

Nondoxastic Attitudes and Religious Propositions

By

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Abstract

Doxastic (from the Greek work *doxa*, meaning belief) attitudes are those propositional attitudes that are equivalent to, or entail, belief. Discussions of faith, particularly its rationality, generally presume that it is doxastic. There are, however, numerous nondoxastic attitudes; why presume that faith is doxastic? Instead of belief, can faith be analyzed in terms of nondoxastic attitudes? Does faith that God exists always entail a belief that God exists?

Hope is one example of a nondoxastic attitude. If one has hope that God exists, does that mean that one has faith that God exists? Acceptance is another nondoxastic attitude. Is accepting the tenets of a religion sufficient to make one a person of faith? It has also been suggested that the attitude of faith is a distinct, irreducible, nondoxastic attitude. What implications does this approach to faith have for the evaluation of faith?

In what follows, it will be argued that faith can be analyzed in terms of nondoxastic attitudes; faith that God exists need not entail a belief that God exists. All three of the aforementioned nondoxastic attitudes (acceptance, hope, and faith) are viable approaches to faith. Furthermore, it will be argued that a distinct nondoxastic approach to faith (fiducial faith) is preferable for its benefits. These include, an important volitional component, important differences in its grounds for rationality, and recognition of an attitudinal component in faith.

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Introduction

Discussions on faith, particularly its rationality, typically take it for granted that it is a *doxastic* attitude. There are, however, numerous nondoxastic attitudes that agents are capable of possessing. Hope is one example. One question we ought to ask then is whether or not faith should be evaluated in terms of belief. Or, is it possible that faith that God exists can be understood in terms of hope, or some other nondoxastic attitude, that God exists?

The question is motivated by several considerations. For one, faith (like trust, as I will argue) is a pervasive attitude. Not just faith in religious propositions, either: individuals have faith in each other, faith in the government, and faith in themselves. So one consideration is a question about how such “faith” should be understood and evaluated.

Another motivation is a question about the rationality of faith. If faith is presumed to be doxastic, then the rationality of faith is in large measure a question of the rationality of its belief component. However, if faith is understood as a nondoxastic attitude, then evaluations of its rationality will become more nuanced, and furthermore, faith may very well be rational even if the corresponding belief is not. For instance, might it be rational to have faith that a friend’s cancer will go into remission, even if it is irrational to believe that?

I begin with an examination of the attitude of acceptance. This attitude has been brought to light in the writings of William Alston and L. Jonathan Cohen. The next attitude I turn to is that of hope. I will look primarily at the work of Louis Pojman. The final attitude I will consider is faith itself, considered as a distinct, irreducible,

nondoxastic attitude. Robert Audi has written extensively on this idea and will be the primary source for its discussion.

I want to begin, however, with a brief clarification of some of the language I will employ, lest there be any confusion. First, “attitude” will always be short for “propositional attitude.” A propositional attitude is, simply enough, the particular attitude a subject has towards a proposition. These attitudes may range from belief, hope, fear, doubt, wonder, or faith, etc.. Second, doxastic (from the Greek work *doxa*, meaning belief) attitudes are those attitudes that entail belief. A non-doxastic attitude, by contrast, is one that does not entail belief. So, for instance, if I have a nondoxastic attitude towards the proposition that leopards are fast, then my attitude does not entail that I have a belief that leopards are fast. Finally, a cognitive attitude is one where the object of the attitude is a proposition: a statement capable of being true or false. I will take it for granted that the attitudes I consider, particularly faith, are cognitive.¹

¹ For an example of a view that is non-cognitivist, see J.S. Clegg’s “Faith” (1979) where he writes, “genuine avowals of faith reveal states of mind. They are most accurately read as symptomatic displays that may be judged as sincere or insincere, but not as true or false” (p229).

Chapter One: Acceptance

William Alston offers the first candidate for the type of nondoxastic faith that I want to consider. Alston's work focuses on the propositional attitude of *acceptance*. He contends that acceptance is a nondoxastic attitude and largely neglected in discussions of faith. Nevertheless, acceptance is a positive² attitude, like belief, and it will be shown that it resembles belief in many ways. I begin with a description of acceptance, as well as the relevant distinctions between belief and acceptance. One of the central claims made therein is that beliefs are, by and large, involuntary; I will look at this claim next. Finally I will look at several problems for Alston's view.

1.1 An Analysis

Alston believes there is an important difference between acceptance and belief that is often overlooked. For instance, suppose that you and I are jurors for an important trial. During deliberations you tell me that you "accept" that what the drug dealer testified was true. Are you telling me that you *believe* the drug dealer's testimony, or something else? To explain just what that "something else" might be, I'll start by describing belief and the two important ways Alston thinks acceptance differs from it.

First, Alston thinks of beliefs as dispositional states.³ What sort of disposition? It

² "Positive" here can mean many things. To complicate matters, the various authors I will cite often use it differently. It might mean an affirmative or "positive" attitude, one that is contrasted with "negative" attitudes (e.g. doubt, disbelief, etc.). Or, it can mean descriptive, when discussing positive vs. normative statements. I think it is the former that Alston intends. It can also mean, in a more literal sense, something good (which is how Audi will use it in discussing the "positive" attitudinal component to faith).

³ Philosophers tend to make a distinction between occurrent beliefs, or beliefs currently being considered by the mind, and dispositional beliefs, or beliefs that are stored in the mind but not currently under consideration. Alston's talk of dispositions should not be confused with the

is a disposition to do or think various things under specific conditions. For instance, the following conditional is true of belief: (1) “*if S believes that p, then if someone asks S whether p, S will have a tendency to respond in the affirmative.*”⁴ So too is (2), “*if S believes that p, then if S considers whether it is the case that p, S will tend to feel it to be the case that p, with one or another degree of confidence.*”⁵ Alston offers several other conditionals (i.e. dispositions to do *x*) to characterize the state of belief. Notice that in each conditional the consequent is a *tendency*: a belief is a disposition, but often times there are contravening influences in the lives of individuals. Alston lists six such conditionals, but is open to the possibility that more or less might capture the concept of belief.

Alston, following L. J. Cohen,⁶ thinks that the second conditional (“*if S believes that p, then if S considers whether it is the case that p, S will tend to feel it to be the case that p, with one or another degree of confidence*”) is particularly adept at describing belief. Of chief importance in the second conditional is the use of the word “feels” in the consequent. It would be easy, and mistaken, for one to assume that Alston is here equating belief with an emotion. The word is actually meant to highlight the fact that the role of consciousness, in belief, is largely passive. I typically do not *decide* to be angry, downcast, happy, or joyful. Likewise, I typically do not decide what I will believe.

latter. However, a disposition nicely captures the distinction, since dispositions are “something that one can have in a *latent* state as well as in an *active* state” (Alston, 1996, p4).

⁴ Alston, William, 1996. “Belief, acceptance, and religious faith,” in J. Jordan and D. Howard-Snyder (eds), *Faith, Freedom, and Rationality: Philosophy of Religion Today*, London: Rowman & Littlefield, p3.

⁵ Alston, 1996, p3

⁶ L. Jonathan Cohen, *An Essay on Belief and Acceptance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

Instead, I find myself confronted or “struck by” the way things *are*.⁷ For example, I open my blinds and am confronted with the fact that it is snowing, forming the belief that it is snowing. Or, I open my window and am struck by the sound of birds, forming the belief that there are birds outside my window. There is no *belief-forming activity* on my part to acquire these beliefs.

With this understanding of belief in mind, we can look at an important difference between acceptance and belief. While beliefs are dispositional *states*, acceptance involves a mental *act*. When you accept the witnesses’ testimony, you perform some mental activity to bring about the positive attitude of acceptance. That mental activity is the adoption of “a policy of deeming, positing, or postulating that *p*—i.e., of including that proposition ... among one’s premises for deciding what to do or think in a particular context.”⁸ So when you accept the testimony as true you *include* it among those other propositions relevant to determining a verdict in the trial. You take on, or adopt, that proposition among other attitudes (such as belief, etc.) you possess. It seems to me that the contrast here between belief and acceptance is summed up nicely in terms of the aforementioned active/passive distinction: the mind is largely passive in belief formation, but the mind is active in accepting.

While acceptance involves some mental activity on my part, it does bring about a certain dispositional state. The reason it must do so is that it would be of little consequence otherwise. If I accepted a proposition only to the extent that I performed the relevant act, then as soon as I ceased said activity I would no longer accept the

⁷ Bearing in mind: if I believe “that the Labrador Duck is extinct,” then I take it to be the case that the Labrador Duck is extinct. This is how things supposedly are; my belief represents what I take to be the case.

⁸ Cohen, 1994, p4.

proposition. If the act left behind no residue, no imprint in the cognitive framework, then we could only accept things to the extent that we dwelled on them. This seems to be incorrect because, months after the trial, you may still accept the dubious testimony; furthermore, you may feel that you've accepted it all this time, even when it was farthest from your mind. The reason this is possible is because the act of acceptance produces a dispositional state similar to belief.

It is important to clarify just *what* that dispositional state is, in order to keep the distinction between belief and acceptance⁹ clear (indeed, a major criticism of Alston's view is that it amounts to nothing more than belief). Alston describes the attitude as similar to belief in that many of the aforementioned conditionals apply to acceptance as well. So, the first conditional would be true of acceptance: "*if S [accepts] p, then if someone asks S whether p, S will have a tendency to respond in the affirmative.*" The chief difference between the two is that the second conditional ("*if S [accepts] that p, then if S considers whether it is the case that p, S will tend to feel it to be the case that p, with one or another degree of confidence*"), which Alston describes as particularly true of belief, is not true of acceptance. This also serves to highlight why acceptance is a nondoxastic attitude; one may accept something without *believing* it. Other than describing the acceptance-disposition in terms of a "policy" (as in the Cohen quote above) or a type of "guiding-principle," not much more can be said for it. Alston does write in a later work that "when we come to say just what positive attitude to a

⁹ Alston admits that it might be infelicitous to have the term "acceptance" range over *both* the act and the engendered disposition. The term "acceptance" is meant to capture the adoption of the policy, not the having of the policy or the acting upon the policy. However, when it comes to religious propositions, the "having" and "acting" are equally important (if not more so), so for simplicity sake he uses the term for both.

proposition is adopted when one accepts it, we are back to the pervasive similarity of acceptance and belief,” but that “accepting that p is both a complex dispositional state markedly similar to believing that p, but distinguished from it by the fact that it issues from ... a mental act that is voluntarily engaged in.”¹⁰ This leads me to the second contrast with belief.

Beliefs are, by and large, involuntary. It is not the case that I can consider some proposition and, by an act of will, come to believe that proposition. Instead, I typically find myself to *have* beliefs, not choose them. Suppose I look out the window and see that it is snowing. I do not *will* myself to form the belief that it is snowing. Rather, I see that it is snowing, and upon reflection (or upon being asked) I admit that I believe it is snowing. This raises an important point though. I cannot directly will myself to have certain beliefs, but I do have indirect control over what I believe. In the case of the snow, I have the power to either look outside the window or not. If I never look outside I may not form the belief that it is snowing. Or consider another example: suppose I want to believe that the Loch Ness monster exists. I cannot form this belief by sheer will alone.¹¹ However, perhaps if I watch the right documentaries, read the right interviews, and talk to the right people, I can come to believe that the Loch Ness monster exists. I will return to this question of *doxastic voluntarism* (i.e. the thesis that we can believe things at will) later in the paper.

Unlike belief, acceptance is voluntary in the direct sense. We can directly will ourselves to accept things. For instance, I could accept that the Loch Ness monster

¹⁰ Alston, William, 2007. “Audi on Nondoxastic Faith.” In M. Timmons, J. Greco, and A. Mele (eds), *Rationality and the Good*, New York: Oxford University Press. p132.

¹¹ As proof, it is often asked whether or not one could willingly form the belief that Santa existed, if one was offered a million dollars to do so.

existed, even if I could not will myself to believe it. The reason is that all it is to accept that the monster exists is to include that proposition (i.e. that the Loch Ness monster exists) among others I utilize in thinking and acting. So, if I am considering whether or not to join an expedition in search of the creature, I might accept that it exists prior to pursuing it.

While acceptance is voluntary, it is not the case that just any proposition can be accepted. We cannot accept propositions that are contrary to what we hold to be true or take to be true.¹² I cannot accept both p and $not-p$; nor can I accept p when I believe $not-p$. So, for example, if I believe there are no undiscovered/unclassified megafauna still in existence, then I cannot accept that an unclassified megafauna (i.e. the Loch Ness monster) still exists. The reason no agent, no self-reflecting agent anyway, can accept p under these conditions is that to accept p is to take it be true. One cannot take both p and $not-p$ to be true, after reflection. It is only possible for one of them to be true.

We do, however, “take” things to be true, despite believing the contrary. For instance, I might *assume* something to be true, despite believing it to be false. Similarly, I might adopt a working hypothesis, to see what followed from it, even if I felt it to be false. In both cases my attitude might coexist with other, contrary attitudes. The difference between acceptance and an assumption or hypothesis is important though. Alston writes, “The sense of ‘accept’ with which I am concerned, is different from

¹² John Bishop stresses a distinction between holding something to be true (belief) and taking something to be true (practical belief). Beliefs, under Bishop’s view, are dispositions to take as true in practical reasoning what we hold to be true. On Bishop’s view, we do not always take to be true those things that we hold to be true. I think this distinction, despite the language of practical “belief,” helps make sense of Alston’s view. See Bishop, John, 2007. *Believing by Faith: An Essay in the Epistemology and Ethics of Religious Belief*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

adopting a “working assumption” in the sense of proceeding as if it were true, in contrast to *taking* it to be true. Acceptance in my sense is the latter.”¹³ So, while I might assume or hypothesize that a particular particle existed, despite believing it did not, I could not accept that it existed. Acceptance is the more positive attitude.

Here are two examples, suggested by Alston, which may help to flesh out the concept of acceptance. They are both examples where someone accepts something but, purportedly, does not unqualifiedly believe it. First, a defensive coordinator for a football team may accept that the opposing quarterback is going to throw the ball on the next play, without actually believing it. The coordinator has some evidence for this, given the quarterback’s history, but the coordinator lacks enough evidence to believe this. The coordinator could also accept that the quarterback is going to hand the ball off, but he could not accept that the quarterback was going to perform a song and dance number.¹⁴ In accepting that the quarterback will throw the ball on the next play, he includes this fact with others he utilizes (e.g. his beliefs about the line of scrimmage and the down) to make a decision about which play to call.

Second, imagine a general who is deploying his forces for an upcoming battle. He receives inconsistent information as to the whereabouts of the enemy troops. Given his uncertainty, he does not believe the enemy troops are located either here or there. Instead, he surveys the relevant information, accepts a particular location, and proceeds to draw up his battle plans. He does not believe the enemy is arrayed on this particular ridge, but because he is forced to make a decision he accepts one possibility as true.

¹³ Alston, 2007, p133.

¹⁴ I think this is probably because the defensive coordinator believes that the quarterback’s goal is to score; accepting that the quarterback will perform a song and dance routine seems incompatible with that belief.

1.2 Doxastic Voluntarism

In this section I want to examine Alston's (implicit) claim that doxastic voluntarism is false, with an aim of defending his view. To clarify, doxastic voluntarism is the view that we can directly will ourselves to have certain beliefs. In what follows I will begin with reasons why it is important to resolve this issue. I will then sketch the necessary conditions that must obtain in order for doxastic voluntarism to be true. Finally, I will provide two arguments against voluntarism. Throughout, I will refer to Louis Pojman's paper on voluntarism, "Believing, Willing, and the Ethics of Belief."¹⁵

Part of the reason we ought to ask if voluntarism is true or false is that Alston's distinction between acceptance and belief is largely dependent upon its falsity. The other reason deals with the overall project of this paper: the nature of faith. It is generally thought that religious faith ought to be the sort of thing that one is free to choose or reject. The reason, it seems to me, is that in most of the major religions we are held accountable for our faith. Individuals are praised for its possession and condemned for lacking it.¹⁶ However, philosophers have also thought that we cannot be held accountable for something if it is beyond our control. Thus, it seems to me, if belief is something beyond our direct control then there are questions about whether or not we can be held accountable for it, and furthermore, whether it is a suitable attitude for faith. Without addressing questions about an "ethics" of belief, I think it is at least important to ask whether or not voluntarism is indeed false.

¹⁵ Pojman, Louis P., 2003. "Believing, Willing, and the Ethics of Belief" in Louis Pojman (ed), *The Theory of Knowledge*, Wadsworth.

¹⁶ I think that this is generally true of secular faith as well. Spouses are praised for their faith and scorned for lacking it. Indeed, I also think that part of the reason we want to say that a woman has *faith* that her husband is not cheating on her is that she *chooses* that attitude.

If doxastic voluntarism (henceforth just voluntarism) were true, what would be its necessary conditions? Pojman lists three, and I will look at each in turn. The first is that the belief acquisition must be a basic act; the belief must be obtained by a direct act of the will. Beliefs obtained indirectly (such as my belief in the Loch Ness monster) would not serve as proof for voluntarism. Furthermore, this is not a claim that all, or even most, of our beliefs must be obtained this way. For voluntarism to be true it is only necessary that *some* of our beliefs be obtained by basic, direct acts of the will.

Second, the acquisition must be done in full view of one's consciousness. If it is to be the result of the will (in the sense of a conscious decision, and not merely a desire), then it must be an act of which we are completely aware. The reason, it seems to me, that belief formation must be the result of a conscious decision and not merely the result of desire, is that desire could coincide with belief formation and yet could not definitively be shown to *result in* the belief. Suppose I want to believe I am smart, and eventually come to believe this. It may be that my desire directly caused the formation of a belief. However, it may also be the case that my desire caused me to selectively view evidence for this conclusion, resulting in my formation of the belief over time (and not as the result of a direct act). As Pojman writes, "there is a difference between willing to believe and believing willingly."¹⁷ It is the former we are concerned with, and thus only a conscious decision of the will to believe something would be sufficient for voluntarism. Furthermore, as I will mention later in the paper, desires also seem to be the sort thing that is largely beyond our ability to control.

¹⁷ Pojman, 2003, p539.

Third, the belief formation must occur independently of the evidence. Granted, one might have some evidence for the proposition, but in order for the belief formation to be voluntary it must not be the case that the evidence is *decisive* in forming the belief. Instead, the formation must be the result of a decision on the part of the believer. Given that beliefs represent the way we perceive the world to be, they are usually the result of evidence for that perceived reality. To use an analogy of Pojman's, belief formation is like a mental scale, where the evidence, pro and con, is placed on either side of the scale. As the mind perceives the scale to tip, the relevant belief is formed (either *p* or *not-p*). If voluntarism is correct, then the mind can tip the scales either way, per its will, and regardless of the relevant evidence.

Here is a phenomenological argument, given by Pojman, that voluntarism is false. It has only two premises. The first states that belief formation is a "happening" in which the world forces itself upon the subject. The second states that an occurrence of the world forcing itself upon a subject is not something she chooses or does (i.e. it is not a direct act). From this it follows that belief formation is usually not something a subject chooses or does.¹⁸

The first premise is the more critical and controversial of the two and therefore the one to focus on. It states that belief formation is an instance of the world forcing itself upon a subject. Its truth follows inductively: when we look at the phenomenon of belief acquisition, its various forms all fit this description. Take for example perceptual beliefs. When I open my eyes and see my tabby cat I cannot prevent myself from seeing

¹⁸ Pojman concedes that this argument cannot show that it is impossible for a subject to directly will herself to have a belief; it only shows that such activity would be highly abnormal. For an argument that claims voluntarism is *logically* impossible, see Bernard Williams's "Deciding to Believe."

him. And, I can no more stop myself from believing *that I see him* anymore than I can stop myself from seeing him. Just as I cannot help but see him, I cannot help but form the perceptual belief. That's not to say that I have no direct control over my sensual input. Of course I could turn away or close my eyes, and no longer see the cat. I can stop myself from seeing him in *that* way. But once I open my eyes and focus on the cat, the perception and corresponding belief are there, regardless of my will.¹⁹ It is the same for the other senses. I can neither stop myself from hearing music when it is played near me, nor from forming the belief that I hear music. And so on. Granting then that the first premise is true, the second intuitively true, and the conclusion that follows is valid, the argument is sound.

Pojman also offers a second argument, dealing with the "logic of belief." It demonstrates how voluntarism's third premise, that beliefs can be formed independent of evidential considerations, is inconsistent with the concept of belief. Essentially, the argument claims that an individual who obtains or holds a belief based upon a direct act of the will (independent of evidence) cannot understand the concept of belief itself. Beliefs are psychological representations of states of affairs. They are about the world. Furthermore, they are true or false depending on the way the world is—what is actually the case. So, to believe there is a bear in front of me is, in essence, to believe that it is true, or the case, that there is a bear in front of me. Once someone understands this, they should also understand that willing to believe something could never make that belief true. If I will myself to believe there is not a bear in front of me that of itself cannot

¹⁹ I think it's fair to say that the context here must clearly be well-functioning, normal agents. The mentally ill or otherwise might be exceptions.

make it true that there is not. Understanding this, there becomes no *epistemic* reason for me to retain the belief that the space around me is free of bears.

Part of the reason we are concerned with our belief's truth or falsity is that they guide our actions. If a bear is chasing me then it is important that my beliefs (e.g. the distance of the bear, the distance to a tree, my relative speed, etc.) be *reliable* representations of the world. Evidence is important because of its capacity to correctly determine which states of affairs are actual states of affairs. Evidence serves as a type of "truth-connection" that helps to ensure what is believed is true. Once an individual understands this, the will becomes superfluous in belief acquisition. Thus, once I understand the nature of belief, I must realize that the cause of my belief (the will) is the wrong sort of cause—it lacks a connection to reality—and the will is unnecessary for my belief about bears.

These two arguments, the phenomenological and the logical, were meant to refute the second and third premises of voluntarism, respectively. What they show is that, while voluntarism seems intuitively true, it is philosophically problematic. What does this mean for faith? I don't want to imply that faith *cannot* be doxastic. In fact, both Alston and Audi think that doxastic faith is more commendable because it involves more cognitive commitment from the subject. What I do think such arguments show is that we ought to take seriously the idea of nondoxastic faith and the part it can play in religious faith.²⁰

²⁰ I am of the opinion that nondoxastic faith often plays an important role in the genesis of doxastic faith, be it religious or otherwise.

1.3 Problems

Throughout this chapter I have alluded to potential problems with Alston's view; in this section I want to clarify and focus on those. Hamid Vahid supplies two of them in "Alston on Belief and Acceptance in Religious Faith,"²¹ and another is found in the writings of Robert Audi.

Vahid argues that all of Alston's examples of acceptance could just as easily be described in terms of degrees of belief. Take the case of the defensive coordinator, which Alston describes as a case of acceptance. The coordinator lacked enough evidence to unqualifiedly believe that the quarterback would throw the ball and thus merely accepted it. As Vahid notes, though, why must he unqualifiedly believe it? It seems quite plausible that he could have a weak belief, or a belief with a low degree of confidence. He only has some evidence for his conclusion, so he tentatively believes the quarterback will throw the ball because this is the most likely of all options, as it seems to him.

A second example Alston gives, though I did not discuss it, deals with a philosopher's acceptance of libertarian free will. He may not believe we have libertarian free will, because he finds the arguments for determinism to be convincing to some degree, but he nonetheless accepts we have free will. Alston writes that

It doesn't seem clear to me that this is the real situation, as it seems clear to me that I am now sitting in front of a computer, that I live in Central New York, and that I teach at Syracuse University. Nevertheless, I accept the proposition that we have libertarian free will. I announce this as my position. I defend it against objections. I draw various consequences from it, and so on.²²

²¹ Vahid, Hamid, 2009. "Alston on Belief and Acceptance in Religious Faith," *The Heythrop Journal*, 50.1, 23-30.

²² Alston, 1996, p11.

As before, Vahid argues that we would do just as well to characterize this attitude in terms of degrees of belief. The philosopher, aware of the arguments to the contrary, only believes the object to a marginal degree (say .6 or .7—whatever number we assign to those beliefs which are neither “strong” nor “weak”).

While I agree, to a certain extent, with Vahid, I think two points should be said in favor of Alston here. One, as a student of philosophy, I sympathize with Alston’s second example. There are many philosophical positions that I do not have a strong opinion on, even after reflecting upon them. For instance, no matter how much I deliberate, I cannot decide the case of epistemic closure. In many instances I adopt or choose one particular view. It’s not clear to me that I *believe* those views, even with a low degree of belief.

The second thing I want to say in favor of acceptance deals with the notion of *entrenchment*. If a belief is highly entrenched in my cognitive outlook then I will not give it up easily, even in the face of perceived counter-evidence. It seems to me that the attitude of acceptance would, under normal conditions, not be deeply entrenched in a subject’s cognitive system. Alston seems to support this when he writes, “having performed an initial act of accepting it as true, I may require supplementary injections of such an act to keep myself in the relevant dispositional state vis-à-vis this position.”²³ Many of the philosophical views I hold are not deeply entrenched and are the sorts of views I could easily give up. Now, which attitude best makes sense of this fact, belief or acceptance? For instance, one day I have a positive attitude towards libertarian free will, a week later I do not. It seems to me that a belief, even one with a low degree, is typically given up as a result of counter evidence. But my changing attitude towards

²³ Alston, 2007, p133.

libertarian free will need not be the result of any change in perceived evidence. It seems that I simply no longer *accept* it, in Alston's sense of acceptance. For whatever reason, I no longer include it among those propositions I utilize in decision making and action guidance. To clarify, I do not think that either of the positive things I have said about Alston's position refutes Vahid's criticisms, but they at least give the view more plausibility.

However, there are questions about the distinctiveness of acceptance from belief itself. In its strongest form, acceptance is almost identical to belief. For instance, in looking at the reasons Alston gives to differentiate acceptance from an assumption, Vahid writes that assumptions and hypotheses "entail regarding a proposition as true without sensitivity to whether one is thereby doing so only if it really is true," whereas, "accepting a proposition *p* is, accordingly, a mental state that is regulated by tracking its truth. In other words, on Alston's account, acceptance turns out to be a truth-directed state very much like belief."²⁴

A similar point confuses me as well. Alston's second conditional ("*if S [accepts] that p, then if S considers whether it is the case that p, S will tend to feel it to be the case that p, with one or another degree of confidence*"), while true of belief, is not true of acceptance. But Alston defines acceptance as "taking" or "regarding" the proposition as true. It seems strange to me that one might regard a proposition as true but not think that it is the case?²⁵ A weaker account of acceptance might avoid these problems, but then what differentiates it from an assumption or hypothesis? Additionally, Audi writes,

²⁴ Vahid, 2009, p28

²⁵ Perhaps a taking/holding distinction *might* be able to make sense of this. If I hold something to be true, then I feel that it is the case. In taking something as true, I do not hold it to be the case, but I still take it as true. It's plausible.

“Supposing, then, that there is a kind of cognitive acceptance that is equivalent to non-doxastic propositional faith, it may also be equivalent to what I call *fiducial faith*.”²⁶

Another criticism of Alston’s position, suggested by Audi, deals with the sufficiency of one’s acceptance of religious propositions to make one religious. To put it another way, is acceptance a suitable candidate to make sense of, and cash out, the attitude of religious faith? One particular problem Audi notes is that Alston’s emphasis on the *act* of acceptance is at odds with the concept of faith. It is true that theologians and philosophers normally think that faith ought to be freely chosen; however, many instances of faith are not the result of some free act. A man who has faith that God exists might not be aware of any activity on his part that produced this faith.

²⁶ Audi, Robert, 2008. “Belief, faith, and acceptance,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 63: 87-102, p92

Chapter Two: Hope

The next attitude—hope—is one that has a long association with faith. The attitude of hope is often intertwined with faith: the objects of hope are often the same as the objects of faith. The attitudes are so connected that several philosophers have suggested that having religious hope is sufficient to make one a person of faith. In this chapter I will give an analysis of hope, note some interesting features of hope, discuss “reasonable” hopes, and finally evaluate the adequacy of hope for religious faith.

2.1 An Analysis

In this section I want to look at an analysis of hope, its necessary and sufficient conditions, offered by Louis Pojman.²⁷ He argues there are four necessary conditions for hope. In assessing and critiquing those proposed conditions I will also take in to consideration the analyses of hope offered by James Muyskens²⁸ and J.P. Day.²⁹

The first necessary condition is that hope entails a desire that the object of hope be realized.³⁰ If I hope p ,³¹ where p is some proposition, then I *want* p to be true. So, if Sylvia hopes to pass her test tomorrow then she must have a desire to pass her test tomorrow. It might not seem obvious that desire is necessary for hope, but consider three

²⁷ Pojman, Louis, 1986. “Faith without belief?” *Faith and Philosophy*, 3: 157–176.

²⁸ Muyskens, James, 1979. *The Sufficiency of Hope: The Conceptual Foundations of Religion*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

²⁹ Day, J. P., 1970. “The Anatomy of Hope and Fear,” *Mind*, 79: 369-384.; and Day, 1991. “Hope: A Philosophical Inquiry,” *Acta Philosophica Fennica*, 51: 11-101.; and Day, 1998. “More About Hope and Fear,” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 1.1: 121-123.

³⁰ I intend the term “realized” here to capture the fact that the desire can be either for a proposition to be true (e.g. “I hope Valerie started the dishwasher before she left”) or for a state of affairs to obtain (e.g. “I hope the Cubs win tomorrow”).

³¹ Can I hope in x , where x is some object? I'm not sure. But surely I can *have* hope in x , or hope *for* x . Perhaps these would still be worked out as hope-that statements. For instance, if I hope for Fred, what I might mean is that I hope *that* he sorts himself out and takes charge of his life. Or, if I have hope in Bill, what I might hope is *that* he will do what's best.

cases: a farmer who hopes for rain during a draught, a real-estate agent who hopes for the market to bounce back, and a meteorologist considering tomorrow's weather. The first two are cases where the individual desires something; thus, it is appropriate to speak of their "hope." The third, the meteorologist, is a case where the individual is largely ambivalent about the outcome, lacking any desire either way. In that case it is inappropriate to call the attitude hope.

The second necessary condition is that we can only hope for what we believe to be possible. So, if I hope p , then I must believe it is possible³² for p to be true. I cannot ever hope to see a round square, because I recognize it is impossible, but perhaps my young cousin can hope to. If Sylvia hopes to pass her test tomorrow then she must believe she *can* pass her test tomorrow. Likewise, if Sylvia does not believe it is possible for her to pass her test then she cannot properly hope that she will pass her test.

It is important to note that believing something is possible is not equivalent to expecting it. Sylvia may hope to pass her test tomorrow but not expect to. Of course, it's possible that she hopes to pass her test *and* expects to pass her test, though she need not. Without offering a full-blown analysis of expectation, I think it generally goes something like this: if I expect something to happen, then I believe it will happen. Hope, on the other hand, can coexist with a significant amount of doubt; doubt strong enough that the subject does not expect the object of hope to be realized. For instance, I may hope to marry a supermodel even if I acknowledge that the chances are quite small that I will ever

³² J. P. Day writes that "A thinks that P is in some degree probable" presupposes (in Strawson's sense of "presuppose") "A thinks that he has evidence relevant to P ." So that if A says that he hopes that P although he thinks that he has no evidence for or against P , he must be disbelieved" (1991, p98). I'm not sure this is correct, for surely I could *believe* that round squares are possible, without having any evidence for it. Regardless, this point is not an important one.

meet one, much less marry one. My hope is not dependent on an expectation, but upon my desire.

It is also important to note that although hope entails desire, it is different from wishing. In wishing, the subject need not believe that what is wished for is possible. I can wish I were never born or that I was smarter,³³ but I cannot hope for either of those things. Once I know the final score of the basketball game I can no longer hope that my team won, but I can still wish that they won. In all three examples, I do not believe the facts could be otherwise.³⁴ However, if I *did* (i.e. I believed it possible to change the past or alter one's own DNA) then I could rightly hope for any of those things.

Given these first two conditions, it is easy to see why hope is non-doxastic. I may hope that I win the lottery and not believe I will win the lottery. Hope does not entail the corollary belief. Imagine that I am lost at sea. The situation may be dire enough that I lack any belief that I will be rescued. I may not believe that I will be rescued, if the circumstances are grave enough, but I can still hope that I will be rescued. However, if I hope that I will be rescued then I must at least believe it is *possible* that I will be rescued. At the point I stop believing even *that* then I have *lost hope*.

The third condition, suggested by Pojman, is that hope implies a certain level of uncertainty. I think this might be just to say that if I hope *p* then I believe not-*p* is also possible. For instance, if Sylvia hopes that she will pass her test tomorrow then (in

³³ Pojman, 1986, p162.

³⁴ We might distinguish between metaphysical possibility and nomological (i.e. relating to this world) possibility. Obviously I think it is metaphysically possible to altar one's own DNA or change the past, but I do not think it's nomologically possible (at this time, anyway). Or perhaps we might put it as Muyskens (1979) does: "one can wish (counterfactually) ... logically, one cannot hope counterfactually" (p17).

addition to believing it is possible for her to pass her test) she must believe it is possible for her to fail (or not-*p*). This condition may be best seen in hoping about the past. Suppose I have not heard the score of the basketball game yesterday, and I hope that my team won. Obviously, in this case, I believe it is possible that my team did not win. Now contrast this with a friend of mine who attended the game and knows the score. In that case it would be odd, and mistaken, if she were to say "I hope the team won yesterday." In this case she knows the team won and there is no uncertainty.³⁵

While nothing of particular importance, for my project anyway, depends upon this third condition, it does strike me that this is necessary for hope. J.P. Day and James Muyskens both include this third condition in their respective analyses of hope. Influenced by Hume's treatment of hope, and its opposite fear, Day writes that "when *A* believes that *P* is *certain* and *A* desires that *P*, *A* no longer hopes that *P* ... Similarly, *A* no longer fears that *-P* when *A* believes that *-P* is *certain* and *A* desires that *P*."³⁶ Muyskens also writes that "it is a part of the force of Hume's analysis that, as he points out, once we are certain we go beyond hope to something better, namely, joy."³⁷

The fourth necessary condition put forward by Pojman is that hope entails a disposition to bring about the truth of the proposition if the subject can. So if Sylvia hopes that she will pass her test then she will be disposed (but not guaranteed) to make it true that she passes her test. I take it that this is not to say that she will be disposed to study all night; it might just mean that she is disposed to do her best on the test. Suppose

³⁵ Perhaps the reason she does not hope is that she has no *desire* that the team win, given that she already knows the outcome. But this seems mistaken, given that she could still *wish* that her team had won (and hence, have desire regarding the final score).

³⁶ Day, 1998, p123

³⁷ Muyskens, 1979, p14

that I hope to go running tomorrow (I'm worried it will rain and I won't have enough time). Weather and time permitting, if I choose *not* to go running tomorrow, then it is odd to say that I hoped to go running tomorrow. Certainly, something else may have come up; I may have changed my mind, or may have just been too lazy. Yet it seems that if I hope to go running tomorrow, then tomorrow I will be disposed to go on a run.

This fourth condition may strike some readers as false. Muyskens makes no mention of it, but Day briefly does. He writes that *A* hopes *P* entails

A is disposed to try to bring it about that *P*. So that if Tom says that he hopes to recover, but disobeys all his doctor's orders, he must be disbelieved. However, this test does not apply to all cases of "A hopes that *P*," but only to those where the object of hope is an action or passion of the subject; in other words, to cases of hoping-to.³⁸

However, I am not inclined to consider it necessary for hope. A disposition to bring about the object of hope seems to be embedded in the subject's desire (the first condition). Ultimately, though, this may depend upon the reader's understanding of desire. For instance, under an action-based theory of desire, a disposition to act *is* entailed by desire. Under a pleasure-based theory of desire, though, desire might not entail a disposition to act. I cannot resolve the issue here.³⁹

2.2 Hope, Belief, and Action

In the previous section, I established that hope does not entail the corollary belief. There are many paradigmatic cases of hope where the subject need not possess the relevant belief (e.g. the "lost at sea" case). However, cases of deep or profound hope do seem to entail a type of belief. Pojman defines profound or deep hope as cases where "one is disposed to risk something significant on the possibility of the proposition's being

³⁸ Day, 1991, p98

³⁹ See Tim Schroeder's entry, "Desire," in the online Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

or becoming true."⁴⁰ He admits that such hope does entail a belief in the object of hope. A gambler in desperate need of cash, who bets on a long shot to win, typically believes *in* the bet (i.e. the horse, team, etc.). A belief-in in this context should not be confused with an existential belief (e.g. "I believe in Santa"). Instead, it implies something closer to trust (as in, "I believe in you"). Religious hopes would seem to often coincide with this type of belief or trust.

Do belief-in statements entail belief-that statements? Does, for example, a belief in the President entail a belief that the President exists? Essentially, at issue here is a question of whether or not religious hope (typically a nondoxastic attitude) entails belief. Pojman argues that belief-in or trust (and by extension profound hope) does not entail propositional beliefs (a point also argued for by H.H. Price⁴¹). Instead, he suggests that a belief that *x possibly* exists is a necessary condition for profound hope. He cites as an example a scientist who hypothesizes the existence of an entity and devotes considerable time and energy into discovering it. He need not believe it exists, but he believes it possibly exists. In his tests and work he acts as though it exists. A further example provided by Price: it was possible to believe in universal suffrage long before it existed.

In the case of the scientist, his projects and life are shaped as though the entity existed. Pojman concludes that a person with profound or deep hope will live *as though* the object of hope were true or would become true. The sailors aboard Columbus' ships may not believe the world is round, but their hope leads them to live on the hypothesis that it is true. Explorers, searching for the fountain of youth, may not have believed it

⁴⁰ Pojman, 1986, p167

⁴¹ Price, H.H., 1965. "Belief 'In' and Belief 'That'" *Religious Studies*, 1.1, 5-28; and Price, 1969. *Belief* (NY: Humanities PR).

existed, but their actions were guided by the possibility of its existence. Finally, a woman on her deathbed may not believe some wonder drug or miracle cure will heal her, but she may nonetheless place her trust in it.

A broader point can be made about hope generally then. Someone who hopes often has a disposition to act as though they believed the object of hope was true.

Muyskens writes

An agent who hopes acts in large part like a person who actually believes that the object of his hopes is real. Hoping for something involves practical consequences and entails certain actions or dispositions to act. One who hopes for p arranges his life and emotions as if p were the case ... If one hopes that p one is *disposed to act as if p* . Hence the actions of the person who hopes for p may be very similar to those of the person who expects (or believes) that p .⁴²

People who hope for things have a tendency to organize their lives as though the object of hope were true. I may apply for admission to Harvard and only hope to be accepted. I may act as though I would be accepted by buying Harvard shirts and paraphernalia. That's not to say that my disposition to act will prevent me from applying to other schools (nor would that be the case if I *believed* I would be accepted: I can still recognize that it's practical to apply elsewhere).

2.3 Reasonable Hope

Since hope is a nondoxastic attitude the standards for reasonable belief cannot be used in assessing reasonable hope. It is important, then, to ask exactly what constitutes reasonable hope. For instance, would it be reasonable for me to hope that I walk on the moon some day? What if I hoped to walk on the moon without wearing a space suit? As before, my primary focus will be on Pojman's work, with references to Muyskens and

⁴² Muyskens, 1979, p15

Day to supplement the arguments.

The first step in establishing the grounds for reasonable hope is to recognize that hope has two elements, a desiderative and an estimative. If either (the desire or belief, respectively) is unreasonable then the hope is unreasonable. The desiderative is quickly dealt with. For example, it is generally unreasonable to hope to die, since that desire conflicts with almost all of the other desires a healthy rational agent might have. I would suspect that it is typically not the desiderative element of hope that makes it unreasonable (when it is such).

However, the desiderative element in hope plays an important role in the *morality* of hope. For instance, there may not be anything wrong with believing a natural disaster will kill thousands of people tomorrow, but there is certainly something morally repugnant about hoping it. Muyskens includes this as a necessary condition for reasonable hope, but I fail to see why it should be. Can't it be reasonable to hope something, even if it's immoral? Suppose that I am a terrorist; if my ultimate purpose in life is spread terror and mayhem, wouldn't it be reasonable to hope that I do so tomorrow? I think it would be reasonable to have such a hope (though I make no pronouncement on the overarching aim), and I would think it is also fairly immoral to have such a hope.

Next, the estimative/belief element can make a hope unreasonable. The estimation of the possibility of the object of hope can be unreasonable. A hope to draw a round square would be unreasonable because no such thing is possible. A hope that two plus two equals four would also be unreasonable, for the opposite reason. Two plus two *always* equals four and thus the estimation that such an occurrence is less than certain

(granting that hope entails that the object of hope be uncertain) would be unreasonable.

This last example might not sit well with some, since the third condition for hope (its object must be uncertain) is contentious. I have argued it is a necessary condition.

However, if one were to reject it then I think it *would* be reasonable to hope that two plus two equals four (though odd). Pojman writes that "at the very least we can say that a hope is irrational if the agent should know that the object in question is either certain or impossible."⁴³

Pojman's quote leads to an important question: what type of possibility is being used in evaluation? Impossible might mean either logically impossible or nomologically impossible (i.e. impossible under the actual laws of nature). To illuminate the distinction, it is logically possible to hold your breath for an hour, but not nomologically possible.

To iterate an earlier question, my hope of walking on the moon (sans space suit) might be logically possible but not nomologically possible. I think it is clear that nomological possibility is the relevant "possibility" (and, as such, my hope *would* be unreasonable⁴⁴).

Pojman, however, argues for something stronger than nomological possibility. He writes, "there is also the phenomenon of something being so close to impossible or certain that hoping may be irrational, as when an average person hopes to live to 200 or an average high school football player with no great promise hopes to make the pros and gives up all else in order to do this."⁴⁵ The second case fits both types of possibility (it is both logically and nomologically possible for the quarterback to succeed professionally),

⁴³ Pojman, 1986, p165

⁴⁴ Perhaps we should restrict it to the here and now. It seems to me that such a hope might be reasonable *if* it were paired with the hope (or belief) that future technology might allow such things. However, *that* just makes me wonder if its not logical possibility that we care about after all.

⁴⁵ Pojman, 1986, p165.

yet is viewed as unreasonable.⁴⁶ Since it does not seem, at least to me, intuitive that such hope is unreasonable, it is worthwhile to ask why it should be. After all, why should such hope be unreasonable?

I think one reason we are inclined to *discourage* such hope has less to do with its (un)reasonableness and more to do with practical considerations. It is impractical to have such a hope because it might lead one to neglect more worthwhile pursuits (in this case, things like college applications). Given that he cannot succeed professionally, other pursuits and interests will take on greater importance. Thus, such a hope is impractical because it interferes with other projects. But it doesn't seem to me that if something is impractical it is unreasonable. Cases of wives whose husbands are missing in war come to mind. After a certain length of time it might be impractical to hope for the return of one's spouse (presumably because it hinders one from getting on with other projects) but it doesn't seem to be unreasonable. In fact, in many cases those spouses return after lengthy intervals, and the hope is rewarded.

But in most cases there are other important considerations. We ought to ask about those beliefs *presupposed* by the hope. This is a point made by Muyskens. Hope is only reasonable if the beliefs it presupposes (those beyond the estimative element) are also reasonable. So, for instance, if the quarterback bases his hope on his belief that he possesses the talent to succeed professionally, then his hope is unreasonable (because the latter belief is unreasonable, or so I presume). It seems to me that if we use this test, then cases such as the quarterback's may also *not* be unreasonable in certain situations, depending upon the presupposed belief. I think this test allows us to focus on

⁴⁶ Interestingly, he states he was obliged to adopt this view after comments from Alston.

nomological possibility as the relevant possibility. We can further ask about other presupposed attitudes when looking at highly improbable hopes.

2.4 The Adequacy of Hope for Religious Commitment

Having explored the nature of hope, we might wonder if having hope in religious propositions is sufficient to make one a person of faith. For instance, if I hope that God exists, then could it be said that I have faith that God exists (in the absence of such belief)? In this section, I want to consider that possibility and examine some arguments to the contrary proposed by Robert Audi.

First, Audi notes⁴⁷ that hope can coexist with a higher level of doubt than faith. I might have strong doubts that I will walk on the moon before my thirtieth birthday, but I could still hope to. It seems less plausible that I could have faith that I will walk on the moon. It also seems natural to talk of faith devolving into mere hope in the face of overwhelming doubt. Hope is a weaker attitude than faith, and may be impossible of doing the “work” of faith, so to speak.

Second, hope does not entail an important condition that is necessary for faith. There is a positive element in faith not found in hope. Faith, as I will argue later, entails a positive evaluation of the object of faith. That is to say, if I have faith that God exists, then I regard this as a good state of affairs. If I did not, or I regarded it as a bad thing, then I could not be said to have faith. For now, let it be granted that faith has this feature.

Hope does not entail such an evaluation. Hope does entail desire; but that desire does not entail that one positively evaluate the object of hope. As a recovering alcoholic

⁴⁷ Audi, Robert, 1991. “Faith, Belief, and Rationality,” *Philosophical Perspectives*, 5: 213-239, p219; see also 2008, p97

can desire alcohol, it seems we can desire those things we do not regard as good.⁴⁸ Furthermore, as we can have conflicting desires, so it seems we can have conflicting hopes. One could even hope incontinently: my belief system might consider capital punishment morally repugnant, but after a man murders my family I still may hope, despite my better judgment, that he receives the death penalty. It does not seem that one could have such incontinent faith.

Another issue, which occurs to me, is how hope-faith could be voluntary. This is a similar worry to the one I raised about belief and faith. Like belief, hope seems to be—to a certain extent—beyond our ability to control. That is because hope's two components, belief and desire, are not the sorts of things we have direct control over. I have already argued that belief is largely beyond our control; desire is, to a large extent, as well. I cannot, for instance, create in myself a desire for cheese. Instead, desires seem to come and go, like emotions. Perhaps I can indirectly alter my desires, say by staring at pictures of delicious cheese, or smelling its pungent aroma. But what about, say, a desire that a friend do well on a test? How can I *bring about* this desire if I do not already have it? Thus, hope is, like belief, largely involuntary.⁴⁹ Like belief, then, there are also questions about how a faith conceived as hope could ever be meritorious.

⁴⁸ However, under good-based theories of desire, I desire x if and only if I judge that x is good. This is one of the reasons I am inclined to think that faith *entails* hope (because those things I have faith in I also judge to be good), but not vice versa (because the two attitudes differ in their commitment to a particular view of the world).

⁴⁹ Although, Alexander R. Pruss attributes to Pojman the claim that hope is voluntary (and seems perfectly willing to grant this claim himself). See Pruss, forthcoming, "Christian Faith and Belief," *Faith and Philosophy*.

Chapter Three: Audi's Nondoxastic Faith

Alston and Pojman suggested that acceptance and hope, respectively, are attitudes capable of making sense of the concept of faith. The author I will now look at, Robert Audi, suggests that there is a type of faith not reducible to any other attitude, but instead is its own distinct attitude. According to Audi, when we say that someone has faith we do not imply any other attitude, be it hope, acceptance, or belief.

Audi writes, "consider faith that God loves humanity. Might this be a distinct kind of attitude? On my view, just as one can have faith that a friend will survive cancer, without either believing *or* disbelieving this, one can have such non-belief-entailing faith regarding religious propositions."⁵⁰ It seems to me that Audi takes it for granted that secular nondoxastic (or *fiducial*) faith is plausible; furthermore, he feels that this fact lends some credence to his claim that religious fiducial faith is plausible. Elsewhere he writes, "whether in secular or religious cases, neither kind of faith *clearly* requires belief of the proposition in question."⁵¹ In this section I examine the reasons for such a conclusion, as well as some of the reasons to the contrary.

In what follows, I take a detailed look at the arguments proposed by Audi. He claims that while faith may often involve (i.e. entail) belief, it need not. I begin with the arguments for his view. Second, I consider several objections to Audi's view proposed by Dana Radcliffe. Third, I address questions regarding the adequacy of nondoxastic faith for religious commitment. Next, I give a short analysis of trust and its relation to Audi's view. Then, I offer a brief account of how nondoxastic faith can be voluntary.

⁵⁰ Audi, 2008, p92

⁵¹ Audi, 1991, p215; emphasis mine

Finally, I consider the epistemic status of nondoxastic faith.

3.1 Arguments For

Audi has written extensively⁵² on the subject of nondoxastic faith. Nowhere, however, does he give a proper analysis of such "faith." As such it is difficult to discuss the merit of his views. Audi instead focuses, in much of his writing, on contrasts between faith and belief. I suspect that by demonstrating what faith need not be (i.e. contrasting it with belief), Audi hopes to cash out something of what faith *is*. I will follow his approach and focus on the differences between faith and belief in my exposition. Throughout his papers, Audi discusses three reasons⁵³ to differentiate faith and belief. I will begin with (as I perceive it) the weakest of these and move to the strongest. For clarity sake, I will refer to them as arguments A, B, and C, respectively.

The first reason, argument A, is that, in most cases, if someone unqualifiedly believes p , then it is odd to express that attitude towards p as faith. For instance, if I unqualifiedly believe I will finish my thesis on time then I will most likely not express my attitude as "faith that I will finish my thesis on time." The reason, Audi suggests, is that expressing my attitude as faith implies, normally, that I do not believe the proposition. Audi writes that "if, from previous experience (or indeed whatever reason), I unqualifiedly believe that Felicia will meet a certain challenge, I will tend not to express my attitude by saying I have faith that she will; for saying this would at least normally

⁵² The aforementioned Audi (1991) and Audi (2008); also, Audi, Robert, 1992. "Rationality and Religious Commitment," in Hester (ed.), *Faith, Reason, and Skepticism*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.; Audi, Robert, 1996. "The Dimensions of Faith and the Demands of Reason," in Stump (ed.) *Reasoned Faith*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

⁵³ It might be worth noting that nowhere does Audi refer to any of the three as an "argument." Radcliffe (1995), in his criticism of Audi, takes them to be arguments.

imply that I do not actually believe it."⁵⁴ Essentially, I take Audi's point to be that in ordinary usage "faith" concedes a certain amount of doubt that is incompatible with outright belief.

Audi takes it for granted that the everyday usage of faith implies something *less* than belief. To understand his point I think it is important to highlight the nature of belief Audi is talking about. He says that faith typically implies something less than "unqualified" belief. He differentiates a belief *p* from a belief that *p* is probable, or a disposition to believe *p*. Faith, in ordinary usage, may very well imply these sorts of things, but Audi's point is that it does not imply belief *p*. It does seem that paradigmatic cases of faith tend to confirm Audi's suggestion. For instance, if I have faith that my seriously ill friend will recover then, in many cases, I probably do not believe that my seriously ill friend will recover. The argument, I take it, is not that faith cannot coincide with belief; the argument is that our ordinary usage of the words tend to support the distinction Audi is drawing. He confirms this in the following passage:

Indeed, at least in non-religious contexts the closer we come to having a belief that *p*, the less natural it is to speak of faith rather than simply of belief that *p*. If I *believe* a student will find a position, it would be misleading to say I have faith that this will occur, except perhaps as a way of indicating a lack of confidence. It is possible to have faith that something is so when we also believe it is, but propositional faith—faith that—is often non-doxastic.⁵⁵

The second reason, argument B, to recognize faith as a distinct attitude has to do with three⁵⁶ related contrasts Audi finds in faith and belief. They are ways in which faith

⁵⁴ Audi, 1992, p59

⁵⁵ Audi, 2008, p96.

⁵⁶ In a more recent work, Audi mentions another contrast. He writes, "Even outside religious contexts, faith tends to eliminate or diminish fear and other negative emotions, such as anxiety, depression, and anger. Like hope, belief, even if it has the same content as fiducial faith, need not

is supposedly noticeably different from belief.

First, if Fred believes p and p is false, then we are apt to say he was mistaken. However, if Fred has faith p and p is false, then we are less inclined to say that Fred was mistaken. Instead we may suggest that he was disappointed, or had misplaced his faith. Suppose Fred has reason to suspect his wife is cheating on him. If he believes she is not, and she is, then he is mistaken. However, if he has faith that she is not then perhaps he was naïve, or foolish, to have such faith; it is not entirely clear that his faith was mistaken.

The second contrast, also discussed by William P. Alston,⁵⁷ relates to the first in regards to false propositions. Other things being equal, upon learning that something is false, one is more likely to be surprised if it is believed. Suppose that Bob believes something that Sue only has faith in. Upon learning that it is false, Bob is likely to be more surprised than Sue. If Bob believes that he and Sue will not be fired this week, then he will probably be surprised if they are. However, if Sue has faith that she and Bob will not be fired this week, then she may be more prepared for the end of her employment. This is in part, I suspect, because faith involves risk (that p may be false, since there generally is not sufficient evidence to support p) and the person who has faith is normally aware of this. Naturally, Sue will have some type of response to her misplaced faith. For reasons I will discuss later, I think Sue's response will be disappointment rather than surprise.

The third contrast is related to the second. Faith can coexist with a higher degree

have this kind of effect" (2008, p98). I don't think I'm in a position to evaluate the veracity of this claim, but it does seem plausible.

⁵⁷ Alston, 1996.

of doubt than belief. Sue may be aware of the evidence that she will be fired and even have a strong intuition that she will be. Despite strong doubts to the contrary, Sue may still have faith that she will not be fired. On the other hand, if Bob has strong doubts that he will lose his job then he probably cannot unqualifiedly believe he will not. I would even suggest that the contrast is stronger than Audi presents it. Faith and belief can both coexist with various degrees of doubt, faith more so than belief. What about outright doubt? Doubt is a negative attitude, and I'm inclined to understand it as a disposition to believe *not-p*. Thus, if I doubt that aliens exist then I am disposed towards believing that aliens do not exist. Under this interpretation, belief cannot seemingly coexist with doubt. It does seem, however, that faith might be able to.

The third reason, argument C, to recognize faith as a distinct attitude has to do with the nature of faith itself. There is a positive element in faith not found in belief. Faith, unlike belief, is evaluative. That is to say, if Noel has faith *p*, then Noel places some *value* on *p*. For instance, suppose that Noel has faith that her friend's cancer will go into remission. To have faith, Noel must place some value on the recovery, which is to say she thinks it would be good. If Noel did not think it was good, or in fact wished her friend would *not* recover, then she could not be said to have faith.⁵⁸

However, there *are* supposed cases of "faith" where the subject does not regard

⁵⁸ It might be countered that faith is then just a combination of belief and the positive evaluative element. Audi discounts this, writing, "adding such an attitude to belief is still not sufficient for propositional faith. Far from salvaging a reductionist strategy of analyzing faith in terms of belief, this move shows that in addition to finding an appropriate belief component, the reductionist would have to show this belief to imply an appropriate attitude. I doubt that either of these conditions can be met" (1991, p218). He does not expand upon why the belief must *imply* the positive attitude (as opposed to, say, being simply paired with it); I suspect it is because too many beliefs would fall under the heading of faith. For instance, I believe that the President has not been assassinated, and I also think this is a good thing—but I do not have faith that he has not been assassinated. It is only faith when the propositional attitude *implies* the evaluative element.

the object of faith as something good. For instance, suppose I believe that God exists (on faith) but regard this state of affairs as unfortunate (say, because I viewed God as sadistic). Notice here two things. First, it is not clear to me that we ought to describe this as a case of faith. We are tempted to call it faith, I think, because the propositional object, that God exists, is *usually* an object of faith. Furthermore, it is usually not held on the basis of evidence. Second, if Audi is right (that faith and belief are distinct attitudes) then the attitude in question here is belief and not faith. I suspect that to believe “on faith” means something like the following: faith evolved into belief. The genesis for the belief was faith, but the belief itself is not faith.

This leads to a final, and important, point about faith that Audi makes. Propositional faith implies a disposition to believe *p*. If Audi is right that faith does not *entail* belief then why are we so inclined to think it does? One reason is that propositional faith implies a disposition to believe *p*. If Cheryl truly does have faith that Elvis is alive then she will be inclined to believe he is alive, if she does not already. A disposition to believe, though, is not the same thing as *believing*.⁵⁹

Another, and perhaps stronger, reason we are inclined to think that faith entails belief is that faith cannot coexist with a belief *not-p*. I cannot have faith that God exists if I believe that God does not exist. Or, for instance, if I believe that my friend will *not* recover from her illness then I cannot have faith that she will. So, if I *do* have faith that she will recover then I cannot believe that she will not. This seems to imply that I do believe she will recover. This need not be the case though. I very well may have no

⁵⁹ A disposition to believe *p* is not the same thing as a *dispositional belief p*. A dispositional belief is one we hold, but it is not currently being considered by the mind (or “before” the mind; e.g. my belief “that I have a cardiovascular system”).

belief on the matter. I think perhaps this is a function of doubt and hope both working in the life of an individual.

While faith can coexist with more doubt than belief, it cannot survive overwhelming doubt. At a certain point, faith becomes mere hope when doubt becomes too strong. Or, the doubt may be such that it undermines the positive outlook of faith, causing it to no longer be faith. Suppose someone living in the USSR has faith that the party agenda will be carried out. Over time, she begins to doubt the value of such a thing, to the point that she no longer considers it to be a good thing. At that point she has lost faith that the party agenda will be carried out (even if she comes to believe that the party agenda *will* be carried out). The process, over time, where the doubts come creeping in, may be seen as losing one's faith in the face of consuming doubt.

3.2 Arguments Against

In this section (as well as a some of the next) I wish to examine several criticisms put forth by Dana Radcliffe in his paper "Nondoxastic Faith: Audi on Religious Commitment." Radcliffe argues that Audi's nondoxastic faith is insufficient to make one a "person of faith." To put it another way, nondoxastic faith is inadequate to support religious commitment. In doing so, Radcliffe argues several of Audi's arguments fail. Before addressing questions of the adequacy of fiducial faith, in this section I examine Radcliffe's rejection of Audi's arguments and Radcliffe's own proposed analysis of faith.

For Audi, if I believe p then I will not express my attitude as faith p . This is because saying I have faith p normally implies I do not actually believe p . Radcliffe rejects Audi's suggestion that "faith" typically implies something less than belief. Instead, Radcliffe thinks that use of the word "faith" implies "not an absence of belief,

but an acknowledgement by the speaker that there are reasons for doubting the truth of the proposition, which he nevertheless believes."⁶⁰ Imagine I am working on my thesis, and my advisor considers whether or not I will finish it on time. If he unqualifiedly believes that I will then is it odd to express it as *faith* that I will because (1) faith normally implies a lack of belief (Audi) or (2) faith implies belief but an acknowledgement that are reasons for doubting the truth of the proposition (Radcliffe)?

It is not clear to me how to understand Radcliffe's analysis. For instance, this idea that "faith" implies "reasons for doubting the truth of the proposition." There are reasons for doubting almost any proposition. Perhaps what he means is that on the whole, on balance, there are more reasons for doubting the truth of the proposition than there are for believing it. That cannot be right though, because then faith, by definition, is unreasonable. It may be that, ultimately, faith is unreasonable; but surely it's incorrect to define it in a way that is patently unreasonable? Radcliffe's own writings rule this possibility out, anyway: he writes that if I have faith *p* then I also believe *p*, "all while recognizing that my belief, while not irrational⁶¹, may go beyond what the evidence would justify."⁶² Certainly for a belief to be rational (or perhaps just not *irrational*) there cannot be overriding counter-evidence.⁶³

While it puzzles me how such faith would *not* be irrational (is there a sort of

⁶⁰ Radcliffe, Dana, 1995. "Nondoxastic Faith: Audi on Religious Commitment," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 37.2: 73-86; p76

⁶¹ As it will be clear later on, I hope, Audi is keen to differentiate between justification and rationality. A belief might not be *justified* (have sufficient grounds to warrant it), but it still may be presumed to be rational (consistent with other beliefs and lacking counter evidence). I'm not sure what idea of "rational" Radcliffe is working with here.

⁶² Radcliffe, 1995, p76

⁶³ One point that I think Radcliffe's analysis does—inadvertently or not—highlight is that we cannot have faith in what is certain.

middle ground: beliefs which are neither rational nor irrational?), there *is* something attractive about Radcliffe's position. People believe all sorts of things, and many times we describe their belief as faith because they believe despite adequate evidence for the truth of the belief. As Radcliffe notes, faith "conversationally implies *concession*, but what is conceded is the disputability, or perhaps even the inadequacy (by some objective standard), of the belief's grounds."⁶⁴ Yet, it seems to me that Audi is right regarding the use of faith in conversation. It very well may concede inadequate evidence, but it also concedes something less than belief. Someone says to me, "do you believe that?" and I respond, "no, but I have faith."

I think there are some additional problems with Radcliffe's proposed analysis. What happens when we apply it to other examples? The first example I have in mind is a case with overwhelming counter-evidence. The second is a case with overwhelming positive evidence.

First, suppose a woman comes to suspect that her husband is cheating on her. For various reasons (i.e. reasons of the sort that tend to indicate marital infidelity; e.g. late nights, lipstick on collars, etc.) she comes to doubt his loyalty to her. Yet, given their history and the value she places on their relationship, she has faith that he is not cheating (until the truth is made clear). It is a case where there are very strong reasons to suspect the husband is cheating.

Second, suppose there has been a drought for some time, and a farmer's crops are on the verge of failure. He is at his wits' end, and despairs that all will be lost (times are hard, obviously). Imagine further that the weather forecast for the next day is a ninety-

⁶⁴ Radcliffe, 1995, p76

five percent chance of rain. Because of the length of the drought and his own hardship, the farmer struggles to admit that it will, in fact, rain tomorrow. Can he still have faith that it will rain tomorrow?

I do not claim that either of these examples serves as a counterexample to Radcliffe's analysis. In fact, it could probably make sense of both (in the first, I imagine it is just irrational faith; in the second I suspect the answer is "no"). What I do think, however, is that both cases fit much more neatly under Audi's conception of faith. In the first the evidence properly prevents her belief, but not her faith.⁶⁵ In the second case the farmer cannot believe but can still have faith (and it is properly called faith because of the positive evaluation he places on the object of faith).

One final thought on Radcliffe's analysis. It might seem that Radcliffe has in mind something like probability beliefs. If the evidence makes some proposition, p , eighty-five percent likely then we ought to hold that belief to be eighty-five percent likely to be true. Thus, if the evidence makes some proposition, p , fifty-two percent likely and if I hold p with a belief of eighty-five percent, then I have faith. Thus faith embodies a belief that, while perhaps not irrational, goes beyond what the evidence justifies.

If this were what Radcliffe had in mind there would be two problems with it. First, probability beliefs are controversial and do not seem to be supported by our perceptions of our own beliefs. Beliefs are generally just held, perhaps with varying strength or weakness, but lacking probability estimates (at most, perhaps we have some type of belief hierarchy, ranking some beliefs as stronger or weaker than others⁶⁶).

⁶⁵ And I do have some intuition that faith in this case *might* be reasonable, even if belief is not.

⁶⁶ I am indebted to Teresa Robertson for this suggestion.

Second, if faith involves probability estimates higher than the evidence warrants then faith seems, to me, to be decidedly unreasonable. Again, perhaps faith *is* irrational, but why characterize an attitude from the outset in such a way that makes it irrational? Is it always irrational to have faith that a friend will recover from a horrible illness?

However, I don't think the real problem with Radcliffe's analysis depends on probability estimates. The analysis can be conceived without mention of probability. Or, it could be construed as a type of conviction: beliefs held more firmly than the evidence warrants. The real problem with his analysis is that it ignores the positive element of faith not found in belief. For instance, can I have faith that the sun will rise tomorrow? If I can it is clearly called faith, not because of anything to do with belief, but because of the positive evaluation I place on that state of affairs.

3.3 The Adequacy of Nodoxastic Faith for Religious Commitment

While I think one of the most fascinating aspects of Audi's nondoxastic faith is its demarcation of an attitude people decidedly have from time to time (i.e. "secular" faith), its real import is the implications it has for religious commitment. Before turning to that, however, it is important to ask whether or not a nondoxastic conception of faith is adequate to "do the work," so to speak, of "faith" in religious commitment. Essentially, it is a question of whether or not nondoxastic faith can serve as a guiding force in the life of a religious individual. To that end, Radcliffe argues it cannot. In what follows, I address Radcliffe's criticism and explore how Audi thinks nondoxastic faith operates in the religious life.

Audi is keenly aware of the question, and writes, "how, it may be asked, can I

center my life on a view not even really believed? The question is worrisome.”⁶⁷ In anticipation of such a question, he notes two points:

First, religious behavior can flow from nondoxastic faith just as it can from belief: a cognitively projected conception of the world can structure one's behavior in essentially the same way that a flatly accepted conception can. This is in part because—and here is a second point by way of reply—a kind of conviction is quite possible without belief: One can, for instance, grant that one does not know or flatly believe that God exists, and that only one's faith is justified, without lacking a sense of surety, even a kind of certitude, about many aspects of God. For instance, regarding God's sovereignty over life and death, one might have an attitude of certitude about the appropriateness of conceiving human life under the aspect of divine governance. The existential propositions about God are objects of rational faith and not of belief; but normative propositions about God and many concerning how life should be lived in a world under God are believed, and may be strongly believed. Even if one's theistic picture of the world is expressed by a fiduciary projection, and not by a set of believed propositions, one may unqualifiedly and rationally believe that the world so conceived, and human life conducted in accord with that conception, are good.⁶⁸

The question: can nondoxastic faith produce religious behavior? Radcliffe argues that looking at Audi's claim closely, the behavior flows not from nondoxastic faith, but from belief. He writes that the "confidence which motivated religious behavior in this case derives, not from one's nondoxastic propositional *faith*, but from one's normative beliefs about the value of employing a given religious conception in thinking (nondoxastically) about the world. That is, the *conviction* which leads to actions prescribed by the religious conception does *not* flow from one's propositional *faith*, as Audi contends.”⁶⁹

But notice there is a problem with Radcliffe's claim. Non-theists may also hold normative beliefs about God. For instance, an agnostic might very well believe that *if* God existed it would be appropriate to do the sorts of things religious individuals do. However, we do not expect the normative beliefs held by non-theists to produce religious

⁶⁷ Audi, 1992, p82

⁶⁸ Audi, 1992, p82

⁶⁹ Radcliffe, 1995, p79

behavior. The reason is that their conception of the world is non-theistic. Obviously a positive attitude regarding God's existence (e.g. belief, faith, acceptance, etc.; or perhaps whatever results from a Pascalian wager) is required for religious behavior.

Furthermore, it seems clear to me that a projected picture of reality can affect behavior in the same way that a definitively believed picture of reality can. This is essentially what happens in the case of Alston's acceptance. It is what happens in the case of theoretical or practical reasoning. Consider, for example, a scientist who postulates some hypothesis and then acts upon it. The scientist need not, and probably does not, believe the hypothesized picture of reality is true; yet behavior can flow from this projection. It seems to me that there is no reason to accept Radcliffe's criticism: a fiducial projection of reality *can* affect behavior just as other nondoxastic attitudes do.

3.4 Trust

In this section I give a brief analysis of trust. I do this, in part, because Audi refers to his nondoxastic faith as *fiducial*—of or relating to trust—faith. To understand Audi's reasons for associating nondoxastic faith with trust it will be helpful to understand trust itself. I also provide this short analysis because, historically, it has often been recognized that faith is deeply intertwined with trust.

The first thing to note about trust is that it is, by its very nature, risky. When someone trusts they run the risk that the one they trust will fail to do that which they are entrusted to do. Thus, trust involves a venture: an action where the outcome is largely beyond the ability of the subject, or the one who trusts, to control. Classic examples of trust are one's trust in a bank to protect one's money, or trusting strangers on the street not to do you bodily harm. In both cases the outcomes (the safety of your money and

your body, respectively) are, in large part, beyond the control of the one who trusts.

The two examples illustrate a further point about trust: the subject trusts some agent or entity. Trust is interpersonal. Even trust in an impersonal bank, say, is best understood in terms of interpersonal relations. By and large, however, we trust *people*. Furthermore, we typically trust people to *do* something.⁷⁰ We trust our friends to tell us the truth, we trust the government to look after our well-being, and we trust our babysitters to diligently watch our children.

An important question in considerations of trust is when, if ever, is it rational? It is a difficult question because trust, being *inherently* risky, appears to also be inherently irrational. For instance, epistemic reasons *to* trust appear to diminish the trust itself: if I have good epistemic reasons to believe that someone is telling me the truth, then it seems I no longer need to *trust* that person to tell me the truth. Furthermore, even if trust can be rational, it seems virtually impossible for *all* the trusting we do to be rational. Nearly every human activity involves a level of trust (from hiring a plumber, to driving a car), and it would be impossible to ensure that we had epistemic reasons for all of our trust.⁷¹

For this reason, questions about rational, or *warranted*, trust are not always framed in epistemic (or “truth-directed”) language. For example, some philosophers⁷² have argued that the rationality of trust should be understood as “end-directed.” For instance, perhaps I do not have epistemic reasons to trust my wife, but doing so might serve some end (i.e. the promotion of a healthy relationship). This is to say that trust has

⁷⁰ Interestingly, the risk of trust seems to entail a *hope* that the one trusted will do what she is trusted to do.

⁷¹ One question I do not address, but nonetheless find intriguing, is to what extent are these attitudes (i.e. trust, hope, and faith) *necessary* for living a fulfilling and meaningful life?

⁷² See Baker, J., 1987. “Trust and Rationality,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 68:1-13; and de Sousa, R., 1987. *The Rationality of Emotion*, Cambridge: MIT Press.

some *value*, be it cooperation, autonomy, or even knowledge.⁷³

Trust is particularly relevant to Audi's view in that trust requires a certain conception of the world. For instance, in order for me to trust strangers in a crowded subway I must see the world, and people in general, as trustworthy. My perception of reality must be one in which strangers on crowded subways do not generally harm each other. Furthermore, that picture of the world need not be definitely held, but only projected (for instance, on an "end-directed" view of trust). Victims of trauma, for instance rape, no longer see the world as a safe and caring place. They can no longer trust because they no longer hold, or are capable of adopting, a particular view of the world. I think this talk of projection—generally an unjustified one—is one of the reasons why trust and faith are so intertwined. It also helps to explain how people come to "lose" their faith. Victims of trauma might no longer be able to project a picture of reality as watched over by a benevolent God. They have lost their faith; they have lost their trust.

Finally, like belief and hope, trust is not something we can generally will ourselves to have. For instance, Annette Baier writes, "'Trust me!' is for most of us an invitation which we cannot accept at will—either we do already trust the one who says it, in which case it serves at best as reassurance, or it is properly responded with, 'Why should and how can I, until I have cause to?'"⁷⁴ I can no more will myself to trust a dangerous-looking stranger than I can will myself to believe that he is harmless. Like belief, trust can be nurtured and brought about indirectly, particularly by addressing the

⁷³ Philosophers have noted that much of our knowledge is derived from testimony, where we *trust* the person giving the testimony. Furthermore, it may be that internalist epistemologies require us to trust *ourselves* to evaluate correctly. See Lehrer, K., 1997. *Self-Trust: A Study of Reason, Knowledge, and Autonomy*, New York: Oxford University Press.

⁷⁴ Baier, A.C., 1986. "Trust and Antitrust," *Ethics*, 96: 231-260; p244.

trustworthiness of the one to be trusted.

3.5 Nondoxastic Voluntarism

Many of the attitudes discussed thus far are largely involuntary. What about fiducial faith then? Can Audi's view explain how faith can be meritorious—something which views involving belief and hope are hard pressed to do? Audi writes,

There is also a respect in which it heightens the volitional dimension. If you take your grounds for a view to be conclusive, you normally have no choice but accept it; if, on the other hand, you embrace a faith (partly) on the basis of indications you believe significant but far from conclusive, you may rationally choose to take some cognitive risk, hoping for further confirmation and allowing the faith to nurture the hope, while the hope—leading to an openminded search—may reinforce the faith. In this sense, faith that is aware of its own risks, and is nurtured by a steadfast religious devotion, can express a kind of religious commitment not possible for those to whom religious truths are obvious.⁷⁵

I think this is partly because the idea of a “projection” requires some activity on the part of the subject. It involves an active commitment to see the world in a particular way.

Note that it might not be the result of a *particular* choice (as in the case of acceptance), but like acceptance, it involves a somewhat voluntary commitment to a certain attitude. I say somewhat because it's not clear that faith is entirely free (for instance, there are people who, no matter how they try, cannot have faith that God exists). Yet, the taking of risk and the fiduciary projection require some (free) activity on the part of the one who has faith.

3.6 Reasonable Nondoxastic Faith

In this section I examine whether the standards of rationality for fiducial faith and belief are different. Could, for instance, fiducial faith that God exists be rational even if belief that God exists is not? Nowhere does Audi give the necessary conditions for

⁷⁵ Audi 1991 p229.

rational (fiducial) faith. I think this is because, in part, doing so would also require establishing grounds for rational belief, a task he is not concerned with here.⁷⁶ Similarly, I do not think my project requires I lay out necessary conditions for reasonable faith. It will be enough if it can be shown that the standards for rational faith are less than those for rational belief (*whatever* those are). To that end I want to briefly look at several of the comments Audi makes on the topic.

Since we are concerned with questions of rationality, Audi first points out that we ought to note the differences between rationality and justification. Skeptical influences, he claims, tend to make us conflate the two. They are not the same, however, and it is possible that even if religious faith (or belief) is not justified, it very well may be rational. It is important, then, to note their differences.

For one, rationality is the more global concept. It is the broader term; one can be rational in an overall way without reference to a particular attitude. Justification, on the other hand, pertains to specific attitudes. A person cannot be justified, strictly speaking, but they can be justified in having a particular attitude. A justified belief, for instance, rests on the grounds that tend to give us knowledge. Whereas a rational belief is grounded in that which, in some sense, makes up a rational person.

There is also a difference, pertaining to rationality and justification, in the relationship between their source and their role in discourse. Audi writes, "rationality is more a matter of minimal permissibility, justification more a matter of a kind of ground specifically connected with what we tend to conceive as the basic truth-conducive sources, above all perception, introspection, memorial impressions, and conceptual

⁷⁶ I think it is also because, in part, nowhere does he give the necessary conditions *for* faith.

reflection."⁷⁷ That is to say, when we *justify* our attitudes we cite and point to particular sources of justification. However, this is not the case for rationality.⁷⁸

Audi sums up the difference between rationality and justification nicely, writing,

As compared with justification, rationality is more readily achieved by a cognitive outlook satisfactory by one's own lights, though some intersubjective standards, such as consistency, are clearly relevant; justification is more a matter of meeting a minimal intersubjective standard, including an appropriate cognitive grounding in the basic truth-conducive sources.⁷⁹ If my beliefs are mutually consistent and not obviously disconfirmed in my own experience, this yields a presumption in favor of their rationality, even if I have no grounds that would constitute a justification of them; but it does not yield a presumption, or at least not as strong a presumption, of their justification.⁸⁰

As I mentioned, Audi never explicitly says why faith requires less than belief to be rational. He does write "other things being equal, the greater the confidence embodied in a cognitive attitude toward a proposition, the more is required for the rationality or justification of a person's holding that attitude."⁸¹ Fiducial faith represents one way that the world *might* be. Beliefs, on the other hand, purport to describe what is actually the case. As such, we hold beliefs to a higher standard.

Finally, Audi writes,

Rational faith implies that one may not have good reasons for believing an obviously incompatible proposition—unless those counterreasons [*sic*] are ultimately defeated—but rational faith still requires a lesser degree of positive grounding than does rational belief. Rational faith is epistemically less at risk⁸², in the sense that it is less easily

⁷⁷ Audi, 1992, p65

⁷⁸ We do talk about "rationalizing" beliefs, but this is typically synonymous with justifying beliefs.

⁷⁹ In an interesting passage (Audi, 1991), Audi uses this distinction between rationality and justification to differentiate between two ways of reconciling faith and reason. The first, the internal, is analogous to rationality. The second, the external, is analogous to justification.

⁸⁰ Audi, 1991, p221

⁸¹ Audi, 1996, p98

⁸² Audi also writes that faith is an attitude that "is not simply a *response to evidence*, where that is taken to be above all formation of a cognitive attitude having a content and strength appropriate

defeated, than rational belief. This point should not be exaggerated, however: the rationality of faith is still vulnerable to undermining evidence and typically implies an openness to dealing in some way with purported counterevidence. This openness and its often attendant sense of the possibility of error, is in part why having faith is sometimes associated with taking a risk."⁸³

This is one of the more important implications of nondoxastic faith. Even if religious beliefs are irrational/unjustified, it still may be the case that religious faith is rational/justified. It may turn out that religious belief is ultimately irrational. What nondoxastic approaches to faith demonstrate, however, is that this does not imply that religious *faith* is irrational. This is particularly important for individuals concerned about the rationality of their faith: a nondoxastic approach may offer a suitable replacement for belief.

to the nature and amount of evidence in question" (2008, p94). This surely explains why faith is compatible with more doubt than belief and also why faith is less epistemically at risk than belief.

⁸³ Audi 1991 p219

Conclusion

The chief concern of my project has been to show that faith can be nondoxastic. Hope, acceptance, and trust are all attitudes that can serve as a basis for faith (be it sacred or secular), and all, for the most part, are nondoxastic attitudes. Furthermore, I considered, in detail, Robert Audi's proposal that faith *itself* can be a nondoxastic attitude. I have suggested (in considering favorably the arguments put forth by Audi) that this "fiducial" faith is a particularly useful approach to faith. It provides us with a rough and ready account of secular faith, and provides an intriguing approach to religious faith.

My project has also provided a broad survey of nondoxastic attitudes in general (from hope and acceptance, to wishing, assuming, and doubting). These attitudes are an inexorable part of our cognitive lives, though we tend to focus on belief.

In conclusion, I have shown that nondoxastic approaches to faith are not only viable, but also offer important advantages over doxastic approaches.⁸⁴ For one, a nondoxastic approach to faith eases the tension between faith and merit. The cognitive commitment required for nondoxastic faith heightens the volitional aspect of faith. Thus, nondoxastic faith can be meritorious in ways that doxastic faith seemingly cannot. One question that remains is the exact extent to which nondoxastic faith is voluntary.

Another benefit of a nondoxastic approach is its epistemic dimension. The tension between faith and reason is lessened in nondoxastic faith. It is possible for nondoxastic attitudes to be rational, even if their doxastic counterparts are not. Hope that a friend will recover from a serious illness is generally rational, even if such a belief

⁸⁴ While conceding there are disadvantages as well.

might not be. More importantly, religious nondoxastic faith may be rational even if religious belief is not.

Finally, an important benefit of fiducial faith (over hope and acceptance) is that it captures an important attitudinal component of faith. Faith is an evaluative attitude. It entails a positive outlook towards the object of faith. People who have faith that God exists, or even faith that a friend will recover from illness, place some value on these things. Other approaches fail to capture this important point of faith.

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