Thinking and being sure

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1 Asserting and inquiring

\(A_S\) Assert that \(p\) only if you are sure that \(p\).

\(A_K\) Assert that \(p\) only if you know that \(p\).

\(S_K\) Be sure that \(p\) only if you know that \(p\).

- If there is a norm “\(\phi\) only if you are \(F\)”, and being \(G\) is necessary for being \(F\), then there’s a \textit{descriptively parasitic} norm “\(\phi\) only if you are \(G\)”. Williamson: \(A_K\) is basic; \(A_S\) is descriptively parasitic on it.

Us: \(A_S\) and \(S_K\) are basic; \(A_K\) is normatively parasitic on them.

\(I_S\) Don’t inquire into whether \(p\) if you are sure that \(p\).

\(I_K\) ?? Don’t inquire into whether \(p\) if you know that \(p\).

Williamson can’t say that \(I_S\) is normatively parasitic on \(I_K\) and \(S_K\), given his objection to \(A_K\) being normatively parasitic on \(A_S\) and \(S_K\).

2 Knowing without being sure

- Unconfident examinees know but aren’t sure.

- You can perceive that \(p\) without being sure that \(p\).

- “I know, but I’m not sure” sounds worse than “She knows, but she’s not sure”. (Stanley)

- Such cases support us over Williamson: reason to reject \(I_K\).

\(U_S\) Don’t be unsure whether \(p\) if you are sure that \(p\).

Friedman(?), Us(?): \(U_S\) is descriptively parasitic on \(I_S\).

3 Thinking and guessing

- “What made you sure \(p\) was the right answer?” “I wasn’t sure, but I had to answer something.”

- “What made you think \(p\) was the right answer?” #“I didn’t think it was, but it was my best guess.” (compare: “I didn’t think it was; I just wrote something down.”)

\(G_T\) Answer \(p\) iff you think that \(p\) is the right answer.

4 Thinking and deciding

- “What made you sure \(\phi\) was the thing to do?” “I wasn’t sure, but I had to do something.”

- “What made you think \(\phi\) was the thing to do?” #“I didn’t think it was, but I had to do something.”

\(D_T\) Decide to \(\phi\) iff you think you should \(\phi\).

- What about Buridan’s ass?
  - magical/(response-dependent?) “should”
  - rational dilemmas
  - picking vs choosing

5 The myth of full belief

- “believe that” and “think that” mean the same thing in English (Hawthorne, Rothschild, Spectre)

- No internal state necessary for knowledge is subject to a knowledge norm (Goodman unpublished); no level of confidence not entailed by being sure entails thinking (Holguín unpublished)

- All the good norms are already taken; what’s the point of something intermediate between thinking and being sure?

- There is no level of confidence that implies being sure and that is implied by thinking.
References


Ben Holguin. Thinking, guessing and believing. unpublished.

