WHY RESPONSIBLE BELIEF IS BLAMELESS BELIEF

Anthony Booth & Rik Peels (Utrecht University, The Netherlands)

Abstract

According to proponents of doxastic deontologism, what is responsible belief? In this paper, we consider two proposals. Firstly, that responsible belief is blameless belief (a position we call DDB) and, secondly, that responsible belief is praiseworthy belief (a position we call DDP). We begin by offering some considerations in favour of DDB over DDP and then show that recent arguments in favour of DDP (offered mostly by Weatherson 2008) do not go through. We thus conclude that the deontologist should maintain that doxastic responsibility is a concept about freedom from appropriate blame.

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I. Introduction

Let Doxastic Deontologism (DD) be the following thesis:

DD: *S* is justified in believing that *p* iff *S* believes that *p* responsibly.

The idea behind DD is that we are under certain doxastic obligations (prohibitions, permissions) and that we should understand the justification of belief in terms of our compliance with them. If we do comply with them, we believe responsibly.

But what is it to believe responsibly? That is a superlatively difficult question. But let us consider a couple of conflicting proposals that have been put forward in the literature, in order to (at least, partially) elucidate the concept of responsible belief. Let us formulate the thesis that responsible belief should be cashed out in terms of praiseworthiness, the thesis of Doxastic Deontologism as Praiseworthiness (DDP), as follows:

DDP: *S* responsibly believes that *p* iff *S* is praiseworthy for believing that *p*.

And let us distinguish DDP from the more standard deontological view of doxastic responsibility, which is cashed out in terms of blamelessness, a view we might dub Doxastic Deontologism as Blamelessness (DDB):

DDB: *S* responsibly believes that *p* iff *S* is blameless for believing that *p*.

In this paper, we argue that if DD is true, then DDB (rather than DDP) is true, i.e. that doxastic deontologism should be formulated in terms of blamelessness and not praiseworthiness. We also attempt to refute some arguments in favour of construing DD

in terms of praiseworthiness, mainly those proposed (or at least inspired) by Brian Weatherson's recent article "Deontology and Descartes' Demon"[1].

Throughout this paper, we will assume with Weatherson that DDP and DDB are mutually exclusive. Let us briefly explain why. It seems that if one is praiseworthy for believing that *p*, then one is also blameless for believing that *p*, but that if one is blameless for believing that *p*, one is not thereby praiseworthy for believing that *p*. That is, in certain circumstances one is responsible[2] for holding some belief *B*, while being neither blameworthy nor praiseworthy for holding *B*. DDB has it that in those circumstances we believe *responsibly*, whereas DDP has it that in such circumstances we do *not* believe responsibly. The views do not only contradict each other, they also seem to be the only games in town. Any other option, such as the view that responsible belief is blameworthy belief, seems absurd.

This paper is organized as follows. In section II, we put forward two considerations that favour DDB over DDP: first, that if the doxastic domain is relevantly analogous to the domain of action, DDB is more plausible than DDP, and, second, that the highly plausible view of epistemic conservatism fits DDB much better than DDP. In

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[1] Brian Weatherson, "Deontology and Descartes' Demon," *The Journal of Philosophy* 105.9 (September 2008), 540-69. Page references will be to this article, unless indicated otherwise. Unfortunately, nowhere in his article, Weatherson gives a precise formulation of the view he advocates, but DDP seems to be a correct representation of his main thesis. Here are some important formulations of his view: "justification is a kind of praiseworthiness, and (…) praise is more relevant to epistemic concepts than blame" (p. 540); "justification is a kind of praiseworthiness, not a kind of blamelessness" (p. 453); and "a belief's being justified is not a matter of it being blameless, but a matter of it being in a certain way praiseworthy" (p. 569).

[2] Notice that the phenomenon of being *responsible for φ-ing* should not be confused with that of *φ-ing responsibly*. The former merely implies that one is accountable, that is, the proper subject of reactive attitudes, for *φ-ing*, whereas the latter also implies that one is not blameworthy (and, hence, either merely blameless or also praiseworthy).

sections III – V, we discuss three arguments that might be thought to count in favour of DDP. In section III we respond to the idea that DDP enables us to deal with the familiar problem generated from the fact that doxastic attitudes are, at least generally, *not* under our direct voluntary control. In section IV we discuss the claim that DDP is necessary to account for all our intuitions in the New Evil Demon case. And in section V we consider an argument to the effect that DDB, in conjunction with three principles a doxastic deontologist is bound to accept, leads to a contradiction. We attribute the arguments in sections IV and V to Weatherson, but since it is unclear whether Weatherson countenances the consideration put forward in section III, we take it as being merely inspired by some of what he says on the matter. We show that none of these arguments stand up to scrutiny.

II. Two Considerations In Favour of the Standard View

To kick off the discussion, let us consider why deontological doxastic justification is normally interpreted in terms of blamelessness. We think this is because DD is mainly considered to be a thesis about doxastic *permissibility*. As such, it is an "innocent till proven guilty" view, in the sense that one believes responsibly just in case, as it were, one does not break the doxastic law (that is, does not violate a doxastic obligation). Thus, if a belief that *p* is permissible, it is justified (since it is responsible). As John Pollock puts it:

> When we ask whether a belief is justified, what we want to know is whether it is all right to believe it. Justification is a matter of "epistemic permissibility".[3]

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[3] J. Pollock "Epistemic Norms," *Synthese* 71.1 (1987), 61.

If DD is best conceived in such a way, then it stands to reason that it would be a thesis about blameworthiness and not praiseworthiness, since only the former concept can adequately capture what it is wrong to believe (the latter tells us what it is good to believe). But why think that DD is about *permissibility*? It is most unclear why many prominent doxastic deontologists think it is and it is hard to think of any plausible argument in favour of this idea. In what follows, we will, therefore, provide two considerations that count in favour of DDB independently of whether responsible belief is a matter of doxastic permissibility.

First, one might think that one's accounts of responsibility for action and responsibility for belief should be structurally similar, unless we have good reason to think that there are important differences between responsibility for action and responsibility for belief. But to act responsibly is clearly *not* to perform a praiseworthy action. Imagine Max, a teacher, who is not particularly enthusiastic about his job, nevertheless decides to meet all his professional duties by preparing and teaching his classes, correcting the students' exams, and so forth. And imagine also that Max decides not to do anything that, as a teacher, he is not required to do. Thus, he corrects the exams within the required period, but not as quickly as he can, he prepares his classes sufficiently, but not as thoroughly as he could, etc. It seems that in doing all this, Max acts responsibly, although there is nothing particularly praiseworthy about what he does. But if this is correct, then why should we think that things are different in the doxastic domain? Of course, there are important dissimilarities between the two domains; for instance, in opposition to action, belief is widely thought not to be under our direct

voluntary control. But how do these differences affect the way in which we are responsible for our actions and beliefs? How does it follow from the differences between action and belief that to believe responsibly is to be praiseworthy for one's belief? As far as we know, no such argument has been offered in the literature and we cannot think of any either.[4]

A second consideration in favour of DDB over DDP is that it accords with epistemic conservatism (EC) much better than DDP. EC is, roughly, the view that so long as S's belief that p is undefeated, S is entitled to believe (or justified in believing) that p. A bit more precisely, the point is that if EC and DD are true, then DDB seems much more likely to be true than DDP. This is simply because if it is possible to have a justified belief only on the grounds that it is undefeated, then praiseworthiness cannot be a necessary condition for believing responsibly, since (under DD) one is justified just in case one believes responsibly, and one is not worthy of praise simply for having an undefeated belief. However, one may well be blameless for having an un-praiseworthy belief, and if one can responsibly believe that p just by being blameless, and thus (under DD) be justified in believing that p, one can also be justified in believing that p merely on the grounds that the belief has not been defeated. Thus, DDB (unlike DDP) is perfectly consistent with EC, so if EC is true and DD is true, then DDB is also true, again, assuming that one of DDB and DDP is true if DD is.

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[4] Perhaps there is a way in which the doxastic voluntarism problem bears on this issue. In section III, we consider one argument that is related to the topic of doxastic involuntarism and that might be thought to count in favour of DDP over DDB.

As Kevin McCain rightly argues in a recent paper[5], EC has many virtues, virtues which transfer to DDB in virtue of the proximity of EC and DDB. Certainly, they are advantages that DDP, in its inconsistency with EC, must find another way to appropriate and it is most unclear how it might do so. EC's main appeal, according to McCain, is that it allows us to respond to the skeptical challenge found in Descartes' *Meditations*.[6] The challenge is that, since we have no *better* reason to believe that there is an external world than to believe that we live in a world in which an Evil Demon systematically cons us into thinking that there is, we should not believe that there is an external world. The conservatives' response is to deny the implicit premise that if one's reasons for believing that *p* are no better that one's reasons for believing that not-*p,* then we are not justified in believing that *p.* So, given that we believe that there is an external world, we are justified in so doing until our belief is defeated. The thought behind conservativism is that, in view of the threat from scepticism, we had better set the standards for what counts as a justified belief as low as possible. It is natural to suppose that DDB is more faithful to that thought than is DDP.

These two considerations do not *demonstrate* or *show* that DDB is true, but they clearly count in its favour. This means that we should accept DDB, unless there are good reasons for accepting DDP that trump or balance the arguments in favour of DDB. We

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[5] Cf. Kevin McCain, "The Virtues of Epistemic Conservatism," *Synthese* 164.2 (2008), 185-200.

[6] The other virtues McCain attributes to EC are that it can deal with the intuition that when we are revising our beliefs we need to do so in a piecemeal fashion - we cannot revise all of our beliefs at once; it explains why our spontaneously formed memory beliefs are justified, even if we have no independent evidence for them; it can accommodate the thought that a belief based on good evidence may still be justified even if *S* has forgotten what that evidence is; and it can deal with Stewart Cohen's famous "problem of easy knowledge"; see, for instance, his "Why Basic Knowledge Is Easy Knowledge," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 70.2 (2005), 417-30.

now turn to discuss three putative advantages of DDP over DDB, arguing that they do not stand up to scrutiny.

III. Praiseworthiness and Control

Let us first deal with the idea that DDP can handle the voluntarism problem for deontologism. The problem is that it seems that, since we do not have voluntary control over our beliefs, and 'ought' implies 'can', we cannot be said to have doxastic responsibility. However, it might be true that praiseworthiness 'outruns' voluntary control, such that DDP solves the voluntarism problem. Consider Weatherson's example of a Cricket captain, who comes up with a particularly imaginative field placing in the course of a test match. While we may want to praise the captain here, we do so despite thinking that what he did was not something he had control over. After all, claims Weatherson, coming up with the particular field placement is hardly something the captain can set out to do. And we deem this Cricket captain more praiseworthy than his colleague, who works equally hard, but who does not come up with such an imaginative field placement. So if we can justly attribute praise to S for φ-ing, irrespectively of whether or not φ-ing is something S has voluntary control over, then DDP is immune from the voluntarism problem, since the claim is that deontological doxastic judgements – that is, judgments about some person S's doxastic attitude A that imply one's holding S responsible for having or maintaining A – are solely about praise. However, for at least three reasons we do not think this appeal to praiseworthiness helps deontologism with respect to the voluntarism problem.

1. First, in order for the reply to go through we need to take being imaginative to be analogous to being in belief states, such that we have no *direct* voluntary control over either. However, we do seem to have *indirect* voluntary control over our doxastic attitudes, and probably over our acts of imagination too. We can train ourselves to be more critical of things like gossip and the word of self-bequeathed authorities, for example; we might also train ourselves to be more imaginative: perhaps by engaging with imaginative people and their work, or by simply trying to conceive of imaginative solutions to everyday problems (even if one does not act on them), for instance. According to Alston, the fact that deontologism needs to be 'grounded' on our indirect control means that it has to be a thesis about blamelessness. This is because, as Weatherson himself notes, in such a formulation what we are responsible for are not particular doxastic tokens, but rather certain actions such as training oneself to be less credulous. But of course, as Alston continues and Weatherson does not, this does not mean that we cannot be held to *blame* for having particular doxastic tokens. This is because blame supervenes on requirement in two ways, as Alston puts it:

> First, and most simply, one is to blame for failing to do something required. But second, one is to blame for the obtaining of some fact if that fact would not have obtained if one had not behaved in some manner for which one is to blame in the first sense, that is, for doing something forbidden or failing to do something required.[7]

Of course, the same can be said for praise here that can be said for blame, so we need not take this point as telling us anything that will settle the question of whether we are to

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[7] William P. Alston, *Epistemic Justification: Essays in the Theory of Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 140.

construe deontological doxastic justification in terms of praise or blame. What is important, however, is that we can talk of praise or blame for particular doxastic tokens without needing to 'outrun' voluntary control, since we can base such judgements on the indirect doxastic (or imaginative) control we do have. So our first worry with this argument in favour of DDP is that it provides a solution to a problem that already has an equally plausible solution. And only if Weatherson's solution is more convincing than this one, can Weatherson's account of our praising the captain for his imaginative field placement count in favour of DDP.

Once we bring the notion of indirect voluntary control into play here, we can see the example which Weatherson offers in quite a different way than he does. Certainly, we can now wonder whether the praise we are inclined to ascribe to the Cricket captain is not in fact due to his capability to train his imagination, his capability to train himself to use its results, and/or his capability to engage in the matter at all. It might also be the case that our attributions of praise when it comes to the imagination are partly a function of our thinking that the act of imagination in question yields a particular result or arrives at a propitious moment - would we still praise the Cricket captain if his field-placing involves a strong element of risk in a tight, tense game when one needs to eliminate risk as much as possible, for instance? The ability to engage one's imagination at appropriate times may well be something we do have at least indirect control over. The point is that our attribution of praise when it comes to the imagination may be over-determined by a variety of factors, many of which seem to involve, at least indirect, voluntary control.

2. Second, there seem to be two different kinds of praise. On the one hand, we can praise some person S for φ-ing (where S's φ-ing is to include both S's actions and S's

being in certain states), if we want to express the fact that S's φ-ing is something we value or consider good, without holding S responsible for φ-ing. In this sense, I might praise Miranda for her beauty, without holding her responsible for it, and I may praise my recently bought Chevrolet for its speed. This sort of praise, if that is really what it is, ought to be clearly distinguished from the kind of praise usually classified as what Peter Strawson calls a 'participant reactive attitude',[8] an attitude that entails that we hold the person in question responsible. In cases in which we ascribe praise to someone in this sense of the word, we could *in principle* also blame or resent or pity or display another participant reactive attitude toward S for φ-ing.

Now, if the imaginative Cricket captain did not exercise his capacity to train his imagination, but nonetheless happens to come up with imaginative field placements, we would praise him, so it seems, only in the former sense of the word. But this sense has nothing to do with responsibility: we just value the captain's imaginative field placements and admire him because of that, without holding him responsible for it (we do not blame the captain who has done everything he could for not having any imaginative field placements). But this means that this example is irrelevant to the issue of how we should understand responsible belief.

3. Third and finally, if, contrary to what we have suggested, the captain is praiseworthy in a deontological sense for his imaginative field placements, without having any kind of voluntary control over them, why would we think that all responsible believing is like the imaginative acts of a Cricket captain? Surely, if praiseworthy beliefs are of that sort, then they provide a poor model for deontological doxastic justification.

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[8] See Peter F. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," in *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays* (London: Methuen & Co: 1974), 1-25.

Under that understanding of doxastic justification, the standards of justification would be too high and the cost could well be skepticism, since we would then only be justified for very few of our beliefs.

IV. Deontological Intuitions and Demonial Deception

In his article, Weatherson discusses the so-called New Evil Demon (NED) problem, not in order to solve it, but as a means to show that the deontological intuitions that a play a role in New Evil Demon scenarios favour DDP over DDB. The NED problem is usually presented as a problem for reliabilist theories of doxastic justification. The thought is that I am equally justified in my beliefs as my doxastic counterpart (who has exactly the same beliefs as I do, the same memories, the same intuitions and is disposed to reason as I do) even though, unlike me, he happens to live in a world governed by an Evil Demon who systematically deceives him, and so, for a large part, happens to have no false beliefs. Consider Jim Pryor's way of thinking about the problem. Assume that there are three victims of equal demonial deception *A*, *B*, and *C*. Victim *A* frequently uses faulty reasoning procedures to arrive at her beliefs, and if she were a little more careful she could easily see that they are faulty. Victim *B* also often uses faulty procedures to arrive at her beliefs, but the faults in the procedures are the product of bad upbringing and the mistakes are so subtle that we cannot reasonably expect *B* to notice them. Victim *C* hardly ever uses faulty procedures to arrive at her beliefs; in fact she displays the

paradigm of good reasoning, but still has mostly false beliefs because she is the victim of devilish deception.[9]

Following Pryor, Weatherson claims that the notion of blameworthiness cannot capture the intuition that *C* is epistemically better than *B*. If both are blameless, then both are equally justified according to DDB. Weatherson's solution to Pryor's version of the New Evil Demon problem is to claim that none of the victims are justified, but that that does not preclude us from attributing praise, and in this way we can accommodate for all the intuitions playing a role in this scenario. Let us explain. According to Weatherson, *A*, *B*, and *C* are all bad *evidence collectors*: their evidence is misleading evidence. Therefore, the beliefs of all these three victims are unjustified. However, there is still an important distinction to be made between *A* and *B* on the one hand and *C* on the other, viz. that only *C* is a good *evidence processor*: she processes her evidential input excellently. Thus, *C* is epistemically praiseworthy in a way that *A* and *B* are not. Thus, according to Weatherson, the attribution of praise helps us make sense of the difference between *B* and *C*, since we can say that *C* is epistemically praiseworthy (though unjustified) in having the beliefs that she does in a way that *B* is not.[10]

In response to this argument, we should first notice that Weatherson departs from his original understanding of doxastic justification in terms of praiseworthiness as expressed in DDP (in conjunction with DD). It now seems that one is justified only if one's evidence is not misleading and whether one's evidence is misleading need not be

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[9] Cf. James Pryor, "Highlights of Recent Epistemology," *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 52.1 (2001), 95-124, here 117.

[10] Similarly, Weatherson argues that a person who displays the virtue of cosmopolitanism is praiseworthy in a way that someone who rather, albeit blamelessly, displays the vice of patriotism is not (cf. p. 566).

up to oneself. On this alternative understanding of DDP, justification cannot be understood in deontological terms only. This means that, strictly speaking, we have to revise DDP and DDB as follows:

DDP*: *S* responsibly (justifiedly) believes that *p only if S* is praiseworthy for believing that *p*,

and, presumably,

DDB*:*S* responsibly (justifiedly) believes that *p only if S* is blameless for believing that *p*.

However, since all of our criticisms in this paper are directed against the view that praiseworthiness for believing that *p* is a *necessary* condition for responsibly believing that *p*, we can continue to work with DDP and DDB.

Now, what about the difference between victims *A* and *B*? It seems impossible to articulate the difference between them if we only have the concept of praiseworthiness at hand, since neither is worthy of praise. Yet, there is a difference between them, namely that *B* is blameless while *A* is not. So in order to make sense of all the intuitions in this scenario, deontology must be not merely about praise, it has to be about blame too. And now the question is how we determine when someone is a 'good' doxastic agent, 'good' such that it is necessary for doxastic justification. We can either draw the boundary, between what counts as a good doxastic agent and what does not, high or low, i.e. we can

say that only a praiseworthy doxastic agent is a good one, or we can say that a doxastic agent need only be blameless to qualify as 'good'. Either way, we will not be able to accommodate all the intuitions in the sceptical scenario above. So the ability to meet that constraint cannot help us decide between DDP and DDB. So then we may as well bring other considerations to bear, such as the virtues of epistemic conservatism, that will adjudicate on DDB's favour. Further, since we have to leave an intuition unaccounted for whatever way we take deontologism, then this is also problematic for Weatherson's overall solution to the NED problem. For what is left that is advantageous of taking his solution?[11]

V. A Contradiction from DDB?

Let us now to a third and final consideration in favour of DDP, as it is formulated by Weatherson. Here, the idea is that the conjunction of DDB (in contradistinction from DDP), DD, and the plausible premises

A$_1$: It is possible for S to have a justified but false belief that her belief that p is justified. (p. 567)

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[11] Recall that Weatherson's motivation for it is that "[a] fairly common response is to note that even according to externalist epistemology there will be some favourable property that the victim's beliefs have, and this can explain the intuition that there is something epistemically praiseworthy about the victim's beliefs. My approach is a version of this, one that is invulnerable to recent criticisms of the move." (p. 564)

A_2: If S blamelessly believes that she is justified in believing that p, and on the basis of that belief comes to believe that p^{12}, then she is blameless in believing that p. (p. 568)

leads to the following contradiction:

(1) S justifiedly, but falsely, believes that she is justified in believing that p. (A_1).

(2)   On the basis of this belief, S comes to believe that p. (Assumption).

(3) S blamelessly believes that she is justified in believing that p. (1, J=B [DDB])

(4) S blamelessly believes that p. (2, 3, A_2)

(5) S is justified in believing that p. (4, J=B [DDB])

(6)   It is false that S is justified in believing that p. (1) (pp. 568-69).

Given that (1) and (6) are logically contradictory, so the argument goes, we have to reject DDB (Weatherson's J=B), A_1, or A_2. A_2, says Weatherson, "is extremely plausible", so either A_1 or DDB has to go. But to give up A_1 is to commit oneself to externalism, so if

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[12] We are not quite sure how to understand this. Does Weatherson mean that S comes to believe that p on the basis of thinking (a) that a belief that p is justified, (b) that her belief that p *would be* justified if she were to acquire it, or (c) that the belief that she already has *is* justified? It seems highly doubtful that one can come to believe something one already believes, so, for the sake of charity, we take Weatherson to have in mind either (a) or (b). We don't think anything hangs on which one of the two one takes.

we want to be deontologists and internalists we had better give up DDB in favour of DDP.

Before responding to this argument against DDB, let us first consider whether DDP fares any better. On Weatherson's proposal, this means that, first, we replace DDB by DDP, and second, that we say that the inference from *I am justified in believing that p* to *p* is itself praiseworthy only if the premise (i.e. that *I am justified in believing that p*) is true. It is not entirely clear what this is supposed to mean (does it mean to say something merely about the epistemic status of the inference to *p* or the epistemic status of the belief that *p* itself?) The idea, however, seems to be that we should replace A_2 by A_3:

> A_3: If *S* is praiseworthy for believing that she is justified in believing that *p*, and on the basis of that belief comes to believe that *p*, then she is praiseworthy for believing that *p* only if *S* is justified in believing that *p*.[13]

Now, what does the 'argument' on Weatherson's alternative look like? He fails to lay it out, but it seems that it would look as follows:

(7)   *S* justifiedly, but falsely, believes that she is justified in believing that *p*. (A_1).

(8)   On the basis of this belief, *S* comes to believe that *p*. (Assumption).

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[13] In Weatherson's own words: "First, we say that a belief's being justified is not a matter of it being blameless, but a matter of it being in a certain way praiseworthy. Second, we say that the inference from *I am justified in believing that p* to *p* is not praiseworthy if the premise is false." (Weatherson 2008, 569)

(9)   *S* is praiseworthy for believing that she is justified in believing that *p*. (7, J=P [DDP])

(10)   *S* is *not* praiseworthy for believing that *p*. (8, 9, A3)

(11)   *S* is *not* justified in believing that *p*. (10, J=P [DDP])

(12)   It is false that *S* is justified in believing that *p*. (7)

And, clearly, there is no contradiction involved in this set of propositions. The problem with A3, however, is that it seems trivially true. Given DDP (Weatherson's J=P), A3 could be rephrased as:

A3∗: If *S* is praiseworthy for believing that she is praiseworthy for believing that *p*, and on the basis of that belief comes to believe that *p*, then she is praiseworthy for believing that *p* only if *S* is praiseworthy for believing that *p*.

A3 is true by definition, in the same way as A2∗ is true by definition:

A2∗: If *S* blamelessly believes that she is blameless for believing that *p*, and on the basis of that belief comes to believe that *p*, then she is blameless for believing that *p* only if she is blameless for believing that *p*.

The really important question that Weatherson should have addressed is whether the following genuinely informative principle is true:

A$_4$: If *S* is praiseworthy for believing that she is justified in believing that *p*, and on the basis of that belief comes to believe that *p*, then she is praiseworthy for believing that *p*,

or:

A$_4$*: If *S* is praiseworthy for believing that she is praiseworthy for believing that *p*, and on the basis of that belief comes to believe that *p*, then she is praiseworthy for believing that *p*.

And the problem is that A$_4$/A$_4$* seems equally plausible as A$_2$/A$_2$*. If praiseworthiness is transferred from a meta-belief *B** to a belief *B* in virtue of *B**'s being about *B* in a specific way, then why would blamelessness not be transferred from a meta-belief *B** to a belief *B* in virtue of *B**'s being similarly about *B*? Hence, Weatherson's reasoning at this point fails to favour DDP over DDB.

Second, this argument against DDB fails quite simply on the falsity of Weatherson's assumption that we need to be externalists in order to think that we have infallible knowledge about our beliefs about justification, since we could just stipulate an internalist condition on top of the infallibility condition. At most, the necessity of having infallible beliefs about justification implies a strong form of access internalism according to which only reasons that I have special, infallible access to (through introspection) can justify for me a belief that *p*. Further, one need only be committed to the claim that not all justified beliefs are true, or that justification does not *entail* truth, and this is quite consistent with thinking that justification entails truth *when* it comes to propositions

about one's own reasons. So we have not eschewed the internalist idea that one can have justified but false beliefs. Weatherson seems to anticipate this objection:

> Now some may think that the general principle [A_1; AB & RP] is right, but that beliefs about what we are justified in believing are special, and if they are justified they are true. But such an exception seems intolerably ad hoc. If we can have false but justified beliefs about some things, then presumably we can have false but justified beliefs about our evidence, since in principle our evidence could be practically anything. So the following situation seems possible; indeed it seems likely that something of this form happens frequently in real life. S has a false but justified belief that e is part of her evidence. S knows both that anyone with evidence e is justified in believing p in the absence of defeaters, and that there are no defeaters present. So S comes to believe, quite reasonably, that she is justified in believing that p. But S does not have this evidence, and in fact all of her evidence points toward ~p. So it is false that she is justified in believing p." (pp. 567-68)

Here, Weatherson claims that there are situations in which (a) some person S has a false, but justified belief that e is part of her evidence, (b) S knows that anyone with evidence e is justified in believing p in the absence of defeaters, (c) S knows that she has no defeaters for e (or for believing that p?), (d) S thereby comes to believe that she is justified in believing that p, (e) S lacks e, (f) S's evidence strongly points toward ~p, and, therefore, (g) S is not justified in believing p. Weatherson's argument, however, trades on the ambiguity of the word 'justification', which he uses purely deontologically and internalistically in (a), (b), and (d), but purely externalistically in (g), or vice versa. If, for instance, we interpret 'justified' in (a), (b), (d), and (g) purely deontologically and internalistically, then we see that S's belief that she is blameless in believing that p is itself not only blameless, but also true. If she had the belief that believing that p is justified in some externalist sense of the word, then that belief itself might be false, but this possibility is excluded, given that DDB is the thesis under investigation.

VI. Conclusion

In conclusion, for all Weatherson shows, there is no reason to prefer DDP to DDB. All three arguments against DDB that we considered fail at one or several junctures. Moreover, as we have seen in response to the voluntarism problem and the New Evil Demon problem, we need to be careful not to set the standards of justification too high if we do not want to risk scepticism. DDB seems much better capable of meeting this demand than DDP. Together with the other virtues that transfer from EC to DDB and the fact that DDB fits much better with plausible analyses of the analogous phenomenon of responsible action, this provides us with sufficient reason to adhere to the standard account of responsible belief in terms of blamelessness rather than praiseworthiness.