Dogmatism Paradox à la Kripke

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Abstract
I aim at dissolving Saul Kripke's dogmatism paradox by defending the idea that, with respect to any particular proposition p known by a subject A, it is not irrational for A to ignore all evidence against p. Here my defence of the dogmatic attitude depends on the crucial assumption – and this is an assumption made by Kripke himself in the setting of the paradox – that A wishes above all else to avoid gaining a false belief or losing a true one. An appendix briefly examines the possibility of a knowledge version of the paradox, as opposed to Kripke's original true-belief version.

1. Overview

Kripke had discovered the dogmatism paradox by 1972. After four decades of commentaries and secondary literature in the absence of the public availability of the maestro's own work, it is fortunate that the original presentation of the paradox has been in print since 2011. Focusing on the relevant parts of Kripke's paper, 'On Two Paradoxes of Knowledge',[1] I aim at dissolving the paradox – and I aim at doing so without subscribing to any particular theory of knowledge.

My discussion is structured as follows. Section 1 – basically a set of quotations from Kripke (2011) together with my brief comments – presents the paradox. Section 2 offers a definition of the very concept of being dogmatic with respect to a proposition. Section 3 makes a familiar distinction between two senses of 'should' in the statement 'A should resolve not to be influenced by any evidence against p'. It is my hope that by appealing to this distinction we may see that perhaps not all forms of prescribing dogmatism have the same degree of

[1] Kripke (2011, pp. 43–45, with an appendix at pp. 48–50). Unannotated page numbers refer to this work. Labelled sentences (*i*)–(*vi*) are direct quotations from Kripke (2011), with his own numbering.

Kripke's paper is, for the most part, a transcript of a talk given in 1972; appendices and some of the footnotes seem to have been added in the late 2000s. For Kripke's brief comments on some eminent commentaries see his Appendix 3. (The other paradox dealt with in Kripke's paper is the surprise-exam paradox, to which the main part of his paper is devoted.)

doi:10.1017/S0031819125100855 © The Author(s), 2025. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Royal Institute of Philosophy.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0031819125100855 Published online by Cambridge University Press

weirdness; plus, I hope that making the distinction will shed some light on the role of the KK-principle in the paradox. Yet, being a digression in essence, the section may be skipped without significant loss insofar as one replaces steps (*v*) and (*vi*) in Kripke's argument by corresponding steps (*v**) and (*vi**) presented towards the end of this section.

I offer my solution in Section 4, which is a defence of the idea that it is alright for us to be dogmatic with respect to what we know *if,* as is assumed by Kripke, what we wish above all else is to avoid losing true beliefs or gaining false ones. My concern in this article is Kripke's original version of the paradox which, in a crucial premise to be discussed in detail, involves true belief, not knowledge; an appendix examines prospects of the possibility of a knowledge version of the paradox.

For the most part, this is a discussion in 'traditional' epistemology: save for a brief comment at the end of the paper, I sidestep the implications of the paradox for virtue epistemology.

2. The Paradox

The starting point is a closure principle:

> (*i*) If A knows that p and A knows that p entails q, and, on the basis of such knowledge, A concludes that q, then A knows that q.

The next premise does not involve knowledge as such:

> (*ii*) p entails the following hypothetical: any evidence against p is misleading (where misleading is to mean *leads to a false conclusion*).

Let p be a proposition,[2] and suppose that A knows that p. It is not implausible to assume that our subject understands the general principle (*ii*) and has reasons for subscribing to it. So let us suppose that:

> (*iii*) The subject A knows that p, and A knows (*ii*).

[2] In Kripke's paper, 'p' is said to stand for a *statement* (pp. 30 & 43). The differences between propositions and statements are negligible for my purposes here.

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Assuming that A carefully carries out the relevant deduction, it follows that:

(iv) A knows that any evidence against p is misleading.

Kripke notes that this already looks rather strange, but let us continue. Here is the next premise, which is 'very hard to state in a nice, rigorous way' (p. 43):

(v) If A knows that taking an action of type T leads to consequence C, and A wishes above all else to avoid C (i.e., this is the only relevant issue), then A should resolve now not to take any action of type T.

Notice the parenthetical gloss: avoiding C is not merely the strongest among A's desires – if that were the case, it would not follow that A should decide not to do anything of type T, for it could be the case that a cluster of A's other wishes collectively trump his wish to avoid C. Rather, in the situation described by Kripke, A wishes to avoid C *and nothing else matters* for A. Kripke is considering cases where 'A knows, at a certain time, that if he does anything of a certain kind in the future, it will lead to some consequence that he thinks bad, there being no other relevant consequences which would override it' (p. 44).[3]

With appropriate substitutions for C and T, premise (v) yields:

(vi) A should resolve not to be influenced by any evidence against p.[4]

And what are the appropriate substitutions for C and T? Kripke's explanation is crucial to my understanding of the paradox; so, let me quote it in full. Here is Kripke (p. 44):

Let the action of type T be accepting evidence against p – that is, doubting or denying that p on the basis of some future evidence. The consequence C is gaining a false belief – or at least losing

[3] Perhaps a weaker assumption would do the job: *all things considered, A wishes to avoid C*.

[4] The phrase 'not to be influenced by' seems to me perfectly well-chosen. At other places Kripke uses 'ignore' (p. 44), 'avoid' (p. 44), and 'disregard' (p. 49, n. 31). Also, we may note that in applying (v) in order to get (vi), Kripke talks about 'accepting' evidence, while of course, strictly speaking, one may be influenced by some evidence without *accepting* it. But let that pass.

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> a true one, if we merely fall into doubt – and this is something that we do not want.

Since (*vi*) is the very conclusion of the paradoxical argument, we may assume that (*vi*) itself is supposed to be unacceptable. But unacceptable in what way? It is fairly clear from the flavour of Kripke's discussion that what he has in mind is that it is *irrational* for A to do what (*vi*) says he should do. Textual evidence for such a reading comes from what Kripke says just before presenting the (*i*)–(*vi*) argument: '… that if I know something now, I should, as a rational agent, adopt a resolution not to allow any future evidence to overthrow it. But this does not seem to be our attitude toward statements that we know – nor does it seem to be a rational attitude' (p. 43).

So, I take this to be the real question concerning the dogmatism paradox: how could there be a sound argument which prescribes dogmatism?[5]

3. Defining Dogmatism

Kripke does not offer an explicit definition of *dogmatism* – in fact, he uses 'dogmatic' and its cognates only once in his original discussion. In this section I shall try to define the concept. Here I am not concerned with dogmatism and open-mindedness as character

[5] In what is perhaps the oldest and best known of all commentaries on the paradox, Gilbert Harman presents an argument with the conclusion that *I am in a position to disregard any future evidence that seems to tell against h*, where *h* is a proposition that the arguer knows. He then writes, '[t]his is paradoxical, because I am never in a position simply to disregard any future evidence even though I know a great many different things' (1973, p. 148). A considerable number of published works on the dogmatism paradox quote this passage in full; thus, it may be safe to say that, according to many commentators, the unacceptable conclusion is that the arguer says of himself that he is in a position to disregard all the future counterevidence concerning a given proposition. And how is that unacceptable? We may imagine a number of related reasons or labels, including: (a) it is *not alright*, or it is *absurd* or *irrational*, to disregard all the future counterevidence (Nozick, 1981, p. 237; Lewis 1996, p. 564), (b) one can never know that one is in such a position, or (c) knowledge never *breeds* dogmatism (Hawthorne, 2004, p. 73). In accordance with my understanding of the original paradox as intended by Kripke, in the following pages I will focus on (a).

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traits; rather, I am dealing with them only with respect to a given proposition.[6]

Kripke's (*vi*) gives us a hint that dogmatism, as Kripke understands the concept, has something to do with the subject's *prior decision* about what to do with the evidence against what he believes, should he encounter such evidence. Kripke elaborates on this when, in Appendix 3 to the paper, he comments on Harman's well-known solution to the paradox. We need not disagree, says Kripke, with Harman's view on how disregarding evidence would affect the subject's knowledge; but 'remember that I was talking about a resolution to be made in advance' (p. 49).[7]

So, I think it is fair to offer the following definition on behalf of Kripke: a subject S is *dogmatic* with respect to a proposition p iff S believes that p, and, moreover, S has resolved not to be influenced by any evidence against p. Thus, in particular, if S believes that p and he has resolved to ignore all evidence against p then S is dogmatic with respect to p.[8]

Following Lasonen-Aarnio (2013, p. 3), one might cautiously add that the dogmatic subject is one who has resolved not to be influenced by any piece of evidence against p *as it bears on* p (not as it bears on other propositions). However, in the present enquiry we may bypass this nicety by assuming that we are talking about the subject's attitude towards a single proposition p.[9] Also, in a more thorough investigation, it would be wise to define dogmatism with respect to a proposition *relative to a mode of presentation*, so that, for instance, the subject might be dogmatic with respect to the axiom of

[6] For a thorough analysis of open-mindedness as an alleged intellectual virtue see Chapter 8 of Baehr (2011). Baehr's investigation takes place in the realm of virtue epistemology, which is not my concern in this article except for a comment in §5 below.

[7] Also on p. 48 (italics in the original): 'one should remember that my point is about a resolution *made in advance* to ignore certain types of evidence'.

[8] Ignoring all the counterevidence is just one of the ways of not being influenced by them. For Kripke's brief discussion of different ways (or 'strategies') of adopting a dogmatic attitude see his p. 44 and p. 48, n. 27. One might think of yet another way of not being influenced by a piece of evidence, not mentioned by Kripke: looking at the counterevidence with a firm prior intention to refute it.

[9] This idealization makes my topic more manageable. For instance, while talking about the legitimacy of S's dogmatism with respect to a proposition known by him, we may forget about the effect of dogmatism with respect to p on S's epistemic relation to *other* propositions.

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choice but not with respect to the principle of well-ordering even if they express the same proposition. But I think the definition that I just gave serves my purposes here.

A closely related concept is that of open-mindedness. Surely, we would not say of a subject that he is open-minded with respect to p simply by virtue of his not believing that p (or by virtue of his not having entertained p at all); hence we cannot define open-mindedness by simply negating the conjunction given in the above definition. It seems to me that S's open-mindedness with respect to a proposition p consists in, first, his readiness to consider all the available evidence for p, as well as all the available evidence against it, if S has not yet come to believe either p or not-p and p is of some importance for S, *and*, second, S's readiness to consider all the available evidence against p if he does believe that p.

Note that, insofar as the definition of dogmatism is concerned and in the absence of further argument, S's dogmatism with respect to p seems to be independent of his knowledge that p – though at the end of the day our preferred theory of knowledge might tell us that dogmatism with respect to p may lead to the destruction of the subject's knowledge that p.

The subject's dogmatism with respect to a proposition need not be a result of his psychological certainty about that proposition. Thus consider the case of Bill James, who has to jump out of the third floor of a burning building to save his own life. He has somehow managed to form the not-so-firm belief that he has the nerve to jump off. As he also thinks that a necessary condition for his success is to sustain this belief, he tries not to lose it. Specifically, he decides not to consider any evidence against the belief – not estimating the height of the building, not reminding himself of his acute acrophobia, etc. Bill is thus dogmatic with respect to a proposition, but he is not absolutely certain about it.[10]

Concerning dogmatism with respect to a given proposition, as I understand Kripke's conception of it, the defining feature is that the subject has made a resolution not to be influenced by any counterevidence; carrying out the resolution is not of major importance for the paradox. Besides, S is not dogmatic if *it just happens* that he ignores

[10] Or consider Charles Bovy's attitude towards the proposition p that his wife is not unfaithful to him. For his own peace of mind, Charles tries not to think of p at all; if he cannot take his mind off it, he will try to form the belief that p and ignore all the counterevidence. Neither Bill nor Charles need be considered irrational – there are, I think, more to rationality than purely epistemic considerations

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all the counterevidence. To make this point more emphatically, we may use the term *de jure dogmatic* for what I have simply called *dogmatic*, and call *S de facto dogmatic* with respect to *p* iff *S* believes that *p* and, without any prior resolution, no evidence against *p* will ever influence *S*.[11] Now it seems to me that it is only *de jure* dogmatism which might be considered a sin against rationality, and it is only habitual *de jure* dogmatism (with respect to a significantly large class of propositions) which is, or may be, a vice in the sphere of rationality. A *de facto* dogmatic agent may be careless or irresponsible; but he is not thereby guilty. To be considered as a crime, disregarding the evidence should be premeditated.

4. Quibbling with Kripke: What the Subject May Not Know

Note one thing the conclusion of the (*i*)–(*vi*) argument does *not* say: (*vi*) does not say that *A* knows or even believes that he should resolve to disregard all evidence against *p;* it just says that *A* should so resolve. There is no contradiction in asserting (*vi*) and adding immediately, 'but *A* does not believe that he should resolve not to be influenced by any evidence against *p*'. It is as if someone located at an Archimedean point judges that *A* should be dogmatic with respect to *p*. To wit, it is only in an objective, not subjective, sense of 'should' that (*vi*) says that *A* should be dogmatic with respect to *p*.

Although the terminology is transparent and the distinction intuitive enough, let me give two examples of different senses of 'should'.[12] Suppose that Bernadette is gravely ill, that she knows this fact, and that she wishes above all else to be healed. Suppose that there is a cup of panacea in front of her. It seems quite obvious that there is a sense of 'should' – the *objective* sense – that Bernadette should take the cup. Equally obviously, however, there need not be a *subjective* sense in which she should take the cup: she might not have the slightest idea about the curative effect of taking it.

To give an example which goes in the opposite direction, consider Thelma who is driving in a highway. She believes, perhaps with warrant, that she should keep her seat belt fastened, and this is a subjective 'should': for all she knows, there could be a collision

[11] The terminology, with its Latin qualifiers, is chosen with an eye to the preface of Kripke's classic, *Naming and Necessity* (1980, p. 21, n. 21).

[12] The distinction is well known in ethics and epistemology. Feldman (1988) argues that it works differently in the two disciplines.

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or a sudden stop, and she knows that in a typical accident a fastened seat belt reduces the risk of injury. But now suppose that, as a matter of fact, there will be no accident today. Then it is *not* the case that, objectively, Thelma should fasten her seat belt. (Allow me to set aside issues like Thelma's peace of mind when the belt is fastened, and the likelihood of her being fined by the police for not having her seat belt fastened; let us assume that the only relevant issue for Thelma is to avoid accident-caused injury.) Of course, it is safe to say that a typical driver on a typical day does not know that she will not have an accident – hence the *practical* uselessness of talking about the objective sense of 'should' in cases like this.

Back to the (*i*)–(*vi*) argument, suppose A knows that p. Hence p is true. It follows from (*ii*) that any evidence against p is misleading. Let us assume, like Kripke (p. 44), that gaining a false belief or losing a true one is what A wishes above all else to avoid. It follows from (*v*) that, as a matter of fact, A should resolve not to be influenced by any evidence against p. For all we are told by (*i*)–(*vi*), this is like Bernadette's case and panacea: objectively speaking, A should be dogmatic with respect to p. However, A may not be aware of the obtaining of this objective 'should'-situation: A himself may not be able to reach the conclusion *I should resolve now to disregard all the evidence against* p.

As presented by Kripke, therefore, the (*i*)–(*vi*) argument does not endorse a subjective dogmatism. Now there are some 'should'-statements that while they sound shocking or outrageous if construed in the subjective way, are less so when construed objectively – 'Hitler's mother should have drowned him at birth' might be an example in the realm of (utilitarian) morality, while 'Pharaoh should have killed baby Moses' might be considered an objectively true prudential 'should'-statement. Perhaps the prescription of dogmatism provides another group of examples?

However that may be, even if we think that prescribing dogmatism in the objective sense is unproblematic, this would be cold comfort since the paradox can be easily strengthened. Although (*vi*) is not the statement of a subjective requirement of dogmatism, such a requirement, *viz*.,

> (*vi**) A knows that he should resolve not to be influenced by any evidence against p,

would follow from a straightforward readjustment of (*v*):

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> (v*) If A knows that taking an action of type T leads to consequence C, and A wishes above all else to avoid C, then A knows that he should resolve now not to take any action of type T,

so that, with truly little ado, Kripke's argument could be transformed into an argument for the conclusion that A should be dogmatic with respect to p, in the subjective sense of 'should'.

Now a number of philosophers have argued that (*iv*), which is needed to derive (vi*) from (v*), does not follow from (*iii*) unless the KK-principle holds,[13] a principle according to which, for every proposition p, whenever a subject knows that p, he also knows that he knows that p. However, interesting as the question of indispensability of KK to the dogmatism paradox may be, we need not take a stance on it here. True, the KK-principle is not warmly embraced by everyone;[14] yet this does not solve the dogmatism paradox even if we think that KK is needed for the validity of the paradoxical argument, for, as noted by Sorensen (1988, p. 437), the critics of KK do not have to deny that there are *some* cases where the subject has second-order knowledge, and we can run the asterisked version of the (*i*)–(vi) argument at least for such cases. Thus, questioning the KK-principle as the (alleged) hidden premise of the dogmatism paradox would not help us solving the paradox, if we think that dogmatism is *never* a rational attitude.

So, while I think the subjective/objective distinction helps us seeing the issue more clearly and illuminates the role of the controversial KK-principle in the paradox, it does not solve the paradox. Let us ask a more fundamental question concerning the very notion of dogmatism.

[13] See, for instance, Sorell (1981, p. 558). Sorell goes on to present a similar paradox not depending on KK. Baumann (2013, pp. 6*ff*.) offers a brief discussion of why one might think that while first-order knowledge of a proposition does not licence dogmatism with respect to it, second-order knowledge may. See also Borges (2015, p. 3679) who, without explicitly mentioning KK, emphasizes that 'the claim that future evidence against p is *misleading* is entailed by the claim that p is true; but this entailment has to be recognized in order for it to rationalize the discounting of evidence against p' (see also his discussion at pp. 3689*ff*., where he goes on to argue that second-order knowledge of p does not always rationalize dogmatism with respect to p).

[14] The most widely discussed recent case against KK is perhaps Williamson's anti-luminosity argument in Chapter 5 of his (2000).

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5. Dogmatism: Is It Invariably Irrational?

In (*i*)–(*vi*) we have an argument with seemingly plausible premises whose conclusion says that the subject should be dogmatic with respect to what he knows. (My preferred version of the argument, described in the previous section, has it that this is a subjective 'should'-statement, in the strong sense that the subjects also knows that he should be dogmatic.) Naturally enough, the literature on the paradox includes numerous works which try to either question the truth of one of the premises or else attack the validity of the argument. My plan, however, is to bite the bullet and argue that there need not be anything wrong with a person's dogmatic attitude towards what he knows.[15]

Is dogmatism always an irrational attitude? Arguably, if the highest epistemic duty of a rational agent is not to lose knowledge and if, moreover, one loses knowledge by not properly investigating all the members of the relevant class of counterevidence, then one must avoid dogmatism; besides, dogmatism may harm our *understanding* of the things we truly believe. Be it as it may, and independently of the real effect of dogmatism on knowledge and understanding, we recall that Kripke's subject wishes above all else to avoid 'gaining a false belief – or at least losing a true one' (p. 44), wherein there is no mention of knowledge. But if what one wishes above all else is to

[15] Following Unger (1974), one may go sceptic and deny that anyone knows anything at all, hence denying (*iii*). Less radically, one may attack the closure principle – (*i*), or its variants – which is probably the most easily noticeable suspect among the premises. For a diagnosis along this line see Sharon and Spectre (2010), as well as Borges (2015) for an analysis of some of the critiques of the principle. For an attack on the validity of the (*i*)–(*vi*) argument (or some variants thereof), see Nozick (1981, pp. 236–239) and Sorensen (1988). More recently, Borges (2015, p. 3678) presents a case wherein the agent, via competently using his epistemic means, is able to neutralize the counterevidence for *p* and maintain his belief that *p*; thus, Borges argues that, in the sense of 'misleading' intended by Kripke, (*iv*) does not follow from previous steps.

That I am offering my own solution need not be construed as my disagreement with all of these authors – I think there are different ways of removing the paradoxical effect of Kripke's (*i*)–(*vi*). Yet, while presenting my solution, I will talk *as if* the (*i*)–(*vi*) argument is sound. More specifically, I will defend the view that a subject whose preference is as described by Kripke, should be dogmatic with respect to what she knows. The 'should' is objective in the original (*i*)–(*vi*) argument and subjective in the asterisked version.

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avoid gaining a false belief or losing a true one, then of course one should be dogmatic if one's belief has already hit the target. If to be influenced by a piece of evidence against a true proposition p makes it more probable that the subject will give up the belief that p, then he should be dogmatic with respect to p, given that his ruling wish is not to lose this true belief.[16]

While discussing dogmatism, philosophers – if they are not working in virtue epistemology – typically take it for granted that dogmatism is irrational or even overtly absurd, and do not pause to explain why: the irrationality of dogmatism is perhaps something of a dogma by itself.[17] However, a distinction has to be made here. If we are looking for a *strategy* to deal with our beliefs, then dogmatism is not always a wise choice, for it ignores the fact that a good number of our beliefs are false.[18] But what about a *particular* true

[16] To reiterate, here my defence of dogmatism is hypothetical: it says that *if* you value the possession of true belief in the way that Kripke's subject does, *then* dogmatism is a rational way to go. Later in the text I will question the rationality of this value preference. Also, in the Appendix I will briefly talk about the prospects of having a version of Kripke's argument wherein the subject's main concern is to maintain his knowledge, not just true belief.

[17] Thus, here is how Lewis concludes his description of the paradox (1996, p. 564): 'Whenever we know […] we should not heed any evidence tending to suggest that we are wrong. But this is absurd', period. One exception I know outside virtue epistemology is Unger (1974), for an evaluation of whose argument against dogmatism one may look at Section 2 of Douven and Olders (2008). Ideas similar to some of what I express in this paragraph are discussed by Douven and Olders, pp. 245–248, where they also discuss some possible advantages of being dogmatic with respect to what one knows.

[18] Note, however, that the implausibility of dogmatism as an all-purpose strategy for reducing the number of false beliefs is not known *a priori* and is contingent upon our specific cognitive powers. Thus imagine a species whose cognitive faculties work in a way that, in an overwhelming majority of cases, they form a true belief about an issue when they look at it for the very first time. If that is the case, then, at least insofar as their most important goal is to avoid losing true beliefs, they should close their minds with respect to every issue immediately after forming a belief about it. (Being an externalist about justification, I think the same is the case if their main goal is not to lose their knowledge.) Again, they themselves might be unaware of this fact, so that this is an objective 'should'; it will be subjective as well if they are aware of the mechanism of their belief-forming process. *Cf.* Carter and Gordon (2014, p. 208): 'Open-mindedness affords no

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proposition p believed by the subject? Would it be rationally obligatory for him to stick to the strategy of open-mindedness and go through all the evidence against p? If the rationale for examining all the available and relevant counterevidence is to avoid falsehood, then it is hard to see what would be the point of adhering to the strategy in a case where the goal is already achieved. In the setting of the dogmatism paradox, the subject is assumed to know that p, hence having a true belief that p; to insist that he should nonetheless keep an open mind with respect to p would be, to use Smart's felicitous expression in a different context (1956, p. 349), an instance of superstitious rule-worship.

Here is an analogy (which might be isomorphic to the case of Thelma and her seat belt in the previous section). Let us assume that the goal of the security check in an airport is to prevent harm to the passengers, the crew, and the aircraft of each departing flight. A popular strategy to achieve this goal is to have the passengers screened by X-ray machines or some such devices. Now if, as a matter of fact, passenger B. J. Ortcutt carries no weapons or explosive material, then, as a matter of fact, it is all right not to subject him to the screening. Moreover, if the security guard knows that Ortcutt carries nothing harmful, then the guard may easily come to know that it is all right to waive the security check for him. Admittedly, it does not happen too often that the security guard knows that Ortcutt is clean without having actually screened him; but this does not affect the moral of the story: (knowledge of) the proposition that Ortcutt carries nothing harmful entails (knowledge of) the proposition that there is no need to screen Ortcutt. To deny this is either to say that there are important things other than the immunity of *this particular flight*, or to attach some intrinsic importance to adhering to a policy. To insist on screening Ortcutt while knowing that he is clean would be insisting on a ritual with little or no purpose.

Of course one may think of undesirable consequences of dogmatism, despite the truth of what one is dogmatic about: perhaps dogmatism makes us less amiable, less tolerant to others' tastes; perhaps it propels the society towards a less open one – and these may be considered bad for reasons *other than* missing the truth of the particular proposition with respect to which one is dogmatic.[19] This

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clear truth-related advantage over *uncritical* credulity if the environment is maximally friendly'.

[19] One such reason is offered by Veber (2004, pp. 567*f.*). Concerning a principle he formulates as 'For any subject S: if a piece of evidence is known by S to be misleading then S is in a position to disregard it', which is

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may give us good reasons for erring on the side of caution and avoid dogmatism in all cases; but such worries are irrelevant in the eye of Kripke's subject who values having true beliefs (and avoid having false ones) above anything else.

6. Residual Doubts

This, then, is my solution to – or, rather, dissolution of – the dogmatism paradox as originally presented by Kripke. To put it bluntly: in the situation described by Kripke, it is OK for the subject to be dogmatic with respect to what he knows. In this final section I shall try to make my solution look more palatable.

First and foremost, the solution depends on Kripke's crucial premise that the subject *A* wishes, *above anything else*, to avoid losing his true belief or gaining a false one. I do not endorse such an attitude towards truth, neither do I think that it is always a rational one. Gaining a false and paltry belief, or losing a true and trivial one, about a friend of yours may save a valuable friendship. To give another case: would it not be rational, or even outright morally obligatory, to opt for losing your true beliefs concerning Metallica's discography, or gaining false beliefs concerning arcane issues in algebraic topology, if the Devil offers you the saving of the lives of nine fatally sick children in return?[20]

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basically the conclusion of Kripke's (*i*)–(*vi*), Veber's worry is that adopting it will put us at risk of misapplying it to the evidence we mistakenly think of as misleading. (Veber's actual wording is more pessimistic: he says, at p. 567, that adopting the principle 'will result in our disregarding evidence which we merely think we know'.) I admit that the risk Veber is worried about is a real one. However, note that in the case of the dogmatism paradox it is assumed that any evidence against *p* is in fact misleading and that the subject does in fact know this (*cf.* Kripke, p. 48: 'Moreover, one might distinguish between first and third person formulations of the problem, and in the latter case, whether it is a subject who really knows or merely *thinks* he or she knows. Here I am discussing a subject who genuinely knows that *p*'). Also remember that for the sake of simplicity, I have assumed that we are dealing with a single proposition – see my footnote 9 above and the accompanying text.

[20] If you think that gaining/losing beliefs is an involuntary process, you may imagine proverbial philosophical pills with the verified effect of implementing false beliefs concerning your friend, mathematics, or music. (Of course, one way of losing a true belief or losing a piece of knowledge is via forgetting the proposition believed. However, while discussing the

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Even if we forget about friendship and morality and restrict our attention to purely epistemic issues, it is not clear that the subject's preference, as described by Kripke, is reasonable – it is not crystal clear whether and to what extent true belief is of fundamental epistemic value, and here one might think that it is required of a believed truth that it must be believed 'aptly and virtuously' (Sosa, 2004, p. 320; see also Sosa, 2001).

Secondly, common wisdom has it that dogmatism is irrational or even immoral, and that open-mindedness is a requirement of rationality, perhaps even a moral obligation as well. I think this platitude takes open-mindedness and dogmatism to be character traits, so that we hear of open-mindedness as a *virtue* – an epistemic or intellectual virtue (perhaps a moral one as well). Now I surmise that the sense of paradoxicality caused by the conclusion of Kripke's (*i*)–(*vi*) argument results partly from sensing a tension between two ideas: the cliché that open-mindedness is an epistemic virtue, and the argument that dogmatism may occasionally help us keeping true beliefs and protect us from false ones. Having in mind that my solution concerns only with particular pieces of true beliefs, and then against the background of the subject's peculiar preference, may make it appear less contrary to common sense.

Moreover, virtue epistemology may come to my help from a different angle. In recent years some virtue epistemologists have argued against the long-standing conviction that open-mindedness is an epistemic virtue. Thus, Carter and Gordon (2014) argue that open-mindedness has no significant connection to truth – they argue that it is not particularly truth-conducive.[21] Baehr (2011) argues, among other things, that some modes of open-mindedness are in fact intellectually vicious. Fantl (2018), who also examines the ethical consequences of closing one's mind, falls into this broad category. Such investigations may somehow modify our way of looking at open-mindedness with unconditional affection, hence, by implication, lessen the weirdness of prescribing dogmatism in particular cases. Besides, we may come to think of Kripke, with his work of the early 1970s on the dogmatism paradox, as anticipating some

surprise-exam paradox in the first part of his (2011), Kripke assumes that the subject does not forget the proposition he believes.)

[21] For some recent arguments in favour of open-mindedness see Kwong (2017) and Alsharif and Symons (2021).

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topics in virtue epistemology which began to flourish only a couple of decades afterwards.[22]

7. Appendix: A Knowledge Version of the Paradox?

Above I argued that it is all right for the subject A to be dogmatic with respect to a proposition p if he knows that p. In my argument I made essential use of Kripke's assumption that A's all-embracing concern is to avoid losing true beliefs or gaining false ones. Now one may ask what happens if A wishes above all else to avoid losing his *knowledge*. Here I briefly examine this issue.[23]

Two preliminary comments are in order. First, I think that Kripke's seminal contribution is important enough to be examined in detail in its original format. Apart from its originality, it has the clear advantage over a great majority of second-hand reports that it makes explicit reference to the subject's preference instead of simply asserting, as a premise of the paradoxical argument, that one should disregard misleading evidence.[24] Secondly, one noticeable aspect of

[22] Note that virtue epistemology was reborn only in the 1980s. None of the classic works on the dogmatism paradox (by Harman and others) came from virtue epistemologist; more interestingly, of the works of virtue epistemologists I referred to in this section only Fantl (2018) talks about the dogmatism paradox, but even he does not refer to Kripke (2011).

[23] It should be clear that in many places in his original argument Kripke talks about the subject as *knowing* something – in fact, it is only in (*ii*) and (*vi*) that there is no mention of knowledge. Here I have nothing to say about those references to knowledge; rather, the topic of the present appendix is what Kripke substitutes for C in premise (*v*) as something that A wishes above all else to avoid (see my §1 above). In the original version, C concerns A's losing his *true belief that p*, not his *knowledge that p*.

It is also worth mentioning that Kripke thinks that problems parallel to the dogmatism paradox can be produced for 'certainty, rationally justified conviction, and so on' (p. 45, n. 18). He does not elaborate on versions of the paradox based on these other epistemic concepts – see also p. 48 at the beginning of his Appendix 3.

[24] *Cf*. Harman's and Lewis's terse assertions: 'But I should disregard evidence that I know is misleading' (1973, p. 148) and 'if you know that evidence is misleading, you should pay it no heed' (1996, p. 564). Moreover, Kripke mentions the subject's preference without making a value judgment about it (which, by the way, gave me the luxury of not getting into the Meno problem and value of knowledge while examining his version in the main part of my article).

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Kripke's original paradox is that it is quite minimal in its presumptions, and this, I believe, adds to its allure. In discussing a knowledge version, one may thereby reduce some of the charm of the original version.

Now, what would a knowledge version of the paradox look like? In the original presentation of the paradox, Kripke talks about A's concern for losing true beliefs or gaining false ones. Nonetheless, it may seem that he could have formulated his argument for a subject who wishes, above all else, to avoid losing his knowledge. In fact, in a 21st-century appendix to the original paper, Kripke switches without comment from true-belief talk to knowledge talk (p. 49, n. 28, my italics):

> I am assuming that we are dealing with a subject who wishes *to avoid losing knowledge*.[25]

In order to have a knowledge version, the most obvious change to be made in the original (*i*)–(*vi*) argument is in the assumption concerning the subject's desire: here we will assume that A knows that p and wishes, above all else, not to lose this piece of knowledge. Now A may lose his knowledge that p in at least two ways: (a) losing his belief that p, (b) losing his justification for p. Therefore, following his desire, A has to take measures in at least two dimensions. First, concerning (a), we already have the original argument with conclusion (*vi*):

> (*vi*) A should resolve not to be influenced by any evidence against p.

Second, concerning (b), we need a new application of premise (*v*): previously the relevant consequence C was our familiar *gaining a false belief or losing a true one*, and the relevant action T was *accepting*[26] *evidence against p*. We now take C to be *losing knowledge*. (Note that while in the original version we had a disjunction – gaining a false belief *or* losing a true one – here there is no obvious corresponding alteration.) And now it is not clear how to proceed.

In the original argument, we had Kripke's elaboration on his premise (*ii*): he had defined 'misleading' as *leads to a false conclusion*. A couple of lines afterwards he tells us what specific false conclusion a misleading evidence against a true proposition p leads to: it leads to

[25] Insofar as I can see, Kripke does not justify, or even flag, his shift from true belief to knowledge.

[26] For Kripke's 'accepting' terminology see my footnote 4 above.

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'the false conclusion that not-p' (p. 43). So, according to Kripke, by accepting evidence against p the subject A is led to gain the false belief that not-p. Assuming that A is reflective enough, we may infer that he loses his true belief that p.[27] Hence, although premise (*iii*) tells us that A *knows* that p, the process of losing this knowledge seems to be this: A simply loses his *belief* that p. Evidently, the process has nothing to do with A's justification for p. Thus, in the context of Kripke's paradox, it is not clear how accepting misleading evidence leads to losing a piece of knowledge, as opposed to simply losing a true belief.

Eager to find a knowledge version of the paradox, we may think of the following idea. Conceivably, in the aftermath of an epistemological enquiry, one may hold that dogmatism with respect to p destroys A's knowledge that p by virtue of the effect of dogmatism on A's justification for p.[28] One who finds this thought appealing may subscribe to the following thesis, perhaps here functioning as a supplement to premise (*iv*) of Kripke's original argument:

(θ) *If* A is dogmatic with respect to p then A does not know that p.

Recall that by now the subject is supposed to be aware of (*vi*),[29] so that he knows that he should perform the following action, prescribed by (*vi*):

t: resolving not to be influenced by any evidence against p.

But it follows from (θ) that taking t – *i.e.*, adopting dogmatism with respect to p – leads to losing the knowledge that p. Therefore, by

[27] Of course, Kripke, the originator of a well-known puzzle about belief (1979), has sophisticated views concerning rational subjects who hold contradictory beliefs. However, I assume that nothing of that sort occurs here, and that A realizes that his new belief (*i.e.*, the belief that not-p) contradicts his former belief that p and, consequently, his former belief simply goes away. See my brief mention of *mode of presentation* in §2 above, right after my definition of *dogmatism with respect to p*.

[28] This might remind us of Harman (1973) and Lewis (1996). Yet, as indicated by Kripke in his Appendix 3, they do not deal with the dogmatic attitude the way Kripke deals with, which is a decision made in advance. See my footnote 7 above and its related text.

[29] Here I really work with the subjective version of the paradox, advocated in my §3 above.

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(*v*), *A* should resolve not to take *t*.[30] So we have the following rather complicated 'should'-statement (with a new roman numeral):

(*vii*) *A* should resolve not to resolve not to be influenced by any evidence against *p*.

Do we have a paradox now? Note that what we have in (*vi*) and (*vii*) is not exactly a pair of the form '*A* should *X*' and '*A* should not-*X*'; instead, it is of the form '*A* should *X*' and '*A* should resolve not to *X*'. Yet even this milder form puts *A* in a predicament, more so if understood in a subjective sense of 'should': if *A* sees the situation in a way that he should perform an action *X*, how on earth could he resolve not to perform *X*?[31]

Yet I think there is no genuine paradox here. In a genuine paradox we are faced with an unacceptable or at least a strange conclusion while it is not initially clear where the argument has gone wrong or which of the premises are to be blamed. In the present case, however, what we have is an overt clash between an epistemological thesis (θ), and *A*'s overarching desire not to lose his knowledge. And I find it clear that the culprit is the desire: *if A* has already subscribed to the thesis that having an open mind is necessary for maintaining one's knowledge (and recall that we need to assume that *A* does believe in (θ) – see my footnote 30), *then* he cannot reasonably decide to keep his knowledge via closing his mind to all counterevidence. That is to say, a rational agent who believes in (θ) cannot act upon his desire to maintain his knowledge no matter what. He simply has to give up that desire, or at least not to act upon it.

But let me say, in conclusion, that I find this a truly desperate move. My main argument – which I described briefly in this appendix – is that the Kripkean conception of misleadingness, with

[30] Premise (*v*) requires *A*'s knowledge that taking an action of type *T* leads to *C*, so that here *A* needs to know that (θ) holds. For the sake of discussion, we have taken (θ) for granted; however, this thesis does not sound like a conceptual truth, like the way (*ii*) may do. But let us not worry about this – we may assume that our subject is an epistemologist who has come to know (θ).

[31] Arguably, in the biblical story of *Akedah* (Genesis 22) something like this pair of 'should'-statements obtains in the objective sense of 'should': arguably, right before the arrival of the messenger of God, Abraham should have resolved to kill Isaac, but he should not kill him. However, even if my interpretation of the story is coherent, I do not want to ascribe much weight to it – after all, it is the subjective sense of 'should' that I am mainly interested in.

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its effect on replacing belief in *p* by belief in not-*p* while leaving the justification for *p* intact, does not allow a knowledge version, as opposed to a true-belief version, of his dogmatism paradox.[32]

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[32] For their insightful comments on earlier drafts of this paper, from early- to mid-2010s, I am indebted to Peter Baumann, Bernard D. Katz, Hamid Vahid, and Mohammad Saleh Zarepour. I am particularly grateful to two anonymous referees of *Philosophy* for substantial improvements in the paper.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0031819125100855 Published online by Cambridge University Press

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