

Fogelin's analysis of knowledge: S knows that P iff: (i) P is true, (ii) S believes that P , (iii_p) The "performance" clause: S justifiably came to believe that P , and (iii_g) The "adequate grounds" clause: S 's grounds establish the truth of P .

1. Levels of Justification

Chisholm offers 13(!) "levels" of justification. Here are some of the highlights:

- The highest level of justification is when a proposition is a *certainty* for an agent.
- The level of justification, that when added to true belief, yields knowledge that p occurs when p is *evident* to an agent.
- The median level of justification is when a proposition is *counterbalanced* for an agent.
- The lowest level of justification is when a proposition is *certainly false* for an agent.

As Fogelin notes, this is an opaque definition, to say the least.

1.1. Three Features of the Evident

1. Some evident propositions can be false.
2. Some propositions are evident for an agent, even if the agent does not recognize that it is evident for her.
 - a. In other words, one can know something simply by *having* evidence, even if one's belief is not *based* on that evidence.
3. The evident is not at the top of the epistemic hierarchy, and this is important for...

1.2. Chisholm's Anti-Skeptical Argument

- C1. There are some p and S such that p is certain for S .
- C2. For all p and S , if p certain for S , then P is evident for S .
- C3. \therefore There are some p and S such that p is evident for S . (C1, C2)
- Consequently, even if we are systematically deceived, this is only because our beliefs are false; not because they are unjustified. If sound, this argument suffices to answer the *Pyrrhonian* skeptic, who claims that our beliefs are unjustified.

1.2.1. For the nerds: Argument for C2

- C4. For all p and S , p is certain for S iff_{df} for every q , believing p is more justified for S than withholding q , and believing p is at least as justified for S as is believing q .¹
- C5. For all p and S , p is evident for S iff_{df} for every q , believing p is at least as justified for S as is withholding q .
- C2. \therefore For all p and S , if p certain for S , then p is evident for S . (C4, C5)

2. Certainty & Self-Presenting

2.1. Chisholm's Argument for C1

- MP1. If the property of being F is self-presenting, S is F , and S believes herself to be F , then it is certain for S that she is F .
- C6. There are some self-presenting properties F and agents S such that S is F and S believes herself to be F (examples of F : sad, thinking about a golden mountain, experiencing a red visual sensation or "appearing redly to".)
- C1. \therefore There are some p and S such that p is certain for S . (MP1, C6)

¹ I will frequently take the expression "For all p and S " to be implicit. Also, the subscript "df" means "definition."

2.2. *Objection*

- O1. For all self-presenting properties F , if S believes that herself to be F , then S correctly applies the concept of F to herself.
- O2. If S correctly applies the concept of F to herself, then S groups/comparates her current self-presenting state with other self-presenting states in which she is F .
- O3. It is possible for this grouping/comparison to be mistaken.
- O4. If it is possible for this grouping/comparison to be mistaken, then it is not certain for S that she is F .
- ~MP1. \therefore It is possible that the property of being F is self-presenting, S is F , and S believes herself to be F , but it is *not* certain for S that she is F .

2.3. *Chisholm's Reply*

O2 is not always true: there are some non-comparative ways of applying concepts, perhaps especially in the case of self-presenting properties.

Problem: This becomes a very thin (“semantically atomic”) foundation, and so epistemic ascent becomes very difficult. For instance, how do we get from these non-comparative appearances to the conceptually richer ones that involve grouping and comparison (much less to physical object beliefs)?

3. Transfer of Justification

3.1. *Chisholm's Two Self-Presenting Properties (basic beliefs)*

1. Intentional² self-presenting properties, e.g. I'm thinking about beer.
 - Chisholm needs these self-presenting properties so that a person can by *reflection alone* determine whether a belief is justified or not. (This is ontological internalism.)
 - Chisholm assumes that agents very fine-grained powers of epistemic reflection: for any two beliefs, an agent can correctly rank them on Chisholm's 13-point scale. According to Chisholm, this ability is *necessary* for being justified.
 - Since very few of us can do this, we are mistaken in most of our attributions of justification. Good news for the Pyrrhonian; bad news for Chisholm.
2. Sensible self-presenting properties, e.g. appearing redly to me.
 - Note that these are *appearances*, but not *appearance beliefs*.
 - These guarantee that his theory accounts of *empirical* justification, by (i) providing *empirical* content to our beliefs, and (ii) being certain.

3.2. *Material epistemic principles*

Material epistemic principles are rules that allow us to transition from non-epistemic concepts to epistemic concepts. They are especially important in justifying nonbasic beliefs. (The goal is to get from certainty about self-presenting states to evident beliefs about physical objects.)

4. Fogelin's Evaluation of Foundationalism

Recall from the previous chapter that a theory of justification must exhibit three properties:

Philosophical candor: “the author should specify, as desiderata, just which beliefs she takes to be justified, and which not.” (118)

Detail: “the theory [must] show in some detail just how these same beliefs are justified.” (118)

Solution: “an answer to the Agrippa problem may not beg the question by assuming *for argumentative purposes* that there *must* be some positive solution to it.” (119)

How does Chisholm fare with respect to these three criteria?

² “Intentional” does not mean “deliberate” here. Rather “intentionality” is philosophical term of art, meaning “the capacity (typically of a mental state) to be about or to represent things.”

4.1. *Philosophical candor*

1. If (Chisholmian) foundationalism is true, then no contingent facts about the future can be evident for us.
2. If no future contingencies are evident for us, then many of our everyday attributions of justification are incorrect (e.g. that I will be wearing a shirt two minutes from now.)
3. If many of our everyday attributions of justification are incorrect, then skepticism is true.
4. \therefore (Chisholmian) foundationalism is a kind of skepticism (about future contingencies.)

4.2. *Detail*

First Problem: See §2.3.

Second Problem: A number of Chisholm's material epistemic principles have a coherentist flavor to them; beliefs are justified as a system or set rather than atomistically (more on this next week), e.g.

MP3. If S accepts b and if b is not disconfirmed by S 's total evidence, then b is probable for S .

MP4. If S accepts b and if not- b is not probable in relation to the set of propositions that are probable for S , then b is epistemically in the clear for S .

MP7. If there is a set of concurrent propositions such that all of the propositions are epistemically in the clear for S and one of them is beyond reasonable doubt for S , then all of them are beyond reasonable doubt for S .

MP 10. If there is a set of concurrent propositions such that all of them are beyond reasonable doubt for S and one of them is evident for S , then all of them are evident for S .

For all of these material principles, Chisholm faces a well-known problem for coherentists: it is possible to have two equally coherent systems that contradict each other. Yet (some would argue that) p is either justified or unjustified, but not both. This is not mitigated if, e.g. both systems have the same self-presenting properties as their basis.

4.3. *Solution*

- *First problem:* The Pyrrhonian accepts the claim that we (for the most part) *presume* that our senses are reliable.
 - However, unlike some foundationalists (e.g. Chisholm), the Pyrrhonian does *not* accept the stronger claim that we are *entitled to presume* that our senses are reliable. (To make the stronger claim about entitlement is to assume a kind of *prima facie* justification.)
- *Second Problem:* With the exception of MP1, all of the other material epistemic principles assume precisely what is at stake in the debate with the Pyrrhonian skeptic.
 - Ex. Chisholm holds:
 - MP2. Accepting b tends to make b probable.
 But the Pyrrhonian will deny this, and only grant the weaker:
 - MP2* Accepting b **strikes us** as making b probable.
 Strictly speaking MP2* is not a material epistemic principle, since striking us as making something probable is merely a psychological claim, not an epistemic claim.
 - This, of course, is precisely what the Pyrrhonian wants.
 - Parallel points apply to MP3-MP10.