

**“On the Problem of Justification: A defence of William K. Clifford’s
Evidentialism”**

*A Thesis Submitted to the University of Hyderabad
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of*

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By

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DECLARATION

I, Archana Jamatia, do hereby declare that this thesis titled **“On the Problem of Justification: A defence of William K. Clifford’s Evidentialism”** submitted under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Venusa Tiny is my bonafide research work and is free from plagiarism. I also declare that it has not been submitted in full or in part to this university or any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma. I hereby agree that my thesis can be deposited in Shodhganga/INFLIBNET.

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The student has two presentations and one publication for the minimum requirement of the Ph.D. thesis submission.

I. PRESENTATION

1. Ms. Archana Jamatia. Presented the paper title “When habit is associated with Identity” in the Three-Day National Seminar *Politics of presentation: Interdisciplinary Perspective* Organized by the department of English, Sikkim University in collaboration with HRDD, Government of Sikkim from 1-3 November 2017.
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III. PUBLICATION

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2.	PH-802	Topics in Epistemology	4	PASS
PH.D-II Semester				
3.	PH-851	Topics in Ethics	4	PASS
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Dedicated To

My

*Lt. Grandfather Padmashree Beni Chandra Ch. Jamatia, he taught
himself and inspired me to pursue academics*

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“On the Problem of Justification: A defence of William K. Clifford’s Evidentialism”

Introduction

Knowledge is not an unfamiliar notion. It is so familiar that we often take it for granted. We do say that ‘I know this or that.’ And the degree of our confidence in knowledge varies. When we were child, our confidence level is up to hundred percent. Even the imagination seems real. Like, during our childhood days there used to be popular serial called ‘*Sindbad*,’ we never doubted his hero ship. He fly on the sky sitting on the mat, and we believed it. Even the fighting scenes in the television appears very real. However, as we grow, we realize that it is a fantasy story. We also realise the quality of fighting scene. We feel ourselves like a fool to think those fantasy story as real.

As we grow, we get to know other thing, such as our parenthood, nationality, religion etc. We take that also granted. We belief that this people are my parents, this is the village I belong to, this is the language we speak, these are the attire we wore etc. and the interested thing is we identify ourselves with it without any doubt. We don’t question about our identity. Instead, we take pride in our belongings or identity.

However, our identity are questionable even though there are certainty. Questionable in the sense that, our parenthood can be questionable, so are other belongings. A child take it for granted that he or she is the parent, this is his name. However, there are possibilities that whomsoever the child was thinking as his parents adopted him, and there are many people who are not biological parent. For example Gora, the male protagonist of the noble laureate Rabindranath Tagore’s story *Gora*, took pride in his birth, identity, and social position.

Gora lived his life with the Hindu principle as his parents were Hindu. He practiced caste system, he even avoided the women he loved because she was not from the same caste. But he felt liberated when he realized that his parents were not his biological parents, he was adopted when he was very young. He was not even Hindu, as he was racially from Europe. This example is not to highlight caste issues. However, the story gives us a subject to introspect on our social, religious and political identity.

Secondly, on the knowledge which we consider as scientific or the knowledge of our surrounding: From Ptolemy to Kant and till today the science has been proven to provide new information to us. Back then, every one including the astrophysicist believed that the earth was round, they believed on the nine planets. These knowledge changed in time. Now if I say the earth is flat, even a laymen would say that I have lose my mind.

This changes in the belief led us to question all our beliefs. Be it political, personal, or scientific. Even though in epistemology, knowledge is considered as truth and justified, yet it is not free from doubt. This brought to the challenge of defining knowledge, because at any moment my belief or justification may shatter. It may liberate me like Gora got liberated when he knew that he was not a Hindu. Or else it may turn a person to sceptic, questioning everything.

Acknowledging this pros and cons, there is this acceptance about the knowledge, belief and justification that everything we know is questionable. The reasons are partially subjective and objective. However, knowledge is the part and parcel of once journey. We cannot say we know everything neither can we say that we know nothing. What we can say is that, life is a journey of beliefs. This journey is like relay race where the baton is the

justification each knower has and he passed it to the next runner till he reaches to the final line. The only difference is that in this relay there may or may not be finishing line.

Considering the journey few question raised to introspect on our belief. Among these question some are common questions, frequently asked by all philosophers. The questions are as follows:

1. What is knowledge?
2. Is Justified True Belief knowledge?¹
3. Is knowledge knowing about the other thing or knowing knowledge itself?
(Epistemology surely is knowing about knowledge).
4. Can I have knowledge of knowledge from knowing what knowledge can do or the function of knowledge?
5. Is knowledge propositional; knowing the meaning of language or more than knowing the meaning?

These questions further leads to various queries by the different seekers like Do we have any knowledge about anything? Or to copy the entire line/sentence from the title of the book ‘What is this thing called Knowledge?’ (Duncan Prichard). Can we really describe knowledge or it is indescribable?² If I simply say yes ‘it is describable’ then I have to be ready with some description in my hand. What does description mean? It means to be able to give some identity to things/entity in the form of ‘a/the so-and-so.’³ From Russell’s

¹ E. L. Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?," *Analysis* 23, no. 6 (1963): 121-123 doi:10.1093/analys/23.6.121.

² Duncan Pritchard, *What is this thing called Philosophy?* (London: Routledge, 2015), 1-5.

³ "The Problems of Philosophy, by Bertrand Russell," Free EBooks | Project Gutenberg, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/5827/5827-h/5827-h.htm#link2HCH0001>.

descriptions, I am making the assumptions that neither can I say that I have no knowledge, because partially I know fragments of many things nor can I say that I have knowledge as I do not know things with certainty. The situation is such that I know yet I don't know at the same time. This is logically contradictory position and cannot be entertained yet I want to be optimistic with the belief that, partially I have knowledge of something because I have belief on the justification of knowledge.

With the concept of knowledge and belief I took the approach of justification of knowledge as justification of belief considering that knowledge at least is of two types: spiritual and material. We know self and the self knows the others. Self can be spiritual and it denotes subjectivity whereas others denotes objectivity, science, logic and the shared world. Be it subjective or the objective, the commonality is the justification. In every form of belief a justification is a must.

Justification defined in various aspects:

Justification are of various kind. It can be rational, emotional, perceptual, testimonial and other. The notable theories of justifications are foundationalism, coherentism, internalism, externalism, reliabilism, evidentialism and others. A rational person would justify everything based on reason, so much so that he may deny the apparent reality, for example Descartes would doubt anything other than the thinking self. For a person, who gives priority to emotions may justify things based on emotions. For example, the work of charity, an act of forgiving, loving the neighbour is completely based on emotion. Reasons are not accountable in this conditions. On the other hand those who take experience

as the prime source of justification, for them they will not consider anything that are beyond experience.

Coming to epistemic justification, where both experience and reason is taken into consideration there the method of justification will be mixed kind. For example, Gettier would question on the justification of belief with the question of necessity and sufficiency. He may accept both rational and experiential account. He analyses the justification as; S is justified in believing that p, where justification includes S's acceptance, adequate evidence, and surety.⁴ Further he brings the notion of necessity and sufficient conditions for justification of belief.

Evidence

Evidentialism is a prominent theory in many field like in judiciary, religion, and moral and also in philosophical justification. In jurisdiction, a judge will not give sentences unless evidences are provided before the judge. A religious seekers looks for evidence to strengthen his/her belief. The nature of evidence will surely vary in religious and moral context, as their domain of justification cannot be taken as other scientific or jurisdiction justification. However, evidence is considered as good means of justifying a belief. The reasons are that evidence brings clarity. Evidence is a means of creating belief and proof of the final result.⁵ Evidence may be given in any suit or proceedings of existence or non-existence of every fact in issue and of such other facts as are hereinafter declared to be

⁴ Ibid. p 121-123

⁵ "Evidence," Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, last modified December 15, 2022, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evidence>.

relevant, and of no others. Conclusions drawn through evidence are the combination of reasoning and the substantiation through acquired facts.

From the above it can be inferred that there are types of evidence and the types are: propositional and physical evidence. Propositional would include logical statements; and physical evidence would include:

Direct evidence or perceptual evidence: there is a proverb that goes *pratyaksh*⁶ do not need *pramaan*,⁷ direct evidence may be considered as a basic belief that need no justification.

Direct evidence is perceived through the five senses and considered as basic. Testimony and memory also fall into the category of direct evidence. Testimony is taken as one of the valid sources of knowledge as long as the one who testifies is reliable in the sense that he or she is not going to give false testimony. There is a means of measuring the authenticity of testimony. On memory, Russell suggests that memory is the extension of sense data. We remember what we see or heard, and these are presented to our senses. Accordingly he says that memory is the sources of all our knowledge, without it there cannot be inferences or something to be inferred.⁸ Hence, going by Russell's description on memory, it can also be considered as direct evidence.

On the other hand there are other form of evidence which are indirectly available to us through different modes. Those evidence are documentary evidence, and circumstantial evidence. Documentary evidence suggests reliability. Where oral testimony is not sufficient to prove one's point of view, documents help in the justification of belief. There

⁶ Prima facie

⁷ Proof

⁸Russell, Bertrand. "Knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description." In *Proceedings of the Aristotelian society*, vol. 11, pp. 108-128. Aristotelian Society, Wiley, 1910.

is a belief in the documentation that it provides true information. For example, our national identity card proves that we are the citizen of a nation. The University identity card proves that I am a student of University. Secondly, there is circumstantial evidence, which may be helpful when one lacks documents. It is completely presumptuous, and it goes with the belief that the testimony may be erroneous, yet the circumstances do not warrant it. Circumstances help in demarcating relevant from irrelevant. For example, in the case of the 2012 Delhi gang rape; the police found the culprit through circumstantial evidence.

Evidence in Epistemology

Epistemologically, evidence means something that helps in justifying doxastic beliefs as it creates a link that connects the premises to reach to conclusion, and from one to many. Evidence supports a proposition, and it indicates the supported proposition as either true or false. In order for something to act as evidence for a hypothesis, it has to stand in the right relation to it. For example, a perceptual experience of a cat on a mat may act as evidence that justifies the belief that there is a cat on the mat. Secondly, evidence also helps in the justification of inferential by providing conditions for a belief.

My thesis is on the theory of William K Clifford's Notion of Evidentialism where he brings the concept of Ethics attached with evidence to justify a belief. Through Ethics he brings the concept of epistemic duty and moral obligations together. This is the first time that happened in the history of epistemology that the discourse on the justification of a belief is carried forward through moral dimension. Clifford provides two principles for the justification of belief that are: firstly he states that "it is wrong always, everywhere, for

anyone to believe in anything on insufficient evidence,”⁹ and secondly, “it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone to ignore evidence that is relevant to his beliefs, or to dismiss relevant evidence in a facile way.”¹⁰

Evidence though makes a strong claim for the justification of belief but faces issue due to the keyword sufficiency from the first statement and relevance from the updated version of first statement. The question of sufficiency and necessity is raised through it. Otherwise, the problem of sufficiency and necessity was raised by the philosopher like Edmund Gettier, Roderick M. Chisholm and others. However, it was exclusively from epistemic approach separated from moral aspects.

Now, considering Clifford’s emphasise on the ethics of beliefs, I am taking both ethics and epistemology to determine the justification of epistemic belief. With Ethics the notion of actions also becomes paramount or else action is not an epistemic subject. Clifford’s ethics of belief do not face criticism from the other epistemologist, instead he faces criticism from his contemporary thinker William James who brought religious believe and objects evidential principle of Clifford on the ground of *will* that we do not require evidence in religious belief. James do not agree with that term that ‘everywhere’ sufficient evidence is required. For James, in religious belief one do not require evidence to belief that there is God, or Devine being. This forms of belief springs from individual’s free wills and not from evidence

⁹ A. J. Burger, William K. Clifford, and William James, *The Ethics of Belief* (Scotts Valley: CreateSpace, 2008), 1-2

¹⁰ José M. Otero, "AA. VV., Faith, Freedom, and Rationality: Philosophy of Religion Today, Jeff JORDAN - Daniel HOWARD-SNYDER (eds.), Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham - London 1996, 287 pp., 14 x 22,5, ISBN 0-8476-8153-X," *Scripta Theologica* 32, no. 3 (2017): 137-153, doi:10.15581/006.32.14943.

James makes this criticism based on the first section of Clifford's work. James missed on the second and third sections where Clifford's provided conditions for belief, where he goes beyond evidence keeping some conditions. If James had considered the other two sections then he would not have criticised Clifford's ethics of belief. Despite James's criticism, Clifford's position becomes gateway for other school of thought where belief is a predominant factor came to the discussion of epistemic justification; for example, virtue epistemology and social epistemology. In my thesis I have attempted to bring his other sections that were not considered by James nor A. J. Burger who objected James.

The other reasons for Evidentialism

There are other reasons why I have considered evidence for the justification of belief. The reason is that, evidence is connected to the experience through self and other and sense experiences as the direct knowledge is a strong position to support a belief. Secondly, other than the truth value evidence links between the knower and the known by connecting the dots between past, present and future. It further suggests location and occupation of space.

Time and space have both advantage and disadvantage in making the justification of knowledge. From the above definition evidence provides an advantage that is the accessibility to other inaccessible. By inaccessibility I don't mean something that goes beyond the physical realm, it means others experiences. These experiences are inaccessible due to time and space. Time, because not everything comes into existence at one time. The experiences that one had can be traced as it is existing, existed or possibility of existence in the time and space. We are bounded within the time frame of past, present and future

and we also bounded in the certain location in space. If I am located in place p then at the same time I cannot be located in another place p' . The second meaning of inaccessibility would be the mental faculty that every individual possesses.

Considering the passages and Clifford's stand on evidence, the thesis attempts to explore on the evidentialism of Clifford, James objection, response to James, and contemporary evidentialism to defend Clifford's Evidentialism. It also bring out the follow up work of Clifford that are *The Weight of Authority*¹¹ and *The Limits Inference*,¹² which are the part of his work 'Ethics of Beliefs' but rarely mentioned by his critique. The thesis takes different approach to defend evidentialism and Clifford's position.

First Chapter

The thesis has four chapter. The first chapter is titled 'Defence of Evidentialism.' The first chapter deals with the core discussion of Clifford's ethics of belief. The ethics of beliefs highlights the importance of sufficiency to form a belief and put forward a moral question where he suggest that it is individuals moral responsibility to belief only when they possess sufficient evidence. To this William James made an objections stating that, there is no need for evidence in every form of belief. Some cases are exempted from the evidence. In response to William James, A. J Burger, Criticise his position but he did not help Clifford's positions. Hence the first chapter is an attempt to defend Clifford's Ethics of Belief particularly the statement where he says that it is wrong always, everywhere for anyone to belief anything on insufficient evidence. Secondly, I brought the defence of evidentialism

¹¹ A. J. Burger, William K. Clifford, and William James, *The Ethics of Belief* (Scotts Valley: CreateSpace, 2008), 19-35.

¹² Ibid. 35-40.

discussed by Richard Feldman and Earl Conee to support Clifford's position. Where Feldman and Conee strongly emphasises the notion of *being right* to the epistemic justification. Meanwhile a discourse on morality is brought up as Clifford suggest the strong sense of morality as the necessity condition in the method of Justification of belief.

Second Chapter

The second chapter is titled 'Aspects of Evidentialism.' the second chapter deals with the second section of his work title the Role of Authority. In this section Clifford's brings the discourse on the role authority, society and every individual's moral responsibility in formation of a belief. In this section he highlights on the good and evil practices by the people. In this context, evil practice is suggested towards when someone fails to apply the reason for a belief. Good practices are when a belief is followed from a rational account. The rationality implies the formation of belief through justification that is supported by scientific evidence. The belief may be of religion or it may be of medicine.

In addition to his moral responsibility of the individuals I have address on the nature of distortion due to which one's justification may possibly get diluted. This distortion may cause the reason for confusion. To remove confusion, I have emphasised on the test and investigation which Clifford himself mentions in his work. And apart from Clifford, I have brought the evidentialism of Richard Feldman and Conee's concept of *caution* to strengthen the Clifford's position.

Third Chapter

The role of evidence is not just to bring out into light that are accessible, it also brings things that inaccessible to us through the connection between universal and particular. Our

experience are limited, and at one point we need to justification for our belief for inaccessible things. To these Clifford suggests belief in the principle of uniformity and brings a connection between *simplicity* and *universality* with the statement: "...we may believe what goes beyond our experience, only when it is inferred from that experience by the assumption that what we do not know is like what we know."¹³ This chapter's attempt is to draw an inference of the subject of belief that are not directly accessible to us through senses. Discourses are made to defend Clifford's Uniformity principle by addressing the problem it may faces due to the uniformity and to do so, Mill's Method of difference is brought parallel to Clifford's inferences to defend a belief that goes beyond experience and to understand what we do not know from what we know.

Fourth Chapter

The fourth and final chapter is titled 'Evidential Justification considering a Context, Morality and Faith.' The objectives of the chapter is that in the method justification when one considers the evidence to supports one's claim, the sufficient and necessity conditions takes the problem of justification in two ways first is the regression and second is the circularity. Hence to avoid that I have conjoined evidentialism with contextualism and secondly evidentialism with faith. The problem of regression is attended by the foundationalist, yet because of its denial of the evidence, I have approached contextualism rather than foundationalism. Discourses on foundationalism is provided in this chapter to show why it do not help evidentialism.

¹³ A. J. Burger, William K. Clifford, and William James, *The Ethics of Belief* (Scotts Valley: CreateSpace, 2008), p. 36

Contextualism is a knowledge attribution which came to the picture of epistemology as responds towards scepticism but the contextualism in evidentialism is brought to highlight on the importance specificity of a subject for justification of belief or else the justification would be a never ending chain. To avoid these problems I propose the consideration of (1) contextualism, where the attempt is explain the importance to consider context in evidence to draw a line to decide the sufficiency of evidence, (2) Secondly, consideration of faith in relation to action to justify one's belief. Action and justification are two distinct subject. However, considering Clifford's moral responsibility I brought the notion of action and justification together to do with sufficiency of justification. Because Clifford briefly mention that it is the action that that test the truth of a belief, in other words a belief is real when it guides one's action.¹⁴

The important aspect is that evidence is what justifies beliefs. This line of thought is usually followed in epistemology and tends to explain evidence in terms of private mental states, for example, as experiences, other beliefs or knowledge. This is closely related to the idea that how rational someone is determined by how they respond to evidence. Another aspect is that, evidence is focused beyond private mental state through the consideration of evidence as common property as Socrates also suggest that whatever is knowledge is teachable or transferable.¹⁵ Clifford also take knowledge or belief as transferable through one's action. On this view, it is essential that evidence is public so that different scientists can share the same evidence as it is a common property. It is common property as it arises out of responsibility. It is a common property as it is available and

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 23

¹⁵ "Meno," Free EBooks | Project Gutenberg, last modified December 1, 2022, <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/1643/pg1643-images.html>.

acceptable. Common property is the heirloom of knowledge that is the progress of knowledge built through the modes of thought and forms by the knowledge seeking community from generation to generation by building trust.

Chapter-1

Defence of Evidentialism

Seeing, touching, eating, smelling and hearing are reliable sources of knowledge. Yet, with all the functional senses, due to factors such time, space and lifespan, our knowledge of things in the world is very limited. Very few things are accessible to us directly through the senses and even the accessible things are such that they are experienced differently by different people in different circumstances. Besides, there is no guarantee that what we experience at a given situation is objective or free from error. All this bring to our attention the somewhat paradoxical nature of evidence – the need for evidence and the reliability of evidence itself for acquiring knowledge.

In the nineteenth century, William K. Clifford first time articulated the concept of evidence methodically to justify belief through his book *The Ethics of Belief*.¹⁶ The methods of deduction based on evidence are common in legal and epistemic reasoning. In the law court, the prime focus is on meeting justice and so the pursuit of this end is met by establishing the rights, duties, and liabilities of a particular person. Clifford also focuses on related issues such as social justice, establishing rights and duties. However, the epistemic goal is the justification of belief and so for him the central focus or question has been the legitimacy and usefulness of evidence in the epistemic context. Clifford contends that for every person, it is not correct to believe anything if there are no sufficient evidence to support ones belief. However, his work faced criticism from his contemporary philosopher, William James. In his work, *The Will to Believe*¹⁷ James points out that both sufficiency of

¹⁶ Clifford, William K, *The Ethics of Belief*, published in 1877, in a journal *Contemporary Review*.

¹⁷ William James, *The Will to Believe: And Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (1896)

evidence is not necessary to form a belief and that forming a belief without sufficient evidence is not necessarily a wrong thing. Apart from them, there are other philosophers such as Richard Feldman and Earl Conee who also defended various versions of evidentialism. In this chapter, my attempt is directed primarily towards defending the evidential approach of Clifford against the criticism of William James. Attempt is being made to show that James's objection can be overlooked on the ground that the concept of will is not central to epistemic issues and so it is inadequate to undermine or question the importance of evidential theory in epistemology. Secondly, relevant discourses of the twenty first century's defences of evidentialism by Richard Feldman and Earl Conee including the objections to their defences and their counter-responses to the objections have been highlighted as a prelude to the subsequent chapters.

1.1 Evidentialism in epistemology

Evidentialism in epistemology may be broadly defined as follows:

EVI: A person S is justified in believing proposition p at a time t if and only if S's evidence for p at time t supports the belief p.¹⁸

According to the evidentialism hypothesis, a person's view is only justifiable if and when it is backed by sufficient evidence. Based on the data at hand, it advises which beliefs are rational or justified and which beliefs are not. When it comes to the function of evidence in epistemology, the driving intuition is that it is what supports beliefs. For example, a perceptual experience of a cat on a mat may act as evidence that justifies the belief that there is a cat on the mat. Shyam's auditory experience of the cooker whistle justifies her

¹⁸ W.K. Clifford. "The Ethics of Belief." *The Theory of Knowledge*. 3rd. ed. ED. Louis P. Pojnam. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003.

belief that the cooker is still on the gas stove. Other doxastic attitudes, such as disbelief or suspension of belief, are also included in the account of evidence. If there is compelling evidence in favour of something, one should hold that belief; if there is compelling evidence against it, one should hold that belief in suspension; and if there is no compelling evidence at all, one should not hold that belief. The bottom line is that evidence ought to help in justifying our beliefs.¹⁹

Evidence plays a vital part in epistemology whether or not we know it. In actuality, it permeates our daily conversations and actions. Evidence is frequently cited in areas like the judicial system, history, media, etc. There have been several efforts to comprehend the nature of evidence. These endeavours frequently begin with intuitions from a single discipline or in connection to a single theoretical function performed by evidence, then expand these intuitions to produce broad definitions or theories. When it comes to the function of evidence in epistemology, the driving intuition is that it is what supports beliefs. For instance, Shyam's aural perception of the whistle from the cooker supports her conviction that the cooker is still on the gas burner. The believer must have proof in order to fulfil this function. Therefore, Shyam's personal experience might support his own opinions but not those of others.

According to some philosophers, proof can only be in one's conscious mind, such as sensory information. However, there are those who think that this view is limited and faces a number of difficulties. In many situations, we have to rely on testimonies of others or documented facts on issues which are not available for direct observations. There are thus

¹⁹ W.K. Clifford. "The Duty of Inquiry." *The Ethics of Belief*. Revised edition. Edited by A.J. Burger. 2008

individuals who support the idea that all mental states, even unconscious stored ideas, can serve as evidence. However, there are some objections of this viewpoint as well. It is been asserted that the existence of a mental condition capable of justifying another does not guarantee that the justification will take place. There must be a link between belief and experience, or there must be something greater. This means that the premise of this school of thinking is that a belief must be rooted in or related to the mental state serving as its support. Even in the case of the aforementioned example, if Shyam had both the experience and the belief but is unaware that the whistle is generated by the cooker, the whistle will not provide as support for his conviction.

The important aspect is that evidence must serve to justify a belief. Interestingly, the practice of appealing to evidence is closely linked to the idea our idea of rationality – how rational someone is can be measured by how she responds/appeals to evidence. The idea of rationality is strongly entrenched in the scientific activities and practices. And so evidence has significant roles to play in sciences. Among them is the use of evidence for arbitrating between competing hypotheses or theories. The one which is supported by evidence or stronger evidence will replace the other one as the rational choice. According to this perspective, sharing the same information across scientists requires that the evidence be made public. This in line with the view of Clifford who also maintains that evidence is a common property. In this sense, evidence has a crucial role to play in the creation of common property. It is a common property as it arises out of social responsibility.²⁰ Common property is the heirloom of knowledge. This idea and practice of common

²⁰ Alvin Goldman, "Reliabilism: What is Justified Belief?," *Arguing About Knowledge*, 2020, 157-173, doi:10.4324/9781003061038-27

property is essential for the progress of knowledge; it is built through the modes of thought by the knowledge seeking community from generation to generation as a trust.

Despite its importance and huge ramifications in the field of epistemic pursuit, a clear and universal definition of evidence is difficult to obtain. The reason is that there are many different definitions of evidence that may be used, both inside and across areas as well as both, and that can conflict with one another. For instance, when evaluated as evidence in various fields, it is unclear what a bloody knife and a perceptual experience have in common. Just like competing theories in sciences, we can even talk about competing evidences for justifying beliefs. One can use a bloody knife as evidence in a murder case while for the same case, another can use a witness to nullify the evidence of a bloody knife. In some other situation, the same ‘fact’ can be used to support different beliefs as well.

In what follows, we will try to pay a closer look at the notion of evidence by highlighting some standard discourses and perspectives in the literature. Generally, EVI, associated with William K. Clifford in his work *The Ethics of Belief*, is the central theme of the evidentialism. Richard Feldman and Earl Conee too defended the concept of evidentialism in their work title *Evidentialism*.²¹ This defence is particularly against William James’s *The Will to Believe*²² that he wrote in response to Clifford’s work mentioned above. In addition, a consideration attention will also be given to Hilary Kornblith’s work “Beyond Foundationalism and The coherence Theory”²³ where he provides an argument to show that a person may have evidence to support a belief but it does not show that a belief is

²¹ Richard Feldman and Earl Conee. “Evidentialism.” *Epistemology: An Anthology*. 2nd Ed. Edited by Ernest Sosa, Jaegwon Kim, Jeremy Fantle, and Mathew McGrath. Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2008.

²² William James, *The Will to Believe: And other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (1896),

²³ Hilary Kornblith, "Beyond Foundationalism and the Coherence Theory," *A Naturalistic Epistemology*, 2014, xx, doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198712459.003.0002.

justified. To have a good evidence may or may not suffice a justification.²⁴ And secondly, I want to bring highlight on Alvin Goldman's work "What is justified belief?"²⁵ to defend Clifford's justification.

1.2 W.K. Clifford

The central principles of *The Ethics of Belief* suggest that belief-formation, belief-maintenance and belief-relinquishment are governed by norms. Based on these principles, one can raise the follows questions:

- i. Is it morally wrong to form a belief on insufficient evidence?
- ii. Is it morally right to form a belief on sufficient evidence?
- iii. Is it morally right to suppress a belief when an evidence is absent?
- iv. Are people morally obligated to seek out all the evidences in order to form a belief?

Answering these questions, Clifford in his above mentioned work, i.e., section one, titled "The Duty of Inquiry", suggests that in order to form a belief or disbelief, there ought to be necessary and sufficient evidences. Clifford took the approach of duty/obligation to believe something, that is, the duty to believe something when backed by necessary and sufficient evidence. Clifford offered two anecdotes to throw light on his position. He begins his "Duty of Inquiry" with the anecdote of voyage: there was a ship owner who sent his ship for a voyage. He had this knowledge that the ship was old and have thought for the repairmen. The repairing would cost him wealth. However, considering the past successful

²⁴ Kornblith's "Beyond foundationalism and the coherence theory:' The Journal of Philosophy 77 (1980), pp. 597-612, esp. pp. 601 ff.

²⁵ Alvin I. Goldman, "What is Justified Belief?," *Justification and Knowledge*, 1979, p. 1-23, doi:10.1007/978-94-009-9493-5_1

voyages he decides to send the ship with many people, goods and resources in it. He convicted himself with the belief the ship is sea worthy and thoroughly safe. The ship departed and sink midway with no tales to tell.²⁶

Clifford raises a follow up question from the anecdote; “What shall we say of him?”²⁷ The ship's collapse and the subsequent deaths of the passengers are undoubtedly the owner's fault. Since his ship had survived several storms, the ship's owner honestly thought that it was seaworthy. Supposing that the ship survived not only this but also many other voyages after this, would he be charged guilty? Clifford suggests that:

“When an action is done, it is right or wrong for ever; no accidental failure of its good or evil fruits can alter that. The man would not have been innocent, he would only have been not found out.”²⁸

In such a scenario, how would Clifford account for other voyages prior to the last one which did not survive? Note that the ship’s condition was also weak in the previous voyage but weathered the stormy sea successfully; all these successful voyages are reasons good enough to infer that the next trip will also be successful. The problem is deep and a straight answer is difficult to offer though Clifford seems to have one.

According to Clifford, in the lack of evidence, it is wrong to believe anything, and if there is any doubt, then there are moral obligations as well as epistemic responsibility to look for certainty with patient investigation. Stifling doubts is wrong; instead one ought to do serious investigation before arriving at a belief or a decision. The best way to get to certainty is through evidence and by constantly testing the evidence, unlike the confidence built through ‘blind’ belief. He goes on to put forward an important point that belief in

²⁶ Clifford, William Kingdon. *The ethics of belief*. Good Press, 2021.

²⁷ Clifford, W.K. The Ethics of Belief—I, *The Ethics of Belief*. Edited by A.J. Burger. 2008 p. 10

²⁸ Ibid. p. 10

itself is not to be judged as right or wrong but it is the action that follows from it²⁹ which becomes the matter of judgement as right or wrong. Accordingly, he argues that it is wrong on the part of the ship owner to base his decision on the performances of the earlier voyages of the ship when he knew that it is already weak and moreover, many lives are tied to the life of the ship. One cannot be exempted from her duty to provide reasons for her belief and decision; it is a wrong for the ship owner nourish wishful thinking, and to suppress doubts. The result of suppression of doubt is the avoidance of investigation, which we could see in the ship owner's attitude.

Clifford gives second anecdote based on the people who lived in an island. The anecdote goes like this: there lived an islander with a particular religious practice. The professor of that religion started the practice that would separate the children from their parents. He starts his own law of religion. As the time pass by, the religion grew in its number. However, later a commission was formed to investigate the practices. When the group of people practicing the religion was found then they were accused of the crime. They were accused with minimum evidence and minimum enquiry. Justice was stolen due to prejudice and passion.³⁰

From the second anecdote, the need to investigate claims and evidences is being stressed. Accurate investigation by the commission shows that the accused is really not guilty of the charges brought against them; rather the accusers are guilty of forming their wrong and unfounded beliefs based on 'prejudices and passion'. Sincere and passionate conviction without reasonable evidence to support it is insufficient and wrong. This is what Clifford

²⁹ Clifford, William K. *The Ethics of Belief* Publish by Good press, 2021

³⁰ Clifford, W.K. *The Ethics of Belief—I, The Ethics of Belief*. Edited by A.J. Burger. 2008 p. 11

has to say on the accusers: Without any doubt they would say that, we were right from the very beginning; and we hope that you will believe us next time. And because of their accidental right they might be believed that, but this kind of belief is not honorable. Because the men may have been innocent, but they will never know as they did not attempt to find it out. Their judgment was completely based on passion and prejudice, yet “they had no right to believe on such evidence as was before them.”³¹ Taking parallel example, everyday thousands of people visit temples, specially the Tirupati Balaji Temple. The statistics show that almost around seventy six thousand people visit Tirupati Balaji Temple every day. People donate their fortunes, and also their hair. People have this belief that Lord Vishnu will bless people with health, wealth, children and others. This form of belief results from passion, and Clifford finds this form of belief to be subject of inquiry.

In both the cases, it is the action that determines if the judgement is right or wrong. Even if the ship's owner may believe that it is safe to sail, it is still necessary to thoroughly inspect the vessel before entrusting it with people's lives. Furthermore, one should hold off on making anything public until the accused's character has been thoroughly and carefully probed, no matter how certain one may be of the fairness of her cause and the veracity of her convictions. In all situations, it is important to remember that if a man's belief is entrenched, he may not be able to consider other possibilities. But since his acts are the result of a decision, further research is necessary to support his beliefs and decisions. He insists that there must be “a plain rule dealing with overt acts”³² so that there is check on the uncontrollable thoughts and feelings that would result into fair, complete and unbiased

³¹ Clifford, W.K. *The Ethics of Belief*—I, *The Ethics of Belief*. Edited by A.J. Burger. 2008 p. 11

³² Ibid. p. 12

belief. If a belief is founded on the unfair means of inquiry then the performance of this necessary duty becomes unfit for a man.

Apart from the moral duty, the other reason given by Clifford regarding evidence is related to *social purpose*. He believes that a purpose guides our lives in general and other courses of things. An heirloom of knowledge and belief is created which is received and then passed on from one generation to another; a belief is woven for good or evil purpose with responsibility to create posterity in the world. In this sense, the role and value of evidence goes beyond the epistemic domain to social domain. He even goes further. He opines that evidence has its share in all cases of belief for humanity that are established through experiences, toils and have stood against the free and fierce questioning. This belief then helps in binding, strengthening and directing a person's action for the wellbeing of humankind in general. Humankind would degrade if it is desecrated by the unproved and unquestioned statement for the sake of individual's whims and pleasures. Hence, a believer must guard his belief with a jealous care. If a belief rests on unworthy object, then there will be stain that can never be wiped off. Along with the leaders of men, statesmen, philosophers and poets, he addresses every rustic men and also hard-worked wife to do the universal duty towards mankind. The universal duty is questioning all beliefs so that there are no stains in the history of belief.

Clifford acknowledges that this duty is hard and may often turn out to be a bitter experience. At times, one may feel bare and powerless when one is supposed to feel safe and strong with exciting and novel ideas due to lack of sufficient evidence. People prefer to feel content and safe when they know exactly what to accomplish since there is a sense of power associated with knowing. People, on the other hand, do not appreciate the concept

of being ignorant and helpless. This prevailing mind-set or propensity makes a person fearful of doubting and eager to believe. Clifford says that this impression of authority is most effective when belief is fairly acquired via research. If the belief has been adopted from the insufficient evidence, it's a deceitful pleasure that gives the impression that one is stronger than one actually is. Given that it is stolen and disobeys human obligations, it is a wicked belief. This disobedience will then spread across the community like a plague.

Every time one believes in unworthy reasons, one loses control over themselves, doubting and fairly weighing evidence. An evil is born when such belief is entertained, and it rises when the gullibility is maintained and supported by believing unworthy reasons. According to Clifford, believing something based on insufficient evidence may not cause greater harm, yet, it could cause danger to society. The harm may not be confined to an individual, but it may reach out to society. Society will move back to savagery if people lose the habit of inquiry. Society needs to make belief-inquiry a habit. And if a person does not inculcate this habit, then he/she is guilty of the wrong things such as cheating, theft, deception, etc.

Taking reference of John Milton's *Areopagitica* and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*, Clifford writes,

“[A] man may be genuine and truthful but if he believes in things because his religious teachers say so then even if his beliefs are true; yet the truth will be merely a *hearsay*. Secondly, if a man loves a sect more than the truth, then the person would end in loving his self than the truth.”³³

He concludes his defence of evidentialism by saying that it is improper for everyone, everywhere, and everywhere to believe anything based on insufficient evidence or to foster

³³ A. J. Burger, William K. Clifford, and William James, *The Ethics of Belief* (Scotts Valley: CreateSpace, 2008), xx

believing by squelching concerns and forgoing examination. Along this line of thought, he says that it is not lawful to stifle doubts; that inquiry into the doctrine of evidence is not to be taken for granted; that an unsettled doubt is an incomplete inquiry; that pushing away any doubts is a crime against mankind; that if one has no time to inquiry then one would have no time to belief.

1.3 William James

Clifford's 'Duty of Inquiry' has been objected by James William through his work "The Will to Believe". In his work, he defends the adoption of a belief without prior evidence of its truth and calls it as the justification of faith. As a result, he argues that a belief can exist even in the lack of sufficient proof. He claims that, even if the logical side of one's mind is not entirely persuaded of something, one has the freedom to believe in it in issues of religion even in the absence of "sufficient proof." In doing so, he refutes Clifford's premise that it is unacceptable for anybody to believe anything based on insufficient evidence "always, everywhere."

It would not be unsurprising to find people who would not identify with the position of James. Although it is generally accepted that faith involves a matter of choice, voluntary choice based on one's persuasion and that this choice comes with a right, yet some of his own students, by his admittance, remain unconvinced at his position for the simple reason that in philosophical enterprises, the spirit of logic and inquiry is to be preferred over the spirit of faith. Nevertheless, James stands convinced that his position is correct and

continues to defend it, hoping that the readers are a bit more open in mind compared to the students he has had to deal with.³⁴

He introduces and defines a few technical terms to develop and articulate his thoughts. A hypothesis is named to anything that may be proposed to a certain belief, and that a hypothesis is considered *dead* or *alive*, depending on the possibility of accepting the school of thought in relation to the person under study. To elucidate this point, accepting *Mahdi* may be dead to an American since it makes no connection with the American's nature as such but to an Arab, regardless of being a *Mahdi*'s follower or not, it is a possibility in the way of the thinking and hence, the hypothesis is alive. This seems to suggest that the extent to which a hypothesis is dead or alive is not an intrinsic property of the hypothesis itself, but is actually determined in relation to a thinker or believer, and can be measured by his or her willingness to act on it. A hypothesis can be said to be at a maximum of liveness if the thinker is willing to believe and act on it irrevocably with steadfastness. And that may as well be called a belief, since wherever there is a willingness to act, it carries with it some part of a tendency to believe.

Then there is the decision making between possible hypotheses, which is being called as the *option*. The options may be of various types –*living* or *dead*, *forced* or *avoidable*, and lastly *momentous* or *trivial*. The combination of the living, forced and momentous are the genuine kind of option. A live option describes a scenario wherein two presented hypotheses for decision making are both live ones, that is, both being a plausible possibility. In contrast, if the choice is between being a theosophist or a Mohammedan, the

³⁴ A. J. Burger, William K. Clifford, and William James, *The Ethics of Belief* (Scotts Valley: CreateSpace, 2008),

option here is dead since neither of the hypotheses itself is likely to be considered live. However, if the choice was between being an agnostic or a Christian, both the hypotheses seem appealing, even if by a trifle, and so the option is alive.

If given a choice between stepping out with or without an umbrella, it is not a genuine option again since it is not forced. The whole decision may be avoided easily by not choosing to step outside at all. Similarly, choices between loving and hating someone, accepting a theory to be true or false, are all avoidable options. Avoiding them can be achieved by remaining indifferent to the person and not loving or hating them, and by simply declining to submit any judgment to the theory as acceptance or rejection of its truth. But if it is paraphrased as a choice between either accepting the truth or leaving without it, it becomes an option of forced as there is no alternative place to stand outside of the scenario. No third way out. An option of a forced kind is one where a completely logical disjunction is the base for every situational dilemma and it becomes impossible to refrain from making either one of the decisions.

The last kind is the momentous vs. the trivial options: a choice between whether or not to undertake a research expedition to the North Pole becomes momentous since it may be the only time such a choice is given, and it inadvertently affects the future whether the person is completely excluded from the chance of visiting the North Pole or at least is given the slightest chance of being considered. So James makes statement: prolonged investigation will have trial and failure but whoever refuses the unique opportunity to belief loses the prize due to the inability to belief without evidence.”³⁵ However, if it is a trivial option then

³⁵ James, William. The will to Belief, *The Ethics of Belief*. Edited by A.J. Burger. 2008 p. 43-44

the opportunity does not seem to be once in a lifetime or unique per se with insignificant stakes and reversible decisions if it is later proven to be not right or wise. A rather strange and trivial hypothesis would be like a chemist believing in a hypothesis to be alive and then spending a year to verify it by experimentation and finding his experiment itself to be inconclusive; subsequently, he quits his experiments with no vital harm being done save waste of time.

Taking reference of *Pascal's Wager*, James offers an illustration of will and action: suppose that a celebrated passage in literature attempts to convince or force Christianity onto others by reasoning with them, appealing to their own concerns with truths, just like in a game of chance. The literature claims that there are only two choices, either believe in God or do not. A human cannot reason out with complete information, but in the game that brings out the result of heads or tails only on the final Day of Judgment, one has to choose either option to live with until then. When the *gains* and *losses* are weighed out against each other, if one goes with accepting God, they either win and gain eternal bliss and beauty or lose the wager but lose nothing. Against an *infinity of choices*, if God is only one choice in the wager, it seems better to stake everything on God because even if there is a risk of a finite loss but it can still be reasonable, compared to the possibility of losing out on an infinite gain.

This thought experiment associated with Pascal and alluded to by James is not without problem. When one adopts this belief after a calculated decision, the soul of such faith is lost and it becomes a more mechanical way of looking to gain something out of the wager. Such decision involving rational choice or self-interest choice for gain misses the point of faith. Even though it is a willing decision, it does not stem from the faith's reality as such.

It is possible that even the Deity may presumably be upset with this kind of believers and may not consider granting the eternal reward.

Therefore, the idea of believing by our own volition seems unpleasant and foolish at times. When one looks at a person who pretends to decide out of his own private will or dream, the question arises whether someone who was brought up with a scientific school of thought should also go about proclaiming their own subjectivism. Desecration occurs when a belief is placed in assertions that are neither supported by evidence nor called into question, but are instead held for the comfort or personal enjoyment of the believer. Even if the belief is accurate, Clifford claims that it is wicked if it has been received without appropriate support. Since it is against our obligation to defend ourselves from such notions, just as we would protect ourselves from a plague that takes possession of our own bodies and spreads throughout the community, to steal is against our duty to mankind. To believe in anything without proper evidence is always incorrect. Clifford's voice seems aggressive, yet this is healthy. Simple wishful thinking and free will are like fifth wheels on a wagon. James, however, believes that as long as a person complies with not seeming to believe something they have no reason to believe if it is to their advantage, they will not fall to the lowest level of immorality. James is thinking specifically of Clifford in this regard.

To return to James, if a hypothesis has already died and the will cannot bring it back to life, the most likely culprit is a prior action that was equally willing but of a hostile or counterproductive kind. The *willing nature* in this case includes all the belief elements including "fear and hope, prejudice and passion, imitation and partisanship, and the pressure of caste and set, in addition to the conscious free-will judgments and habits of

faith from which one cannot escape.”³⁶ We may find ourselves accepting a belief without being aware of a reason or how we got there. Whether a hypothesis is dead or alive, it influences or governs our lives like an *authority*. It is what makes us perceive with more inner clarity than any non-believer about the conservation of energy and fragments, about democracy and advancement, or about religious faiths and so on with no apparent reason.

This strongly suggests that our convictions and beliefs are sometime influenced by non-intellectual natures as part of our cultures and traditions, or mere social habits. A passional tendency and volition may precede or follow the instillation of a belief. If they come after, it is too late to be fair, but if the previous passionate work pre-existed along the same lines it is not too late. This, perhaps, makes Pascal’s wager seem less powerless and requirement of final push to make a faith in masses complete and irrevocable.

In the domain of religious life, rational intuition and logical reasoning may not suffice to create religious principles or doctrines though they may play a role. Other forces in life, forces which may not have rational basis, such as ideologies, hope and fear, love and jealousy, etc. seem to play greater role in human actions and decisions. After having recognized this situation, the question needs to be raised as to whether this is condemnable and pathological or simply be considered a normal element in a mind’s decision making. For Clifford, a person claiming to be a follower of Christianity on insufficient evidence, for instance, becomes sinful as it points to the antagonistic direction of lack of enough evidence, thereby, making the hypothesis of being a Christian dead from the very beginning. However, for James, this need not be so. He describes that one’s passionate

³⁶ James, William. *The Will to Belief, The Ethics of Belief*. Edited by A.J. Burger. 2008 p. 48

nature comes to the forefront when faced with options or dilemmas which cannot be decided on intellectual basis alone. And his recommendation is that in such circumstances, it is better to leave the question open than to decide because this itself becomes a passionate decision that carries similar risks of losing out on the truth. This does not mean that philosophical scepticism is the correct view. On the contrary, sceptic position may be excluded on the ground that the discussion is progressing or can make reasonable progress. The fact that though philosophical scepticism is almost irrefutable and yet a large majority of thinkers do not choose it is a strong indication that people act on faith; that is, people make choices and act upon their beliefs even without sufficient evidence. James writes; knowledge and certainty are different from one and other.³⁷ The former may be possible without the latter, but both empiricists and the absolutists display degrees of dogmatism despite not being sceptics. Empiricists and absolutists may be taken to represent two attitudes towards knowledge in this context.

Highlighting the history of opinions involving sciences, James observes that while empiricists are satisfied with tentative truths, the absolutist way insists on certainty. And for attaining certainty of beliefs or truths, the usual approach adopted by philosophers and scientists is the construction of system. To be called a system, it must be closed under implication. While some systems are reversible or defeasible, some deductive systems are not revisable. Philosophers often choose the deductive and absolutist way of pursuing truths. To gain a clearer perspective on absolutist convictions, the scholarly orthodoxy offers a doctrine named *objective evidence*. It describes how one may question one's own existence, or that the value of two must be lesser than three or the mortality of men etc. and

³⁷ Ibid. p. 51

then proceed to provide reasons behind it all through what may be termed as the irresistible illumination of the intellect. However, James considers the alternative option, the empiricist way; for him, this is the way to go by as a man who ponders. Certainty and objective evidence though seemingly desirable is dreamy in that such evidence is not truly found anywhere in reality and so he prefers to call himself an empiricist by nature. He believes that he lives by practical faith and that he must continue experiencing and pondering over opinions in order to build them up so that they can become true and strong; to latch on to them as though they cannot be reinterpreted or corrected is a grave error that the history of philosophy would also vouch for. History is full of disagreements and very rarely, we find ideas which have not been questioned, especially in the history of philosophy.

James points out that the celebrated objective evidence is never truly existent but simply an aspiration of the thinking life's remote ideal. Therefore, one's belief of the objective evidence is, in fact, subjective opinion since a bunch of contradictions would arise; in opinions, claims of certitude and the objective evidence lead to contradictions or conflicts of ideas. The belief in the existence of a personal God versus the difficulty of rationally conceiving of such a God, if such a being exists at all; the importance of morality versus desires as the root of all obligations; the existence of a spiritual principle in all things versus the dynamic states of the shifting minds; an infinite avalanche of causes versus the existence of a physical world external to the mental space; and Infinity vs finiteness; universal continuity versus fundamental discontinuity

When empiricists forfeit the concept of objective certitude or objective evidence, it does not imply that they have terminated their search for truth on the whole. They still have faith

in its existence, however, only consider it a progress to the quality towards collecting more experiences to think of. The strength lies in the outcome of the approach and not the origins of the thoughts that the system has. How it leads the intellect to make decisions is what matters rather than how or where or when it was acquired. If a current of thoughts continuously conforms to it and proves it, it remains the truth.

Given the empiricist attitude and the need to pursue truth, the demand of Clifford according to James is tantamount to giving up our pursuit of truth since absolute truth or certainty appears an impossible task. Clifford urges us not to believe anything without sufficient evidence but life does not operate on that basis. On the contrary, amidst conflicts of ideas and opinions, life goes on and we have this important duty to continue seeking truth. Accordingly, James argues that possible price to pay for making errors is trifle in comparison to the chance of gaining true knowledge; the fear of error is not worth since it closes the possibility of attaining truth altogether. In this way, James claims that the duty to pursue truth amidst the possibility of failures or errors is just the passionate life expressing itself.

Fear of error is real and James confesses that he is not an exception. But failure is not the worst case scenario compared to believing nothing and doing nothing at all. James opines that to take Clifford's advice would be like avoiding to fight a battle because of the fear of losing or the risk of injury while fighting. Worst, avoidance of war when there is a clear need to fight is paving way for the victory of the enemy.

Postponing judgment till evidence is acquired is desirable and good in the practice of law and the wait is worth it if it succeeds in delivering justice. But in our day today lives, we

are not makers of law but acceptors of truth that we record according to James; we simply accept one truth at a time and move on to the next till situation demands revisions or rejections of the recorded truths. Naturally, facts are constant and are reliable. It is not every day that we are faced with the option choosing between the true and the untrue and when we face such a situation, we wisely choose a sceptical balance and postpone our judgment with hope for the truth to prevail in time instead of committing to philosophical scepticism or complete indifference on the matter at hand. Even sciences would not have progressed as much if the mind's desire to search for proof of faith or substance of hope were excluded entirely. A farsighted judgement of Spencer and Weismann, for instance, is better compared to a completely disinterested man or disillusioned sceptic who cares not for results in an investigation. Can someone who actively pursues the truth, instead of simply dodging errors, wait patiently with immunity to punishment, and the convincing evidence to show up? The answer is to be in the negative.

Moral questions are questions that need not wait for sensible or sufficient evidence. The will determines possession of moral beliefs. But what is the truth behind such a preference, or are they biological phenomena that decide between good and evil but stay in indifference on its own. The intellect alone cannot come to such a decision, for when the heart refuses to yearn for a morality in the world the mind cannot possibly believe in it either. Mephistophelian scepticism quenches the mind's instincts more efficiently than does any strict ideal. Some people, even at pupil-life, are so calm at heart that no moral hypothesis has ever seemed unpleasant and thus makes any hot-headed moralist uncomfortable before them.

An empiricist of the kind that James espouses would stand by the existence of a truth, no matter its kind, and are willing to go down either path that the results offer. In contrast, a sceptic would stand by caution and doubt. Which approach would be wiser is something only the Omniscient would be able to determine. However, for our everyday life, we need to keep moving with hope in the discovery of truth amidst trials and errors. Moving itself is a virtue which may be prized over paralysis.

Swerving away from the broader questions and directing our questions towards human relations, the need for evidence to act can be misleading. We do not simply wait for evidence and do nothing to see if someone likes us or not. On the contrary, we act and explore the responses of the other person we are interested at. Relation is essentially built on trust and hope, not on scepticism and demands of evidence. In a relation of love, the relation is built through mutual participation and expression involving mistakes and misunderstanding also. But even mistakes and misunderstanding take a different tone when love gets stronger. At the initial stages, one has to take the risk of rejection and humiliation and expresses one's love for the other. And even after being in a love-relation for many years, it can never be said that there is one way to test true love, not even death itself can be accepted as the ultimate test of love. In that sense, love cannot be confirmed objectively in the same way a scientific hypothesis is confirmed by empirical experiments and observation.

Amongst social animals, members behave as though they have a duty to trust and cooperate with each other for their survival. Desirable and successful actions and activities are due to pre-existent faith among the members. The same principle is also applicable in many human organizations and institutions. For instance, this principle of cooperation based on

trust governs the successful conduct of life in the army or college or soccer team including state government. In the absence of trust and cooperation, misfortunes happen in life. For instance, successful robberies in banks or trains by few people are due to lack of cooperation and trust on the part of the bank staffs and customers and the passengers of the train. However, there were times when attempt robbery failed because someone by faith took the first step to trigger alarm and fight the robbers.

An element of faith is a necessity in religion. Contrary to scientific demands, in religion, certain events or facts cannot be brought about without the pre-existent faith. Conversion in faith leads to radical transformation of life and not vice-versa in the case of religion. When the faith precedes any scientific proof, and the faith in fact helps in manifestation of the fact, it becomes what James calls the *lowest kind of immortality* that thinking can reach. When it comes to truths that depend on our actions personally then our faiths stemming from desires have an inevitable role to play. These may be deemed as amateuristic matters in comparison to greater cosmic faiths such as religion. Religions vary from one another to such a degree that we cannot conceive of any evidence that can be used to test the authenticity of religious claims of truths. On the contrary, authentic moral life which is often considered to be the test of faith is not the necessary condition of faith to be possible but the fruit of faith. Faith comes before action. An action performed without faith is bereft of spiritual value even if serves the common good of human beings, for instance sex and reproduction of life outside the institution of holy marriage.

According to James, “religion offers itself a momentous option.”³⁸ By believing one is meant to gain a certain reward and lose it by disbelief. Additionally, religion is a forced option regarding the reward. There is no escaping by choosing indifference or scepticism or awaiting more information since although mistakes are avoided by the process, so is the reward – regardless of the religion being true or false. It can be analogous to a man who hesitates indefinitely to propose marriage to a woman in doubt of her being angelic after marriage. He would essentially lose the opportunity of the angelic possibility just as surely as if he just married someone else instead. Thus, being sceptical does not confer escape from avoiding an option; rather it is the weighing out of risks of a certain or particular type. James observes that “better is the loss of truth than the chance of error”³⁹ would be the disbeliever of the faith’s stance. Teaching how to be sceptic till the arrival of enough proof is equivalent to stating that in the presence of such a hypothesis, surrendering out of fear of being erroneous is smarter than surrendering to the hope of it being true. With such attitude, progress in any fields of human pursuit would be rendered impossible.

If a religion is true and there is not enough evidence, he does not imagine himself being able to give up his only chance to take the side that is victorious, the chance although being determined by his will to risk pretending like his passional requirement of perceiving reality and the world religiously might be correct and *prophetic*. This is based on an assumption of truth being correct or prophetic truth without proof and that religion is a live hypothesis that has a chance at being true. In religion, our own active willing brings about the appealing nature of the religion in the first place and so we would never reach the

³⁸ Ibid. p. 65

³⁹ Ibid. p. 65

evidence if it weren't for investing efforts to meet the hypothesis half way. Faith brings about desirable actions.

According to James, we would have to use our sympathizing side of logic if the hypothesis turned out to be true by all respects for which pure intellectualism choosing to withhold our willing advances would be absurd. He rejects the agnostic rules for seeking out the truth or voluntarily exclude his willing nature. He reasons out that it is an irrational rule of thinking if it prevents him absolutely from the acknowledgment of certain truths, if they existed. This would be his formal logic, regardless of the material of the truth. He is under the impression that there is no way out of this logic. However, there may still be some individuals who are hesitant to accept that we have the freedom to believe in any hypothesis that is active enough to be able to test our resolve at our own peril if such theory has the potential to do so. If that is the case, he suspects that the reason would be owing to the fact that the person here has strayed away from the abstract logical stance and are thinking of an already dead religious hypothesis without the realization of this. It is a misapprehension when one applies the freedom to believe in anything that he wills or desires or when one treats faith as the sort of belief which is merely about believing in something that isn't known to be true. When it comes to the actual facts, the freedom to believe can encompass only live options that cannot be resolved by the intellect alone. For the person who can consider an option live, it can never seem absurd.

Having outlined the basis of faith, he remarks that when examining a religious question in the way it presents itself, and all the possibilities that it involves in theory and practicality, the tendency to stop one's heart, instincts, courage and instead wait, thinking that the religions were untrue, till doomsday or till the point where both the intellect and the senses

go through enough evidence, seems to be the most unusual idol from philosophy. Since action measures belief, forbidding belief in religion being true also calls for forbidding one to behave as they would if religion were true. The defence of religious faith rests on action. The religious faith becomes sheer superfluity that is better off being trimmed away if a religious hypothesis leads to behaviour that is identical to behaviour motivated by a naturalistic explanation, and the legitimacy controversy is no longer worth toying for serious minds. James believes however, that religious hypothesis provides the world an expression by which our reactions are specifically determined and this is what differentiates it partly from a completely naturalistic school of belief.

To a scholastic absolutist, the notion may have been excusable. If one had an unerring intellect with objective certainties, they may not feel faithful to this awareness of not trusting or awaiting its release. But if we were to take on the stance of an empiricist, and believe that nothing rings in us when the truth is at an arm's reach, then it would be unrealistic to preach about awaiting such a ring, as a duty. If one awaits it, it is at their own risk and danger as they will to the extent of their belief. In both cases, one does act taking their own lives at hand. Neither side should try to nullify the other or abuse the other, but respect the other's mental freedom delicately nor this bring about an intellectual republic and a spirit of inner tolerance, the lack of which outer tolerances does not have a soul. This is the heart of the empiricist glory that allows one to live and let live in both speculative and practicality of things.

Ending James's objection with Fitz James Stephen's questions such as what do one thinks of oneself or the world must be dealt with like the Sphinx' riddles in some or the other way. It is one's own choice to either leave the riddles unanswered or falter in the answers but

one makes the choice at one's own risk and danger. A choice to turn the back against God and the future is also one's own choice and cannot be prevented. Likewise, when one chooses to think and act to the contrary, he cannot be proven mistaken either. Each should be able to act as they think is best for them for if they are wrong, it is only worse for them. It is like standing in the midst of snow and mist on a mountain pass where the paths that may or may not prove deceptive can only be caught at glimpses. Death awaits both those who stand still and freeze and those who choose the wrong path. Whether there is a right one at all is not known. What can be done then? To this question, James suggests, "Be strong and of a good courage. Act for the best and hope for the best, take what comes. If death ends all, we cannot meet death better."⁴⁰ James objects the mode of justification based on evidence on the ground of wills. However, he doesn't refuse intellect or reason but regards the nature of things with the highest value in forming any belief.

1.4 A.J. Burger:

Burger observes that James "confuses actions and believes"⁴¹ and raises some objections in this regard. James' approach of evidence is brief and direct: for example he makes a statement stating "Believe if you will by faith—that is, without proof." He does, of course, set limitations on when he thinks faith is appropriate, but Burger objects this attitude of James as his limitations are by no means sufficient to shield people from the harmful consequences of holding beliefs in the face of uncertainty—that is, having faith.⁴²

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 70

⁴¹ Ibid. p 74

⁴² Ibid. p 74

According to Burger, *option* in general is a choice one makes between given two hypotheses— it is a decision between two potential beliefs—not a decision between two potential actions. “However, the examples provided by James to explain the difference between a *forced option* and an *avoidable option* leave something to be desired, for several involve actions, not beliefs.”⁴³ The choices between going out with an umbrella and without an umbrella are a choice between potential actions and not believe, for instance. Burger states that the distinction between action and belief is paramount and needs careful consideration. The relation between action and belief is such that if one believes that it is going to rain then one might carry an umbrella because of the belief that it might rain. One’s belief can be known through one’s action, but beliefs are distinct from action. For example, carrying umbrella is insufficient to warrant a belief that it will rain. Someone must have bought umbrella for future use, or maybe it is not even her umbrella and that she is carrying it to give it back to the owner from whom she may have borrowed. Given the case that it might rain, it is not necessary that one will carry umbrella either; one may simply choose to walk in the rain, or use rain coat or hat.

The possible scenarios painted above are not to deny James’ hypothesis of umbrella to emphasize on the measure of belief through action. However, Burger finds it worth mentioning that there is no necessary relation between belief and action, that, for instance, an action can be performed without sufficient evidence to form a belief. For example, while crossing a road, a car races before the one who is crossing. Now the choices that the person has is to act quickly and efficiently. He has to either continue to cross the road or move back. He may need to act without demanding evidence to support his belief. What he needs

⁴³ Ibid. p 74

in this case is the wish to live and so moving away from the speeding car will be effective move.

It is possible that taking action without prioritising faith is the best decision. This will typically be the situation when there is evidence indicating prompt action is required but no evidence regarding the optimal course of action. As a result, in times of need, action based on the best available evidence is required rather than faith. There are chances that one can make the wrong decision in such situations and end up being hit by a car.⁴⁴

Burger evaluated James's critique of Clifford's *The Ethics of Belief*. However, he neither defended nor dismissed Clifford's position. Overall, it appears that he is neither advocating evidentialism nor questioning it. So, in the subsequent paragraphs, we will consider some views which defend and advocate evidentialism.

1.5 Richard Feldman and Earl Conee

James criticized the concept of evidence in terms of belief and Burger responded by critically evaluating the central ideas of James. Though their views have certain merits, one need not engage them or their ideas in the direction they have deliberated with regard to evidentialism. The concern and direction of thought articulated by Clifford, however, certainly merit the attention of epistemologists. The above points can be clarified as follows: First, James's argument is mostly about the belief in God or having faith in God. Since the concept of God and issues involving faith and religious knowledge are not empirical in nature, James' criticisms of Clifford will be, at best, of peripheral interest to epistemologists. No doubt, Clifford did take some examples from the religious context but

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 76

that was done not to address the core epistemic issues but directed, instead, towards issues which concern the wellbeing of human beings at large. In the main, Clifford's position could be an issue for by the reliabilist thinkers who deny the need of evidence to form any belief. As such, to revive and strengthen Clifford's position, it is the 'reliabilism' that needs to be objected.

In what follows, we will explore the views of Feldman and Conee and see if their views can be considered a successful defence of evidentialism, a school of thought that has become synonymous with the works of Clifford. As indicated above, their interest is not directed towards James's criticism of *The Ethics of Belief*; it is not required to do so since it poses little threat on the position of Clifford. However, directly or indirectly, their work can be seen as a respond to possible objections from reliabilist thinkers.

Feldman and Conee introduced a new term called *doxastic attitude* in respond to reliabilism that was propounded by Alvin I Goldman and Hilary Kornblith. Following the principle of doxastic attitude, it can be assume that quality of believer's evidence determines a belief. This principle deals with such issues as disbelief and suspension of judgement which can also be epistemically justified and as such, it has a role to play towards solidifying Clifford's position vis-à-vis his key terms involving *obligations*, *responsibility* and *conscience*. However, before we move forward with Feldman and Conee's defence of evidentialism, it is important to have some basic understanding of reliabilism.

1.6 Reliabilism:

Like non-evidential justification of James, reliabilism can be understood through unreduced epistemic notions, meaning not requiring evidence for epistemic justification.

Reliabilism does not critique the standpoint of Clifford but its approaches are truth-conducive and reliability in general, thereby, it devalues the role of evidence in the justification of belief. Hence, it is the reliabilism that needs to be refuted by the evidentialist.

A statement has been suggested by Kornblith and Paul Thagard citing Alvin I. Goldman's work as an inspiration for his view that; in the light of innate endowment one tries its best to have justification of belief.⁴⁵ Reliability, according to them is understood either in terms of frequency of occurrence or in terms of propensity or inclination. The premises used in the reliabilism are self-justified and that a belief depends entirely on the cognitive state of a believer. To some point it may not completely deny the external factors but highlights more on the analytic like Descartes sceptical solution where the emphasis is on the believer as the external factors are doubtful. Hence, the reliability is used in its term.

Accordingly for a reliabilist, a belief is justified and properly grounded if it results from a belief-forming process that reliably leads to true beliefs. Every belief is mostly caused by a sequence of particular events which is possibly an instance of many types of causal processes. For example, assume that, Jones looks out his window one evening and sees a bright, shining disk-shaped object. The object is in fact a luminous Frisbee, and Jones clearly remembers having given one of these to his daughter. But Jones is attracted to the idea that extra-terrestrials are visiting the Earth. He manages to believe that he is seeing a flying saucer.⁴⁶ 'Is this process of belief forming reliable?' As the sequence of events that

⁴⁵ Kornblith, Hilary. "Justified belief and epistemically responsible action." *The Philosophical Review* 92, no. 1 (1983) p. 33-48.

⁴⁶ Feldman, Richard, and Earl Conee. "Evidentialism." *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 48, no. 1 (1985) p. 15-34.

led to this belief is an example of many different types of processes, the answer depends upon which of these many types is the relevant one. The sequence falls into the general categories of *visually-based-belief-formation* and *perceptually-based-belief-formation*. These are naturally considered as generally reliable belief forming processes. If these are the relevant categories, then belief is indeed reliably formed. Jones's belief also falls into relatively specific categories such as *night-vision-of-a-nearby-object* and *vision-in-Jones's precise-environmental-circumstances*. However, Jones's beliefs are not clearly reliable. The sequence is also an instance of this contrived kind: process-leading from *obviously-defeated-evidence-to-the-belief* that *one-sees-a-flying-saucer*.⁴⁷ This, presumably, is an unreliable kind of process.

There is the maximally specific process that occurs only when physiological events occur that are exactly like those that led to Jones's belief that he saw a flying saucer. In all likelihood, this kind of process occurred only once. Processes of these types are of differing degrees of reliability no matter how reliability is determined. The implications of reliabilism for the case are rendered definite only when the kind of process whose reliability is relevant is specified.

Reliability is fundamentally a property of certain kinds of belief-forming processes, not of sequences of particular events. But it can be said that a sequence is reliable provided its relevant type is reliable. The problem raised above concerns the specification of relevant types. The current problem is that of specifying the conditions under which a kind of

⁴⁷ Feldman, Richard, and Earl Conee. "Evidentialism." *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 48, no. 1 (1985) p. 15-34.

process is reliable. Among possible accounts is one according to which “a kind of process is reliable provided most instances of that kind until now have led to true beliefs.”⁴⁸

Goldman, in his article “What is Justified Belief?”, states that: “If S’s believing *p* at *t* results from a reliable cognitive belief-forming processes (or set of process) then S’s belief in *p* at *t* is justified.”⁴⁹ A process is reliable as long as it produces true beliefs. Examples of reliable processes are perception, remembering, good reasoning and introspection. In contrast, unreliable processes would be confused reasoning, wishful thinking, hasty generalization, guesswork, etc.

Goldman provides a *substantive conditions* for when a belief is justified. Justification is both an epistemic and an evaluative term, evaluative in that it is epistemic. If knowledge is justified true belief, the only epistemic constituent of knowledge is justification. *Belief* according to him is a psychological notion, and *truth* is a metaphysical concept. The concepts of belief and truth are not evaluative; only ‘justification’ is by itself an evaluative term.

For example, consider a primary alternatives:

- (1) A belief that *p* is justified for an agent S if and only if S has good reasons to believe that *p*.
- (2) A belief that *p* is justified for an agent S if and only if S has solid evidence that *p*.

In both cases, there are obvious questions that follow from the above statements:

Q-1 What are the good reasons?

Q-2 What is the solid evidence?

⁴⁸ Bonzio, Stefano, Jürgen Landes, and Barbara Osimani. "Reliability: an introduction." *Synthese* (2020) p. 1-10.

⁴⁹ Goldman. Alvin I. *What is Justified Belief?* Philosophical studies series in Philosophy p. 13

The notions of *good reasons* and “*solid evidence*” are evaluative but they do not cast much light on the epistemic and evaluative concept of justification. According to Goldman, when interpreted as free of epistemic terms, they do not plausibly explicate the notion of justification, and when construed as containing epistemic terms, they leave open the central questions about justification as seen in our two questions above.

Goldman observes the failure of analyses of justification that are non-epistemic terms. Hence, he introduces the concepts of propositional and doxastic justification. Suppose that there is a belief, that *p* is justified for *S* if and only if *x* obtains. We can then say that a *proposition* *p* is justified for *S* if and only if, whether or not *S* believes that *p*, *x* obtains. Here, *S* may not believe that *p* but may be considering whether *p*. Now suppose that *S* does believe that *p*. Then, *S* is *doxastically* justified in believing that *p* if and only if *p* is propositionally justified for *S*, and *S* believes that *p* *because* *x* obtains. Suppose that Jones sees a blue jay in her back yard and is thus justified in believing there is a blue jay in the back yard. The existence of a blue jay in the back yard entails that there is at least one animal in the back yard. Whether or not Jones draws that inference, the proposition that there is at least one animal in the back yard is propositionally justified for Jones. Now suppose Jones believes that there is at least one animal in the back yard. Is that belief doxastically justified? Not if Jones believes it because a notorious liar asserted it. That there exists propositional justification for an agent does not entail that the agent is doxastically justified in believing the proposition. Goldman’s insight is that doxastic justification requires that the belief has an appropriate cause, and he goes on to characterize *appropriate cause* as having been produced by a reliable belief-forming process that is, a process that produces mostly true beliefs or a high ratio of true to false beliefs. Guessing,

wishful thinking, and hasty generalization are unreliable, whereas believing on the basis of a *distinct memory*, *attentive viewing*, or *valid deduction* is reliable.

Goldman also distinguishes between basic beliefs and non-basic beliefs. Basic beliefs are not justified by reference to other beliefs, whereas non-basic beliefs are so justified. Basic beliefs are justified if and only if they result from an unconditionally reliable process, a process none of whose inputs consist of other beliefs. Non-basic beliefs are justified if and only if they result from a belief-dependent process that is conditionally reliable, that is, a process whose inputs consist partially of other beliefs and which, given that the inputs are true, produces beliefs that are likely to be true. Memory, which is based on previously formed beliefs, induction on a large and varied base, and deduction might be considered reliable belief-dependent processes.

Because basic beliefs do not have other beliefs as sources of justification, it does not create chain of justification (regression). If an agent offers her belief that q in support of her belief that p , the obvious question is: Why believe that q ? If the answer is, “because r ”, then there is a potential regression. And one might wonder whether an embodied human agent can make use of such an infinite chain to justify her beliefs. Alternatively, the chain of justification might go round in a circle, where no single belief is independently justified, which raises the concern that the circle is vicious.

From the above analysis, a statement may be deduced in this form:

S believes that p on the basis of q , q on the basis of r , and r on the basis of p .

All of one’s beliefs might be deemed justified because they properly cohere in the sense that they are interdependent and mutually supporting. But there is a possible chance that

one may have interdependent and mutually supporting *false* beliefs. A common threat in epistemological discussions is that a justified belief is more likely to be true than one that is not justified, whereas in coherence it is possible that one may have all false beliefs. Therefore, the reliabilist opts out of the requirement that reasons are reflectively accessible to the agent by identifying justified beliefs with those that are the outputs of reliable processes, whether or not the process itself includes other beliefs. If it does not, then the process is belief-independent and the beliefs produced by it are basic.

Analysing the argument of Goldman, Clifford's position can also be questioned as the needs to always look for sufficient evidence may create a long chain of evidence and not reaching any kind of conclusion. Goldman's process reliabilism is conceived as an alternative to traditional theories of justification. Goldman proposes a theory of justification according to which a belief is doxastically justified for S just in case S's belief is formed from a reliable, truth-conducive, and belief-independent process. Reliable cognitive belief-forming also suggests indubitability; and self-evidently true proposition (directly justified/intuitively justified/non-derivatively justified). In reliability process, the proposition is self-presenting or self-intimating, meaning a necessary condition where the subject believes p because p is true. According to Goldman, merely having good evidence for a proposition is not sufficient to make believing that the proposition is justified. A person's belief in p is not justified unless the belief is caused in reliable way.⁵⁰

1.7 Against Reliabilism:

⁵⁰ Ibid.p.316

According to Feldman and Conee, reliabilism seems to include one that is extensionally equivalent to the Well-Foundedness (WF)⁵¹ that holds that all beliefs are formed by one of two relevant kinds of belief-forming process. One kind has, as instances, all and only those sequences of events leading to a belief that is based on *fitting* evidence; the other is a kind of process that has, as instances, all and only those sequences leading to a belief that is not based on fitting evidence. If a notion of reliability can be found in which the former sort of process is reliable and the latter is not, the resulting version of reliabilism would be very nearly equivalent to WF.

Evaluation of reliabilism is further complicated by the fact that reliabilists seem to differ about whether they want their theory to have approximately the same extension as WF. The credibility of reliabilism and its relevance to WF depends, in part, on the concept reliabilists are really attempting to analyse. An example first described by Laurence Bonjour helps to bring out two alternatives. Bonjour's example is of a person who is clairvoyant. As a result of his clairvoyance, he comes to believe that the President is in New York City. The person has no evidence showing that he is clairvoyant and no other evidence supporting his belief about the President. Bonjour claims that the example is a counterexample to reliabilism since the clairvoyant's belief is not justified although the process that caused it is reliable – that the person really is clairvoyant. The general sort of response to this example that seems to be most commonly adopted by reliabilists is in effect to agree that such beliefs are not well-founded. They interpret or revise reliabilism with the

⁵¹ A person's doxastic attitude toward a proposition at a given time is said to be well-founded, according to Well-Foundedness, if and only if doing so is acceptable to them at that specific moment. Additionally, they base their doxastic attitude on a body of evidence that satisfies the following requirements: (a) they have the evidence at that specific time; (b) their doxastic attitude toward the proposition fits the evidence; and (c) there is no more complete body of evidence.

aim of avoiding the counterexample. An alternative response would be to argue that the reliability of clairvoyance shows that the belief is well-founded and thus that the example does not refute reliabilism.

The second alternative believes that the clairvoyant in Bonjour's example is really well-founded considering reliabilists position. The clairvoyant has reason to believe that the President New York City. As the fact that the belief was caused by a process of a reliable kind –i.e. clairvoyance is a significant fact about it and the fact is innate endowment. Such a belief may merit some favourable term of epistemic appraisal. But this kind of justification is clearly not well-founded rather it is an instance of an ill-founded belief that any proponent of that view must have in mind a different concept from the one we are discussing.

It further means that simply having a spontaneous uninferred belief about the whereabouts of the President does not provide evidence for its truth. But it might be asked, what better evidence is there for any ordinary perceptual belief, say, that one sees a book? If there is no relevant epistemological difference between ordinary perceptual beliefs and the clairvoyant's belief, then both should be evaluated similarly. The argument continues with the point that reliabilism provides an explanation of the crucial similarity between ordinary perceptual beliefs and the clairvoyant's belief as both perception and clairvoyance work as they are reliable. As a result, beliefs resulting from each process are well-founded on a reliable account. On the other hand, in advocating evidentialism, it is claimed that perceptual beliefs are well-founded and that the clairvoyant's belief is not. But there appears to be no relevant evidential difference between these beliefs. Thus, if the

evidentialist view of the matter cannot be defended, then reliabilism is the superior theory and the clairvoyant's belief is well-founded.

One problem with this argument is that reliabilism has no satisfactory explanation of anything until the un-clarity discussed above are removed in an acceptable way: What shows that perception and clairvoyance are relevant and reliable types of processes? In any event, there is an adequate evidentialist explanation of the difference between ordinary perceptual beliefs and the clairvoyant's belief. On one interpretation of clairvoyance, it is a process whereby one is caused to have beliefs about objects hidden from ordinary view without any conscious state having a role in the causal process. The clairvoyant does not have the conscious experience of, say, seeming to see the President in some characteristic New York City setting, and on that basis, forms the belief that he is in New York. In this respect, the current version of clairvoyance is unlike ordinary perception, which does include conscious perceptual states. Because of this difference, ordinary perceptual beliefs are based on evidence, whereas clairvoyant beliefs are not based on evidence. Since WF requires that well-founded beliefs be based on fitting evidence, and since typical clairvoyant beliefs in the current interpretation are not based on any evidence at all, the clairvoyant beliefs are not satisfactory. We suppose, instead, that clairvoyance does include visual experiences, though of remote objects that cannot stimulate the visual system in any normal way. Even if there are such visual experiences that could serve as a basis for a clairvoyant's beliefs, there is still a relevant epistemological difference between beliefs based on normal perceptual experiences and the clairvoyant's belief in BonJour's example. There is collateral evidence to the effect that whenever there is perceptual experience of certain kinds, external conditions of the corresponding kinds are normally obtained. For

example, evidence supports the proposition that having the usual sort of experience of seeming to see a book does, in fact, suggest seeing a book. This includes evidence from the coherence of these beliefs with beliefs arising from other perceptual sources and it also includes testimonial evidence. One reason that the belief that one sees a book fits even a child's evidence; that is, when she has a perceptual experience of seeing a book, she is taught to be having a normal sort of visual experience that she is seeing a physical object of the relevant kind. This testimony, typically from people whom the child has reason to trust, provides evidence for the child. And of course, testimony from others during adult life also gives evidence for the veridicality of normal visual experience. On the other hand, as Bonjour describes in his example, the clairvoyant has no confirmation at all of his clairvoyant beliefs. Indeed, he has evidence against these beliefs, since the clairvoyant perceptual experiences do not cohere with his other experiences.

The evidentialists can satisfactorily explain why ordinary perceptual beliefs are well-founded and unconfirmed clairvoyant beliefs, even if reliably caused, are not. There is no good reason to abandon the initial intuition that the beliefs such as those of the clairvoyant in Bonjour's example are not well-founded. Again, reliabilists could respond to Bonjour's example either by claiming that the clairvoyant's belief is, in fact, well-founded or by arguing that reliabilism does not imply that it is well-founded.

The second alternative commonly adopted by reliabilists is that of *implication*. It can be pointed out that, as a general approach, reliabilism is sufficiently indefinite to allow interpretations under which it does lack the implication in question. The technique is to specify the relevant types of belief-forming processes in evidentialist terms. It is possible to hold that the relevant types of belief-forming processes are believing something on the

basis of fitting evidence and believing something not as a result of fitting evidence. According to Feldman and Conee, this sort of reliabilism is a roundabout approximation of the straightforward evidentialism. There is no reason to express the approximated evidentialist theory in reliabilist terms. Moreover, the reliabilist approximation is not exactly equivalent to WF, and where it differs, it appears to go wrong. The difference is this: it seems possible for the process of believing on the basis of fitting evidence to be unreliable. Finding a suitable sort of reliability makes the differences here. In various possible worlds where our evidence is mostly misleading, the frequency with which fitting evidence causes true belief is low. Thus, this type of belief-forming process is not reliable in such worlds in any straightforward way that depends on actual frequencies. Perhaps, a notion of reliability that avoids this result can be found. So, the reliabilist view under consideration has the consequence that in such a world, beliefs based on fitting evidence are not well-founded.

The ambiguity of reliabilism makes it difficult to determine what implications the theory has, and it is not entirely clear what implications reliabilists want their theory to have. If reliabilists want their theory to have approximately the same extension as WF, there is no better way to accomplish this than one which makes the theory an unnecessarily complex and relatively implausible approximation to evidentialism. If, on the other hand, reliabilists want their theory to have an extension which is substantially different from that of WF, and yet some familiar notion of a reliable kind of process is to be decisive for their notion of well-foundedness, then it becomes clear that the concept they are attempting to analyse is not one evidentialists seek to characterize. This follows from the fact that on this alternative, they count as well-founded attitudes that plainly do not exemplify the concept

evidentialists are discussing. In neither case, then, does reliabilism pose a threat to evidentialism.

1.8 In Defence of Evidentialism

In order to defend the evidential position for the justification of belief, Feldman and Conee provide epistemic justification (EJ) as doxastic attitude towards proposition is epistemically justified for the subject at time t if and only if having doxastic attitude towards a proposition fits the evidence.⁵²

Feldman and Conee give three examples to illustrate the application of this notion of EJ; first, when a physiologically average person under ordinary circumstances looks at the street that is directly in front of him in broad daylight and believes that there is a street before him, that is, the attitude toward this proposition that fits his evidence. In this condition, belief is epistemically justified.

Secondly, *suspension of judgment*: a fitting attitude for each believer towards a proposition that states an even number of ducks exist when the evidence makes it equally likely that the number is odd. Neither belief nor disbelief is epistemically justified when the evidence is equally balanced.

And thirdly, when it comes to the proposition that sugar is sour, then one's gustatory experience makes disbelief the appropriate attitude. Such experiential evidence epistemically justifies disbelief.

⁵² EJ is compatible with the existence of varying strengths of belief and disbelief. If there is such variation, then the greater the preponderance of evidence, the stronger the doxastic attitude that fits the evidence. And epistemic justification is not an analysis; rather, it is a notion that makes justification turn entirely on evidence.

Reliability process about justification seems to cast doubt on justification by the implication that epistemic justification depends upon the cognitive capacities of people, or upon the cognitive processes or information-gathering practices that led to the attitude. On a contrary, EJ asserts that the epistemic justification of an attitude depends only on evidence. It is believed that EJ identifies the basic concept of epistemic justification. According to these, there are no other *adequate* grounds that do justice to epistemic justification. Evidence leaves no obvious room of doubts on EJ and so it continues to be the best option in favour of epistemic justification.

In defending evidentialism, Feldman and Conee look into the two related objections facing the EJ principle:

1. Concerning conditions under which an *attitude* is justified and
2. Concerning human *limitations*

One objection depends on the claim that an attitude can be justified only if it is voluntarily adopted while the other depends on the claim that an attitude towards a proposition or propositions can be justified for a person only if the ability to have that attitude toward the proposition or those propositions is within normal human limits.

According to EJ, a doxastic attitude is justified when that attitude fits the evidence. Taking human control over a person's attitude towards belief, it can be seen that there are cases in which a certain attitude toward a proposition fits a person's evidence. According to EJ, some involuntarily adopted attitudes are justified. However, John Heil finds this position of *involuntary* EJ questionable. According to Heil, whenever there is a "speak of a person's beliefs as being warranted, justified, or rational ... makes it appear that ... believing

something can, at least sometimes, be under the voluntary control of the believer.”⁵³ Hilary Kornblith claims that it seems not fair to evaluate beliefs if they are not subject to direct voluntary control.

According to EJ, an epistemic evaluation may be both involuntary and subject to an epistemic evaluation. Assume that a person spontaneously and involuntarily believes that the lights are on in the room, as a result of the familiar sort of completely convincing perceptual evidence. This belief is clearly justified whether or not the person can voluntarily acquire, lose, or modify the cognitive process that led to the belief. Unjustified beliefs can also be involuntary. A paranoid man might believe without any supporting evidence that he is being spied on. This belief might be a result of an uncontrollable desire to be a recipient of special attention. In such a case, the belief is epistemically unjustified, even if the belief is involuntary and the person cannot alter the process leading to it. The contrary view that only voluntary beliefs are justified or unjustified may seem plausible if one confuses the topic of EJ with an assessment of the person. A person deserves praise or blame for being in a doxastic state only if that state is under the person’s control. The person who involuntarily believes in the presence of overwhelming evidence that the lights are on does not deserve praise for this belief. The belief is nevertheless justified. The person who believes that he is being spied on as a result of an uncontrollable desire does not deserve to be blamed for that belief. But there is a fact about the belief’s epistemic merit. It is *epistemically defective* if a belief is held in the presence of insufficient evidence and is therefore unjustified.⁵⁴

⁵³ Heil, John. "Doxastic agency." *Philosophical Studies* 43, no. 3 (1983): 355-364.

⁵⁴ Feldman, Richard. "Earl Conee." *Epistemology: An Anthology* (2008) p. 310.

According to second objections, it is inappropriate to set epistemic standards that are beyond normal human limits.⁵⁵ According to Goldman, an epistemologist seeks epistemic principles that can practically guide belief formation and must take into account people's limited cognitive capacities. Thus, he is led to deny a principle instructing people to believe all the logical consequences of their beliefs, since they are unable to have the infinite number of beliefs that following such a principle would require. However, Feldman and Conee respond to Goldman's view, stating that Goldman's objections do not conflict with EJ as EJ does not prescribe anyone to believe anything. It is simply stating that a necessary and sufficient condition is required for epistemic justification.

Feldman and Conee deduced a hypothetical structure of EJ in response to Goldman's human cognitive limits:

P1: A doxastic attitude toward a proposition is justified for a person only if having that attitude toward that proposition is within the normal doxastic capabilities of people.

P2: Some doxastic attitudes that fit a person's evidence are not within those capabilities.

P3: Yet EJ classifies them as justified.

Conclusion: EJ is false.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Ibid. p.311

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 310.

Feldman and Conee contend that there is no compelling reason to exclude EJ from the preceding P2 assertion in this instance. This is based on the reality that humans can only hold a certain amount of beliefs. There is no reason to think that all possible beliefs can be accounted for by the evidence that has ever been acquired. Despite an endless number of logical consequences, the evidence that individuals have in everyday life never makes it clear that the consequence is a consequence for everyone. Therefore, accepting each result will not be supported by any conventional evidence. Furthermore, even if there are instances in which a person is able to hold more beliefs that suit their evidence than they are able to, it still follows that he cannot hold all of those views at once. It does not follow that any one appropriate belief is unachievable. The argument's assumption, according to which EJ deems some ideas as justified that are often unreachable, is not supported by this case. There does not appear to be any kind of believable proof to support this claim. While certain empirical data may indicate that people seldom develop appropriate attitudes in specific situations or that some appropriate attitudes are beyond the capabilities of some people, such evidence does not indicate that any appropriate attitudes are excessive.

This argument against EJ faces a more basic challenge. The assumption that what is epistemically justifiable must be limited to realistic, doxastic alternatives lacks any support. Helping individuals make a decision from the available epistemic options can be beneficial. Consider a situation, nevertheless, where developing the attitude that best suits a person's evidence was outside the range of normal cognitive ability. The person's evidence would still support this perspective. If the individual had normal talents, he would be unlucky enough to be unable to perform the action that is justified by the criteria for justification put forth by EJ. This does not constitute a defect in the justification explanation. Some

requirements can only be attained by exceeding what is reasonable for humans. There are criteria of creative brilliance that no one can achieve, or at least that are impossible for the average person to achieve in any given situation. Similar to that, epistemic justification may have been unreachable in most cases. Conclusion: EJ as an explanation of epistemic justification should not be abandoned due to considerations of doxastic voluntarism or doxastic constraints.⁵⁷

1.9 Belief is an obligation

Roderick Chisholm agrees with Clifford that it is intellectually necessary to make every effort to ensure that, among the propositions one evaluates, one accepts only the truths. The following principle is implied by this idea of our epistemic duties and our belief that the justified attitudes are those that we have a responsibility to have. A proposition of doxastic attitude is justified for an individual at a given time if and only if the individual considers the proposition at that time. The individual's doxastic attitude toward the proposition at that time is the result of the individual making every effort to make the individual believe in the proposition.

According to Kornblith, we have a responsibility to responsibly seek the truth and acquire evidence, which is a similar perspective on epistemic responsibilities. Additionally, he contends that the integrity of the research that led to a view determines its legitimacy. Kornblith outlines a situation when ignorance was, in his opinion, *epistemically culpable*. When a person's view appears to be supported by his or her evidence, it is said to be evidentially justified. He claims that the belief is invalid because it stems from actions that

⁵⁷ The limits is discussed in the chapter 3 title the limit of inference, where Clifford put forth the method of deduction for the things that goes beyond human limit.

are irresponsible in terms of epistemology. Imagine a physicist who, after delivering a work to his peers, ignores the dire criticism of a more experienced colleague. As a result, the physicist's trust in his own theory is invalid, according to Kornblith, since the physicist is so preoccupied with his own accomplishment that he is unable to even hear the issue, which has no bearing on his ideas. He contends that evidentialist theories are unable to explain this reality.

However, in terms of moral responsibility, Kornblith and Clifford are very different. Kornblith contends that one is not always ethically required to believe what the facts supports. A suitable attitude can have disastrous personal and societal repercussions, such as nasty ideas that inspire similarly vicious deeds that can be epistemically justified. For instance, Plato's conception of reproduction in his fictional utopian society is justifiable from an epistemological one but not from a moral one. Furthermore, one is not always sensible obliged to adopt an attitude that is epistemically reasonable.

Heil provides the following illustration: Sally has some solid proof that her husband, Burt, has been having an affair. This couple's marriage is in jeopardy. It would be best for Sally if they could keep their marriage together. Sally predicts that if Burt had been seeing someone else, Sally would act in a way that would cause them to divorce. Given these presumptions, EJ considers Sally's notion that Burt has been seeing another lady to some extent to be legitimate. But given that their continuing marriage would be in her best interest, Sally would be better off if she did not have this notion. Heil asks what Sally's prudential obligation is in this situation. It is Sally's duty to hold the view that her husband is unfaithful. But it doesn't make it justified to contest this situation's apparent truth. Sally should use caution and not assume her husband is cheating. It can be morally right to refrain

from having a doxastic attitude, which EJ properly claims to be justifiable, as well as sensible.⁵⁸

Heil argues that the negative effects of an unreasonable attitude can sometimes be more advantageous than the negative effects of its justified alternative. It is highlighted that EJ believes it is ethically and financially wiser not to hold sentiments that are justified. For epistemic aims like knowledge acquisition, failing to adopt these attitudes can also produce the best outcomes.

For the sake of achieving these epistemic goals, EJ does not advise against acquiring such beliefs. EJ means that adopting the views would not be reasonable. This is not to suggest that believing would be useless for advancing knowledge. It can be agreed that discussing epistemic duty is appropriate. However, it is incorrect to believe that moral responsibility has the highest epistemic outcomes and that being epistemically obligatory is equivalent to having epistemic justification.

Conclusion

It should be noted that there are no compelling arguments in favour of the notion that an attitude is only epistemically valid if it is voluntarily controlled. According to a second argument that contradicts EJ, a doxastic attitude can only be acceptable if it falls within the typical doxastic bounds of humans. It is maintained that the attitudes that EJ claims are epistemically justifiable fall within these parameters, and even if they did not, that fact would not be sufficient to contradict EJ. As a result, S is only justified in believing a

⁵⁸ Feldman, Richard. "Earl Conee." *Epistemology: An Anthology* (2008): 310.

proposition, p , if S has responsibly gathered evidence for it or has come to believe it as a result of pursuing an honorable epistemic purpose, such is the discovery of truth. This form of thesis contradicts EJ because p can be believed regardless of how carelessly one sought p -related evidence and regardless of the objectives that motivated the belief. There can be consensus that truth-seeking and responsibly obtaining evidence have some epistemic value. The idea that just possessing evidence does not suffice to support a belief is another thesis that disagrees with EJ because it is possible for a believer to acquire a belief without properly considering the facts. But it doesn't offer any compelling justification for giving up on EJ. Since only evidential justification may lead to belief, evidentialism continues to be the most logical theory of epistemic justification.

A belief is only permissible if it is caused in the proper kind of method and is not contradicted by other information the believer possesses, as Clifford also suggests that it is bad always, and anyplace, to believe on insufficient evidence. It means that acquiring information calls for perseverance and a "continuous searching" mentality. If it exists, it will be discovered; if not, it cannot be discovered. Only that which is perceivable and sensible may be sensed.

A substantial amount of evidence may be used to disprove any objections to the evidence. Understanding human cognitive limitations and keeping a close check on the senses through which everything is seen, whether intellectually or perceptually, are the only two

things that need to be taken care of.⁵⁹ These would be covered in the subsequent chapter, which deals with the restrictions on human cognitive ability and potential mistakes.

⁵⁹ It can be observed that, there is an agreement between Clifford, Feldman and Conee's approach regarding the acceptance of the limitation, and suspension of judgment when there are insufficient evidence.

Chapter-2

Aspects of Evidentialism

In this chapter, the attempt is made to discuss some important aspect of evidentialism associated with the works of Clifford, Feldman and Conee. While Feldman and Conee build their theory on the quality of the believer's evidence for believing, Clifford establishes his evidential theory of reliabilism on moral responsibilities for belief. In the first chapter, it has been argued that if proper test and investigation are being carried out, then a true belief can be established. It may be noted that Feldman and Conee's version of evidentialism is against Clifford's work in that reliabilism is not consistent with the concept of evidential process. However, they can be brought together under one camp since they all argue that justification of belief through evidence is necessary – that a person is justified in believing a proposition at a given time if that person has evidence to support the proposition. Secondly, they also commonly share a set of assumptions which may be listed as follows:

- a) The fact that we conduct test and investigation suggests that there are limitations in human's perception and understanding of the world.
- b) The insistence on the sufficiency of evidence presupposes the number of evidences that is required to form a belief although it is not clear what constitute sufficiency of evidence or how much evidence counts as sufficient evidence.
- c) The need for suspension of judgment at times begs the question on what basis one should suspend a judgment.

- d) Social structure plays a significant role in validating a belief (which actually constitutes one of the rules of authority according to Clifford). This suggests that there exist an authority which helps in justifying and suspending belief.

In order to make sense of these issues and assumptions, attempt is made to locate them in their historical contexts. Apart from locating the issues in the contexts of Ancient Greek scepticism and modern Cartesian scepticism, we will also consider the works of contemporary works such as Roderick Chisholm's '*Knowledge and Belief: de dicto, de re*' Clifford's '*The Weight of Authority*,' and A. J. Burger '*An Examination to Will to Believe*.'

2.1 Test, investigation and limitation of the perception of world

Perhaps, it might be interesting to begin our analysis of this chapter with a narration of the popular fairy tale '*Snow White and the seven Dwarf*'⁶⁰ written by the Grimm Brothers: When Snow-white was born, her mother died. The king wed another young, lovely, and fair bride after a year. She was haughty and conceited, and she could not stand the thought of someone outdoing her in beauty. According to legend, she possessed a magical looking glass, in front of which she would stand, gaze, and ask, "Looking-glass upon the wall, Who is prettiest of us all?" You are the fairest of them all, the looking glass would reply. She would be happy to think that her magic glass was telling the truth.⁶¹

As the story unfolds, Snow-white grew up to surpass the Queen in her beauty which was confirmed by the magic glass. Since she was convinced that the looking glass spoke the truth, and since she could not stand a competition, she plotted to kill her. A huntsman was

⁶⁰ 460+ Free Book Summaries and Study Guides, accessed December 26, 2022, <https://pinkmonkey.com/dl/library1/story158.pdf>.

⁶¹ Ibid

hired to do the job. But being a good man, the huntsman took pity on Snow White. Instead of killing her, he left her in the forest thinking that some wild animal will do the job for him. He killed a wild boar, took out its heart and showed it to the Queen as evidence that he had killed Snow-white. Seeing the heart, the Queen was convinced. However, after a few weeks had passed, she posed the same question to the mirror and discovered the following truths – that she is not the fairest maiden as Snow White is still alive and that the huntsman had deceived her.

In this fairy tale, three epistemic issues or key concepts can be noted. The huntsman is the only person to witness and justify Snow White's death. Secondly, a heart was presented to the queen as evidence. Thirdly, there is a mirror which always speaks the truth. These can be termed as justifier, evidence and truth conducive. The issue before us is the justification of Queen's belief. Was the Queen's belief that Snow White is dead on seeing the evidence justified? If the three conditions of knowledge are not taken into consideration (S knows p, if and only if p is true, S is beliefs in p and S is justified in believing p) and only the condition of evidence is applied, then the Queen is justified in believing the statements of the Huntsman. She was justified in her belief till she found out that she was deceived.

If there were no magic looking glass in the fairy tale, the story might have a different ending. The Queen may have lived happily ever after believing that Snow-white is dead. Believing the huntsman was justified as he provided the heart as evidence to the Queen. However, from the story we learn that even if evidence is provided to support a belief, it does not guarantee that our belief is true. Therefore, it is important to investigate the given evidence itself. It is natural to belief what one sees but it is not necessary that 'what is seen

is what a thing is'. It is necessary to investigate what one sees as 'seeing can be deceiving' too.⁶² Though the huntsman lied to the queen about his act, he was also in the belief that Snow-white will not survive in the forest. Some wild animal will hunt her down.

The story of Snow-white indicates that even if a given evidence seems conducive, it may not stand be fully reliable. Therefore, an investigation into the evidence itself is required to strengthen the belief. Let's accept that evidence provides knowledge through various modes/forms such as oral, documentary, circumstance etc. However, the authenticity and genuineness of the founded evidence, like in the case of the Queen, is always dubitable. She acts irresponsibly by simply believing the statement of the huntsman and did not feel the necessity to do further investigation. Though it was the Queen's duty to go into the details of evidence, she did not do it, perhaps, thinking that it was not quite necessary to do so. As it is also stated by Descartes in his *First Meditation* that people may believe many false things and structure their belief on false things as the "senses sometimes deceive us."⁶³ In general, people investigate into evidences or facts only in the case of reasonable doubts. We often rely on beliefs which come from the senses.

So what should we say about evidence? What should be done in order to rely on evidence for our beliefs? In keeping with these and related questions, a defence for the evidence is as given as follows: *A person is justified in believing proposition at times if and only if the evidence supports the belief.*⁶⁴

⁶² Rene Descartes, 'First meditation: On What can be call into doubt'

⁶³ <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/descartes1641.pdf>

⁶⁴ W.K. Clifford. "The Ethics of Belief." *The Theory of Knowledge*. 3rd. ed. ED. Louis P. Pojnam. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2003.

The story of the Snow-white shows that evidence even false evidence can support a belief. Hence, there is a need to rigorously check our methods and source of information before we accept certain beliefs as true. The following four moves/assumptions can be initiated in this regard:

1. *Assumption-1*: Knowledge rests both on reason and facts; reason alone cannot provide substance over a claim on knowing something. Descriptions that do not include empirical evidence remain merely presumptuous. A claim needs concretization and that can happen only through involvement of facts or evidences. Such concretization can be achieved through cautious evaluation.
2. *Assumption-2*: Reason is a good start to initiate into the structure of justified true belief. However, when a belief is substantiated with physical dimension, it gets its own weightage as stated by Anselm: “a being that exist in reality is greater than a being that exist in mind.”⁶⁵
3. *Assumption-3*: Evidence is verifiable as it has physical property. However, due to its extension in space and time, it may suffer certain challenges related to space and time. As there is limitless space, there can be limitless extension and the same may be said of time.
4. *Assumption-4*: In the light of assumption -3, one ought to acknowledge the limitation of extension while gathering or investigating a piece of evidence and keep a check on reality to avoid illusion or distortion.

⁶⁵ "Anselm: Ontological Argument for the God's Existence," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy | An Encyclopedia of Philosophy Articles Written by Professional Philosophers, accessed December 28, 2022, <https://iep.utm.edu/anselm-ontological-argument/>.

2.2 A note on distortion

Note that illusion can be of various degrees. It can be apparent illusion or prolonged illusion. And distinguishing reality from illusion can be a challenging task due to various reasons. Hence, the step is to take the approach of scepticism whenever needed till possible distortion/illusion is addressed or clarified. If nobody confirms what X may have heard, the position of what one has heard would be in doubt. Even though it was one hundred percent clear to X, yet ten people may have to confirm it. If they don't confirm, it would be difficult to have a stable situation in one's mind to believe it. For example, in the late night around twelve O' clock to one AM, I am sitting on the chair to study (assuming that this occurred in the ladies hostel). A cooing sound becomes audible from the room. It is an unfamiliar sound so it catches the attention. But it would call for doubt as I may have heard due to sleepiness or some other reasons. But, if I get confirmation from other hostel dwellers, then my belief may get confirmation. But if I receive a miss call in a phone, even if I doubt it, there is a missed call to prove it.

Let's take another example: Moses who is regarded as the most important Prophet in the religious text (Old Testament Bible) of Christianity performed miraculous actions while rescuing the Hebrews (Jews) from the Egyptians rulers. He did the impossible: he divided the Red Sea to let the Jews pass through safely. His actions were witnessed by the people who followed him. He was called by God to a mountain known as Mt. Sinai where he stayed for forty days and night and there on the mountain, God gave him the Ten Commandments engraved on the stone tablet. Though he was alone when he conversed with God, yet people believed him and follow him because the people who followed him

witnessed miracles done by Moses. Despite the miracles, there were also people who rebelled against him and made their own idol of worship.

The above story suggests that a belief needs strong confirmation, confirmation through various sources or more witnesses – the greater percentage or degree of confirmation, the firmer the belief is. The confirmation is not simple as the process of confirmation involves the human psyche and related factors or human conditions. Human are habituated being, so is our knowledge. Often, what is considered knowledge by us is but the product of our confused mind that is unable to make the correct judgment of the external objects. Even with initial confirmation, more evidence may be needed to strengthen a belief or belief system. At some situation, the possibility of correct perception may be just ten percent while the possibility of misapprehension could be 90 percent. Likewise, even in religious context, many miracles may not be sufficient to establish a truth of belief; more and more miracles may be needed to overcome doubt, for instance, in the biblical story, a disciple of Jesus by the name Thomas doubted the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Sometimes, a radical experience of miracle may be needed to see the truth, for instance, Arjuna's experience of Krishna's divine form.

However, a key question is not degree of confirmation through the use of evidence but this: How to eliminate the possibility of error while obtaining the right (form of) evidence? The human mind is given to the possibility of enormous distortion. Often a distortion in cognition/perception is not intentional. The mind usually functions from its identification or habituation. So, it has natural tendency to distort things. The distortion can be sentential as well as visual. For this reason, we can talk about distortion of two types, namely, (1) unintentional and (2) intentional. We will now turn our attention to this issue.

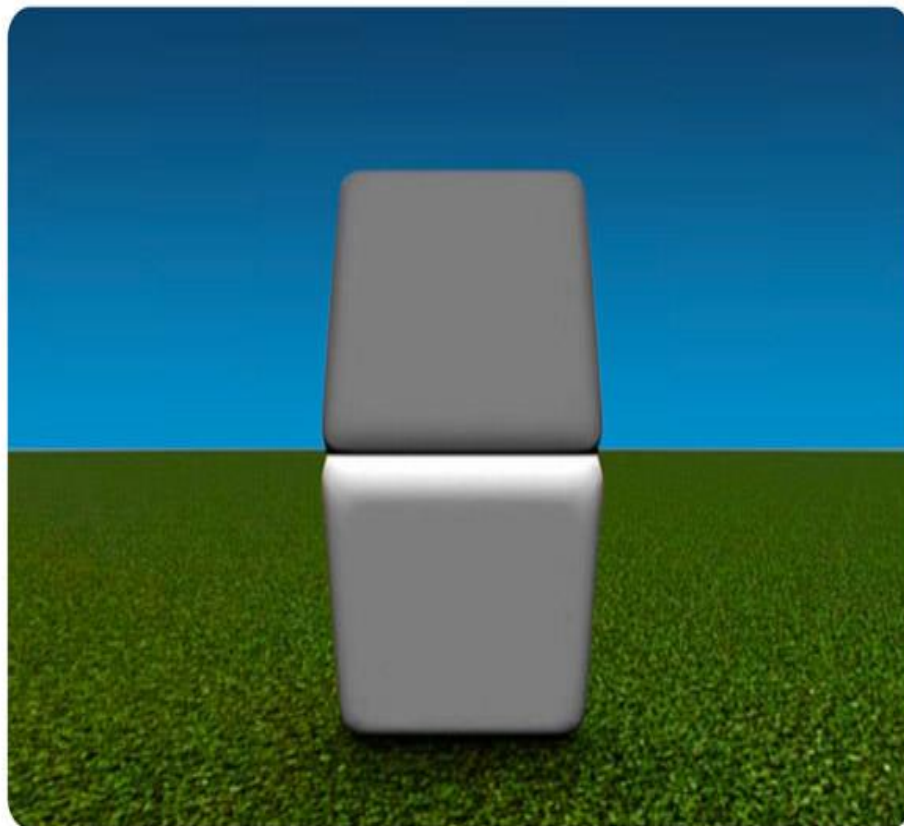
(a) Unintentional Distortion:

Most children while learning songs and rhymes unintentionally distort words and meanings. For instance, memorizing multiplication tables: “two wants are two,” “too-toos are four,” etc. These are not intentional distortion; tendency to rhyme words could be the reason. At times, it is tendency for identification that distorts our cognitive function of the mind. For instance, there is a Christian hymn: “*Must Jesus bear the cross alone, And the entire world go free? ... The consecrated cross I would bear.*” Words in the sentence of the passage are often sung by children as ‘*crossed eyed bear*’ and this certainly is not intentional. It just happened because of identification.

Perhaps, we think of another example – the Chinese Whispers game – to get further clarification. The rule of the game was such that one chosen person would be selected to whisper a word/phrase to her immediate neighbour’s ear without letting a third person to overhear it. The neighbour then whisper the word or the sentence whisper to the next person and it goes on till the last member of the player. The last person has to say the word/phrase that has been whispered to her. Often to the utter surprise of everyone, the word/phrase would get distorted even beyond proportion. At times, the words/sounds make no sense at all while at other times, we get a very different expression with a different meaning. In any case, the original word/phrase gets distorted as if by necessity.

There are other forms of distortion. Below is a visual distortion or illusion. In the picture provided below, the upper box and the lower box are of the same colour. However, people find it difficult to perceive it as the same colours. They see the boxes as having different colours. The lower box appears white in colour and the upper box appears grey in colour.

Even if I know perfectly well in advance that the boxes are of the same color, I perceive it differently. This may be a case of 'knowing yet not perceiving'. The statement 'knowing yet not-knowing' is supposed to reduce it to absurdity, yet it does not, which is strange logically speaking. Our perception does not correspond to our knowledge.



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Russell's analogy on stopped clock case also narrates a similar point:⁶⁷ Alice mistakenly believes it to be two o'clock because of the clock when it isn't. In fact, it is two o'clock.

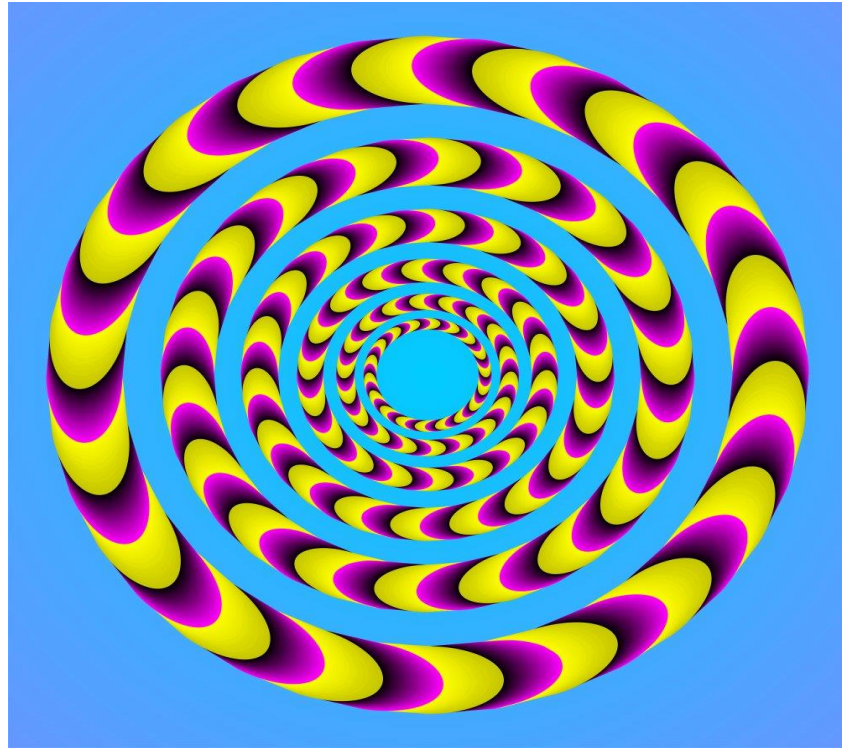
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<https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=Color+Opticalillusion+Dress&id=8FD70A33BC2C77ADBD5885A3D63DD502169465C7&FOMIDBQ>

⁶⁷ Scheffler, Israel (1965). *Conditions of Knowledge: An Introduction to Epistemology and Education*. Chicago: Scott, Foresman. ISBN 978-0-226-73668-6.

But there's a problem: Alice is unaware that the clock she is viewing stopped 12 hours ago. Alice then forms this belief which is justified according to her perception, yet it is distorted (not accurate knowledge) because unknown to her, the clock is not functional at that moment when she is looking at it. At certain time of the day, given the context, she would not be surprised to see the reading of the clock. As a matter of fact, it tells and confirms her belief about the time of the day. However, if she happens to read the clock at other times, say evening, then she would notice that something is not right with the clock. She can carefully examine her observation/evidence to avoid error. Now if she pays enough attention to the time, then she can observe three needles of the clock, the second needle do move by one second, so it will take only one second for her to find out if it is two o'clock or the clock is broken. In case the clock have only two needle; minute needle and hour needle then it will take her maximum five minutes to know if her justified true belief is justified or not justified as it is known for the fact that the clock needles are not made static. Otherwise, the circumstance will then obviously grant that something is wrong with the timing as it is will not be corresponding with the outside environment unless she lives underground.

Let us consider another visual illusion, the third example. It seems moving but in reality it is not moving. Even if I know that it is not moving, yet I cannot help my perception. I have to make good amount of effort constantly to make it still which is already still. To get the image static if one makes their vision blurred then the colour of the circle appears static.



The only way of coming out of unintentional distorted view or the illusion is by looking at the given images carefully and constantly involving right technique; only after that the reality of images can be verified. Note that there is a way to deal with sensory or perceptual illusion or distortion and so this need not be mistaken as an explication of Cartesian doubt. This is to make a point that though not all sense experiences are reliable due to the nature of mind or the senses or the object of experience, with careful approach we can deal with challenges of perception to some extent. Of course, the above examples are well known extraordinary examples of illusions. However, they serve to suggest a bigger purpose: that is, if we take due/necessary precaution by examining our source of information or evidence, justification of beliefs with evidence becomes more convincing and reasonable. For instance, even the examples of epistemic 'paradoxes associated with Edmund Gettier are

instances of partial perception or misleading perception of some sort. These problems can be addressed if more is done to cross-examine the information/ evidence.

(b) Intentional distortion:

What if someone wants to create a fake world by making things appear 'real' though they are just a show or performance? If a child is taken to that imitation-world without telling her that everything is an act or fake, she would believe her perceptions to be true. That would be the case of false knowledge/belief. However, that knowledge is imposed on her intentionally. A 1998 American science fiction comic drama film titled "The Truman Show," which was directed by Peter Weir, is a good example of this kind of scenario. The main character, Truman, lived his entire life in the beachside community of Sea Heaven Island without realizing that he was a part of a reality TV project that portrayed the feelings of regular people. In truth, it's a sizable set close to Hollywood that has 5,000 cameras to capture every motion of President Truman as well as cutting-edge technology to mimic day, night, and weather situations. The Truman Show cast includes everyone involved in the story area. The plot created a story within the story to create artificial aqua phobic in Truman so that he does not leave the seaside. Truman's everyday emotions aroused from the artificial scenarios were then justified as he remains innocent of the false narrative. In this context a person will live and die with the artificially created world but with false knowledge which were the imitation of real world just beside the Hollywood set.

In Alvin Goldman's "Fake Barn" story, a man is driving through the countryside when he sees something that looks like a barn. Because of this, he thinks he sees a barn. But he does not know that most of the fake barns in the neighborhood are made to look exactly like real

barns from the road. Same thing with Roderick Chisholm's "the perception of cat" analogy: '*de dicto* — he perceives that there is a cat on the roof' and '*de re* — a cat on the roof is perceived by him to be a cat on the roof.' He believes that he perceives that a cat is there. The characterization of the perceptual taking is as follows: "'S takes there to be an F = Df (1) S is appeared — to; (2) it is evident to S that he is appeared — to; (3) S believes that there is only one thing that appears — to him and that thing is F.'" And "S perceives that there is an F = Df (1) There is an F that is appearing certain way to S; (2) S takes there to be an F that is appearing to him in that way; and it is evident to S that an F is appearing to him in that way.'"⁶⁸

Let us revisit Gettier's problem. First case thinks that Smith has strong evidence for coming to a conjunctive proposition, but this is not true. Jones is the person who will get the job, and Jones has ten dollars on him. Smith's proof for (d) could be that the company's president told him Jones would be chosen in the end and that Smith himself just counted the coins in Jones' pocket ten minutes ago. The conclusion of (d) is (e) The person who will get the job has ten coins'⁶⁹ Smith is clearly justified in believing that (e) is true. He provides further imagination by stating 'that unknown to Smith, he himself, not Jones will get the job. And, also, unknown to Smith, he himself has ten coins in his pocket. Proposition (e) is then true, though proposition (d), from which Smith inferred (e), is false. In his example, he finds that (i) (e) is true, (ii) Smith believes that (e) is true, and (iii) Smith is justified in believing that (e) is true; for (e) is true by virtue of the number of coins in Smith's pocket, while Smith does not really know how many coins he has in his pocket; instead, he relies his

⁶⁸ Chisholm M. Roderick: 'Theory of Knowledge' third edition, chapter 5, The Evidence of the Senses

⁶⁹ In my opinion, this case is a case of opinion and not belief. Explanation will be given later on.

belief in (e) on a count of the coins he sees in Jones' pocket, the man he mistakenly thinks will be chosen for the position.

Gettier gives this example to make a point that there may be an accidental cases of justification like in the case of John and Smith. However, unknown to both John and Smith there is another situation where someone puts ten coins in Smith's pocket. Justification and false belief are going in parallel due to the external interference. Hence, the point that I want to emphasise is that misconception or distortion can be intentional or unintentional. If someone intentionally tries to keep someone in dark and doing so he or she tries hard to maintain the distortion then in that context one is obviously helpless.

For example, I go to the super market to buy some groceries. Unknown to me, the manager of the supermarket put artificial groceries in the display. The artificial groceries were so identical to the generic items, and because of this I purchase this artificial groceries. I am mistaken here. The manger's act of fraudulent succeed and my judgment fail. However, if I pay attention then I may be able to safeguard myself from the fraud. Thereby to take care of it once again I will have to bring the notion of caution that Clifford repeats in ethics of belief.

(c) Skeptical Approach on Distortion

Based on the distortion, sceptics denies the possibility of knowledge. But, instead of denying knowledge I would like to work on the distortion by acknowledging distortion. This brings to acknowledge distortion and how it is discussed in the epistemology. For example the distortion of perception. That distortion of perception can happen is not a recent problem or concern in epistemology. It has been raised by philosophers of all eras,

beginning from the ancient Greek philosophy itself. There have been sceptics of all sorts. Any epistemologist working in the area of evidentialism needs to consider and counter them if needed. In the following paragraph, we will take a look at some of the more prominent views.

Skepticism of Pyrrho: Pyrrho, the ancient Greek sceptic, makes statements that a knowledge seeker must consider and examine all opinions⁷⁰. Pyrrho goes beyond the examination of all the opinions, attacks the concept of knowing and concluded that we know nothing. In order to know, one must ask three questions:

- (1) What is a thing and how things are constituted?
- (2) How the object of knowledge is related to those things?
- (3) What ought to be our attitude towards those things?

Pyrrho was of the opinion that knowledge is limited within the boundary of appearance, the real things or substances are ignorant to the knower.⁷¹ If the real things cannot be known through the senses, then there will not be any reference for the test of truth value. It is impossible to test sensory perception with objects. The results of sense perception are what the perceiver sees, but what the perceiver sees cannot be utilized to deduce "what is."

Pyrrho argues that the perceptual experience can never be sufficient to warrant indubitable statements or belief about the external world. For example, while seeing yellow, sweet and sticky appearance there is a possibility to justify in stating 'this looks like honey'. Yet

⁷⁰ Pauloskar Kristeller, *Greek Philosopher of the Hellenistic Age*, tr. By Gregory Wood, Columbia University Press, New York, 1993, P.46

⁷¹ See A.A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, Gerald Duck Work and Company limited London, 1974 pp.80-81.

Pyrrho also holds that sense perception is compatible with the proposition ‘this is honey’ as well as the proposition ‘this does not look like honey’.⁷² It is possible to have contradictory statement of each and every thing. For Pyrrho, both pro-arguments and contrary-arguments are equally strong and balanced that led him to suspend of all forms of judgment. For Pyrrho, suspension of judgment is freeing oneself from confusion. Nothing is true or false; it is only an apparent. His scepticism, however, surpasses the theory of knowledge, and explains the moral concepts and the form of life without attachment. (He lived a life that exhibit detachment from the world, purposes and desires).

Cartesian Skepticism: Descartes’ main intention in the *Meditation* was to establish the thinking self. For that he laid the foundation of modern scepticism. His doubts on the reliability of senses are fundamental and so it is important to address/consider them. Descartes, in the ‘*First Meditation: On what can be called into doubt*’, presents possible cases of false beliefs. His *First Meditation* is undertaken to challenge Aristotelian Philosophy, the predominant Western philosophy that propagates that knowledge is achieved through senses. He states that: “All that I have, up to this moment, accepted as possessed of the highest truth and certainty, I received either from or through the senses. I observed, however, that these sometimes misled us; and it is the part of prudence not to place absolute confidence in that by which we have even once been convinced.”⁷³ Descartes gives ‘Dream Argument’ to suggest the whole experience of the world may be a dream as there are no substantially different experience of the world whether be it in a dream or in a waking state. It is quite difficult to establish a sharp experiential distinction

⁷² Ibid.,p.82

⁷³ Produced by Titan Read Christianshavn 1428 Copenhagen Denmark, ‘Rene Descartes, The Essential Collection’, Translated by John Veitch.

between the sleeping and waking states. Secondly, the 'Evil Genius Argument' suggests that we cannot trust our senses as senses are often prone to deception. We can never be certain that we have not been tricked by a more powerful being to believing that there is a world out there by presenting sense experiences of all sorts to us. This is not implausible considering the example of the 'The Truman Show'. As the broad form of the argument may be stated, "If I am dreaming or being tricked by my senses, then it indicates that I have unreliable beliefs," Descartes offered a sceptical perspective in the process of knowing anything with confidence about the world around us.

Discussions on scepticism: Barry Stroud in his work "The Problem of the External world"⁷⁴ suggests a rule through which the Cartesian problem of the knowledge through the senses can be achieved. He calls it 'Ruled Out Condition': Since we can never know that we are not dreaming, so the first things that needs to be ruled out here is the dreaming condition. He says, we have to except the alternative being awake rather than being asleep. Secondly, anyone who talks about knowledge and comprehends what other people have to say about it will be able to identify this fact or circumstance in specific situations.⁷⁵ The rule out condition would often take the following form: when I know x, the x is goldfinch I must know all the incompatible things with x. things that are not goldfinch, I know that it is not canary. Similarly, when I know that I have a cup of tea in my hand I know that it is beverage and not food, I also know that it is not toxic drink, tea, water etc.⁷⁶ Stroud also emphasises on the re-examination of ruling out condition to make the reflection and investigation

⁷⁴ Barry Stroud, "The Problem of the External World," *The Significance of Philosophical Scepticism*, 1984, xx, doi:10.1093/0198247613.003.0001

⁷⁵ Ernest Sosa, Jaegon Kim, Jeremy Fantl, and Matthew Mcgrath. *Epistemology An Anthology*, Second edition, Blackwell Publishing Ltd (2008)

⁷⁶ Ernest Sosa, Jaegon Kim, Jeremy Fantl, and Matthew Mcgrath. *Epistemology An Anthology*, Second edition, Blackwell Publishing Ltd (2008)

reliable. For example a jury may rule out a possibility of suspect the criminal due the man's alibi and supportive witness, yet it is important to raise question on the knowledge that has taken granted.⁷⁷

Even while this condition as it stands does not account for the importance of the other types of possibilities previously discussed, it does explain why one must know that the bird is not a canary. The goldfinch instance was cited as an example since it is well known that being a canary and being a goldfinch are incompatible. However, this does not explain why it is necessary to rule out scenarios such as the witnesses fabricating information regarding the man's whereabouts in Cleveland or the chance that the person is having a hallucination in which her bed is covered in a mountain of leaves. It also won't clarify why Descartes has to rule out the notion that he is dreaming. Descartes is not dreaming, despite the fact that he is sitting by the fire with a piece of paper in his hand. Descartes can't just know that he is sitting by the fire since it is recognized that possibility is incompatible with what he claims to know if it is plain to us that he must know that he is not dreaming. Not at all. If there is a straightforward truth about knowing that we can rely on in response to Descartes's argument, then it must be more complex than what has been proposed thus far. Even considering only the commonplace instances without any controversy might easily lead us to believe that it goes something like this: if someone knows something, p, he must be aware of the untruth of all those claims that are incompatible with his knowledge of p. (or perhaps all those things he knows to be incompatible with his knowing that p).

⁷⁷ *ibid*

The most conclusive evidence for the existence of the outside world is G. E. Moore's demonstration of the existence of human hands by lifting his two hands. But did he demonstrate that two human hands existed at the time? According to Moore, it may be difficult to provide a greater or more rigorous proof of anything than the one that was provided since it was so thorough. However, it is not a proof if the three conditions are not satisfied. The conditions are as follows:

- (1) unless the premise used to support the conclusion was unrelated to the conclusion being proved.
- (2) unless the adduced premise was something that was known to be true and not just something that was believed but far from definite, or something that, although true, was not known to be true, and
- (3) unless the conclusion is the implication from the premise.

But all these three conditions were in fact satisfied in the above example.⁷⁸ (1) The conclusion was simply "Two human hands are present at this time," although the premise that was offered as evidence was unquestionably different. This wasn't the concept; the premise was something that could be stated by exhibiting hands, making certain movements, and saying things like, "Here is one hand, and here is another." Because it is fairly evident that the conclusion might have been true even if the premise had been untrue, it is quite obvious that the two were distinct. One was asserting considerably more than what was stated in the conclusion when they made the premise. (2) One might say with certainty that they understood what they had meant when they combined particular motions

⁷⁸ Ernest Sosa, Jaegwon Kim, Jeremy Fantl, and Matthew McGrath. *Epistemology An Anthology*, Second edition, Blackwell Publishing Ltd (2008) p. 39

with the words "Here is one hand and here is another." One could see that she was holding one hand in the location she indicated by combining a certain motion with the phrase "here," while another hand was in a different location she indicated by combining a different gesture with the word "here." If it was implied that the subject didn't know it but merely believed it and that possibly it wasn't the case, it would have been an absurd instance! Saying that the topic is not aware that she is now speaking while standing up, that she might not be, and that it's not absolutely definite that she is, is just as ludicrous. And thirdly, it is undeniably true that the conclusion did flow naturally from the premise. This is as definite as the statement that if one hand is present and another appears, then two hands are there at this time.

Descartes' *Meditation* was a challenge on the sensual knowledge and the follow up critical work by Stroud and Moore shows that by considering certain 'rule out condition' and necessity condition, knowledge of the external world through sense is possible. However, the foregoing discussion is neither to reiterate nor explicate Cartesian doubt and the possible way out. Reference to the works of Descartes, Barry Stroud and G. E. Moore is to assert the point that various forms of distortion such as dreaming state, hallucination, illusion, etc., due to distance of the objects, are possible. Distortion is not an uncommon factor of perception. In the same manner, distortion of the evidence is highly probable. In the subsequent section, we will take a closer look at the possibility of distortion of evidence.

(d) Distortion of Evidence:

Taking reference from the first chapter, it is generally agreed upon that evidence helps in supporting one's claim. To repeat the classical definition of evidence: S knows that p is

true, if and only if p is true, S accepts that p and S has evidence, e, for p.⁷⁹ Let us pay a closer attention to this definition. Let us assume that the right evidence will provide justified belief and wrong evidence will give rise to unjustified belief. What is right evidence and what is wrong evidence? Evidence that is not distorted is to be considered as right evidence. Roderick Chisholm suggests that for a subject to know something that something should be non-defective and the condition for non-defective is as follows: when a man knows a true proposition then his supportive basis for that true proposition is not the basis of false proposition. For example, in the cases of knowledge by accidents, a mistaken perception turns out to be true due to the accidental circumstances. Accidents, which occur as a matter of luck, should not become the basis for knowledge claim.

Non-defective evidence could mean the following: “(1) An evidence is non-defective for S, if the evidence is entailed by a conjunction of propositions each having for S a basis which is not a basis of any false proposition and (2) evidence is known and accepted by S, evidence is true; and it is non-defective.”⁸⁰ These conditions are consistent and compatible with the four types of evidence that are:

1. Non-defective perception
2. Non-defective testimony
3. Non-defective documents, and
4. Non-defective circumstances

⁷⁹ E. L. Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?," *Analysis* 23, no. 6 (1963): 2, doi:10.1093/analys/23.6.121.

⁸⁰ Roderick Chisholm, Knowledge and Belief: 'De Dicto' and 'De Re.' *Philosophical studies: An international Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition*, Vol. 29 No.1 (Jan., 1976) p. 1-20

2.3 Sufficiency of Evidence:

According to Clifford's theory of evidence, accepting a claim without supporting evidence is immoral from a moral standpoint. However, he made no mention of the requirement for proof or its adequacy. The justification through evidence needs to be explored and examined in details as some lapses can result in the problems of infinite regress and circularity. So, we will consider the conditions that help us to understand the concept of evidence. However, we will do so in a round-about manner by looking at the conditions of knowledge as well.

We can begin with some tentative definitions of necessary and sufficient conditions. Logically speaking, a necessary condition for believing in the truth of a proposition is one without which a thing could not possibly be the case while sufficient condition for believing something to be the case is one in which if the belief obtains, then it is sufficient for some belief to be true (to be the case). Normally, conditional phrases such as "if p, then q" are used to describe and record these circumstances. In this case, p is a necessary condition for q whereas q is a sufficient condition for p. In other words, by necessary condition, we mean that if p is a sufficient condition for q, then the truth of p assures the truth of q, and vice versa. According to the claim that q is a prerequisite for p, p cannot be true unless q is true or if q is untrue, p is false. Perhaps a specific statement will be helpful.

- a. Salman Khan is a bachelor.

If we analyse the above statement, the necessary attributes for the statement to be true are the following: unmarried, male and adult. Of course, the above sentence is not a conditional sentence. However, it can be converted into one though not an accurate translation:

- b. If that person is Salman Khan, then that person is a bachelor.

The above sentence can be analysed further into parts: p = “That person is Salman Khan” and q = “That person is a bachelor”. If we go back to our definitions of necessary and sufficient conditions, then ‘being Salman Khan’ is a sufficient condition for ‘being a bachelor’. That means if it is true that a person is Salman Khan, then it is sufficient to believe that he is a bachelor (That is, the truth of the antecedent guarantees the truth of the consequent). Likewise, ‘being a bachelor’ is a necessary condition for ‘being Salman Khan’. That means a person cannot be Salman Khan without being a bachelor. (That is, for a person to be Salman Khan, he MUST be a bachelor).

Second example:

- c. If there is spark, then there is fire

In the above statement, the (antecedent) sentence “There is spark” is a sufficient condition for the truth of the (consequent) sentence “There is fire”. Generally, the idea of sufficient condition is used to define the concept of causality. It is a way of saying that there is a kind of necessary relation between spark and fire.

Given the above explications of necessary and sufficient conditions, let us apply the concept in the definition of knowledge. According to Plato, the necessary and sufficient condition for knowledge can be expressed as follows: S knows p iff (if and only if) p is true, S believes in p and S is justified in believing p . In other words, what is on the left hand side of “iff” is the same as what is on the right hand side of “iff”. The conditions on the right hand side of “iff” are the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge. However, the sufficient condition is challenged by Gettier insisting that though the three

conditions are necessary, they are not sufficient to acquire or form a belief/knowledge. Chisholm defines knowledge in terms of the conditions that are adequate and sufficient in the following way: S knows p provided that S accepts p, S has adequate evidence to belief in p and p is true. Going with this necessary and sufficiency principle, Clifford's evidential theory can be formulated as follows:

1. S knows p if and only if
 - a. S has moral obligation to belief in p, and
 - b. S's moral obligation is to have evidence to belief in p.

Clifford's principle is not strictly verifiable in that the conditions are not quantifiable. It essentially suggests moral obligation vis-à-vis action, thereby, making his theory of knowledge ambiguous. In some sense, it is a more difficult theory to handle in standard epistemology since it does not deal directly with the question of truth of proposition or belief. However, his move is both interesting and important in that epistemology is not only concerned with propositional knowledge but also actionable knowledge. Besides, knowledge cannot be fruitfully and meaningfully kept outside social and moral concerns of a society. Therefore, we will now try to understand some moral concerns/issues in epistemic engagements, especially the notion of moral obligation.

2.4 Moral Obligations

Morality has its own issue as there are problems in unified definition of morality. There is no particular definition that ultimately defines morality as 'this.' However, in moral

philosophy, two types of morality are broadly categorized, namely, (i) descriptive morality and (ii) normative morality.

i. A type of empirical research called *descriptive morality or ethics* looks at people's or groups of people's opinions. The purpose of the study is to describe the phenomena by observing how moral decisions are made in accordance with societal standards and ideals. The goal of descriptive morality is to identify people's ideals, good and bad behaviours, and moral actors' qualities. It also investigates people's ethical ideals in terms of actions that are rewarded or punished by law or by supernatural beliefs. Descriptive morality is cultural specific and that is why it involves empirical investigation. As such, the study is not necessarily confined within the corridors of philosophy books or departments. For example, Lawrence Kohlberg is a psychologist to work on descriptive ethics. Using the empirical method, he questioned a group of boys about the action of a man facing a moral dilemma⁸¹: should he steal a drug to save his wife, or refrain from theft though that would lead to his wife's death? The moral justification for people's actions, not the choice the lads made, is what raises worry.

ii. *Normative morality or ethics* is a code of conduct designed through reason or which are derived from the universal moral law. Studies involving normative ethics investigate the questions that arise regarding how one ought to act. Normative ethics is sometimes understood as prescriptive ethics. Broadly speaking, all traditional ethics, including customs and traditions of primitive groups of people in the ancient times, will come under this type. Most of the classical works of moral philosophy are related to normative ethics,

⁸¹ "Heinz Dilemma," Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, last modified November 22, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinz_dilemma.

for instance, Kantian categorical imperatives (more popularly known as deontological ethics), utilitarian ethics, including some forms of contractarianism, etc.

The question of whether a behaviour is right, good, or wicked is at the heart of contemporary ethical studies. Therefore, whether deontological or utilitarian ethics, action is a crucial component of contemporary ethics. The employment of universal moral principles to resolve contentious moral problems is one of the goals of contemporary ethical theories.

Perhaps any information on the problems with ethical research would be useful. There are three perspectives on how moral queries ought to be resolved. (1) *Virtue ethics*, advocated by Aristotle and supported by Saint Thomas Aquinas, focuses on the inherent character of those who are acting rather than specific actions. (2) The status of the action or disposition is the main emphasis of deontological ethics. According to deontology, choices should take into account one's obligations or rights. Asserting some inviolable moral principles, Kant's categorical imperative states that "a person should behave in such a way that the deed itself becomes the universal law and a person should respect other persons as having inherent value and not as a tool to reach an aim."⁸² (3) *Consequential ethics (consequentialism)* argues that the morality of an action is contingent on the action's outcome or result. Within each school of thoughts, we can find varieties of thoughts. There are new approaches to ethics which can be strictly categorized under any of the standard classification. For instance, the feminist approach which is being developed in the more recent time

⁸² Timmons, Mark (ed.), 2002, *Kant's Metaphysics of Morals: Interpretative Essays*, New York: Oxford University Press.

comparatively suggests that empathy and compassion ought to be the basis for moral reasoning as opposed to universal rational principles. It highlights the significance of relationships and interdependence in accomplishing ethical objectives. Ethical pragmatism is more closely related to the questions and concerns of epistemology. Pragmatists contend that norms, principles, and moral standards are likely to be improved as a consequence of inquiry and that moral correctness evolves similarly to other types of knowledge – socially over the period of many lifetimes. As a result, they disapprove of all fundamental (or absolute) ethical principles, whether they are irrational or not. Pragmatism is credited with having been founded by John Dewey, William James, and Charles Sanders Peirce.

With this brief exposition of ethical systems, we can now get back to Clifford, more accurately debates after/around him. According to William James, moral questions are such which ‘questions cannot wait for sensible proof.’ A moral question is about ‘what is good.’ James considers evidence as an area of science, and the functions of science is to tell us what exist and what does not exist. However, in order to compare the "value," science looks to the hearts of people to set down the boundless ascertainment of reality and to rectify mistaken beliefs for the benefit of people. James also noted that "confidence in a fact may assist generate a fact" and that it would be absurd to conclude that having faith before proof from science constitutes the lowest kind of wickedness. In doing so, he refuted the notion that moral responsibility requires evidence.⁸³

Defending Clifford, A.J. Burger criticizes James’s criticism stating that faith by nature is such that it cannot be decided on intellectual ground. James’s position only states when

⁸³ Burger, A.J. “An Examination of ‘The Will to believe’” (2001). *The Ethics of Belief*. Edited by A.J. Burger. Revised Edition. 2008

one has a right to have faith but not about not having faith. These problems are arising as James seems to have confusion regarding beliefs and actions. Burger points out that belief and actions are separate notions. For example, one may believe that she is fearless of height but abstain from paragliding due to fear. In such a situation, to have believes include (1) acting on her believes by doing events that includes height, (2) abstain oneself from paragliding. Not having believes that she is fearless does not entail that she will go on the adventure of heights.

In the special note, Burger also mentions that Clifford never said that beliefs should be legislated; he said that what one believes is of ethical significance because belief is intimately tied to action. Ethical significance is different from legislation. Individuals weigh evidence for themselves in order to determine what they should believe. This is contrary to the idea that this particular belief is required by law. Burger's insistence on the conceptual distinction vis-à-vis relation between belief and actions for clarity is noteworthy. Though there is no logical connection between them, the connection is important for human pursuit for excellence.

Considering his works and concerns, Clifford's interest in moral obligation may be identified as normative in nature. It is an ability to demarcate right from wrong, good from bad and from barbarism to civilization. He brought up the concept of virtuous duty in the theory of knowledge. In his words he states, there is a greater danger that lies in the practice of belief based on insufficient evidence. The danger is not personal, not it is about false

belief. The danger is towards mankind. Man will lose the habit of inquiry and investigation, which may regress the human civilization.⁸⁴

It may not be about simply doing what is good, but also doing what is right. Clifford's concern and engagement with moral obligation appeal to human conscience. If taken comparatively, then it can be observed that many practices in the society have become ritualistic without knowing the meaning of it. In this way, his apprehension is justified in that without the spirit of inquiry into our practices and system, the society will lose direction and purpose. Let us consider an example: During Diwali, why do we light candles and burst crackers? What are their significances? If given a serious thought, we will realize that cracker is a recent invention whereas Diwali celebration is a very old practice followed by many people groups in India. Generally, Diwali is understood as victory of good over evil. However, if it is simply taken as victory of good over evil, then the significance of lighting candles and burning crackers is somewhat puzzling in that there seems to be no logical connections between, for instance, bursting crackers and victory of good over evil. Besides, in today's context where the rural and urban dwellings are filled with electricity, does it make sense to light candles during Diwali? Contrary to such practices, Clifford would suggest that it is our moral duty to use less energy and emit less pollution. It is a virtue to consume fewer natural resources and create less pollution so that future of human kind is secured. Of course, such activities may have deep religious significance about which no rational explanation or justification can be provided. The point is basically to correlate moral obligation with knowledge system in that if we know something to be true,

⁸⁴ A. J. Burger, William K. Clifford, and William James, *The Ethics of Belief* (Scotts Valley: CreateSpace, 2008), p. 17.

then it is a moral obligation to perform that which is true and right to counter false and wrong beliefs which are harmful for human existence.

Considering the foregoing discussion, we can see that the ethical concern of Clifford is very much similar with Kantian concept of Universal maxim: *Do one's action in such a way that it becomes a universal law*. His interest in a way is to make our beliefs more than just mere beliefs but to translate our beliefs into actions, actions which are conducive for human progress and wellbeing. The basis of human action should be guided by moral concerns as men will speak truth to one another only when each of them revered the truth in their own mind.⁸⁵

2.5 Suspension of belief

Generally, suspension of judgment is associated with either positivism or scepticism. The Cartesian scepticism posits four rules:

- i. Accepting only that information that are known to be true with certainty
- ii. Take the known truth and break them to their basic components
- iii. Then start solving the simplest problem and
- iv. Make the list of the others to solve its problems.

Similarly, Clifford suggests suspension of belief and states that we should never settle our belief. Belief should not become a doctrine; it should always be a subject of inquiry.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ A. J. Burger, William K. Clifford, and William James, *The Ethics of Belief* (Scotts Valley: CreateSpace, 2008),

⁸⁶ Ibid p.18

On this, James disagrees with Clifford on the idea of suspension of judgment. According to him, there are two ways to look at belief or opinion: (1) one must know the truth and (2) avoid error. The possibility is that, when one believes, one escapes the incidental consequences from believing falsehood. It happens rarely that by disbelieving a thing one believes the same thing. While trying to escape one falsehood, one may fall into another falsehood. Chasing for truth may be paramount, but one has to let the truth take its chance. Suspension in belief is keeping oneself away from the chances of guessing or grasping the truth. This sense of duty about investigating truth or error is only a passional expression of life. Postponement is an action that reflects hidden fear of human being of being fooled. It is like an army general informing his troop to keep out of battle as there are chances of wound and loss of life. Errors are not that awful according to James.

Burger reacted to James on this matter once more and said that he doesn't understand what genuine knowledge is. Knowledge is a process attained via reason and evidence; it is not only accurate guesswork. Take for example, the ratio of the outcome of a roll of die is one by six. A person who had real knowledge about it knows that in each roll of die, the chances are one divided six. However, if we go with James's idea of taking chances with knowledge, then a mere guess can be considered as real knowledge which is absurd. According to Burger, such an attitude only demonstrates ignorance or extreme foolishness. The person with real knowledge of dice roll, if there is such a thing as real knowledge of dice game, would suspend his or her belief. James, on the other hand, preferred to commit the fallacy of argument *ad ignorantum* because whenever he fails to answer important questions, he would make bigoted guess.

The second criticism of Burger against James with regard to avoiding error is this: the act of avoiding error itself is an act of suspension of judgment. If one wants to find truth, then one must avoid error while it is also the case that even if one avoids error, it is not necessary that he or she has gained the truth. Hence, the possibility of truth occurs only when one applies the suspension about the subject matter. However, James do not like the idea of suspension and in ignoring the advice the suspend beliefs, he is indirectly promoting bigotry, according to Burger, and bigotry entails prejudice which may lead to wrong judgment. For example, imagine a bigot (female) who hated all men with a bigotry-belief that all men are sexual predator. Now imagine a case where a man happens to be a molester. Even if there is an instantiation of his belief, such a belief will not be justified as it was based on prejudice. But for James, prejudice would be considered as knowledge.

Burger has an observation to make on the issue of faith and scientific belief. The integrity of a scientist lies in finding outcome where faith plays the least role. A scientist's task should not be limited to finding one side of an issue irrespective of the possibility of deception or failure. James may be partially correct when he suggests that not caring about the result will not be competent but he is giving false dilemma when he is stating that the scientist who is interested in the result out of curiosity and does not care about the outcome needs to be omitted. Burger agrees with James on the point that there are truths that one will never believe if it is solely based on evidence and recommends faith regarding momentous options as some things cannot be decided on intellectual ground solely. A government, an army, a business system, a ship, a college, and an athletic team are just a few examples of institutions that depend on faith to function. This is achievable because each person in a society performs their duties in the expectation that their fellow citizens

would follow suit. Burger views this collaboration of several separate creatures as a natural outcome.

Perhaps, it is a good idea to reflect and evaluate the above discussion. It appears as though Burger equates suspension of belief with inquiry or investigation while defending Clifford against the objections offered by James. However, he does not give its connection with scepticism. Clifford's position is sceptical and the sceptical stand entails openness; the idea is not to settle a belief as absolute knowledge. Burger at one point mentions the distinction of action and belief; and in this regard it is once again necessary to bring forth actions and belief to understand Clifford's intention why he suggests suspension of belief. Belief, according to him, is a cognitive process and action is a social need (as his philosophy suggests moral obligation). "When action is once done, it is right or wrong for ever; no accidental failure of its good or evil fruits can alter that."⁸⁷ Therefore, a sceptical attitude needs to encompass beliefs before and after actions. If we revisit the issues of *Ethics of Belief*, then it can also be noted that the central issues are: belief-formation, belief maintenance, and belief relinquishment. Those are immediately followed by these questions: Is it ever or always morally right or epistemically rational or practically prudent to belief on sufficient evidence? If this is the case, are there any methods of gathering evidence that are also unethical, unreasonable, or imprudent? The answers to these queries are 'to have open mind' for further inquiries. We will consider them, at least partially, in the immediately following section along with some other related issues.

⁸⁷ A. J. Burger, William K. Clifford, and William James, *The Ethics of Belief* (Scotts Valley: CreateSpace, 2008), p. 10

2.6 The Role of Authority in Justifying Belief and Suspending Belief

The immediate issue that we face after the suspension of belief is prolonged scepticism, doubting everything followed by apprehension to form belief. Clifford addresses the issue of universal sceptics in relation to 'individual experience' and the 'body of knowledge' that arises from the moral obligations of belief. He raises such questions as; are we to become universal sceptic, deprived, and afraid that we will never know the truth? Are these depravity supposed to make us commit perjury and stealing?⁸⁸

To these queries, Clifford clarifies stating that, in the matter of belief, there can be no 'practical danger' from care and self-control. But practical certainty and principles are acquired that is most suited for the guidance of mankind when men do their duty of investigation with utmost care and honesty. The investigations had no negative effects on one's physical beliefs, which direct one's actions in interacting with both animate and inanimate creatures, or moral beliefs, which direct one's actions in dealing with humanity. There is no cause to worry that the habit of inquiry would hamper man's daily activities. Even when the data may not support the current viewpoint, there may be situations where one must take action based on probability. The specific fruits that would decide the activities of supporting future beliefs with proof are seen.

Without clarifying what good evidence is, Clifford contends that it is insufficient to assert that believing in bad evidence is wrong. He believes that the testimony should be the first step in the investigation. What situations are appropriate for believing in other people's

⁸⁸ Clifford, W.K. "The Weight of Authority." *The Ethics of Belief*. Edited by A.J. Burger. Revised Edition. 2008. P. 19

testimony, he wonders? Second, when and why should one have faith that goes beyond human experience?

Let us consider the above questions by Clifford. "Is the testimony of a man unworthy of belief?"⁸⁹ In order to accept a testimony, Clifford suggested reasonable grounds for trusting the speaker's *veracity*, *knowledge*, and *judgment*.⁹⁰ Two important questions arise from trustworthiness of testimony: (1) Is he honest? (2) Is he mistaken? Most men, according to Clifford, are satisfied with negative answers with probabilities. The moral ground of a man is taken with high gratitude and at times, it can be taken as a ground for accepting things which he possibly may not know. For instance, a Mohammedan will claim that his prophet's character is so majestic that it inspires respect in both the prophet's followers and his detractors. His moral teachings are so expertly constructed that the majority of mankind accepts and upholds his commandments. His institutions have educated the expanding West about civilisation while saving black people from the barbarism. Should the populace mistrust the word of a so great and so good a being as man? Can it be argued that this great guy lied about serious and holy matters?⁹¹ Through the testimony of Prophet Mohammed, it is advocated that there is only one God and that whosoever believes in him shall enjoy the everlasting life but whosoever fails to trust him will be doomed. The Prophet Mohammad is excellent example of testimony for he must have spoken with truth and honesty in so far as his own knowledge is concerned; however, there is no evidence that he has the knowledge of truth.

⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 20

⁹⁰ He is really trying to speak the truth so far as he knows it, secondly he has had opportunities of knowing the truth about this matter, and thirdly he has made proper use of those opportunities in coming to the conclusion which he affirms.

⁹¹ Ibid. p. 21

Take another example, suppose that a celestial visitor gave information and when the information was tested, it turn out to be correct. Even then, the surety of celestial's visit is doubtful. It may be a figment of imagination. The information is revealed through 'subtle channel of sense.' But, if the visitor were to be a real person and for the most part if his information were trustworthy, then this would be good ground to trust him for future as it is verifiable. Though the tested visitor may justify in believing that the truth is spoken as far as his knowledge is concern, yet, the question remains; on what *ground* one is supposed to know what he knows? In this regards, he says, the fruit of patience will turn conjecture to belief.⁹²

The belief based on deeds can be answered by saying that accepting Islam is just an activity motivated by belief to complete the Prophet's mission. In the former case, it is the action that determines the test of the truth; but in this case it is the belief that serves for the test of truth. However, is it possible to belief a system that has succeeded on delusion? It is observed that the individual saints claimed to have found peace and joy in their beliefs and that their spiritual experiences are verified through faith. Even countries may be elevated from lower stages of life (savagery or barbarism) to higher levels via the use of beliefs of all kinds. Looking at the example, one may claim that the belief has "been put into practice and proved."⁹³ However, it is important to show that the verification is not supernatural character of Prophet's mission or trustworthiness of his authority which cannot be tested. It is required to show that his wisdom is practical in mundane things. The prophet preaches the doctrine of joy and peace and assurance of it through eternity and the people or the

⁹² Ibid. p. 23

⁹³ Ibid. p. 24

believers find comfort and pleasantness of the souls in that doctrine. But the issue that is of interest to us is that the comfort and pleasure do not guarantee the truth of the doctrine. This only proves his sympathy for the people's nature and his knowledge about it.

Like Prophet Mohammed, there is a prophet from the East – Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism. Buddhism is the religion of peace, one religion that has consistently tried to persuade the human race from persecuting one another in the name of religion. According to Buddha, the existence of God is not important or necessary for the pursuit of *Nirvana* saying that life is a cycle of birth and death. Nirvana or salvation consists in freeing oneself from the cycle.

With regard to these two religious systems, Clifford suggests that “Both cannot be infallibly inspired; one or the other must have been the victim of delusion, and thought he knew that which he really did not know.”⁹⁴ From the above, he argues that a judgment can be formed, that the goodness and greatness of man do not justify nor warrant a belief. A reasonable ground is required to establish a belief. Since there is no reasonable ground to verify the afterlife, therefore, no ground to verify the Prophet's and Buddha's preaching.

Suppose a doctor prescribes a medicine to a patient. The patient is quite justified in believing the authority of the doctor. Take another example of an explorer of Arctic; if he gives information about the experiences of the degree of cold in longitude and latitude, then it is quite right for people to belief him. His narration can be tested by his companion. It is reasonable to assume that he is telling the truth about what he is saying. However, if a doctor asserts that the ice at the North Pole is 300 feet thick, there is no evidence to support

⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 26-27

the assertion. Even if his statement is verifiable by men, given his profession, his claim is not justifiable. In short, according to Clifford, one should not accept the testimony or the authority of a person if it is not reachable by human states.

According to Clifford, it is not only conceivable and proper, but also a man's obligated responsibility to ask appropriate questions and conduct investigations; the tradition's primary goal is to give mankind the tools necessary for these activities. If we accept things without doing more research, we endanger not only ourselves but also the future generations of our race by failing to contribute to the development of the fabric that will be passed down to them.⁹⁵

Clifford provides another illustration based on the traditional⁹⁶ belief which requires examination for the belief to be justified. He takes the example of a tribe in Central Africa: suppose there is a medicine man who professes on the sacrifice of the cattle to make his medicine work. Did the medicine work due to the sacrifice of a cattle or it could have worked without sacrifice? This is not verifiable. The only credibility of the practice is that the medicine man has persuaded them pretty well and the tribesmen believed in this practice for a very long time which is being passed from generation to generation. Clifford says that this traditional practice is founded through the means of fraud and credulity. A person has no right to believe the testimony of their neighbours unless they have solid reasons to. If a man's word is not tested or independently validated, it is not worthy.

The customary notion that derives from humanity's shared experience is the next point to explore. Additionally, this tradition creates individual moral and material world

⁹⁵ Ibid p. 29

⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 30

perceptions, including notions of justice, truth, and goodness. This is not given in the form of statement. These concepts answer to the instinct which is within every human being, like the concept of ‘doing right thing’ and ‘doing good thing’. These concepts need further inquiry since they are established by an authority rather than moral sense founded by personal experience. For example, recently in Europe, it was taught that giving money to the beggars indiscriminately is beneficent. However, questioning into this act led them to see that the true beneficence is in teaching men to do work he is fitted for. Giving money to the beggar would mainly encourage idleness. Through testing and discussion, the concept of beneficence gets purified, wider and truer.⁹⁷

Clifford believes that the ethics of belief, regarded by him as a sacred tradition of humanity, does not lie in the proposition or statement accepted by an authoritative tradition. The sacred tradition ought to lie in our ability to question rightly, questions which would enable us to ask further questions and in methods of answering these questions. He thus expresses,

“He who use of its results to stifle his own doubts, or to hamper the enquiry of others, is guilty of a sacrilege which centuries shall never be able to blot out.”⁹⁸

In other words, anyone who utilises its results to dispel their own doubts or to thwart the questions of others commits a sacrilege that cannot be atoned throughout the passage of time.

Hence, it may be stated that, there are limitation on justification as there are limits in the sources and also of the believers. Many factors are involve, such as internal factor, external

⁹⁷ <http://blog.practicaethics.ox.ac.uk/2012/09/dont-give-money-to-beggars/>

⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 35

factor. It is not only on self a person lean on for their own understanding, sometime people do rely on others. The others can be an object or subject. Object includes the matter and subject includes the human. When there are humans, there is a role of authority. The role of authority is both ways. Specifically considering human, Clifford suggest that, it is the sole duty of seeker to test and investigate the mode and medium of our knowledge, justification and belief system very cautiously. If we fail to be cautious then we fail to duty of enquiry, and that would be major epistemic failure.

The next issue that is faced through this is the problem of limitations. Evidence taken as empirically has its physical limitations and when a belief is regarded as guide to ones actions goes beyond the limits of experiences. The assumption for the following chapter is that; to know something perception may be an important tool whereas to know some other thing only introspection will work. Where as to some other thing both may not be sufficient, and some other factors such as corroboration and circumstances may be an important requirement.

Chapter-3

Justification through Negation

Introduction

Clifford in the ‘Ethics of Belief’ establishes that belief is based on the inferences drawn from the morally obligated sufficient evidences. The immediate concern of belief is the limits of experience as if belief is taken as a guide to our actions and then it goes beyond experience. This presented a believer with the moral conundrum of whether or not to believe something that transcends our experience. How much and how can we build on our experience to construct our beliefs? In an attempt to answer the question, Clifford suggested utter *simplicity* and *universality* in forming a belief with the statement: “...we may believe what goes beyond our experience, only when it is inferred from that experience by the assumption that what we do not know is like what we know.”⁹⁹

This chapter’s attempt is to understand Clifford’s justification of belief that goes beyond experience that he mentions in ‘The Limits of Inference’¹⁰⁰ keeping a question in mind that ‘how to draw an inference of things that are not directly accessible to us through senses?’ and then look into the possible objections that Clifford’s notion of inferences face by taking the analysis of uniformity done by G. W. Leibniz in his work ‘principle of identity of indiscernible,’ David Hume’s critique on the inductive method and the fallacy of weak Induction. Secondly, Clifford’s inference is being compared with Mill’s Method of

⁹⁹ A. J. Burger, William K. Clifford, and William James, *The Ethics of Belief* (Scotts Valley: CreateSpace, 2008), p. 36

¹⁰⁰ Ibid p. 35

difference to defend Clifford's position (i.e., to justify a belief that goes beyond experience).

A narrative to begin the section on the quest of *Reality*;

Nachiketa in his third boon wishes to know about the existence or inexistence in the afterlife from Yama the God of Death the existence and inexistence afterlife. To this Yama said, even the gods formerly had their doubts as it difficult to comprehend the subtle nature of Atman is subtle. So the Yama said to choose another boon and to release him from this boon. With Nachiketa's persistence, Yama replies, the afterlife may only be realized through the *Knowledge of Reality*.¹⁰¹

Reality has been the search since the quest of knowledge began yet it is difficult to determine the nature of reality. Reality is most assuredly assumed in mere fragments as Russell put in his statement; reality is something that is inferred from immediate sensation.¹⁰² Reality may not be known but may be inferred from the things that are known through comparison with things that are not known to us. How far inference leads to knowledge that remains as the immediate quest? If we keep on digging sensation or inference will it lead us anywhere? We need to rest the foundation of knowledge somewhere. Towards this end, attempt is made to rest one foot on evidence and the other on negation.

3.1 Inference beyond the Experience

This section is dedicated on the work of induction with reference to the work of Clifford's *Limitation of Inference*. There is no certainty in induction but only probability as we are aware of. Deduction naturally belongs to the domain of pure formal science as it has

¹⁰¹ Arsha Bodha Center, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.arshabodha.org/Kathopanishad/kathaTrans1.pdf>.

¹⁰² "The Problems of Philosophy, by Bertrand Russell," Free EBooks | Project Gutenberg, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/5827/5827-h/5827-h.htm#link2HCH0001>

precision in it. There are only inferences, assumptions in induction that helps in furthering inferences, assumptions and hypotheses. There can be an agreement that scientific knowledge is knowledge based on induction. Induction includes experiments and experiments include numerous observations.

In the basic definition, induction is a prediction involving possibilities. Inductive skill is the ability to predict the future based on the previous experiences. Induction may be stated as a skill people learn through past experiences through mindful observation (necessary and sufficient observation).

There are other things that are closely knitted with prediction such as dreams, prophesy and stories. For instance, there are beliefs such as “There exists a God”, “There is underworld”, and “The world is flat”, etc. There are conscious and sub-conscious dreams; some dreams are seen in a waking state and dreams are seen while asleep. Conscious dreams are actually a desire or wish like corruption free India, the whole nation lives as one, world peace. Subconscious dreams are explained by some as suppressed desires finding an expression and giving a glimpse of relaxation.¹⁰³ Thirdly, there are metaphysical assumptions about the origin of the universes such as the Big Bang Theory; within the Indian philosophical tradition, Nasadiya Sukta explains the origin of the world as follows:

“... At first there was only darkness wrapped in darkness. All this was only un-illuminated water...”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Classics in the History of Psychology, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Freud/Dreams/dreams.pdf>.

¹⁰⁴ "NAsadIya SUkta (Rigveda)," Sanskrit Documents Collection :, accessed December 20, 2022, https://sanskritdocuments.org/doc_veda/naasadiiya.html?lang=sa.

Fourthly, there are prophecies such as there will be apocalypse and the world will come to an end. And there are predictions, such as weather forecast, or scientific prediction that some part of India may be immersed in the water in some distant future; other forms of prediction includes a predication made in 2014 saying that by 2022 India will be *Swach Bhaarat*¹⁰⁵ (Clean nation) and weed will be medically legalized in every nation¹⁰⁶.

A common thread in all the above examples for assumption, prophecy and prediction is inductive inference. Induction is certainly one way of obtaining knowledge. There are things that are within the accessibility of sense and there are things beyond the sense experience like the examples mentioned above. The historical facts and the scientific searches also often go beyond the experiences of the common people. Yet, when a declaration is made about the historical search or scientific investigation, we take it for certain that 'it is the case.' For example, in the year 1969 when the Apollo 11 landed on the Moon, we believed on the information though we have no direct experience of the moon. We believed because there are necessary and sufficient evidence that supported the information such as, Neil Armstrong as commander, Michael Collins as Command Module Pilot, Buzz Aldrin as Lunar Module Pilot, the lunar materials collected to bring back to the earth, Saturn V, photographs and others. Of course, various doubts can be raised concerning scientific claims too. For instance, there are doubts regarding the moon landing mission/claim that it is a conspiracy or that Apollo program and the associated moon landings were hoaxes created by the NASA with the aid of other organizations. All this is

¹⁰⁵ "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan | Prime Minister of India," accessed December 26, 2022, https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/major_initiatives/swachh-bharat-abhiyan/.

¹⁰⁶ "Americans Overwhelmingly Say Marijuana Should Be Legal for Medical or Recreational Use," Pew Research Center, last modified November 22, 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/11/22/americans-overwhelmingly-say-marijuana-should-be-legal-for-medical-or-recreational-use/>.

to suggest that drawing inferences from things not accessible by the experience is possible though doubtful at times. However, the question remains - 'How do we justify inference from inaccessibility?' Clifford provides an answer to the question in his work 'Ethics of Belief.'

3.2 Clifford's solution of belief that goes beyond experience:

Clifford suggests: "We may believe what goes beyond our experience, only when it is inferred from that experience by the assumption that what we do not know is like what we know."¹⁰⁷ In order to explain the statement Clifford take an example of the 'fear of fire;' fire which burnt yesterday causes fear of fire today. What happened yesterday transcends what is happening right now since it only includes memories of fire, not actual burning. We may deduce the commonality in fire's nature from the regularity in nature. Clifford believes that our immediate worry is how we acquire the knowledge of uniformity from generation to generation.

The deductive conclusion of the presence of hydrogen in the sun is derived from the knowledge of the presence of hydrogen in the bodies of the earth observed in the laboratory. The unidentified light lines in the sun are said to resemble the well-known brilliant lines found in laboratories. The known hydrogen from a lab and the unidentified hydrogen from the sun both acts similarly under identical conditions. The formation of a trust circle between the instrument (spectroscope) and the observer is the second factor (verifying man). The instrument testifies the same thing in the two cases: the light vibrations of a certain rate are being sent through it. Its design ensures that if it were incorrect for one, it

¹⁰⁷ p. 40

would also be incorrect for the other. It is required to make the assumptions of uniformity and resemblance. This presumption may be expanded to allow for several other presumptions and comparisons. Then, are we obligated to think that nature is unchanging and uniform everywhere? Clifford responds to this by saying that our belief in uniformity is only applicable to views that transcend experience since one must begin with some assumptions when conducting research.

3.2 Problems in Clifford's Inference that goes beyond our experience

Sometimes, the 'absence' gives an impact and makes us see the possible presents (just like one switches off the camera flash lights to get a better view by getting rid of the reflections; it is ironic because light is the reason for vision but here lights becomes the obstacles). In other words, one can try to form a 'belief of things that are not accessible by human experience' by substantiating the uniformity in nature. Even though Clifford suggests the application of the 'uniformity' as rule strictly for the inaccessible things, yet it raises doubt regarding uniformity itself. On the one hand, he suggests forming a belief based on sufficient evidence, and on the other hand, he suggests the idea of forming a belief by appealing to the 'principle of uniformity' which seems to undermine the need for evidence.

(a) Some problem in the principle of uniformity:

It is an assumption that the same natural processes have always operated in the universe. It declares constancy or invariable concomitance between cause and effect. Accordingly, in natural science, uniformity is considered as the first principle. The axiom of the uniformity is necessary so that the scientist can extrapolate the unobservable past or else it would be

difficult to study the past. However, this assumption raises some difficulty too. If uniformity underlies everything, then the idea of evolution stands falsified. Evolution suggests constant/gradual change or growth in the nature. Now, if I say ‘change is the only thing that is constant’ then this statement sounds poetically pleasant but logically, it shows contradiction. And yet our assumption of uniformity lies at the very heart of our logical reasoning too. For instance, consider one of the most commonly exemplified textbook reasoning:

All human are mortal.
Shyam is human.
Therefore, Shyam is mortal.

This assurance in the mortality of human being is granted from the uniformity in the nature of being human. And so far, this hypothetical syllogism is assumed to be true, and there are not counter-example to refute this syllogism except from religious or mythical narratives.

(b) Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz’s Principle of Identity of Indiscernible (PII)

Leibniz’s Philosophy on “Principle of Identity of Indiscernible” occurred a century before Clifford’s principle of Universality. In a strict sense, the principle of uniformity is not consistent with the PIL of Leibniz. Leibniz writes:

If two things are identical then they share all the properties; if ‘ $x=y$ ’ then for all x and y , if F is the attribute of x then F is the attribute of y and vice versa.

$$\forall x \forall y (\forall F) (Fx \leftrightarrow Fy)$$

If x and y have exactly the same features, then x and y are one single thing.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ "Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/leibniz/>.

In actuality, “there are no two substances which resemble one another entirely, differing only numerically, because their “complete concepts” would otherwise coincide.”¹⁰⁹ Put it differently, PII says that no two things can be exactly alike in every way. This principle is to be read alongside his “Principle of Sufficient Reason” which can be roughly explained as follows: If two pieces of matter were identical in every way, God would have no reason to put one in one place and the other in another because the same facts would be true if their places were reversed. But God never takes unjustified action. Therefore, no bits of matter can be exactly alike. No single thing is identical yet we look for similarities to form a genus and to form a political, social, and scientific ideas.

Despite the apparent inconsistency between PII and the principle of uniformity, one need not favour one over the other as though one of them is false. We can grant that while PII can be applied to objects, Clifford’s principle can be applied to form or kind.

(c) David Hume on Identity

The uniformity in nature can also be questioned by taking the reference of David Hume’s work on the ‘problem of induction’ and ‘identity’ which were discussed in his ‘A Treatise of Human Nature’ and ‘An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding.’ Hume states

“...resemblance is the cause of the confusion and mistake, and makes us substitute the notion of identity, instead of that of related objects.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ OTTE, Michael. “TWO PRINCIPLES OF LEIBNIZ’S PHILOSOPHY IN RELATION TO THE HISTORY OF MATHEMATICS.” *Theoria: An International Journal for Theory, History and Foundations of Science* 8, no. 19 (1993): 113–25. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23915501>.

¹¹⁰ Hume, David ‘*A Treatise of Human Nature*’ reprinted from the original edition in three volumes and edited with the analytical index by L.A. Selby Bigge, Oxford 1888. Book 1, part 3, section VI p.253

Formulating the concept of Hume's Identity, we get:

1. Identity as a quality, which is attributed because of the union of their imagination when reflected upon them
2. The uniting principles or the three relations of likeness, contiguity and interconnection that consist in producing a transition of ideas smoothly and uninterruptedly
3. Thinking principle always preserves the memory of a considerable part of past perceptions
4. A picture must inevitably resemble its subject; this resembling perception helps the mind go more readily from one connection to the next and gives the impression that the "whole" is one item continuing.
5. Impressions give rise to their correspondent ideas; and these ideas in their turn produce other impression. The chain of impressions creates an idea without losing its identity

Hume gives a reason why there is confusion in identity: it is due to resemblance, contiguity, and causation that play the trick in mistaking one for the other. The so-called "concept" of the outside world or the knowledge claims based on them are the result of "impressions" acquired through contextual situation. Hume said that the mind is like to a stage where various sensations gradually appear: they pass, re-pass, glide away, and mix in an unlimited number of positions and circumstances.

As a result, Hume identifies this as one of the definitions of an opinion or belief. Hume analyses the idea of inference taken from cause and effect as an impression of one

becoming present to us and developing an idea of usual attendant. The notion of uniformity in nature may be connected to both the notion of existence and the impression of memory, which creates the tangible object of impression. In doing so, Hume clarifies three concepts: first, the source of impression; second, the concept of related cause and effect; and third, the type and quality of the idea.

Hume believed that all our thoughts could be linked back to our sensory inputs. The simplest scenario is when a concept is copied from the corresponding perception and then enters the mind. The combination of simple concepts results in complex thoughts. He takes into account a variety of conceptual relationships, including the causal relationship.

For Hume, the only relationship that allows one to go beyond the information provided by memory and senses is the relation of causality.¹¹¹ Let's say we are exposed to an item through our senses, like gunpowder. The explosion, which is a consequence of that object, may then be deduced. Our predictions for the future are causally related to our past, present, and experience. Due of the relationship between gunpowder and explosions and past experience, particularly experience of persistent conjunction, we may deduce that the gunpowder will explode.

An object may always be attended with an effect, and other things that are similar in appearance will be attended with comparable effects if an inference is produced by a chain of reasoning and inferences depend on a transition of the type as indicated by Hume.¹¹² According to Hume, if Reason had created humans, it would operate under the premise that

¹¹¹ Enquiry. 4.1.4, T. 1.3.2.3/74

¹¹² Enquiry. 4.2.16

laws we haven't encountered must resemble those we have, and that nature's progression is always uniformly the same.¹¹³

Hume contends that this causal principle cannot be supported by Reason. The argument is dichotomous in the sense that it distinguishes between relationships between concepts and facts. Every statement, including those relating to geometry, algebra, and arithmetic, is either demonstrably or intuitively definite. On the other hand, facts are empirical claims that are easily imaginable to be something else. According to this distinction, he claims that there are two types of reasoning: moral reasoning, which is concerned with matters of reality and existence, and demonstrative reasoning, which is concerned with the relationships between concepts.¹¹⁴

The Uniformity Principle cannot be supported by any of these conceivable lines of reasoning, according to Hume, who examines the viability of each one. The reasons are as follows:

1. To start, demonstrative reasoning is impossible since it only establishes conclusions that are incontrovertibly true. This suggests that there is no contradiction, which is another way of expressing that nature may change and that anything that seems to have the same consequences as what we have experienced might really have different or opposing effects. It is feasible to envision a scenario where the unseen case deviates from the regularity that has thus far been observed.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Treatise. 1.3.6.4

¹¹⁴ Enquiry. 4.2.18

¹¹⁵ Enquiry. 4.2.18 and Treatise. 1.3.6.5/89

2. Hume contends that the reasoning likewise cannot be taken as an established reality with a genuine existence. He also refers to this as a likely argument that follows from the presumption that the present would be consistent with the past, or that nature is uniform.¹¹⁶ As a result, the chain of reasoning will again rely on this assumption and take it for granted if it is founded on this form of argument. The second sort of reasoning then falls short of offering a non-circular chain of reasoning.

Hume comes to the conclusion in the "Treatise" that human reason falls short of revealing the ultimate connection between causes and consequences. Even if our experiences have taught us that cause and effect always go together, it is impossible to satisfy ourselves with reason alone. This leads to the conclusion that reason does not support the propensity for past regularities to continue into the future.

After outlining the issue, Hume addresses any concerns he may have raised. This is a description of the fundamentals of inductive inferences. Hume says in the "Treatise" that understanding should be used for the principle of inference rather than imagination since understanding is determined by reason or by a specific association and relation of senses. According to him, some laws that group together the thoughts of different items and bring them together in the imagination, rather than reason, govern when the mind shifts from the concept or impression of one object to the idea or belief of another. Therefore, rather than reason, it is believed that the inductive conclusion is supported by imagination.

¹¹⁶ Enquiry. 4.2.19

According to Hume, every mental action that is not justified by an argument or the application of logic must be motivated by another, equally valid and authoritative principle. According to the theory, the mind is predisposed to anticipate continued regularity if one has repeatedly observed comparable things or experiences together. The result of custom is a tendency or predisposition to infer such things.

It is frequently discovered that any two opposite objects, such as flame and heat or snow and cold, have always been combined. If flame or snow are presented to the senses for the first time, the mind is conditioned to anticipate heat or cold and to believe that such a quality does exist and will be revealed upon a closer approach. The necessary outcome of subjecting the mind to such conditions is this conviction. A soul operation causes us to feel the passion of love when we acquire advantages and the passion of hatred when we encounter harm. All of these actions are a type of natural instinct that cannot be produced or prevented by mind or mental processes or reasoning. These conclusions do adhere to nature's predetermined route of harmony.¹¹⁷ It is a sort of instinct that comes naturally to us, and it could even be more helpful in helping us succeed in the world than if we depended just on reason to draw these conclusions.

(d) Logical objections due to Weak Inductions

Clifford's use of the uniformity may be considered through the operation of induction to show that uniformity principle is weak inference. Generally, the form of inductive argument is such that the content of conclusion may go beyond the content of the premises. Strong induction suggests a strong connection between the set of premises and its

¹¹⁷ Enquiry. 5.2.21

conclusion. The inductive argument's premises deal with a topic that is comparatively well-known, but the conclusion shifts to a topic that is less well-known. An argument may take on several shapes as a result of the inductive technique, including predictions, analogies, generalizations, causal inferences, and others. For example someone might present a situation that the knowledge of the past guarantees the knowledge of future. One might give a prediction that the prize of petrol will rise in India due to Russian and Ukraine war. Can we be certain about the future? Given the past experiences of wars, there is every likelihood that petrol prize will rise. Secondly, analogy is based on similarities between two things or the two states of affairs. It has been determined that a certain ailment that affects more well-known objects also affects less well-known things. Thirdly, generalization is an inference made from a small number of carefully chosen particulars to the entire group. It is believed that the group's members will have the same characteristics as the members of the chosen specific since they do so. One may contend that because a small number of HRX items have poor quality, the remainder of the line must also be subpar.

Given these few examples of inductive argument, where do we locate the principle of uniformity? Does it provide strong inductive relation between known and the unknown? Or is it a deductive principle where we infer the unknown through the known?

Let's analyse the situation. Weak induction often involved emotional ground for believing something. A fallacy may occur in generalization, for example, the product of HRX brand mentioned above. It may be the case that the products purchased or used by the person in question are qualitatively bad; however, a large number of people who use the brand have

no issue. So it is fallacious to conclude that the product is defective on the basis of few instances.

Second example on prediction: Prior to the Uttar Pradesh election, the Zee News Opinion Poll conducted on 15th January 2022, predicted that the BJP will win 241-263 seats, crossing the majority threshold while AajTak predicted that BJP is expected to get 288 to 326 seats.¹¹⁸ When election Commission declared the election result, the result was not as it was predicted by AajTak though it is true that BJP came to power with 255 seats out of 403 seats.¹¹⁹

Considering the above possible objections against Clifford's principle of uniformity, it is clear that the principle has to be accepted with some caution. We cannot discard the principle on account of objections or problems as it has some basis and largely used not only in our day today reasoning but also constitute the basis of scientific reasoning one way or the other. It is sought as it simplifies forming genus. However, 'Is simplicity in approach right approach (going by the standard of Clifford's notion of ethics of belief)?' Of course, there are objection. But the Clifford's assumption of the Uniformity Principle in the method of induction can be developed by the application of Mill's method and justification through negation. And so we will turn our attention in this direction of development of thoughts.

(e) Substantiating Uniformity Principle with Mills five Methods

¹¹⁸ https://www-aajtak-in.translate.goog/elections/up-assembly-elections/story/uttar-pradesh-exit-polls-results-2022-up-vidhan-sabha-chunav-latest-news-updates-in-hindi-ntc-1423823-2022-03-07?_x_tr_sl=hi&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=sc

¹¹⁹ <https://results.eci.gov.in/ResultAcGenMar2022/ConstituencywiseS24323.htm?ac=323>

Limitations of Mill's Methods: Mill's methods have no genuine explanatory power; they can only disclose evidence of likely causes. Finding examples of causality is a crucial first step in comprehending the uniformity. It is important to comprehend how and why certain examples of causality operate the way they do. These problems require answers that go beyond simple cause-and-effect analysis. The creation of theories and hypotheses, the foundation of scientific reasoning, is necessary. The following five informal strategies were suggested by John Stuart Mill as a way to resolve the problems with causal linkages.

(1) The method of agreement: The technique of agreement is a systematic search for a single or essential component that is present in many instances in order to pinpoint that factor as the origin of a phenomenon that is present in the instances. According to Mill, “If two or more instances of the phenomenon under investigation have only one circumstance in common, the circumstance in which alone all the instances agree, is the cause (or effect) of the given phenomenon.”¹²⁰

A symbolic example:

A, B, C, D occur together with w, x, y, z

A, E, F, G occur together with w, t, u, v

Therefore, it can be inferred that A is the cause of w.

Think about an effort to identify the root of a disease epidemic (for instance, the recent Pandemic COVID-19). The process is roughly as follows: Look at occasions when a certain impact happens. It is more likely to pinpoint the reason when these examples

¹²⁰ Mill, John Stuart. *A System of Logic*, Vol. 1. John W. Parker. (1843) p. 454.

are more varied; it is then simpler to pinpoint a component (or set of factors) that is common to all of those occurrences. The method of agreement makes it clear that a particular element is required to produce a particular outcome.

(2) The Method of Difference: The technique of difference places an emphasis on adequate cause-and-effect conditions. This approach is a methodical attempt to pinpoint a single component that is present when the phenomenon under consideration is present and absent when the phenomenon is not there. If two occurrences of the phenomena under examination share all but one circumstance, with the latter happening exclusively in the former, the situation in which the two instances vary is either the result, the cause, or a necessary component of the cause, of the phenomenon.¹²¹ For example;

A, B, C, D occurred together with w, x, y, z

B, C, D occurred together with x, y, z

Compare a situation in which a putative causal factor is present to ones in which it isn't. The more similar these situations are in other respects, the better it is to determine whether there is any difference in the observed effect. Hence A is the cause of the effect w. The method of difference establishes that a certain factor is sufficient for bringing about a certain effect.

¹²¹ Ibid p. 455

(3) The Joint Method: It combines tactics of agreement and those of disagreement.

Compare various scenarios when a particular element is present against scenarios where that factor is absent. Then demonstrate that a certain effect is seen in each and every instance when that element is present. The circumstance in which alone the two sets of instances differ is the effect, or cause, or a necessary component of the cause, of the phenomenon if two or more instances of it occurring share only one circumstance in common while two or more instances of it not occurring share nothing in common other than the absence of that circumstance.¹²² It is a systematic effort to identify a single condition that is present in two or more occurrences in which the phenomenon in question is present and it is absent in two or more occurrences where the phenomenon is absent. It is never present when the phenomenon is absent and never absent when the phenomenon is present.

For example:

A, B, C occur together with x, y, z

A, D, E occur together with x, v, w also B, C occur with y, z

Therefore, A is the cause or the effect or part of the w.

(4) The Method of Residues: It is a deliberate attempt to remove the known causal threads from a set of causally related variables and events, leaving the necessary causal connection as residues. Any phenomena may be divided into parts that have

¹²² Ibid. p. 463

previously been inferred to be the result of particular antecedents, with the remaining portion being the result of the other antecedents.¹²³

A, B, C occur together with x, y, z

B is known to be the cause of y

C is known to be the cause of z

Therefore A is the cause or effect of x.

The method of residues is most effective in cases where one cannot directly measure the level of influence a factor has over some effect.¹²⁴

(5) The Method of Concomitant Variations: By comparing changes in one condition with the others, it determines the causal links between two situations. It illustrates how changes in an effect's quantitative characteristics are consistently correlated with changes in that factor's quantitative characteristics.

A B C occurred together with w x y

A* B C occurred together with w* x y

Therefore, A and w is causally connected.

¹²³ Ibid. p. 465

¹²⁴"Waiting for the Redirectiron..," Waiting for the Redirectiron.., accessed December 20, 2022, https://beisecker.faculty.unlv.edu/Courses/Phi-102/Mills_Methods.htm.

If these methods are added with Clifford's uniformity principles, then the objections can be dodged. Addressing Clifford's suggestions, "We may believe what goes beyond our experience..."¹²⁵

For example, the 'fear of fire' that occurred from past experience, and the deductive conclusion of the presence of the presence of hydrogen in the sun from the laboratory experiment: there is uniformity in nature and an assumption of likeness. The method of Clifford and the Mill's method may be applied in the other cases where the subject matter of knowledge goes beyond one's experiences.

Now addressing the important question that arises in the Clifford's method is: 'Are we then bound to believe that nature is absolutely and universally uniform?' Clifford's answers would be in the positive, perhaps with some restrictions here and there. In agreement with Clifford, one might even ask a rhetorical question, "If not this method, then are there any better methods to know the things that are beyond the experience?" Of course, there cannot be a straight "Yes" or "No" answer. In the subsequent discussion, we will adopt a new approach for justification of belief, that is, the method of negation.

3.3 Justification through negation

There are other forms of deduction such as science of deduction (used by the fictional character Sherlock Holmes), elimination theory, abduction or the inference to the best explanation by Charles Sanders Peirce, and Occam's razor (that emphasizes the minimal use of concepts unless necessitated). Occam's razor further implies the rule of simplicity

¹²⁵ Clifford. W.K. The Ethics of Belief p. 40

in the process of knowing. Deductive forms of reasoning are such that negation of the conclusion would result in some contradiction if the argument is valid in the first place.

If I claim that the sun rises from the east, then it can be denied that it is false that the sun rises from the east. It can be denied by the physiological explanation that it is the rotation of the earth that makes the sun appear rising from the east. However, it is a case of an alternative definition of the cause of sunrise. If I am to say in the first premise that the sun rises from the east is true and, in the second, goes on to add that the sun rises from the east is false, then I contradict myself in that both my claims cannot be true at the same time. A single premise can only be true. It will be an insane statement if both are true. The second assertion will undoubtedly be untrue if the first is accurate. In this case, a statement is thought to be either true or untrue, not at once, which is a logical application of negation. The idea is not straightforward, though; depending on the situation, it might signify multiple things.

What is meant by Negation? Does it mean non-existence or non-thing or non-being? Is there anything called 'non-existence,' 'non-thing', 'non-being' in the first place? If I am to look into the sceptical approach of non-existence, it is an ironic situation as nobody can know 'non-existence.' How can 'nothing' be known? Knowledge by definition is 'knowing with justification' and so how do we justify knowledge of 'nothing'? If 'nothing' is justified, then it is not nothing anymore; the moment it is justified, it would become something. When I am thinking about justification through negation, I am looking at it through the medium of first, from the logical aspect and secondly, from the efficient opposition like 'non-mule.'

In my own ways, I would now like to formulate four propositions or assumptions to delve deeper into the concept of negation. They are as follows:

1. It is false that we may believe what goes beyond our experience through the assumption of *what we do not know is like what we know*.
2. It is false that S beliefs p in given evidence e
3. S beliefs q in a given evidence e, and q entails p hence S beliefs p through q, as q entails p and
4. Epistemic closure: if p were not true then S would not belief that p.

First Assumption:

It is false that we may believe what goes beyond our experience through the assumption of *what we do not know is like what we know*.

Consider the case of xenophobia or the fear of strangers or fear of the unknown. Xenophobia is generally defined in the racial tone as it is often used as a description about the people who discriminate against foreigner and immigrants. The diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorder (DSM-5) does not describe xenophobia as mental disorder but considers it as subtype of delusional disorder. Now, taking xenophobia literally as it is, it means the fear of the unknown. Let's try to justify the fear of unknown due to the assumption of *what we do not know is like what we know*. Fear of the unknown is not unique to human species alone. Fear of unknown is present in every being that lives including animal, birds and plants. We do become little bit cautious and careful in the strange places and in the midst of strangers and if pushed, we may become little hostile strangers also. Even animals for that matter become very hostile when it comes around

unfamiliar place and species. “Touch-me-not” plant also known as the “shameplant” is sensitive plant that shrinks its leaves quickly when it comes into contact with something. This fear is partly natural or impulsive and partly, it happens due to the past experiences with strangers. Be it impulsively or experientially, it occurs before strange things. To add more, when a person goes to a new place, he becomes more alert and cautious and this change comes almost naturally as an impulse. However, his action may have reasons as well: One goes to journey and then he gets robbed; goes to the market and wallet gets stolen; receives an unknown call and get scammed; visits a friend’s place and chased by a dog; goes to forest and then attacked by some wild animal; etc.

In both cases (natural or experiential), a person learns to believe that the unknown stranger would be like the “known stranger” (unpleasant experience of the past with a stranger). Now, denying that *the unknown stranger would be like the known stranger* would only show an act of carelessness. Denial of the assumed proposition may not lead to utter absurdity but it would fail in the epistemic responsibility because epistemic duty does not have room for careless activity. Secondly, it may lead to some kind of unpleasant situation like the loss of life considering that a person do not care for epistemic responsibility. And this happens many a time. Studies of unpleasant incidences in connection to research and experiments exemplify this case of *unknown stranger* with the *known stranger*.

Another example to point out the absurdity of the proposition would be abolition of slavery. The history of slavery is one the most tragic events that could happen in the human history. The thirteenth amendment act of United States of America abolishes the slavery. Abraham Lincoln in one of his speeches delivered on 17th September 1859 at Ohio strongly states that slavery is morally and politically wrong. He believed in the equality of all men and it

is on this the fundamental principle of institution rested and so slavery violates that principle. In his letter to Henry L Pierce, he says those who deny freedom of others deserve no freedom for themselves and it cannot retain under a Just God. The idea of abolition of slavery came from his biblical belief found in Genesis 1: 27-28:

“...have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”¹²⁶

The motion for the abolition of slavery was carried on from the first statement quoted above, that is, *God created man in his own image*. Enslaving God’s likeness becomes enslaving the likeness and it further implies disregard of the God in whose image the human species is created. The white people who took the white burden must, in this condition realize that black people are also creation of God in his own image just like white people. By that logic, be it black or white, there exist no hierarchy between them. Hierarchy is accepted from man to whatever is not man. There is no hierarchy between one man to another man, and man of equals have no right to enslave each other. Now denying the abolition of slavery is denial of humanity and denial of the Genesis, consequently denial of the fact that the black people and white people belongs to the same species. This is an absurd situation.

Second proposition

‘It is not the case that ‘S beliefs p in given evidence e’

¹²⁶ "Bible Gateway Passage: Genesis 1 - King James Version," Bible Gateway, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%201&version=KJV>.

An analogy may be helpful. Objective type questions have been asked during an exam. A student goes through many reading to prepare for a test yet she may have missed out certain topics. Though the correct answers to the questions are not known to her, she is familiar with the schools of thought within which the questions are been framed. In such a situation, she applies the method of negation meaningfully to guess the correct answers. Let us consider one example.

Question: The concept of *Anyonya Abhava* (Mutual Negation) is propounded by

- a. Nyaya (S)
- b. Samkhya (N)
- c. Visistadvaita (V)
- d. Advaita (A)
- e. None of the above (T)

There are three ways to assume an answer—firstly, if the candidate knows the answer then, she would tick the correct answer. Secondly, if she does not know the answer or is not familiar with the Indian schools of thought, then she can blindly tick any one. Thirdly, she may not know the correct answer and yet she may be familiar with schools of thought and so can apply the eliminative or the reductive method to guess the correct answer. This third approach illustrates the point I want to use to explain the concept of negation in this chapter. In this sense, negation is not to be understood as the opposite of positive. Rather, it is suggestive of the notions of “bracketing” or “elimination”, a method which one can use when one does not have immediate access to (reality) to verify claims or make knowledge claim.

In other words: let me put the knower as A

P1. Either S or N, or V or A, or T

P2. A knows something about N and V and assumes that it is neither N nor V

P3. A does not doubt that it is not the case that T

C: Hence, the inference is made that S is the answer

Assume that I denied the claims that I have made in the previous chapter. What will be the consequent of such a denial? Let us recall the claims in the previous chapter:

5. Perceptual or direct evidence gives knowledge
6. Testimony of the reliable person gives knowledge
7. Documents assures knowledge
8. Circumstantial evidence sometime referred as presumptive evidence are in close approximation with knowledge
9. Corroborative or substantive evidence gives knowledge.

If I deny the above, we will get the following sentences:

- 1` It is not the case that perception gives knowledge.
- 2` It is not the case that testimony of the reliable person gives knowledge.
- 3` It is not the case that documents assures knowledge
- 4` it is not the case that circumstantial evidence referred as presumptive evidence gives knowledge
- 5` it is not the case that substantive evidence gives knowledge.

There are instances when absence has a greater influence than presence. In the example above, one need not assert that the assumed response, as a result of the process of elimination, is the right one. Nevertheless, the inference is very likely to be accurate because the other possibilities are known to be false or are very likely to be wrong. Naturally, this approach is not new nor innovative. It is a modification of the indirect Euclidian technique, which is frequently employed in the pure formal sciences like geometry and logic. When starting a proof, Euclid would presuppose the opposite of what has to be proved. The theorem that has to be proven must be valid since the assumption must be untrue if it causes contraction or "reduces to an absurdity." And this approach has shown to be quite effective and precise.

Such method is useful even in informal reasoning in philosophy. It may be noted that philosophical reasoning are primarily deductive in nature, especially those which deal with metaphysical issues. When certain beliefs cannot be shown to be true or false empirically, then indirect reasoning is useful to demonstrate the absurdity of negating those beliefs. For instance, this method of negation can be used in the context of arguments for the existence of God considered in the Second Chapter. The cosmological and the ontological arguments appears to have been developed from the *present* but it is developed from the greatest possible absence. Let us re-look the arguments from this perspective:

Cosmological argument:

P1—A contingent being (a being that might not have existed) exists.

P2—This contingent being has a cause of its existence.

P3—The cause of its existence is something other than the contingent being itself (my computer, mobile phone, the guitar did not cause itself to exist).

P4—What causes or explains the existence of this contingent being must either solely be other contingent beings, or include a necessary being (Many things caused the computer, Mobile phone, guitar to exist).

*P5—Contingent beings alone cannot provide an adequate causal account of the existence of a contingent being.

P6—The cause of a contingent being must include a necessary being

P7—A necessary being exists.

C—A necessary being is God

Ontological Argument:

P1`—It is a conceptual truth (or, so to speak, true by definition) that God is a being than which none greater can be imagined (that is, the greatest possible being that can be imagined).

P2`—God exists as an idea in the mind.

P3`—A being that exists as an idea in the mind and reality is, other things being equal, greater than a being that exists only as an idea in the mind.

P4`—Thus, if God exists only as an idea in the mind, then we can imagine something greater than God (that is, the greatest possible being that does exist).

*P5`—But we cannot imagine something greater than God (for it is a contradiction to suppose that we can imagine a being greater than the greatest possible being that can be imagined.)

C`—Therefore, God exists.

In both argument for the existence of God, the P5 and P5` which have a negative connotation that provides the base for the conclusion for the existence of God.

Third proposition

‘S beliefs q in a given evidence e, and q entails p hence S beliefs p through q as q entails p.

This can also be implied that our subject S has a belief in a proposition p entailing q, if and only if in the entire possible world in which it is not the case that if p does not entail q, then S would not have believed in q.

The second case from Russell’s analysis on stopped Clock:

“A woman, call her Alice, looks at the clock on the tower she sees every day to check the time. The clock shows at 4 o’clock, so Alice forms the belief that it is 4 o’clock. And it is indeed at 4 o’clock. But the clock has stopped; it has been showing 4 o’clock for the last twelve hours. Intuitively, Alice has a well-justified true belief that it is 4 o’clock...”¹²⁷

In Russell’s analogy, I would like to bring in checking the circumstance and also the implication of negation. Alice was justified in her false and non-false belief with the broken clock. What we should consider in this case is the circumstance. When Alice looked at the clock the needle must have pointed at 4’o clock. Taking consideration that it is evening 4’oclock, Alice must be engaged with other activities too from sun up till sundown. So her circumstances include her activities, the weather outside, and the surroundings. When she came to know that it is 4’oclock then she must have prepared herself for the evening work. She would look outside; she would observe the sunlight and other things. If everything corresponds with the clock then she will not doubt that it is 4’oclock. Considering the clock is broken and the surrounding outside is not corresponding with the clock then it will generate doubt in her. She will apply the mode of negation to determine the timing. Alice

¹²⁷ Weatherson. Brian, Lectures note on Epistemology (2015) p. 68.

may state that it is not the case that when the clock strikes 4 o'clock, the regular things that occur by 4 o'clock are not occurring on that day when the clock was broken. So the clock may not be reliable at that moment when it is broken. However, if she lives in a cave with no contact with the outside world or surroundings or circumstances to relate her belief about time and space, then it will be difficult to cross-check her belief in the accuracy of the clock.

The details of the surrounding are important as in the two given narratives above show that when knowledge is taken in isolation or with less evidence, circumstance, and comparison to support then it may easily raise doubts.

Let's take a look at a murder case from the American comedy "Legally Blonde," which was adapted from a book by Amanda Brown and was helmed by Robert Luketic. The story tells about a sorority girl Elle Woods, the protagonist of the movie. To get back her ex-boyfriend, she joined the Harvard Law School. In the sequence she manages to get into an internship at Callahan's law office along with her ex-boyfriend and his fiancé. Callahan is defending a fitness instructor named Brooke Winham, who happens to be the protagonist's role model and a former member of the sorority. Brooke is accused of the murder of her husband and to defend herself she needs to produce an 'alibi'. Before getting the alibi Elle mentions that Brooke cannot kill her husband, because she is a regular trainee. The person who exercises releases happy hormones, so happy people will never do such an act. Callahan tells her that the jury will not go with the hormonal emotional status of a person. The jury act on alibi. Therefore, it is important to get one. Brooke later reveals to Elle that she was having liposuction, which she is not willing to give for an alibi. The one thing

which could save her she was not willing to give. Yet, the case carries on without an alibi. The major witness of the murder was Brooke's stepdaughter and a pool cleaner.

The first witness states her perceptual testimony saying that when she heard the gunshot coming across the hall, she ran from the bathroom towards the hall room and saw Brooke standing beside her father. The pool cleaner's testimony that Brooke was having an affair with him and that they were preparing to flee with her husband's money suggests that this may have been the motivation for her husband's death. The major accusation on Brooke was of infidelity. The further task was to prove her not guilty by not giving the alibi, so how would Elle take the case further without an alibi? During the break, Elle was standing behind the pool cleaner when he complimented her shoes with the detail. This happens to be a major turn in the case; she found out that the pool cleaner was gay. If he is gay, then he cannot have an affair with Brooke. Though, just based on the detailing of the products of the clothes, it is difficult to judge a person's sexual preferences. The point is that he was a proven liar before the court. Hence, his statements were automatically bounced. Still, this does not prove that Brooke is not guilty. The Elle cross-examines Brooke's stepdaughter Chutney, the first witness. Chutney claims that she did not hear the gunshot as she was in the bathroom taking shower. Elle keeps on asking Chutney, about her activities of the previous day, and Chutney tells in front of the court that she got her perm-done (it has to do with hair). From her own experience Elle tells the court that any person who visits the hairstylist knows this basic thing that, just after the chemical treatment, it is mandatory to avoid contact with water for a few days which includes more than forty-eight hours. Therefore, her statement about her being in the bathroom and taking a shower stands false. Somehow out of panic Chutney confess that she is the one who shot her father because he

married a young woman of her age. What is important to notice through this narrative of the movie was the ‘situation’ or ‘the circumstance’ – it is important to find out the truth of any event. The important matter of fact is to note that how Elle got the result from the minute details of the small events gave in the truth which everyone with expertise neglected to see it. For example, Callahan was known to be the best lawyer; however, he did not know what is and is not called to detailing of clothes. Coming back to the murder case of the movie, I am referring to, the allegation against Brooke was bailed without her alibi because of Elle’s knowledge of the other factors.

The above example shows that only collecting the *presence* of facts/data cannot determine the accuracy of certain truth; rather, to arrive at the truth, we need to reason from the absence. Therefore, negative justification has applications in our day today reasoning as well. Conventionally, negation has been used in the logical reasoning as an indirect method to reach into a valid or invalid conclusion.

Fourth proposition:

If p were not true then S would not belief that p.

Knowing nothing would be a paradox and knowing false proposition would be a paradox too. It is a paradox because one cannot know what is not there. The absence of anything that was there previously may be felt, and the awareness that something is untrue comes from knowing the truth. I am aware, for instance, of my dear buddy Mr. Kitey's absence. We grew up playing together, going to school together, and after his demise I know his absence. I cannot know the absence of something that does not exist previously. Of course, there are many things in this world that exist and I have no knowledge about it; however,

given a chance, there is a possibility of knowing it. But something that does not exist in totality cannot provide the possibility of knowing. Another example supporting paradoxical situation of knowing false proposition could be this: If I know that Delhi is the Capital city of India, then I also know that Kolkata is not the capital of India. If I still belief that Kolkata is the capital city of India, then my not-knowing (the fact) is my state of ignorance since intentionally, one cannot have false knowledge. In this section, the attempts are to look into western epistemology that emphasizes on the negation to give closure to the justification of knowledge. The justification of *closure principle* suggests the proposition in this form:

If S knows a proposition p, and p entails q, then S knows q.

(The closure principle suggests the possibility of extension of a belief through other belief).¹²⁸

As the present thesis is based on the evidential theory, it would need justification or explanation in our use of closure principle. I will undertake this task now. According to the closure principle, if someone S knows p and p implies q, then S also knows q. It also produces three options. (1) Only if S is aware of q can p be said to entail S. It is a required case that S knows p and p entails q only if S knows q, and (2) if S were to know anything, p, that necessitated q, then S would know q.’

The assumption is that from the knowledge of p, the extension of knowing the unknown q is possible. This closure method helps in knowledge by the application of deductive

¹²⁸ Gail Stine. *Skepticism, Relevant Alternatives and Deductive closure*. Epistemology: An Anthology Second Edition Edited by Ernest Sosa, Jaegon Kim, Jeremy Fentl, and Mathew McGrath. Blackwell publishing ltd. P. 248

methods and it strengthens the inferential method by making inference undoubtedly acceptable given the premises are true. And it is also a principle that we believe things that are grounded on several known items, in this context is the q , it can be other items too such as 'r, s, t, etc.'

The right account of knowledge results in knowledge closure failure, according to the argument from the analysis of knowledge. Knowledge necessitates belief monitoring and pertinent alternative narratives, therefore it fails. Any pertinent alternatives account inevitably but not always results in closure failure. The first variant entails defending, for example, Dretske's or Nozick's tracking analysis of knowledge before demonstrating how it weakens closure. Nozick's belief tracking states that to have a belief that satisfies the following criteria is to know p .

If p were false, then S would not believe p .¹²⁹

That is, in the close worlds to the actual world in which *not- p* holds, S does not believe p . The actual world is one's situation as it is when one arrives at the belief p . Belief tracking requires that in all nearby *not- p* worlds S fails to believe p . On Dretske's view knowing p is a matter of having a reason R for believing p which meets the following condition:

The conclusive reason R suggests that if p were false, then R would not hold.¹³⁰

That is, in the close worlds to the actual world in which *not- p* holds, R does not. When R meets this condition, Dretske says R is a conclusive reason for believing p .

¹²⁹ Nozick Robert. *Knowledge and Skepticism*. Epistemology: An Anthology Second Edition Edited by Ernest Sosa, Jaegon Kim, Jeremy Fentl, and Mathew McGrath. Blackwell publishing ltd. P. 263

¹³⁰ Gail Stine. *Skepticism, Relevant Alternatives and Deductive closure*. Epistemology: An Anthology Second Edition Edited by Ernest Sosa, Jaegon Kim, Jeremy Fentl, and Mathew McGrath. Blackwell publishing ltd. P. 248

Suppose that Mr. Man is driving through a neighbourhood in which, unknown to him, papier-mâché barns are scattered, he sees that the object in front of him and believes that it is a barn. He also notices that it is red in colour. Because he had barn-before-him percepts, he believes that the object before him is an ordinary barn. The intuitions however suggest that he failed to know that it is a *barn* according to belief-tracking and conclusive-reason.

Now imagine that the only fake barns in the neighbourhood are blue and that there are no fake red barns. In contrast, Mr. Man cannot track the fact that there is a barn since he may believe that there was a barn even if there wasn't one, according to Nozick. This is because Mr. Man would not believe there was a red barn if there wasn't one. There is a red barn, which I know, implies that there is a barn, which I do not, according to Dretske. He said that this association—in which someone knows one thing but doesn't know another—is embarrassing and that his perspective is superior to Nozick's in this regard. Let *R*, my foundation for believing, be my red-barn perceptions. *R* would not be able to hold if there was no barn, thus I am certain that one exists. *R* would still fail to hold even though there wasn't a red barn, thus I know one is there. Dretske can thereby escape the negative connotation. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that Dretske chose his version of tracking over Nozick's in light of the red barn example. First, as we shall demonstrate, Dretske himself accepted combinations of knowledge and ignorance that are at least as absurd. Second, by restating his explanation to relate to the processes by which we form our beliefs, Nozick avoided the same link Dretske raised. To know *p*, according to Nozick, is approximately to have a belief *p* that was reached by a method and fits the following need for belief method tracking: if *p* were untrue, *S* would not have reached the belief *p* through the

method. If there was no red barn, I would not base my beliefs about red-barn perceptions on either the existence of a barn or a red barn.

Third, different people will have different intuitions regarding the red barn instance. In the scenarios Dretske outlines, which differ from those in Ginet's original barn case only in the requirements that I see a red barn and that none of the barn simulacra be red, it is not immediately apparent that I do know there is a red barn. Furthermore, both Dretske's and Nozick's accounts have the strange implication that even while I know there is a barn if I base my belief on my perceptions of a red barn, I am unaware of it if I disregard the colour of the barn while basing my belief on my perceptions of a barn. The colour of the barn probably has little to do with the fact that it is a barn.

The tracking accounts allow for belief monitoring counterexamples. Dretske's famous zebra case illustration assumes that under normal conditions, if Mr. Man is in a zoo and in front of a cage that is labelled "zebra," the animal inside the cage is a *zebra*. Mr. Man believes this because he possesses zebra-in-a-cage visual perceptions. He would think that *zebra* implies non-mule; it is not true that the animal in the cage is a *mule* that has been artfully camouflaged. He therefore concludes from *zebra* that it is not a mule.

What does he know? He knows *zebra*, since, if *zebra* were false, then he would not have zebra-in-a-cage visual percepts; instead, he would have empty-cage percepts. Does he know not-mule? If not-mule were false, then he would still have zebra-in-a-cage visual percepts. So he does *not* know *not-mule*. But he has these percepts:

- a. He knows *zebra*

- b. He believes *not-mule* by recognizing that *zebra* entails *not-mule*, and
- c. He does not know *not-mule*.

Given (a)-(c), a counterexample may be used to knowledge closure.

Nozick had to reject closure across simplification after denying that we know things like *not-mule* and rejecting knowing closure. Given closure across equivalence, which Nozick acknowledged, if someone knows *zebra* then he may also know the conjunction *zebra* and *not-mule*. This is because if some statement *p* implies another proposition *q*, then *p* is equal to the conjunction *p* and *q*. He will be able to know *not-mule* if he also accepts knowledge closure across simplification. Some theorists, like Luper, Bonjour, and DeRose, responded to this first iteration of the argument from the analysis of knowledge by arguing that knowing closure has a considerable deal of plausibility in and of itself and should only be rejected in the presence of convincing reasons—but there are none.

Theorists have offered accounts of knowledge that (a) manage our intuitions at least as effectively as the tracking analyses and (b) validate knowledge closure to demonstrate there are no compelling reasons to forsake knowledge closure. Weakening the tracking analysis is one technique to do this so that we can know the things we monitor or the things we think since we are certain that they follow from the things we track. A different strategy is as follows: The closest way to know *p* is to have a reason *R* for believing it that satisfies the following requirement, known as a safe indication: *p* would be true if *R* held.

Safe indication needs *p* in the surrounding *R* worlds to be true. Let us argue that *R* is a *reliable indicator* that *p* is true when it satisfies this requirement. The safe indication is the

contraposition of convincing reason, but the original is not the same as the contraposition of a subjunctive conditional.

Let us suppose without argument that safe indication handles cases of knowledge and ignorance as intuitively as a conclusive reason. Why say that safe indication validates knowledge closure? The key point is that if reason safely indicates that p is true, and then it safely indicates that q is true, where q is any of p 's consequences. To put this in another form:

1. If R held, p would be true (i.e., R safely indicates that p)
2. p entails q
3. So if R held, q would be true (i.e., R safely indicates that q)

Hence, if a person S knows p based on R , S is in a position to know q based on R , where q follows from p . S is also in a position to know q based on the conjunction of R together with the fact that p entails q . Thus if S knows p on some basis R , and believes q based on R (on which p rests) together with the fact that p entails q , then S knows q . Again: if

- (a) S knows p (based on R), and
- (b) S believes q by recognizing that p entails q (so that S believe q based on R , on which p rests, together with the fact that p entails q), then
- (c) S knows q (based on R and the fact that p entails q),

To illustrate this further with the help of Dretske's example, Given the circumstance of perception of *zebra-in-the-cage*, Mr. Man knows *zebra* according to safe indication that it

is true that there is zebra in the cage. He also believes that it is *not-mule* by deducing *not-mule* from *zebra* through safe indication.

Ernest Sosa casts some doubt on the safety of an indicator; for instance, p would be true if S were to believe it. This suggests that a person's belief may be safely inferred to be true. The necessary condition may not be satisfied for anything that follows from a belief, but it is completely feasible to be in a position where one's belief confidently implies that it is true. The red barn scenario may be used to demonstrate the idea. Assume that he has the belief that a red barn is in front of him based on his red-barn perceptions. Let us also assume that the red barn is present. However, the neighbourhood is dotted with several blue artificial barns, which is a coincidence. As he satisfies the necessary criterion for knowing red barn, he is accurate in the nearby worlds in which he thinks red barn. His faith in *Red Barn* securely demonstrates its veracity. Now, the phrase "*red barn*" implies the presence of a barn (in front of him). However, in accordance with the viewpoint put out, my conviction that red barn securely implies that barn holds are not a need for understanding barn. Instead, it is necessary that his conviction unambiguously proves its veracity. On the other hand, if he believes he saw barns but saw only a blue artificial barn, then he cannot confidently say that he did.

However, it may not be able to verify knowledge closure by substituting closure reason with safe indication since another requirement for knowledge may prevent closure. Knowledge closure may fail provided if knowledge contains conclusive reason but not if knowledge entails safe indication. If we believe that knowing p is equivalent to believing p on safe grounds, we may justify closure. We may trust things based on safety without

understanding them because we understand what safety is. Any required fact is a clear example; we may confidently trust it for any reason since it holds true in all conceivable universes. Using the red barn scenario from earlier as an example, my red-barn perceptions are reliable markers that the thing in front of me is a barn and that it is a red barn, despite the neighbourhood's abundance of phony blue barns.

But it is undeniably true to say that the closure principle implies that knowledge might be supplied with pertinent alternatives that imply

If p were false, then *Alternative* might hold.

If *Alternative* to be hold then R would not hold.

This precept argues that we can know something p only if we can rule out not- p , but we can know things that imply p even if we cannot rule out *not- p* , which leaves open the possibility that there are situations that violate closure. This is according to a key alternative's theorist. Because even while we are unable to rule out non- p , this does not prevent us from knowing things that include p . For instance, we might not rule out mule in the zebra situation, but that might prevent someone from knowing *non-mule* without preventing them from knowing *zebra*.

These points can be restated in terms of the conclusive reasons account. For Dretske, the negation of a proposition p is automatically a relevant alternative since the condition is automatically met; that is, it is dimly true that:

If p were false then *not- p* might hold.

Mule is therefore a viable substitute for not-*mule*. Because it is impossible to rule out *mule*, there is also a failure to know not-*mule*: my conviction in not-*mule* is founded on the *zebra-in-the-cage* perceptions. Nevertheless, *zebra* knowledge exists despite the incapacity to rule out *mule* because, if *zebra* were untrue, *zebra-in-the-cage* perceptions would not exist.

The second iteration of the knowledge analysis argument contends that any pertinent alternative viewpoint is in conflict with closure. How convincing is this claim? It is a weak argument to closure, as Dretske admitted, as certain pertinent alternative narratives are perfectly consistent with closure. As an illustration, use the safe indicator views to demonstrate that the account is a relevant alternative.

To develop the safe indication two steps may be adopted. Firstly, an *Alternative A* to *p*, is relevant if and only if the following condition is met that is safe *circumstances*. Secondly, If and only if the following condition is true, Alternative A is disregarded based on reason *R*: if reason *R* were to hold, Alternative would not hold. This method of comprehending pertinent options could sustain the closure principle. The key idea is that if *S* knows *p* based on *R* and rules out *p*'s relevant alternatives, *S* may do the same for *q*, where *q* is anything, *p* implies. This indicates that if *R* were to hold, then *q*'s alternatives would not hold. It appears that there are two possible interpretations of the pertinent alternatives account: one that favours closure and the other that does not. This makes Dretske's argument that the pertinent alternatives perspective "naturally" leads to closure failure somewhat erratic.

Conclusion:

Combining these methods, viz., the Mill's method of residues and the method of negation (or indirect method), a wider approach may be developed that would strengthen the evidential theory involving the following notions and principles (as proposed above):

1. S knows p in given evidence e.
2. Given evidence e, the denial or the p leads to absurdity as in the proposition P5 and P5` of argument for the existence of God.
3. S knows p in given evidence e within a context c and S knows something else like 'q, r, s.....n' that supports p, (q, r, s.....n stands for the neighbours such as the detail description and the circumstances help in doing so).
4. S knows facts about things that are not p
5. S knows that S's knows p and it is not accidental
6. Hence, S knows p is justified.

This argument may resemble the abduction, elimination or science of deduction one way or the other. Of course, there are some similarities in terms of inference, and 'context justification.' In my defence, I would like to say that abduction is about inference to the best explanation. The 'best explanation' is tentative justification that provides mere assumption. It does not guarantee a belief. The application of negative justification and comparison of similarity and dissimilarity, are to identify 'what is' from 'what is not.' Negative justification is inclusive, time consuming, and precautionous. However, knowing the contradictory helps in confirming the things needed to be known. A missing link suggests that there is a link, an end adds values to the beginning, death gives values to life, cold gives the knowledge of heat, etc. To sum up, this chapter focuses on suggesting that a

belief may be justified if we take account of evidence along with Mill's method, relevant alternatives and the negative justification.

Chapter-4

Evidential Justification considering a Context, Morality and Faith

In the previous chapters specifically chapter one title ‘Defence of Evidentialism’ the attempts were made to discuss Clifford’s philosophy on evidentialism who methodically articulated the justification of belief in his book ‘The ethics of Belief’ that also focuses on meeting social justice, establishing right, and duties. I attempted in defending the evidential approach of Clifford against the criticism of William James by bringing the discourses of Clifford and James together to show that James’s objection can be overlooked on the ground that the concept of ‘will’ is not epistemic to challenge the work of Clifford’s ‘Evidentialism.’ In the follow up chapter, the attempt is taken to discuss some important evidentialism associated with Clifford and Feldman and Conee together. The issues that are discussed was (a) the limitations in perception and understanding of the world; (b) the bases of sufficiency of evidence; (c) the base on which one should suspends a judgment; and (d) finally, the significant role of social structure or the authority in validating a belief. In the third chapter, ‘Justification through Negation,’ my attempts were to meet the immediate concern of belief that is the limits of experience and deal with the question ‘How far and in what manner may we add to our experience in forming our beliefs?’ with an attempt to understand Clifford’s statement; “we may believe what goes beyond our experience, only when it is inferred from that experience by the assumption that what we do not know is like what we know.”¹³¹

¹³¹ A. J. Burger, William K. Clifford, and William James, *The Ethics of Belief* (Scotts Valley: CreateSpace, 2008), 36.

The fourth chapter is titled 'Evidential Justification considering a Context, Morality and Faith,' my proposition is that the justification that evidentialism faces the problem of regression and circularity keeping in mind the justification condition of Clifford where he emphasize action too. To avoid these problems I propose the consideration of (1) contextualism, where the attempt is explain the importance to consider context in evidence to draw a line to decide the sufficiency of evidence, (2) Secondly, consideration of faith in relation to action to justify one's belief. However, the concept of this faith is different from William James religious faith. This faith is affirmative and holistic; similar to Kant's notion of choice on faith when one faced with rational difficulties to form a belief. These would be add on to the previous chapters, some in agreement with Clifford and some in difference. Secondly, attempt to answer the question 'why and whose evidence for the justification of knowledge?' and thirdly, taking Faith as one's chance for beliefs. To support my objectives I have taken references from the philosophical work such as; '*Ethics of Belief*' by Clifford, '*Contextualism: the Knowledge Attribution, and Solving the sceptical problem*' by Keith DeRose, '*Critique of Pure Reason, Prolegomena*' by Immanuel Kant, '*Meditation on First Philosophy*' by Descartes, and '*Can Empirical Knowledge Have a Foundation*' by Laurence Bonjour.

The objective is to remain on the importance of evidential principles and come to the point that; knowledge that are inaccessible to us becomes accessible through evidence. By inaccessibility I don't mean something that goes beyond the physical realm, the inaccessibility is caused due to time-lapse and space. Time, because not everything comes into existence at one time. We are bounded within the time frame of past, present and future and we also bounded in the certain location in space. If I am located in place p then at the

same time I cannot be located in another place p' . The second meaning of inaccessibility would be the mental faculty that every individual possesses. Considering the uniqueness of every individual, I believed that everyone is born with some limitation and expertise. Considering this limitations and expertise, we must acknowledge one's limitation and keep faith in the expertise. The role of evidence here brings this inaccessibility I have mentioned just now becomes accessible through the expertise evidence. For example, if anybody wants to know about the height of the Himalayas, then the expertise such as topographers would know the height of mountain through a telescopic device known as theodolite that the height of the mountain is 'so and so.' And the non-expert who wishes to know may know through the expertise.

4.1 First Objective: Contextualism to justify one's Belief

Before, I enter into the discourse of the first objective, I would like briefly mentioned about sceptical position suggested in Agrippa's Trilemma. Agrippa's trilemma suggests that our belief is unsupported, and if it is supported then it is supported either through infinite regress or through circularity. It strongly suggests that all the belief will ceased if the chain of justification is broken or stopped; and beliefs can be justified through a circular justification. This modality has a structure that would enable a belief b to be supported by another belief b' , which in turn would be supported by another belief b'' , which in turn would be supported by the first belief b .¹³²

Statement one provides a sceptical clarity that knowledge is not possible and the rest two statement shows that if knowledge is possible then it is possibly only through infinite

¹³² Pritchard, Duncan. *What is This Thing Called Knowledge?* Second edition. Routledge 2010 p. 33

regress and circularity. In both cases trilemma hints that we cannot have knowledge. However, that is a pessimistic position. We must take a chance in knowing the reality. To do so we must apply contextualism. An example to support contextualism

If I ask, what is this symbol '+'? The possible answer would be a symbol of addition used in mathematics to add numbers. If the red colour is added to the sign cross it would mean Red Cross giving a symbolic meaning of medical. Those who are not familiar with these symbols or if it is reminding them of any tool, art, or craft may give answers that are not the same as the answers that I have assumed. If the symbol is attached with a circle, it would appear to be a pendant.

It can be notice that, when questions are without context it may create confusion, like in the above example. Likewise, the evidential justification may likely create confusion as in the process it is creating a chain of justification due to its need to support the justification. It also raises the question raised by Keith DeRose; 'How good is good enough?'¹³³

An argument regulated by the concept of infinite regress uses an endless number of premises to support its assertions. For instance, a belief is justified if it is founded on another believe, which is justified in still another belief, and so on. The following form can be used to express the argument's structure: Because X is R to Y and Y is F , X is F . X and Y represent objects, R denotes a relationship, and F denotes a property in the broadest meaning.¹³⁴

¹³³ Keith DeRose: Contextualism and Knowledge Attribution, Epistemology: the Big Questions, edited by Linda Martin Alcoff, Blackwell Publishers ltd, 1998 p. 109-119

¹³⁴ Cameron, Ross (2018). "Infinite Regress Arguments". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University.

Similarly, Clifford's analogy "it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone to believe anything on insufficient evidence" also suggests the argument an infinite premises. Because, according to Clifford one ought to belief if and only if it is supported by necessary and sufficient evidence.

The argument may be structured as S beliefs a proposition p if and only if

1. P is supported by evidence e
2. Evidence e is further supported by supporting evidence e`
3. Evidence e` is further supported by the f
4. ...
5. ...
6. And supported by other justification
7. Therefore, S's believes for the proposition p is justified

Secondly, S beliefs a proposition p, if and only if

1. P is supported by evidence e
2. Evidence e is further supported by evidence e`
3. Evidence e` is supported by f
4. Evidence f is supported by f`
5. Evidence f` is further supported by evidence e
6. Therefore, S's believe for the proposition p is justified

Thereby, creating a chain of circularity bringing us to the exact starting point. Accordingly, Evidentialism holds that a belief is justified if it is based on another belief that is justified.

By this means, evidentialism enters into the long chain of justification leading us to the infinity and also with the question how many evidence would help in justification of a belief satisfactorily Taking DeRose's statement once again, 'How good is good enough?' Because the infinite regress is causing difficulty in deriving to conclusion.

Secondly, when the following proposition is supported by the preceding proposition then it is making that the nature of argument is circular. For example; if I answer the question of 'what came first, a hen or an egg?' by stating that hen came from the egg and egg came from the hen, then my answer is not providing a circular answer. To end this hen and egg circularity I may have to say that going by the principle of evolution, egg may have come first as the life itself came from the single cell. Or else, I may have to say that God may have created roaster first and then hen, then through procreation came egg. Or else how would the egg survived the harsh nature? There must be hen to hatch the egg.

Infinite regress is vicious metaphysically as it may invite contradiction. To put an end to the question 'how many numbers of justified evidence would be necessary and sufficient to lead us to conformity of belief?' we would have to assume a situation and accept that actual infinity is not possible.¹³⁵ And to do so bring the necessary and sufficient conditions to justify beliefs. Same would be applied to resolve circularity. Hence, the attempt is to draw a line to be able to count as these many numbers are the sufficient evidence that would convince the subject who is in the process belief. The necessary and sufficient condition would be supported by three propositions to strengthen the argument and possibly to derive to conclusion.

¹³⁵ Huemer, Michael (2016). "13. Assessing Infinite Regress Arguments". *Approaching Infinity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

4.1.1 First Proposition supporting the first objectives that is consideration of context in the Evidence

This section aims to establish a justification of knowledge that would try to resolve the issue of infinite regress by bringing the concept of Contextualism and Evidentialism together. Contextualism is introduced in the explanation of knowledge to do away with the sceptical puzzle developed through scepticism. I am taking the reference of Foundationalism and its thinker such as Rene Descartes, Laurence Bonjour and their work *Meditation the First Philosophy* and *Can Empirical Knowledge Have a Foundation?* And then I am taking Keith DeRose's '*Solving the Sceptical Problem*,' and '*Contextualism: the Knowledge Attribution*' to deal with the problem of regression and circularity.

The problem of infinite regress is attempted by 'Foundationalism' and 'Coherentism' to establish a relation between justification and belief on the account that a proposition is justified in itself. However, Foundationalism and Coherentism does not favour evidentialism. The discourse is given below to answer how foundationalism and coherentism provides an argument to end the chain of circularity and infinite regress but it does not help the issues of evidentialism.

4.1.12 Foundationalism

It is asserted that not all knowledge is demonstrable, that some knowledge must be independent of demonstration, and that knowledge must rest on fundamental truths or other kinds of self-evident facts.¹³⁶ For example, suppose that a claim is justified that Fred will die shortly as Fred is suffering from an untreatable disease. Being concerned with his health

¹³⁶ Posterior Analytics, I.3

issues with Fred, someone asks how Fred's untreatable diseases are being discovered and it is responded with a guess. The immediate response would be that there is no good reason to suppose that Fred has an untreatable disease. The justification provided through a guess is not a justification at all. The suggestion is that; to be justified in believing a proposition on the basis of justifications the justification must be self-justified.

Consider another example in comparison with the above example.

Imagine there is a report that Fred would pass very soon since his lifeline is short and his palm indicates this. This time, one could be perplexed as to why one would think that the palm lines had anything to do with life expectancy. This assertion will be disproved right away since it lacks any reasonable support. It should be observed that there is no appreciable relationship between Fred's life expectancy and the length of his lifeline. Consider the unlikely scenario that there is a meaningful objective probability relationship between lifelines and lifespan, but there is no evidence to support this theory. The found relevant objective probabilistic relation in such circumstance is insufficient to provide one with justification.

However, suppose that one intuitively believes that Fred is going to die soon due to a mere guess then there is a lack of justification for believing that Fred will die soon. What is needed is a principle of non-inferential justification.¹³⁷

Foundationalism offers a theory that suggests a non-inferential style of justification, following Aristotle's lead. The stance of foundationalists is based on the idea that there must be certain initial beliefs that do not need to be supported by evidence and that all other

¹³⁷ To be justified in believing *P* on the basis of *E* one must be (1) justified in believing *E*, and (2) justified in believing that *E* makes probable *P*.

beliefs will be built upon these foundations or that this is self-evident. The infinite regress argument is frequently used by foundationalists, however this approach does not always lead to a workable Agrippan Trilemma solution. In contrast to the first assertion of the trilemma, the foundationalists' viewpoint often adopts the second statement. Because discussing an endless regress of justifiable views would be nonsensical. Finding an appropriate basis for views that won't need further justification is the key to solving this dilemma. The basis upon which this system of justification is formed is direct or instantaneous conviction. The superstructure that rests upon this foundation is constructed with mediate or indirect beliefs. In order for a mediate belief to be justified it must stand in a particular relation to one of the foundational or immediate beliefs.¹³⁸

This justification approach assumes that the occurrence of the initial belief is a fundamental truth that has no bearing on subsequent beliefs. Even if one believes that a qualitative component of experience, like "redness," is a fundamental truth of reality, one can still question whether it is possible to conceptualize "redness" in isolation from the complementary concepts of "blueness" and "yellowness." These ideas only make sense when they are put out within a larger context of other beliefs. One could be led to question if the idea of "justification" is necessary for such views to be warranted with regard to "self-justifying" beliefs. Does the person understand when a view is "justified"? If so, it appears that two beliefs—the one in question specifically and the one that implies a concept of "justification"—are at play. There won't be a basis for supporting further mediating beliefs if the person does not realize that the self-justifying belief is justified. It would appear that

¹³⁸ William P. Alston, "foundationalism", *Companion to Epistemology* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1992), p. 144-147

a foundationalist approach is not entirely tenable in this sense. It is hard to see how even foundationalists cannot escape, at the very least, some type of circular argument with the justification of belief, if not an outright infinite regress by referencing subsequent "foundational" views to defend earlier "foundational" beliefs.

In the Fifth Meditation, modern philosopher Descartes proposes the idea of "I" as self-evident truth and states that knowledge should be divided into two categories: basic knowledge, which serves as the basis for all knowledge but is not supported by evidence, and non-basic knowledge, which has logically descended from the basic knowledge. The idea of "cogito" is fundamental. Following Descartes, the foundation's argument form is as follows:

A belief is justified if and only if

1. It is a basic belief
2. The justification is basic, and
3. The chain of justification rests on the justification that is basic.

He also suggests an infallible belief; a type of belief where the subject *S* believes a proposition *p* at a time *t*, and it entails that the proposition *p* is necessarily true. To build secure foundations he identifies foundational knowledge with infallible belief implicitly or explicitly. Infallible belief suggests that: A Subject's belief on a proposition at a time is infallible given the condition that it entails necessary truth. Thus if one happens to believe that a necessary truth, *P*, that believe *P* will entail that *P* is true. By the above definition, belief in *P* will be infallible whenever *P* is a necessary truth even if *P* is far too complicated to prove. However, a foundational belief restricted to the infallible belief is considered

weak or not substantially epistemic. There is some contingent proposition that is entailed by the necessary truth for example, ‘cogito;’ the belief in Existence entailing existence.

Secondly, non-inferential justification is a kind of justification where the essential feature of justification is the ‘impossibility of error’ that supports a belief. For example; S’s belief in a proposition p is justified without an error at a time t, and it entails the truth of p. Entailment suggests necessary truth for a proposition, for example, p entails necessary truth means that it is constituents facts that makes it true. An account of facts and their constituents would be; if X has grey hair, then it would entail that someone has grey hair, however, does X’s having grey hair a constituent of the fact of someone’s having grey hair? Now the question is what makes someone having grey hair true? Can somebody point out appropriately for having grey hair as one could do with a mathematical equation such as two plus two is equal to four? Considering the possibility of both the appropriation, there is a need to include contingent truths for a justification to be infallibly justified.

Now consider a belief that is ‘I am in pain’ and ‘it will rain next week’. What are its constituents of justification that make the beliefs non-inferentially justified? What distinguishes the belief in pain and the belief that it will rain next week? Foundationalist locate the non-inferential justification in the truth-maker¹³⁹ for the believed proposition. Truth-maker can be understood in terms of virtue, entailment, relevance, projection, necessitation, essentialism, axiom, and grounding.

Accordingly, the belief in pain would be based on the virtue which makes it true such as I am in pain because it is the fact that I am in pain. Secondly, being in pain entails that ‘being

¹³⁹ Armstrong, D. (2004). *Truth and Truthmakers* (Cambridge Studies in Philosophy). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Doi10.1017/CBO9780511487552

in pain is true.’ Thirdly, what makes ‘being in pain’ true is in some sense be that it is ‘about being in pain’ etc. The explicit nature of truth-maker suggests a various principle that governs the truth making relation; such as:

1. The *entailment principle* states, if an entity e is a truth-maker for proposition p and p entails proposition q then e is also a truth-maker for q .
2. The *conjunction principle* states, if entity e is a truth-maker for the conjunction of proposition p and proposition q then e is also a truth-maker for p .
3. The *disjunction principle* states, if entity e is a truth-maker for the disjunction of proposition p and proposition q then e is either a truth-maker of p or a truth-maker of q .¹⁴⁰

The above argument of foundationalism do not help evidentialism because if the definition is conjoined together then we get the combined state in this manner;

If an entity e is a truth-maker for proposition p , and if p , entails q then automatically e becomes the truth-maker for q . It further entails the truth-maker in the conjunction and disjunction of the proposition p and q . going by this standard, the evidential claim for S 's belief in p entails ‘the necessary and sufficient conditions that makes p true.’ It refutes or do not find it necessity for justification of beliefs. But, Clifford will not entertained this condition of entailment as the condition eliminates the need for justification.

Foundationalist presents another example for the non-inferential justification in terms of relations; that is ‘it is going to rain next week.’ This statement according to foundationalist

¹⁴⁰ "Truthmaker Theory," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy | An Encyclopedia of Philosophy Articles
Written by Professional Philosophers, accessed December 28, 2022, <https://iep.utm.edu/truth-ma/>.

needs the justification of different relations. Because, pain is accessible by self and it is non-inferential for sure but the occurrence of rain is not accessible through self alone. The probability of rain requires observation of the weather, then only it can be inferred that it is going to rain next week (in today's context, radar observation can be made yet weather predictions remain suspenseful) . Even then it is not certain that it is going to rain.

Foundationalism with its relational principle with the fact takes the mode of justification to the correspondence-truth and externalism as it is hinting at knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by demonstration.¹⁴¹ When one is familiar with the unpleasant sensations that do occur, for instance, one might demonstrate what it feels like to be in agony. As a result, it implies that one may understand a belief's veracity or assurance in it by being able to prove its content. This belief equates to a certain experience, and having that experience is a prerequisite for the development of the belief itself. The illustration of external causes leads one to conclude that "it will rain next week." However, because it is shown via demonstration, it may be regarded as unquestionably true.¹⁴²

It can be observed that Foundationalism has its own challenges. Justification of the immediate or foundational beliefs often occurs through sense experience, though they can often occurs through 'self-evidence' or 'self-warrant'. Even 'self-evident' conceptions must eventually be experienced, thus it does appear as though belief will always operate to 'record' some component of experience that is apparently directly supplied, whether it be via some qualitative aspect of experience or notion that is just thought 'obvious'. A basic belief must presumably be supported by a multi-branching tree structure that enables the

¹⁴¹ Russell, Bertrand (1912). *The Problems of Philosophy*. London: Williams & Norgate.

¹⁴² McGrew, Timothy, 1995, *The Foundations of Knowledge*, Lanham, MD: Littlefield Adams Books

justification of further mediating beliefs.¹⁴³ Taking reference to Laurence BonJour ‘Can Empirical Knowledge have Foundation?’ A few more detailed accounts can be added to support the claim that even though Foundationalism attempts to solve the problem of regression but does not succeed in its attempt.

4.1.13 Laurence BonJour on Foundationalism

Specifically taking BonJour analysis of foundationalism, he may be considered as anti-foundationalist. According to him foundationalism can be seen in two types; one as strong and the other as weak. The strong Foundation is a claim about the epistemic warrant; it implies the independence of any inference from the empirical world. Strong foundation helps in the termination of the regress. These forms of belief are said to be certain, indubitable, and infallible. Weak foundation on the other hand is a claim that there are some empirical beliefs that are independent of inferential justification and coherent relations.

Now, the problem starts with the mention of the empirical beliefs as to how can an empirical belief be basic?¹⁴⁴ According to BonJour, the very idea of empirical belief as basic is paradoxical because basic beliefs means a belief by virtue is self-justified. Taking reference of Chisholm, BonJour states that the *basic belief* is an epistemically unmoved mover that needs no justification. Can the basic belief possess motion as it is required to provide epistemic motion (being motionless)?

¹⁴³ Ibid. p 145

¹⁴⁴ BonJour, Laurence, Can Empirical Knowledge Have Foundation? Epistemology An Anthology p. 112

The pragmatic and moral outcome is the intuitive difficulties Bonjour finds in the empirical convictions. As the empirical conviction is guiding moral duty and desired outcomes. These arguments, however, cannot serve as the prerequisites for knowing. He asserts that the fundamental connection between the cognitive objective of truth and epistemic justification is this. When someone has a cognitive goal toward the truth, they accept only those beliefs they have good reason to believe are true. It would be epistemically reckless to accept something with no basis for believing it to be true. Because doing so means neglecting the search for the truth. As a result, epistemic justification must be truth-promoting, and the quality of virtue that the belief qualifies as being fundamental must provide a solid foundation for that belief's truth. Bonjour presents the following justification for the cognitive-goal-truth:

Belief 1- Belief has a feature of virtue in which belief is qualified as basic.

Belief 2- Beliefs having the feature of Premise 1 are likely to be true

Conclusion- Belief is likely to be true

If these premises are taken separately, then it might turn out that the justification of the premises may be done on an *a priori* basis. However, according to the hypothesis proposed, collectively a belief is an empirical belief. And particularly an empirical belief cannot be justified on an *a priori* basis. Hence, the Strong Foundation is not sound enough to do away with the problem of regression. As to assume reasonably enough, for a person to believe B, B is to be justified necessarily in the cognitive possession of justification, and not merely the abstract justification for B.

BonJour develops an argument on the failure of foundationalism in terms of its claims about ‘an empirical basic belief’ is justified if and only if:

1. There are basic empirical beliefs
2. There are reasons to show that it is likely to be true
3. There is cognitive possession for the statement 2
4. The premises of the justifying argument must have an empirical premise at least in one of the premises
5. Hence, the justification of the basic empirical beliefs depends at least on one of the empirical belief
6. Statement 5 is contradicting the statement 1
7. From the above statements 1 to 6, it can be inferred that there are empirical basic beliefs.¹⁴⁵

These reasons provide an ideal view that even though Foundationalism strives to resolve the problem of epistemic regression yet they fail in doing that. Firstly, in the solution BonJour suggests intuition and immediate apprehension for foundationalism. Secondly, by refuting inference Foundationalism refutes Evidentialism as the main content of evidentialism are the premises through which deduction or induction is made. Hence foundationalism cannot be supporting theory for regression nor can it help evidentialism or the argument developed by Clifford. The other theory that attempt to resolve the problem of regression is coherentism.

4.1.14 Coherentist theory of epistemic justification

Coherentists’ main objective is to avoid regression in justification. It objects the linear justification where one reason is supported by other reason. Accordingly it is believed

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/TKno/TKnoHowa.htm>

within the coherentist thought that linear justification is simply wrong as it presupposes that justification are individual beliefs. Coherentist considers the belief system in totality. Individual belief may be justified, only when it is derived from secondary or justified belief system. The assumption is that all the propositions are self-justified proposition. In this sense justification becomes holistic in nature.

According to coherentists, beliefs are only justified if they can fit logically into a person's overall system of beliefs. Coherentists, in contrast to Foundationalists, tend to reject the infinite regress argument because of the issue with determining a system of beliefs. According to coherentism, a coherent system of beliefs must be maintained while beliefs are also justified. For a belief to be justified, it must be consistent with a larger system of beliefs.¹⁴⁶ There are four ideas that allow specific ways of believing to become legitimate. According to the weak coherentists hypothesis, perception, memory, and intuition are additional factors of belief-justification in addition to how a belief fits into the background system of beliefs. The strong coherentists' approach places a heavy focus on how a specific belief fits into a larger belief system.

For example, Keith Lehrer would say that my perception of cat on the mat is justified as it result from the coherent system of belief where I can tell that I am seeing a cat. This is not reasoning or argumentation through which I have derive to justification. Lehrer employs acceptance system that fit together with a system; for example how a nose fits to a face. The acceptance system are which he also refer as evaluation system. The evaluation system

¹⁴⁶ Lehrer, Keith "coherentism", *Companion to Epistemology* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1992), p. 67-70.

evaluates all forms of objections and when all the objections are met then a coherence belief is achieved with justification.¹⁴⁷

The background belief system in this situation is the issue. The existing underlying system of ideas must be justified. And the appraisal of the background that is consistent with a belief is where the problem arises. Such, the issue may be asked: Does the background system of beliefs freeze when the justification of belief happens so that the coherence evaluation can be done? Are we truly conscious of every notion we have? If not, how will we ever be able to know whether or not the other beliefs are valid? Coherentism appears to be a workable Agrippan Trilemma solution in spite of the problems.

In parallel with foundationalism and coherentism, a new theory emerged to solve the challenges that is the externalist theory. The external approach is elaborated by Wittgenstein in his work ‘On Certainty.’

4.1.15 Wittgenstein on Scepticism

On the other hand, Wittgenstein tries to solve the sceptical problem in his work ‘On Certainty’ with the concept of certainty. On Certainty is a respond towards G.E. Moore’s “A Proof of External World.” Wittgenstein questions the reasonableness of doubting the claim like *here is my hand* have the form of empirical and commonly with logical propositions. These propositions seems to say about the factual world and hence may invite the question of the process knowledge itself. This propositions are not meant for sceptical scrutiny that lies beyond the question of doubt and we can take this statement as granted

¹⁴⁷ 2003, “Coherence, Circularity and Consistency: Lehrer Replies,” in *The Epistemology of Keith Lehrer*, E. J. Olsson (ed.), Dordrecht: Kluwer, pp. 309–356

proposition. He does not refute scepticism but he tries to show that certain proposition are logical in nature that finds its structure in the role of language. Wittgenstein sidesteps the doubt of external world because doubts on the external world such as 'here is my hand' do not do justification of doubt. The example of hand is an ostensive definition that explains the empirical claim of the presence of hand. Doubting this statement would be violation of the structure of language that would disintegrate thought too. For example, knowledge is based on the common ground; and for communication and rational thought to take place there must be a common ground. When two people disagree on whether one of them has hand or not, it makes the situation very unclear for any debate as it shrinks the common ground. Sceptical doubt is significant for rationality but too much doubt undermines rationality itself.

The proposition *here is my hand* is an odd proposition to assert doubt. The act of doubting is the philosophical activity and a philosopher may doubt to the eternity. However, one cannot outlive this sort of scepticism. Scepticism would make sense when the insistence is on the context. The essence of scepticism can be abstracted only from the activity of everyday life. Hence, for Wittgenstein, a proposition has meaning only within a context like the reference of hand becomes meaningful in the anatomy class. Scepticism is functional when propositions are taken generally, once a particular context is assigned to a proposition, then scepticism withers away. According to Wittgenstein, there is a relation between justification and doubt. Any knowledge claim and every act of justification may be doubted but doubt itself presupposes certainty. For example, a child learns by believing adult. Learning is possible only through believe. A child do not doubt about his mother, he accepts it with certainty. According to Wittgenstein, there may be difficulty in the

realization of the groundlessness of one's belief, but some beliefs are exempted from doubt. In the section 160, Wittgenstein says, doubt comes only after belief as an act of justification for knowledge or belief. A proposition should be in principle doubtable, where there is doubt the need of justification occurs and justification is a necessary condition for knowledge. Accordingly, he says evidence can be considered as sure without any doubt like in the statement "Sure evidence is what we accept as sure, it is evidence that we go by in acting surely, acting without any doubt"¹⁴⁸ A set of evidence is the compelling ground for a belief and it is certain for example nothing can be certain than the fact that we have hands or body.

On doubt he further make statement that; we need to rest our quest on the content with assumption as we cannot investigate everything as he says "my life consists in my being content to accept many things."¹⁴⁹ He makes a point that, certainty presupposes indubitability and doubt presupposes knowledge. And on the question of ground for doubt, he says "If you tried to doubt everything you would not get as far as doubting anything. The game of doubting itself presupposes certainty."¹⁵⁰

Hence we may take Wittgenstein's position to take care of the problem of regression and circularity in evidentialism, the consideration of contextualism seems more appropriate to resolve the regression and circularity in evidentialism. It may not stop the regression in its entirety but it will help us to put a stop in the length of evidential reasoning. Contextualism

¹⁴⁸ On certainty, edited by G.E.M, Anscombe and G.H von Wright translated by Denis Paul and G.E.M. Anscombe. Basil Blackwell Oxford, 1977 Section 196

¹⁴⁹ Ibid section 344

¹⁵⁰ Ibid section 115

has its genesis for different reasons and different purposes mostly to respond to the sceptics. However, I would like to bring the notion of Context to develop Evidentialism.

4.2 Contextualism and its response to Sceptical Puzzle and Invariantism

Like foundationalism and coherentism, contextualism also emerged as a response to the sceptical puzzle and invariantism.¹⁵¹ The puzzle suggests that there cannot be knowledge due to the limited conditions of subject to objects.

The argument form of the sceptical puzzle is:

(1) I do not know that I am in a sceptical scenario H or I do not know that not-H¹⁵²

(2) If I do not know that not-H then I do not know other proposition p

From (1) and (2), it follows that I do not know p¹⁵³.

Scepticism generally refutes the notion of knowledge on the ground that the nature of reality is inaccessible by humans as humans are limited in their senses and the rational outcome. The Pyrrhonian Scepticism, investigates three sceptical questions. The first question focused on the nature of things, the second question focused on the attitude one has toward the adoption of the 'nature of things,' and the third question is on the outcome of the knowledge of nature-derived through the 'adopted attitude.' In an attempt to answer the above questions it is observed that things are equally indifferent and immeasurable.

¹⁵¹ Invariantism holds that the truth conditions of knowledge are fixed across the context. Invariantism is of three types; Sceptical variantism holds that knowledge is extremely epistemically demanding, Moderate invariantism holds that it is not difficult to know things, and Subject-sensitive invariantism thinks that an epistemic situation is required for knowledge.

¹⁵² Matthias Steup, John Turri, and Ernest Sosa, *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), xx.

¹⁵³ Keith DeRose, "Solving the Skeptical Problem," *The Philosophical Review* 104, no. 1 (1995): xx, doi:10.2307/2186011.

Due to this reason, neither our sensations nor our opinions give us truths or falsehoods. Therefore, one should not claim one's belief.¹⁵⁴

In response to scepticism, the contextualist brings solution to the sceptical puzzle with the statements: the first two propositions of sceptical argument can be resisted and accept only the conclusion, however abandoning the claim on knowledge of hands. Knowledge requires various epistemic factors or a good epistemic position. Contextualist in response to scepticism and invariantism affirm that the epistemic answers would vary according to the declared attribution. A knowledge attribution or the true condition of knowledge is context-sensitive. The many forms of contextualism reflect the various types of knowledge. Contextualists contend that if a context is made more sensitive, progress may be achieved in epistemological issues, notably the issue of extreme scepticism. The context of an action, statement, or expression is highlighted by contextualism. The action, utterance, or expression can only be understood in connection to the context in some significant ways. The contextualist research examines knowledge as a "attribute," an understandable characteristic by which objects are known.

The definition of contextualism states that an expression of knowledge attribution is a claim that S knows that p, depends partly on the knowledge attributor. Hence it is also known as knowledge attribution which further requires a good position to claim knowledge. With these theories, Contextualist responses to the sceptical puzzle ((1) I do not know that I am in a sceptical scenario H or I do not know that not-H (2) If I do not know that not-H then I do not know other proposition p, From (1) and (2), it follows that I do not know p,) stating

¹⁵⁴ "Ancient Greek Skepticism," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy | An Encyclopedia of Philosophy Articles Written by Professional Philosophers, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://iep.utm.edu/skepanci/#H3>.

that the premises of the sceptical puzzled argument can be refuted considering our ordinary perceptions. It can be denied that to know *p*, it is necessary to know not-*H*. To put a necessary entailment of knowing not-*H*, with knowing *P* is an abominable conjunction says Keith DeRose. On the other hand, a contextualist provides resistance to the sceptical puzzle.

Attributor contextualism and subjective contextualism are two different approaches to context. Subjective contextualist provide an instance where characteristics of the putative subject's environment that do not form any part of his supporting evidence for the belief in question—and to which the subject may even be perfectly obvious—have an influence on whether or not the subject knows. Consider the commonly cited instance of the "Fake barn." A person travels through an area that has both false and genuine barns. The subject's perception is deceived when he came across the barn. Meanwhile, he also get luck as he encounters the real barn. In both cases without any distinctions, he confidently believes that has seen barns not knowing the other alternative that, his perceptual experience of barn is doubtful or it may be fake. Here the presence of fake barns in the region seems to rob the subject of knowledge, even if the subject does not know about fake barns and has not even encountered once. On this account, G.C. Stine the early contextualist suggest that if I know something, then it means that I can rule out the relevant alternatives. In a sceptical context I cannot know if the barns were fake or real from the distance. But in ordinary context I can know and distinguish fake barns from real barns. Like in the sceptical context I may not know if I am awake or asleep but in ordinary context my state of physical dimension and mental condition is being aware to me.

Contextualism have the proposition that in some contexts it may be reasonable to say that we may not know many thing, there may not have a clear distinction of being in dream or being awake and clarity in perception as not able to distinguish between fake things and reality; But this is not because of some fact about whether we can or we cannot know. The contextualist suggest that this is how the word ‘know’ works. The sceptics are treating the unusual factors. And a contextualist is treating this unusual feature in an ordinary manner and the ordinary manner is the specification of context. Hence, scepticism is not a threat towards the ordinary knowledge world. It makes a claim about language particularly about ‘knowing’, and not about knowledge itself making epistemic claims by careful observations about how the word ‘know’ is used.

On the other hand, the topic's conversational context is highlighted by the subject contextualist. According to it, the topic of the conversation becomes the appropriate one. The proper epistemic criteria for justification of belief are determined by the course of the discourse, the context in which the subject is acting, and the intentions and purposes. Let's say there are significant debates where very high epistemic criteria are used. Now, suppose that a question is being raised of Mary, who is not present in the conversation, but knows the subject matter of the question. And think that Mary has precisely the same evidence for the belief but the issue isn't necessary to her or to those with whom she's presently speaking. She is in a context in which relatively epistemic standards are being employed. Here, the standards are set by the features of the attributor's setting. For example Stewart Cohen's analogy of flight itinerary of ‘a case—flying to Chicago’; the passenger knows that the flight stops in Chicago for its layout as it is mentioned in the itinerary. However, suppose that the passenger has important meeting in Chicago, and if she fails to attend the

meeting then she loses her job. If the flight do not land on time in Chicago then her job is at stake. She sees her itinerary but she knows the itineraries fluctuates in terms of the flight schedule in the last minute. In that condition it may be natural to have angst that the flight may or may not actually stops there. In order to know from her perspective and given her practical circumstance 'she should check with agent who could update her with the information.' For the contextualist, there is no general question about what we can or cannot know. Rather, there are only questions about whether we can accurately describe ourselves as knowing in different contexts.

4.2.1 Keith DeRose on Contextualism

Keith DeRose adds the following According to contextualist, the truth condition of knowledge—"S knows p or S do not know p"—varies in specific ways depending on the situation. The requirement that S must satisfy in order for such a statement to be true is what makes it so difficult to generalize. In some contexts, the statement "S knows that p" requires for its truth that S have a true belief that p and also be in a very strong epistemic position with respect to P, whereas in other contexts, the same statement may only require that S meet some lower epistemic standards in addition to S's having a true belief that p. While both speakers are conversing about the same S and the same p at the same time, the contextualist allows for the possibility that one speaker may say "S knows that p" in one context while other speakers may say "S doesn't know that p."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ According to Peter Unger there is a single invariant set of standards that goes as far as truth conditions are concerned the truth attributions regardless of the context remain the same. If it is the case that both speakers are varying then one of the speakers is false.

Keith DeRose illustrates the above statement comparing two cases:

Case A: While driving in the Friday afternoon, the narrator plan to stop by the bank to deposit a pay check. Even though the author generally prefers to deposit the pay check, but noticing the crowd inside he decides not to deposit pay check at that moment as it was not important. He suggest to deposit the pay checks on Saturday morning. To that his wife says, most banks are closed on Saturday; so what if the Bank is closed on Saturday. To that he assures that he had been in the bank on Saturday and it was found open till noon so he concludes that the bank will be open on Saturday.

Case B: Like in Case A, the narrator along with his wife drives by the bank and notices the crowd. To this he suggest that it is better if the pay check is deposited on Saturday morning, as the bank is open on Saturday morning and his experience from the last two weeks shows that it was open until noon. Case B is variant from case A, as they have written an important and large amount of check. If the checks are not deposited into the checking account before Monday morning then the check may bounce. There is certainty that the bank remains closed on Sunday. To that his wife reminds him by saying that the banks changes their schedule unannounced, and if the husband is certain about the bank timing of Saturday. Even though he was confident about the opening of bank on Saturday morning he prefers to inquire about it to make sure about the Bank schedule.

Case A and case B puts the narrator in dilemma with three conditions:

1. It is true that, the bank will be open on Saturday.
2. It is true that, I do not know that the bank will be open on Saturday.

3. If it is known that the bank will be open on Saturday in case A, then it can also be known that the bank will be open on Saturday in case B.
4. If case A is true and case B is also true then there is a need of investigation.

According to Keith DeRose, the context variations between the examples are crucial in both of the scenarios described. The scenario demonstrates the value of being accurate since the stakes associated with determining whether or not the bank will be open on Saturday increase with time. Second, it's possible that the bank's hours have changed in the past two weeks. If this option is taken into account, the narrator cannot legitimately assert that he knows the bank will be open on Saturday since it was open two weeks ago unless he rules out all other *possibilities*. Notwithstanding, he do not have to rule out the *possibilities* to know the case A, as no such *possibilities* are suggested.¹⁵⁶ Third is the *consideration of a possibility*. In case B, since the spouse had already mentioned the possibility of changes in the banks scheduled hours, so there is a need for the narrator to consider the possibility. Either he should consider the possibility or rule out the consideration in order to know that the bank will be open on Saturday.

Peter Unger's invariantism that is the truth conditions of knowledge attribution features that an utterance of a knowledge attribution do not affect the epistemic position. For instance, in the bank case the invariantist will asserts (4), and deny either (1) or (2). The invariantist would also deny (1). For Unger the epistemic position or the standards for true

¹⁵⁶ David Lewis (1979) stresses this contextual factor, presenting an interesting account of the effect of sceptical possibilities in the range of relevant alternatives by means of "rule of accommodation." In Chapter 3 (see especially section I) of DeRose (1990). I argue that Lewis's account is not complete, and I locate an independent mechanism of standard changing which, I now believe, is at least as important (and probably considerably more important) to the application of contextualism to the problem of scepticism as is the mechanism Lewis has locate

knowledge attributions remain constant and high. DeRose calls this position as sceptical invariantism, which denotes the position of truth conditions for knowledge attribution that do not vary. Then DeRose uses the term “non-sceptical invariantism” to counter the position of Unger. It is a position in which the standards are constant but relatively low. The sceptical invariantist may deny (1) by admitting that he is warranted in asserting that he knows in Case A, or that it is useful for him to say that he knows but he will also insist that his claim of *knowing* is strictly false

On the other hand, the non-sceptical invariantist may deny (2) and admit that he should not say that he knows in Case B, because his wife thinks that he must be able to rule out the possibility of changes in the bank hours. Without ruling out the possibility if he says that he knew it then it would be a misleading true. Hence, it is useful for him to assert that he do not know. Contextualist may disagree about the types of features of the context of utterance that affects the truth conditions of knowledge attributions and to the extent they do.

The development of contextual theories of knowledge attributions nearly always aims to address philosophical scepticism in some way. Some sceptic arguments provide a danger to demonstrate that we do not only fall short of the extremely high standards for knowing that philosophers seeking absolute certainty are interested in, but even that we do not fulfil the truth criteria of ordinary. As a result, it poses the shocking possibility that we never, or seldom ever, really attribute knowledge to ourselves or to other people. Contextual analysis claims that when the sceptic makes their case, they manipulate the many conversational processes, raising the semantic bar for knowing and producing a situation in which it is possible to assert that "there is no knowledge." In everyday talks, more lenient criteria are

necessary since the sceptic could maintain high standards that are hard to meet. Contextualism defends the common claims of knowing against the potent scepticism.

4.3 Contextualism for Evidentialism

Bringing Contextualism to support evidentialism, I would like to create a condition like Keith DeRose suggested to support contextualism. Clifford's famous statement suggests: "It is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone to believe anything on insufficient evidence." This suggests looking for the evidence but it does not suggest when to stop looking for the evidence. This leads to the problem of infinite regress and circularity which I have mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. The space may be endless and time may be infinite but our life and all its events occur within a time frame. Applying the condition used by DeRose that are *being right*, *possibilities*, and *considering possibilities* in the problem of infinite regress of Clifford's evidentialism:

Case A`: Before the start of the voyage, the ship owner believed that the ship will make its next voyage, since it made all its voyages successfully.

Case B`: Before, the start of the voyage, the Ship owner believed that the ship will make its next voyage, since it made all its past voyages successfully. But a doubt arises in his mind regarding the ship, so he made his own reasoning based on certain evidences:

1. The ship is made of good steel that has the capacity to withstand storm.
2. There is no danger in putting the ship through the sail

Considering the case B`, the ship owner beliefs the proposition p and considered the belief is supported by necessary and sufficient conditions. Hence the nature of the previous argument may be developed as

1. P is supported by evidence e
2. Evidence e is further supported by supporting evidence e`
3. Evidence e` is further supported by the f
4. Within a given context c evidence f that supports e` provides sufficiency for the justification of belief in p.

For example, in Clifford's analogy of ship let's consider

P is the belief proposition that stands for the belief that 'the ship is going to make her voyage successfully.'

The necessary proposition, or "the physical state of the ship is in good form," is evidence e. It will consist of the ship's steering equipment, including the main steering gear, auxiliary gear, steering gear control in the systems, steering capability from the navigation bridge as well as from the remote steering location near the steering gear, the emergency power supply, if available, the rudder angle indicators in relation to the actual position of the rudder, communications between the bridge and the remote steering location, and the steering gear power.

Evidence e` is the proposition for 'the weather that suggest the wind is in the favour for voyage.'

Evidence f is the proposition for 'the weather conditions that suggest the wind is favourable for the voyage.'

Evidence *c* is the context; it is the sufficiency proposition that stands for ‘overall condition which are checked and counter checked with *being right* about the belief, *possibilities* and these *possibilities* are *considered* so that the belief in proposition *p* is assured.’ Things that the ship owner or any belief for that matter needs consideration of possibilities and being right in their beliefs.

According to the necessary and sufficient conditions, the belief of the *S* is dependent on the truth of *p*. And the truth of the *p* is necessarily dependent on the truth of *c*. Context *c* is the sufficiency. Hence, one may say that knowing the *c* is sufficient to know *P*, in other words it may be stated that if *c* then *P*. If *c* are sufficient for *P*, then knowing *c* as true becomes the adequate ground to conclude that *P* is true, however the possibility is that knowing *c* as false may not guarantee of the conclusion that *P* is false (the probability of sailing and sinking stays).

For example, when a ship sails from its deck, even if the condition of ship is hundred percent sound there still remains a chance for it to go down. The chances may of one percent or may be more than one percent. I am taking fifty-fifty chances for both the possibilities. Therefore there are safety measurements for unforeseen events. There are many possibilities, because the ship is not a single objects that is existing. There are immense possibilities in the sea. In the legendary stories we get to read about the story of mermaids who enchants the sailors and caused them to drown. There is mention of the ancient Greek God of sea Poseidon, the voyager would sacrifice horse to please the God so that they could pass the ocean safely. The point that I want to emphasize is that, even if the ship is sound, there still remains possibilities of misfortunes. Of course there are no evidence to support the belief that prayer and offering would cancel the undesirable

happenings but the act of prayer and offering in itself implicates that there are unpleasant things that we would like to restrain ourselves from. There are many example that could support the claim but I am addressing one example; that is the case of Titanic. Titanic was considered to be one of the greatest work of engineering yet it went down as it hits the iceberg. These possibilities suggest that one has to consider the possibilities before making any judgement.

Other than the above mentioned probability, when the sufficient conditions are taken together there is possibility of constitution of a necessary condition. For example; an occurrence of thunder is sufficient for the occurrence of lightning. In the sense that, hearing the thunder one can assume that there has been lightning, as one is accompanied by the other. Second example, 'Elizabeth is a queen' implies that Elizabeth is female. Likewise, given all the favourable and supportive evidence and context it is sufficient for S to belief that the ship will take its safe voyage, i.e. (4) within a given context c evidence f that supports e` provides sufficiency for the justification of belief in p.

From this statement the sceptical scenario 'I do not know that not-H' may also be avoided, because all I need the belief that ship will sail. And finally, taking Wittgenstein's reference it can be stated that the belief may be groundless but the groundlessness is creating a space for doubt and doubt itself presupposes belief as doubt comes after belief. Now provided the similar situation of the ship, one can determine the sufficiency of evidence to justify the belief that the ship is sound to make its voyage.

4.4 The Second objective: Faith and Justification

Generally, faith is a broad term for trust and appears in different phenomena. We speak of faith in democracy, God, people and others. Faith is mostly discussed in the theological or religious reflection. Different accounts have been offered to theorize faith. On traditional account, faith is regarded as theological virtues. To be virtuous, faith must be in a worthy object: the faith *in God* is the theological virtue. Fiducial models of faith seem more attuned to exhibiting faith as a virtue, though a defence of the trustworthiness of the one who is trusted for salvation may be required. Faith as religious kind counts the virtue and the degree commitment. Persons of religious faith and faithfulness both put their faith in and are faithful to the object of their commitment, though the salient kind of faithfulness may be a matter of the continual renewal of faith.

Some accounts of faith are beyond evidential support also known as non-doxastic model of faith.¹⁵⁷ In a non-doxastic approach, acting on faith entails treating hope and unobservable objects as though they were real. It implies a willing acceptance. According to William James, who also criticized Clifford's evidentialism, faith is when one believes something even if it's not known for sure. This justification of religion is based on the permissibility argument, which holds that different and contradictory faith convictions can coexist in the "republic intellectuals" in an equal measure.¹⁵⁸ James defend models of faith

¹⁵⁷ Tennant, F. R., 1943. *The Nature of Belief*, London: Centenary Press.

¹⁵⁸ James, William, 1896 [1956]. *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy, and Human Immortality*, New York: Dover.

with a view to advance the idea that authentic religious faith may be found outside what is generally supposed to be theological orthodoxy. He further says religion is the best and eternal things that overlaps the universe and provides the final word. Secondly affirmation of religion is better than the affirmation of anything else. James prefers to preserve the idea that religious faith grasp the truth about reality without evidence.

Faith is also one of the Christian theological virtues. The supremacy of love is linked to the faith, since love is the essential nature of the divine. In Christian context, faith is a gift of God that requires assent and trust. Religious faith as a gift essentially involves a venture to be willed and enacted and the philosophical faith is expected to illuminate this religious venture by identifying active components of faith; that is the affective, the cognitive and the practical component.

The component of faith as the affective psychological state is a feeling of assurance and trust. The component of faith as cognitive is the possibility of a kind of *knowledge*.¹⁵⁹ The reformed epistemologists appeals to an externalism that maintain belief through believer's experience. Its truth is not found rationally but it provides a kind of certainty. Faith is thus considered as a basic knowledge that excludes doubt. Faith is not exclusively revealed to the mind alone, but it is sealed upon everyone's heart. Faith is welcomed by the practical side as a type of knowledge that may be acquired primarily via the right operation of a unique cognitive ability. It is a proactive way to accept the divine gift, practice believing in God, and submit to his plan.

¹⁵⁹ The knowledge is either 'by acquaintance', or 'propositional' knowledge 'by description', or both.

Philosophically different models have been provided for faith. These models discuss the nature of faith keeping cognitive, affective, evaluative, and practical as the key components. Models of faith may be categorized in principles that include an actional component, propositional, epistemological (internalist or externalist, evidentialist or fideist), and theistically. Philosophical reflection on faith exemplifies the nature of religious faith in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions. It aims to identify various issues, organise a dialectical method, and also give reasons for faith that is found in the Abrahamic, theistic, and religious traditions. Some philosophers approach faith through the analysis of ordinary uses of the term faith and its locutions in which it occurs. For example, an analysis of 'propositional' faith stating that 'p is true, where p is a relevant proposition.'¹⁶⁰

Thomas Aquinas, for instance, had a complex and nuanced concept of faith. He believes that faith lies somewhere between knowledge and opinion. If it is accompanied by conviction and expresses the believer's essential orientation toward the divine, faith is similar to knowledge. Therefore, the object of faith is *something non-composite* "from the standpoint of the reality believed in," yet understanding propositions is crucial to having faith since the object of faith is composite in the form of a proposition. Aquinas offers an opinion that is comparable to William James'. Aquinas emphasizes an inner assent whereas James emphasizes free will. The truth of interior assent advanced by Thomas Aquinas is revealed by God, emanates from him, and points to him. Hence, Aquinas's model of faith

¹⁶⁰ "Propositional faith: What it is and what it is not", *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 50: 357–372.

can be considered as a propositional truth-claims as it is on the basis of divine authority.¹⁶¹

On Aquinas's view, the divinity is revealed in specific ways and not a purely rational way.

Contrary to the above passage Friedrich Nietzsche makes statement on faith as a suicide of reason, particularly the Christian faith is the sacrifice of freedom, pride, and confidence.

On the other hand faith is subjection of the spirit, self-derision, and mutilation. There is cruelty in religious faith in the form of tenderness and fastidious conscience. Whereas non-faith or the freedom from faith is the enlightenment.¹⁶²

The epistemology of faith denies that faith itself has an actionable component. Even while the expression "leap of faith" may not be entirely appropriate, faith seems to fundamentally include some sort of active investment in commitment and confidence. Many have argued that faith accepts things that cannot be shown to be true via the right use of our naturally given human cognitive abilities, going beyond what is commonly known or legitimately believed to be true. Reasonable faith therefore appears to be subject to a broad evidentialist principle—"a sensible man... balances his belief to the evidence"—on models of faith that place a cognitive component at their core and understand faith's object as a proposition. It is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone to believe anything upon insufficient evidence, according to W. K. Clifford, who also elevates evidentialism to the status of an absolute moral requirement. In particular, it accepts faith as the cognitive component that needs to meet a requirement to be grounded on available evidence.

¹⁶¹Aquinas, Thomas, 1265–1273 [2006]. *St Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae, Vol 31, Faith (2a2ae. 1–7)*. Latin text and English Translation. T. C. O'Brien (trans.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁶² Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Translated by Helen Zimmern, First published in the 1886, reprint 2022, FP Classics p. 55-56

In the Preface to the Second Edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason*: Kant states, to make a room for faith, it is necessary to deny *knowledge*. Kant anticipates that faith involves the assertion of an objective uncertainty. Faith is not illogical nor irrational, the nature of faith is very different from knowledge. The affirmation through faith is not an objective judgment based on knowledge but it is a subjective judgment that is identical to moral belief. Objective uncertainty eventually turns out to be practical certainty. For Kant, knowledge is dependent on cognition but it is limited as cognition is through senses and not through intellect. The cognition would fail in the supersensible time such as the future. Knowledge would not offer any kind judgment for affirmation and denying of judgment. However, knowledge is not the only way through which judgment is affirmed. Kant contends that the grounds of sufficiency which enable one to hold a judgment may be found in both subject and object. This is the originating insight in Kant's analysis of faith. The grounds of sufficiency on the side of the object require correspondence between an object and a subject's conception of that object. The grounds of sufficiency on the side of the subject are certain needs of the subject. Objective sufficiency is based on cognition, subjective sufficiency is on need. Faith occupies this middle ground between the objective insufficiency and subjective sufficiency. The strategy of Kant establishes a ground to hold a judgments that do not conflict with the claims associated with knowledge. A judgment on the basis of subjective sufficiency is possible only from a practical point of view. The practical point of view includes skill and morality that further involves two forms of belief, pragmatic and doctrinal.

Now that sufficient condition is established, the other things that one may require is faith in the justification of belief or may be termed as 'Faith and Justification.' To this

terminology, there may be question such as if faith is necessary in epistemology as faith and epistemology are two distinct subject. Like questions were raised by philosophers like Kant and Soren Kierkegaard like: Is faith reasonable or unreasonable as the theist philosophers defends the claim that faith is not contrary to reason? Is faith related to psychological states of and hope? If it is psychological then is it cognitive? Or is it evaluative? Is faith related to taking action and chances? Or what sorts of acts?

To these questions, I would like state that, one is about the enquiry of knowledge and the other do not involve any enquiry. Faith and epistemology are contrary to each other, but do not contradict each other. The reason is its approach. Like Wittgenstein would remark on the religious belief, where he demarcates religious philosophical approach taken by the religious believer and non-believers. To this he says, there are differences in the criterion of scientific and religious justification, where one do not contradict the other. The reason for non-contradiction is the nature of discourses are vastly different from one another. The religious discourses are not treated historically nor empirically. Doubt and reasonability are not applied in this form of belief as it is taken extraordinarily. It is extraordinary because it is free from the means of test. In that sense faith according to him is the sense of wonder that gives absolute sense of security. Going by the description of Wittgenstein, faith is to be understood separately from justification.

I do not disagree on Wittgenstein statement. However, considering Clifford's approach on the justification of belief through ethics, even though faith and justification are different, it becomes necessary to consider faith in the justification of belief, not as a discourse but for actions. Clifford takes morality as the burden for the epistemologist. It can also be stated that faith and discourse on morality are two distinct subject. To this I would state that when

faith is taken without action then it do not come within morality. But when faith is followed by action then faith would come under the umbrella of moral obligations. Moral obligation because, my faith is not just limited within me, it is going to come in association with other as we can in Clifford's justification that the ship-owner's belief is associated with many lives and resources that is there in the ship.

I have consider faith, not as a justification as it is already attempted in the ethics of belief, justification through negation, evidence and context. Faith here is a leap of inference to address action after justification. In the next sections, I will be discussing on faith in general, the relevance of faith for belief, for hope and for action.

Clifford, describing the ethics of belief, he brings two subject in the subject of discourse that is brings self and authority. Self for the personal justification and in the authority, he brings the notion of belief in authority's justification. These leads to the question of self and the authority. The justification of self's belief is analyse in the previous chapters and before I enter into the justification of faith I would like to briefly discuss on the authority. This discussion may help in the approach of faith that I want to emphasise in this section.

4.4.1 on the Authority

Clifford in his work 'Ethics of Belief' raised question on the role of authority for the justification of belief. In terms of authority the possible questions that arises are the attributes of authority, legitimacy of authority, and believes on authority. The term authority is mostly used in political connotation showing the relation between people and the states, people to its church, and generally people's relation with any kind of institution; where one is in the authority and the other follower of the authority. One is dominant and

other is the dominated. The relation is mutual, one cannot function without the other. The authority functions through a system of beliefs, trust and faith. In that sense, the authority cannot function without any forms of belief, trust and faith of the people. For example, if the people do not believe in the political authority then the politics cannot function, as we can see the shift in the political structure from monarchy to democracy. Friedrich Nietzsche, one of the existential philosophers gives his statement on authority as “the belief in authority is the source of conscience; which is therefore not the voice of God in the heart of man, but the voice of some men in men.”¹⁶³

Clifford poses the following queries regarding the authority in respect to knowledge: (1) Are we to adopt a universal scepticism? And (2) are we to deny ourselves the assistance and direction of the great body of knowledge that is constantly expanding throughout the world? The second chapter of my thesis likewise focuses on the search for authority with the questions of when and why one should believe beyond the experience of humanity, as well as under what conditions it is legal to believe in other people's evidence. In order to accept a testimony Clifford suggested reasonable grounds for trusting the speaker's *veracity, knowledge, and judgment*. He is really trying to speak the truth so far as s/he knows it, secondly he has had opportunities of knowing the truth about this matter, and thirdly he has made proper use of those opportunities in coming to the conclusion which he affirms. Two important questions rise from trustworthiness of testimony ‘(1) is he honest? And (2) is he mistaken?’ he took the example of Mohammedan's principle to show both the pros and cons of testimonial belief.

¹⁶³ Nietzsche, Friedrich (2015). “*A Book For Free Spirits 2: Human Book*”, p.168.

Clifford's response is based on man's limited obligation, and its goal is to provide people the tools they need to test, testify, and inquire about the world around them. If we accept things without doing more research, we endanger not only ourselves but also the future generations of our race by failing to contribute to the development of the fabric that will be passed down to them.¹⁶⁴ He takes the example of medicinal practice of tribe of Central Africa says; the credibility of the medicine man is his persuasion and the believe circle that has been created between the people and the medicine man. Clifford suggest that the sacred tradition of humanity do not lies in the proposition or statement accepted by an authoritative tradition but in the right questions asked by the people which would enable us to ask further questions and in methods of answering these questions.

My take on the authority goes evidently and through faith as taking chances in life. We cannot know the entire principle of authority but we may believe in the role of authority evidently and also through faith, trust and belief. For example, there are number of discussion on the corruption of government yet on the day of election people do participate in the election. Because people belief in the leader who plays the role of political authority. For example, when Abraham Lincoln the sixteenth president of USA made the movement for the end of slavery, people believed in him and elected him as people's president. He was successful in abolishing the slavery. He was believed by the people evidently because of his involvement with the people in times of war, and his constant struggle evidently suggest that it is justified to belief in Lincoln's authority.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid p.29

Elaborating Clifford's example on medicine again: during the COVID-19 when the vaccine was launched by the medical institution, controversy swirl over India. There were people who rejected to take the vaccine openly. Laws were implemented for the compulsion of vaccine. However, there were also people who without question took the vaccine. In both the genre the different opinion were generated due to lack of evidence and on the other side the faith and trust between the people and the medicine convince people to take chance with vaccine.

Hence, it can be stated that belief in the authority is not an empty belief. The belief is evolved through evidence and faith. If it is only faith then the faith will be empty. It will be like Old wives tale, with stories and with no rational ground to support it. Hence, the justification through evidence and faith should go parallel. To support the statement I will give an example from a famous short story.

A short story to support the tie through faith between authorities and authorised. In the short story 'The Last Leaf' written by O. Henry, the character Johnsy suffers from pneumonia in cold winter. The doctor pays her visit and assures that, her health condition is not bad. If she takes food and medicine then she is going to recover soon. From the window, in a distance Johnsy could see an ivy vine. The leaves of the ivy vine started to fall as the winter started. Johnsy started to connect herself with the ivy plants. Every day, she looks at the ivy, and whenever the leaves fall her health conditions dropped. Despite the doctor said that, if she takes food and medicine she is going to be fine. She believes that when all the ivy leaves fall she will die too. However, in the next morning when she

look outside she saw that the last leave of the ivy did not fall. She recovers seeing the last leaf as it did not fall.¹⁶⁵

Faith in this sense is an essential attribute for the development and progress of the belief. Johnsy should have faith in doctor's diagnosis, her friends counselling and to herself. Even though the doctor may not have the understanding the nature of death, but faith in the doctor is important because he has knowledge of what he practices, he has command over the nature of diseases. Johnsy should have some faith on her friend Sue for moral support who is nursing her since the day she was ill. Sue may not know the nature of disease yet she must cooperate with Sue who is making all the effort to recover her. Meanwhile, she should have faith in herself, because life is a mystery. We should be sceptic for justification and at the same time have some faith for belief. Faith and justification may not function in parallel, as I have mentioned earlier that to do justification of belief faith is not required but to have faith minimum amount of justification is required. With this I would like to move on the next discourse that is faith for belief.

4.4.3 Faith for belief

Revisiting both Clifford, James, Feldman and Conee notion on evidential beliefs once again; all of them suggests formation, maintenance and relinquishment of beliefs are governed by norms and suggests that to form a belief or disbelief, there ought to be necessary and sufficient evidence. Clifford emphasized sufficiency and moral obligations as the epistemic responsibility to do serious investigation before arriving at a belief. Secondly, Clifford placed the importance of *action*, *patience* and *care* that consists a *social*

¹⁶⁵ Collected stories of O'Henry, Rupa Publication. 2000 p. 719

purpose. Feldman and Conee applied *doxastic attitude* hold onto *obligations, responsibility* and *conscience*. On the other hand, William James take on non-evidential belief by confirming the theory of belief based on insufficient evidence. He considers *passion* or *volitional nature*, possibility of an *infinite gain*, willing nature or *free-will*, practical *faith, instinct* of the heart. The will determines possession of moral beliefs. However, his position can also be added with Clifford stating that James notion of free-will includes moral intentions.

Accordingly, taking one step with Clifford my take on faith as hope is the chances in life we take after considering all the propositions of the argument articulated for the justification of belief in this chapter. For the unpredictable things where everything else fails, faith is the only chance we may lean on. The consideration of chances includes various fields such as believing in religion, science, morality, philosophy, and others. In ethics of belief Clifford brought a comparison that knowledge of unknown can be known through the assumption of unknown through the known. The assumption does not guarantee certainty but it provides possibilities. For example, in the Clifford's analogy of ship, we cannot know if the ship will sink or it will sail successfully. The knowledge is limited within the physical structure of the ship on the other hand the ocean where the ship is taking its venture is unpredictable. The ocean is unpredictable. Even in today's context where there are equipment to predict the course of weather yet it the nature of ocean remains unpredictable. In that condition, the sailor have to have to take chance to start his voyage, considering both the possibilities of sailing and sinking.

Both doxastic and non-doxastic attitudes are borne out of faith as hope. Instead of finding in themselves a definite understanding or intellectual conviction of the reality of these

assertions, the faith as hope finds themselves *conferring* on the tenets of their religion. For instance, if I assert that I believe in the future, this becomes my fundamental claim on my faith in the future. Argument is not necessary to support my assertion.

Faith as hope is the prospect of immeasurable good fortune and answers to questions which cannot be provided through experience. The primary object of faith as hope is optimism. Secondly, through optimism, a second chance in moral progress in life that encompass personal and social objectives. There is a necessary connection between faith as hope and optimism which may be proportion to moral progress and to the highest good as Kant also calls hope as the highest good. To believe in the best possibilities of future or the unknown factors one must have faith as hope.

Example to support faith as hope from a famous work of Drama *The Tragical History of Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlow written in 1592-93; A brilliant scholar Dr. Faustus with the anxiety to know more come to the conclusion that he must go beyond the conventional way of learning and thought to learn magic. Faustus met with two magicians named Valdes and Cornelius to learn the art of conjuring. In his conjuring Mephistophilis arrives before him. Faustus then sign a contract where Mephistophilis will serve him for twenty four years and in return Lucifer will claim his soul. Following the contract, Faustus asks for books of knowledge, wife, and knowledge of engineering so that he could build wall that would protect Germany. However, Mephistophilis provided a single book jester that limited Faustus within jest and entertainment. Mephistophilis then kept Faustus occupied with entertainment travelling Europe and Rome where they play tricks on the Pope. Faustus has been called before Duke and Duchess of Vanholt to do magic show. When his twenty four years of contract was nearly up, he introspect on his

actions and thought of repent. But Mephistophilis and Lucifer appears before him and reminded him of the contract that he has signed. In the last speech before his final doomed he speaks to himself:

“...I'll leap up to heaven!—Who pulls me down?— See, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament! One drop of blood will save me...”¹⁶⁶

In the first paragraph of his last speech Doctor Faustus wishes to have faith to have another chances with his life, where one drop of Jesus's Blood could have saved his soul. He had the knowledge of astronomy, geometry, philosophy, yet he lacked of faith demoralised him. So I want to make an assertion that along with the justification of knowledge or belief, faith functions as hope and one must have it, not only for religious purpose but for epistemic purpose also. Faith would then spare a person from the agony of lapse that is faced by the scholars who tries to have a justification of belief but due to many obstacles fails to achieve it. For instance, the evidentialism as the justification for knowledge. One at one point evidentialism takes us to the problem of infinite regress and circularity, and faith as hope and sufficiency may help us with evidentialism.

4.4.5 Faith for Action

To quote Clifford:

“For belief belongs to man, and to the guidance of human affairs: no belief is real unless it guides our actions, and those actions supply a test of its truth.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ "Full Text of "Life of Marlowe, and The Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage"," Internet Archive: Digital Library of Free & Borrowable Books, Movies, Music & Wayback Machine, accessed December 27, 2022, https://archive.org/stream/lifeofmarlowetra00marl/lifeofmarlowetra00marl_djvu.txt.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 23

To do epistemology, action is not necessary. The definition of knowledge suggest that the condition of 'justified true belief' is neutral. It is neither moral nor immoral. Neither good nor bad. It only states that either S knows p, or S do not know p, S beliefs p, or S do not belief p. For example, when a philosopher is doing introspection on the nature of knowledge, action is not part of it. Justification of knowledge is for the sake of knowledge. For example, the environmentalist may know the uses of plastic is harmful for the environment but may stay inside the laboratory, doing his research, writing books; and meantime use plastic bags for daily purposes. Action, thereby does not follow from the justification. The method of justification and action are two distinct areas. One do not necessarily follow after the other as it is not a causal necessity. The epistemic duty is obligatory on the part of claim maker, but not applicable for everyone. Hence, it may be stated that the core issue of epistemology and actions are distinct in nature and we can have a definition of knowledge without the obligations of actions.

However, to act one may need justification. As Clifford also says action once committed cannot be undone. Action in this sense needs careful justification. The philosophy of action suggests the study on the questions of similarities and dissimilarities between voluntary and involuntary behaviour. There are agreement that actions are intentional and causal. Donald Davidson explains actions in terms of belief and desires.¹⁶⁸ For example one do hard work with belief and desire that the result of hard work would be good. Likewise, action theory suggest other forms of actions such as individuated, basic, non-basic, physical and mental actions.

¹⁶⁸ Wilson, George; Shpall, Samuel; Piñeros Glasscock, Juan S. (2016). "Action". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University.

My intention is to not the philosophy of action or the theories of action, I want to take action as an intentional decision one makes after the justification of belief and to do so he considers moral account. In this sense actions are intended for reasons and motivation. Going by Clifford's 'Ethics of belief,' actions are driven and motivated by the strong sense of morality. Morality may not provide knowledge as it do not provide logical standard for knowledge.

Secondly, action is a leap provided *ceteris paribus* (epistemic search is a necessary condition). It is not change in belief, nor is it deepening belief. It is to regulate the uncertainty and confronting risk. Due to uncertainty of the future the confrontation of a belief may be looked as risky. When we are completely justified with enough evidence that the ship will make its voyage, we may still think that our position is doubtful. With the leap we make a decision to stop our justification and come to the position that, I have these numbers of evidence, it is enough and sufficient for my belief. Faith here is taking action, like when my doctors says, it is high time I should start exercise, knowing my condition I do exercise. I don't ask anymore question, I am acting on it. I know health condition, I am justified about the health condition. My justification not necessarily implies action but actions are motivation from justification.

Considering moral standard another proposition may be added to the argument that is develop for the justification of evidential argument;

5. Faith in justification assures S to take chance in one's action because within a given context *c* and evidence *f* that supports *e* provides sufficiency for the justification of belief in *p*.

Example to support the proposition;

The knowledge of nuclear weapon. From the given resources we commonly know that it is an explosive device that is produce from reactions and releases large quantities of energy from small matter. The Father of atom bomb would provide more detail of the atom bomb stating that it is device that releases energy of twenty thousand tons of TNT, it can be used for green energy and also for explosion. The good uses of it will benefit largely and bad uses of it will be mass destruction of life and habitat. Considering Clifford's stand it brings us to the moral stand where we need to raise this question to ourselves, do we need to know or venture on something where the chances of damage is more than the chances of improve? It will be for knowledge but bad for application. It will not be like the assumption of opening the Pandora's Box. Pandora's Box provides the probability of fifty-fifty chances of good and bad outcome. The explosion of atomic device will not provide any probability. However, if application of atomic device is like '*Kshirasāgara Manthan*' or churning of the milky-ocean, where the end result is Amrita or the elixir of eternal life then it would be worth taking chance.

To support my statement I would like to narrate an Indian mythical story of Kshirasagarā Manthan very briefly from Vishnu Purana: Once the Devas or the gods lost their physical and spiritual strength. To gain back their strength they went to the God Brahma. The God Brahma then suggested the Devas to churn the ocean of milk. The churning will generate the elixir of eternal life. The consumption of elixir will bring their eternal energy back. However, the churning will also bring other beings into existence. From the churning emerged Lakshmi, Apsaras, Varuni, three types of supernatural animals, three types of

valuable and *halahala*.¹⁶⁹ Halahala was poisonous enough to cause the mass destruction but it was consumed by Shiva. At last emerged the elixir of eternal life.¹⁷⁰

The story is mythical and there is no truth value in it. So is the faith and taking chance, there is no truth-value in faith. The above story provides a moral ground where and in situated conditions takes faith as chance by considering pragmatism and doctrine which Kant also mentions when he supports faith for knowledge.

Using Clifford's example once more, if a ship owner adopts a goal, he may grow to feel that a certain means will be effective in achieving that goal, leading to the expectation that the ship will sail successfully. He would have a practical belief in the efficiency of this method. On the other hand, doctrinal belief entails a certainty about a situation that is always beyond of man's understanding but that may nonetheless serve as a guide in the search for knowledge. Here, religion finds its foundation in the ultimate good, which unites all living things under a common moral code and serves as their essential goal. "My conviction is not logical, but moral certainty," says Kant. "And since it depends on subjective grounds (of the moral emotion), I must not even say, "It is morally definite that there is a God, etc.," but rather, "I am morally certain, etc."¹⁷¹

Going back once again to the mythical story that is the Kshirasagarā Manthan; with the chances of the poisonous gas to emerge from the churning; are the Devtas to continue with the churning of milky ocean? Looking at their situation, the Devtas are in their crucial

¹⁶⁹ Poisonous Gas
¹⁷⁰

https://books.google.co.in/books?id=u8m441zg_KgC&dq=churning+of+the+ocean+purana&pg=PA25&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=churning%20of%20the%20ocean%20purana&f=false

¹⁷¹ Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, p. 650 A829, B857

condition. They are broken physically and spiritually. If they do not go with the process they may lose their power and life.¹⁷² So the question that immediately follows from here is; do they have choice? They have choice both to churn and not to churn. The former will bring back their strength and eternity, and the latter is eternal doom. So the former is more affirmative in terms of chance than the later. And regarding action which they must carry on; they must have faith, without putting faith in Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu they cannot process their churning.

In my previous example, I took the example of atomic device. Other than its destructive features it also produces clean and sustainable energy. Which is the argument mostly used to support the nuclear energy other than being its uses as destructive device. Many nation has been signed under the treaty of prohibition of Nuclear but in the year 1998, under the Late Prime Minister Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee India was successfully declared as the nuclear state.

However, the question may be raised as despite knowing the damage it may cause, was it necessary? From political stand, it was necessary just like the Devas needed to churn the Ocean of milk to gain their strength back, India may answer that taking chances with the nuclear weapon and declaring India as nuclear state was a political necessity. The next question is; can political necessity be considered as moral necessity? Politics be it democratic, oligarchic or monarch in nature, it is always for the people despite of many discrepancies in the society. In relation to people, politics and morality goes in parallel. Political strength is a moral strength. Therefore, political necessity may be affirmatively

¹⁷² In the Vishnu Purana, the Devtas are immortal. They may lose power over the Auras and become their subject.

stated as moral necessity. Thereby, considering the political needs it is okay to take chances in nuclear state.

However, my take is to take scientific and other justification together. The notion of faith should not be mistaken for the denial of rational account for the justification of knowledge. Faith is the add-on proposition that helps in actions. It has to be considered as the last step, where the uncertainty of the outcome creates an indecisive situation to justify a belief. As a concluding remark of the chapter, I would like to state that the problem of infinite regress of evidentialism can be taken care by the means of objective necessity and subjective sufficiency with epistemic requirement remaining the same. By objective I mean the data that evidence would provide; by subjectivity means the application of faith, and moral obligations; and by epistemic requirement I mean the epistemic justification that is 'knowledge is justified true belief.' Hence, the final argument may be developed as: S knows p, if and only if, p is true, S believes p, and S is justified in believing that p. The justification of belief includes:

1. The justification of P is supported by evidence e
2. Evidence e is further supported by supporting evidence e`
3. Supporting evidence e` is further supported by the f
4. Within a given context c evidence f that supports e` provides sufficiency for the justification of belief in p. And
5. Faith in justification assures S to take chance in one's action because within a given context c and evidence f that supports e` provides sufficiency for the justification of belief in p.

Hence, it can be concluded that evidentialism do justify a belief and the objection that it faces from the non-evidentialism do not affect evidentialism. As the concept of free-will that James mentions about religious belief do not affect the epistemic justification of a belief. Secondly, the problem of regress and circularity that causes due to the number of evidence supporting each other is also resolve when contextualism, moral obligation, and faith is taken into consideration. It can be safely concluded that justification of belief with evidence is possible provided the proposition 1 to 5 of the last supportive argument is maintained.

One may say that morality is not about knowledge. However, morality as the key for actions comes after justification, hence it does not affect the justification of belief. Morality intervenes as the consequences of actions in terms of good and bad. Clifford's Evidentialism for the justification emphasizes actions for knowledge. It follows the Socratic principle of *to know is to do*. Within the frame of morality one's intention needs to be life affirmative. Hence, from moral perspective and to act based on the knowledge one has gained, morality and evidence becomes paramount. Hence action comes within the umbrella of epistemology because one must possess the rational account through evidence for the pros and cons of an action. And to infer the pros and cons of an action, an epistemic duty is a necessary condition. It is only through epistemic duty, the justification of an action can be made.

Conclusion

Coming to the conclusion of the thesis, the last question that needed to be taken care is ‘What we ought to do now?’ Are we ought to believe through the evidence or remain in the sceptic mode?

Clifford has positioned us with moral connotation where knowledge is attached with rightful actions. Clifford suggest, duty of enquiry for the justification of belief and actions to serve moral purpose. Duty of enquiry becomes important to inculcate a habit of inquiry into people and to the society or else society may sink back to savagery. That way Clifford supports both belief and scepticism. He supports belief for morality and scepticism for further enquiry.

Which Clifford agrees that ‘ought-judgment’ may not precisely be inferred from a set of ‘is’ premises, as ‘ought’ do not suggest ‘can’. For the justification of knowledge Clifford do stands with the epistemic duty that is abiding by the principle of justified true belief that is For all p, I belief p if and only is p is true, p is justified and I belief p. However, when action is taken into consideration it becomes necessity to state that; For all p, I belief p, because the evidence supports my belief for p and my moral responsibility demands that I act with my belief on p. Repeating from the first chapter once again, my moral responsibility suggest that I ought to believe provided there is sufficient evidence to support my belief and to the extend it supports the society.

While taking evidence as the support system for justification, the limitation of the justification and the role of authority are considered in the second chapter. Clifford gave a proposition regarding sacred tradition of humanity and the tradition is asking right

questions that would help in raising further questions. Through these questions built the fabric of truth and take it to its glory from generation to generation.

The third chapter, Negative justification is the combination of the Mill's method, method of contradiction and evidentialism. It is a justification through principle. Where one is connected to the other. Hence, understanding the relation of one belief to other beliefs helps in developing or further beliefs. In this sense, comparison, difference, similarities and contradiction helps in confirmation of the things that are subject of the inquiry.

The fourth chapter is titled 'Evidential Justification considering a Context, Morality and Faith.' I have tried to establish that when context is applied, coming to the conclusion of belief becomes simpler. In other words, the sufficiency of evidence becomes possible. Secondly, through action one's belief face the test, and through test belief is strengthened.

Coming back to the question of the conclusion; provided with the conditions, rules, stories and the principles, what are we to do now? The answer is, we belief in necessary and sufficient evidence for actions and leave room for doubts for the future enquiry, and for the epistemic duty.

For the final conclusion I would like to take quote the dialogue by the protagonist Benoit Blanc from the movie *Glass Onion*; "I can find you the truth, I can gather evidence, I can present it to the police but there is where my jurisdiction ends."¹⁷³ The work of epistemology is like the detective Blanc. Like Blanc finds out the truth by gathering evidence and produce it before the police and to the jury but he remains outside the action. Not because he cannot act but due to the reasons that his limitation within the justification

¹⁷³ *Glass Onion*, directed by Rian Johnson. (2022; IN2022), Film.

not action. Likewise it can be stated that the epistemic duty is to justify a belief or knowledge. For Clifford, finding the truth is not enough. After finding the truth the important objective is to bring it into action. Therefore, he says as long as humanity exist, the epistemic search will remain meanwhile the action will be applied too. Justification is for knowledge but action after the knowledge is for the humanity. He compares the society with heirloom, where just like the thread is connected to one another, our values, beliefs are connected to one another through justification. And it is the sacred duty of mankind to continue the search even after they reach to the truth. This position of Clifford, I have attempted to defend in my thesis.

Annexure-I

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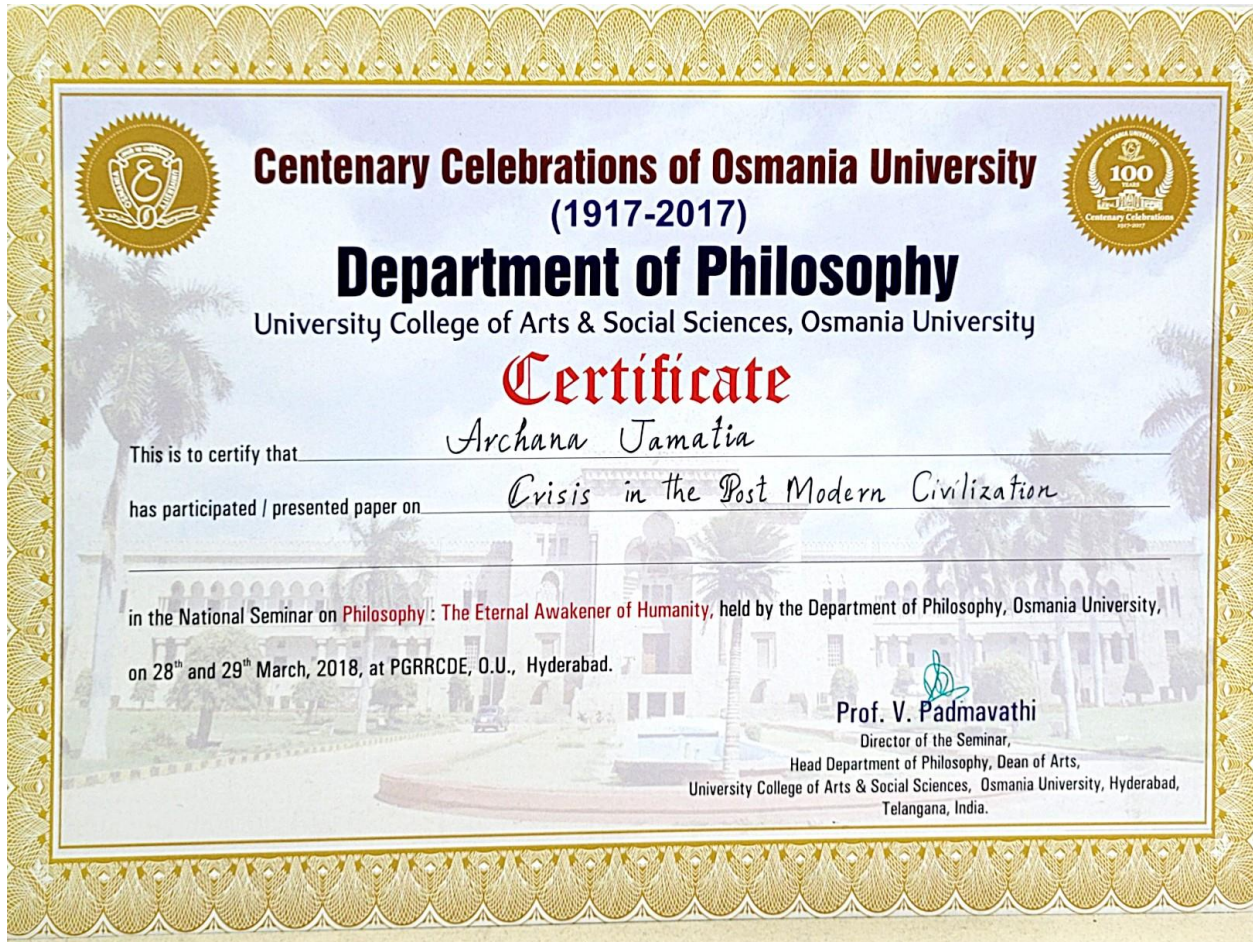
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Annexure-II

Presentation





Department of English
Sikkim University



Human Resource Development Department
Government of Sikkim

International Seminar
1-3 November, 2017

POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION

INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

Nagging Woman, Lucknow, 1870s

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(Professor Emeritus, Jadavpur University)

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Prof. Don Adams (Florida Atlantic University),
Prof. Anuradha D. Needham (Oberlin College, Ohio),
Prof. Sajal Nag (Assam University),
Prof. Saugata Bhaduri (Jawaharlal Nehru University),

INVITED SPEAKERS:

Prof. Simi Malhotra (Jamia Millia Islamia),
Prof. Anita Singh (Banaras Hindu University),
Prof. Amit Bhattacharya (Gour Banga University)

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS: PROF. CHANDRAKALA PADIA
(Banaras Hindu University, & Chairperson, IAS Shimla)

Certificate

This is to certify that Archana Tamatia (PhD Scholar)
of Department of Philosophy, University of Hyderabad
participated/ delivered the keynote address/ valedictory address/ plenary lecture/ chaired a session/ presented
a paper titled 'When Habit is associated with Identity'

in the Three-Day International Seminar "Politics of Representation: Interdisciplinary Perspectives" organised
by the Department of English, Sikkim University in collaboration with HRDD, Government of Sikkim from
the 1st to the 3rd of November 2017.

Convenor

Organising Secretary

Head of the Dept./Dean

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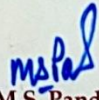
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This is to certify that Ms. Archana Jamatia of Department of Philosophy, University of Hyderabad participated in the seminar. She presented a paper entitled "An Analysis of Oral and Tribal Literature with a Comparison to Mainstream Literature".


Dr. Vivek Singh
Convener


Prof. M.S. Pandey
Head

Annexure-III

Workshop





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&



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Prof. Padmashekhar
Vice Chancellor

Annexure –IV
Publications



"The Realities Becoming Visible"

KEYWORDS

Archana Jamatia

Department of Philosophy, University of Hyderabad

Rongsenzulu Jamir

Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad

I. Introduction

The two philosophical debate on knowledge i.e. 'knowledge originates after experience' and 'knowledge is innate.' The conscious study of our subconscious mind would proof that mind is more complex and it goes beyond so called; experience. We can elaborate further the various modes of experience, one is physical (visual, smell, touch, hearing and taste), and the other mental (our knowledge of language, reasoning capacities, logic, mathematics). Philosophically through Plato's work till the contemporary work, epistemologist tried to define knowledge in terms of justified true belief technically termed as JTB (here knowledge is implied to the knowledge of the external world in the initiative stage which later developed further into knowledge internal knowledge, social epistemology, virtue epistemology etc.). The problem of knowledge lies in the justification for justification again lies in the conjunction of the modes and the medium such as the senses, the objects, and the other external factors. However, Descartes claims that senses cannot be reliable sources of knowledge because senses can be deceived and the most critical part is that what we can experience in our waking state we can experience in our dream state also. So, we encounter the paradox of objective reality as it is and how it appears and how we cognitively perceives it (Descartes illustration on distance tower clock that appear round when it is square in shape). So, how do we claim our knowledge of the external world?

Given an effective option, the reliable resources without being skeptical about the existence of the external world, it is the best option we have in our hand. From the work of Sigmund Freud, Bertrand Russell, David Hume's and their contemporaries we came to know that how the social factors plays an important role in the process of forming knowledge. It may seem simplistic way to say that knowledge is culture specific, if we say that we face different forms and loose the center of knowledge. Knowledge becomes a byproduct of geography, language and the external exposure. This take us closer to 'nature'. And it can be studied only through fieldwork.

Fieldwork, a consensus among anthropologist and sociologist, is a distinctive practice. Practiced in a variety of settings, fieldwork has been regarded as an essential marking to the disciplines. Providing a detailed and intimate understanding, fieldwork, encompasses a deep insights into the reality (ies). Acquiring both qualitative and quantitative data from a detailed and lengthy complex observations and building progressive ideas and understandings.

As a practitioner of fieldwork, it is important to be always on the edge, and keep our minds open to all the possible ideas that we are given with. Sticking to what have been conceived or thought might be harmful and might delaminate various possible sides to the answers one have set foot to seek for. The objectives and the methodologies thus follow suit according to the changes you make, though the framework might remain intact, the fieldwork one started might take drastic turns when faced with the 'reality'. So it is important now to question what is 'reality', how do we know what is 'real'? In addition, which is not 'real'? And the challenges of theory versus practice and traditional method versus modern methods

II. Data collected through secondary sources:

The researcher first visited the village for a pilot study in November 2015 for a general transect walk and general village ethnography keeping in mind the information provided by the Indian government census of 2011¹ to find out that the information provided were quite questionable. One, lower number of household and therefore lower population, and two it question the ongoing question of how reliable the government census is.

The village records and church records were found to be quite reliable with multiple crosschecks. But again most of them are written down either during some jubilee of the village or that of the church's jubilee; mostly based on oral history and life histories. The question one is necessary to question is thus, how reliable oral traditions and oral histories are. One of the major sources of any traditional values – be it about life, death, religion, or nature, is the oral tradition. And among the AOs oral tradition plays a major role in any traditional event. It is told that the AOs which have rich oral tradition and no written material account of its past is explained by a belief; this belief is that the written account was taken away by a dog (*shikemunggulubazur-ishirow*). Therefore, almost all the folklore which are orally transmitted and passed on have been modified time and again according to the teller as well as by the listener themselves. One of the aspects of oral tradition is the scope of addition and subtraction according to time and the person. So the question still remains on how reliable are oral histories? May be the nearest we can get to the actual "reality" is cross checking with different informants or may be employ a group discussion among the elder informants, and make them correct themselves on what and how they represent the "reality" of the past.

III Fieldwork and Modes of Skepticism:

When a researcher involves himself or herself in fieldwork, one encounter numerous complex phenomena and what actually appears to him or her cannot be the reality of what is appeared and portrayed to researcher. Remembering this, it is important for a researcher at certain point to answer certain questions, like-

- Do the ethnographic account we present, represent the reality?
- Is it just mere collection and portrayal of the appearances?

To answer this questions, one need to address on the modes of skepticism which are supposed to force you to suspend judgment because you cannot know or cannot be certain.

The usual tradition amongst older skeptics is that the "modes" by which "suspension" is supposed to be brought about are ten in number; and they also given them synonymous names of "arguments" and "positions". That are these: the first, based on the variety of animals; the second, on the differences in human beings; the third, on the different structures of the organs of sense; the fourth, on the circumstantial conditions; the fifth, on positions and intervals and locations; the sixth, on intermixtures; the seventh, on the quantities and formations of the underlying objects; the eighth, on the fact of relativity; the ninth, on the frequency or rarity of occurrence; the tenth, on the disciplines and customs and laws, the legendary beliefs and the dogmatic convictions. This order, however,



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“ETHICS ON VIOLENCE”

Archana Jamatia

PhD 3rd Year, Department of Philosophy, University of Hyderabad

ABSTRACT

This work is a thought experiment on violence and also over all view of my M.Phil dissertation by taking references of the Bhagvad Geeta and western philosophy that tries to seek a general definition of 'what is just?' in trying to understand how violence occur and what are its solution? However, there is no ultimate solution or end of violence in this article. Can we look at violence as we would look into an object with its properties? An extensive attempt to understand the value of life and its meaning that is added to it. When we think deeply, life has meaning and no meaning t the same time, we live to die. In the journey towards death lies everything such as love, pride, honor, duty, peace etc. etc. To communicate with each other, all we need is, understanding; yet that is not sufficient, we demand sophisticated language followed by correct grammar. Not only that, we also want to have dominant over languages to prove one's superiority and other's inferiority, so, basically it is about the definition of power and not about right and wrong. Therefore, in my article I tried to ethicize violence if it is at all possible.

I would like to begin with a statement, which states that 'The story of humankind is plausibly the history of warfare'. Aristotle, for example, describes warfare - the art of war - as an aspect in the

Archana Jamatia

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Annexure-V
Plagiarism test Report

On the Problem of Justification: A defence of William K. Clifford's Evidentialism

by Archana Jamatia



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