

Hinge Epistemology?

Limits and prospects of a prominent formulation of hinge epistemology

Abstract

Hinge epistemology's main claim to fame lies with its purported advantages in dealing with the problem of radical scepticism. In this paper I argue that the *framework reading*, one of its most promising formulations, is unsuccessful. In a nutshell, the framework reading argues that the system of our rational evaluation is essentially *local* —i.e., resting on a set of arational propositions —hinges— that constitute the limits and the conditions of validity of our epistemic practices. The discussion develops in two main parts. First, I show that, unless important clarifications are made, the framework theory is incapable of offering any solace against the problem of radical scepticism. I then present two ways in which framework theorists may want to clarify their view —following lines of argument found in Coliva (2015) and Pritchard (2016)— but find them both wanting. To the extent that hinge epistemology represents one of the most relevant options available to internalists to avoid sceptical collapse, the results of this discussion contribute to cast a grim light on the chances of a successful defence of internalist epistemic justification more in general.

keywords hinge epistemology, framework reading, Cartesian scepticism, Pyrrhonian scepticism, epistemological disjunctivism

INTRODUCTION

Hardly anyone is a sceptic. Yet, sceptical arguments are very popular. How so? One way of answering this question is to think of sceptical arguments as picking up on features of our epistemic relationship to the world that lead us to question its very nature and scope. In its simplest, most crude version, the problem of scepticism can be framed as starting from two main questions about *how* we know and *what* we know, and then proceeding to show that our epistemic practices are fundamentally faulty, and that we ultimately don't know many, or perhaps any, of the things we normally think we do. To give a very rough idea¹: Cartesian scepticism is the sceptical challenge that compels us to endorse the latter conclusion—that is, that we don't know any of the *facts* we ordinarily take ourselves to know or believe justifiably about the world. Pyrrhonian scepticism (henceforth 'Pyrrhonism' for short), on the other hand, is that strand of scepticism casting doubt not on the facts we take ourselves to know, but on the *way* we come to know them (i.e., their justification status)².

Hinge epistemology—roughly, the revisionary view that the system of our rational evaluation sits on a set of (more or less) fixed propositions known as hinges—stands out as an anti-sceptical strategy in that it promises a charitable and unitary treatment for both incarnation of the sceptical problem. It is unitary because it promises to soothe our worries with respect to our mundane knowledge of ordinary empirical propositions while at the same time making sure that the epistemic tools we use to obtain this knowledge are valid. And it is charitable because it

¹ I will have more to say about these sceptical challenges in the next section.

² Given my formulation, this variety of sceptical concern may better be identified as 'Agrippan' scepticism, a subspecies of Pyrrhonian scepticism. Since it won't play a crucial role in my argument, I will gloss over this distinction in the rest of the paper.

promises to confront the sceptic by granting them some key sceptical assumptions about the structure of epistemic justification³. Since the pull towards scepticism is often motivated, in large part, by the strong intuitive plausibility of its starting assumptions, hinge epistemologists' promise to win the sceptical challenge on the sceptic's ground constitutes the main appeal for this view.

For the most part, in fact, contemporary solutions to sceptical worries involve recourse to principles that override the sceptical challenge. Epistemic externalism⁴ is a good example of this. Some of its proponents believe that both Cartesian scepticism and Pyrrhonism can be set aside if we abandon the inherently internalist picture of epistemic justification that seems to underwrite their challenge. However, even those who are willing to accept that externalism does, by and large, get it right, are often recalcitrant to accept the idea that we can (or indeed we should) get rid of internalistically conceived notions of evidence and justification *tout court*. Indeed, the thought that internalistically conceived reasons do play a non-negligible role in our epistemic lives, as well as the accompanying sentiment that purely externalist solutions to the sceptical problem beg the question against scepticism, are both still relatively widespread⁵. Because it promises to carve out a space for an internalist notion of knowledge and justification that is impermeable to sceptical worries, then, hinge epistemologists' strategy offers a uniquely appealing solution to the sceptical problem.

So hinge epistemology truly aspires to be the panacea to the gamut of our sceptical worries. Can it achieve its aspirations? The answer I give in this paper will be negative, and I motivate it in the following steps: in §1 I give the set up—I quickly present a popular version of hinge epistemology (what I call, following Coliva, the framework reading) and break down its solution to the sceptical problems. This section concludes by showing how commitment to the framework reading threatens sceptical collapse, and it is followed up in the succeeding two

³ That is, the broadly internalist and foundationalist conception of epistemic justification.

⁴ Here I am referring in particular to epistemic externalism about the nature of epistemic justification, of the sort that knowledge requires (e.g., see Goldman (1979)).

⁵ This form of 'gonzo' externalism (Brandom 1995) has been harshly criticised (see e.g., Brandom 1994, 1995, McDowell 1995).

sections by a critical review of the two main ways framework theorists might attempt the rescue. Ultimately, however, neither is found to be satisfactory: broadening the notion of rationality, on the one hand, leads to a commitment to a particularly radical form of relativism (§2) and, on the other, leaning into Pyrrhonian scepticism doesn't seem to offer a genuine way out of the sceptical challenge (§3).

§I.

THE FRAMEWORK READING

The title of “hinge epistemology” is often used somewhat broadly to include a constellation of anti-sceptical strategies inspired by Wittgenstein's remarks in *On Certainty*, which developed into a wide variety of neighbouring epistemological views —from Wright (1985, 2004) and Williams' (1991) entitlement (or epistemic) views, Conant (1998) and Strawson's (1985) therapeutic accounts, as well as Coliva (2015, 2016), Pritchard (2016) and Moyal-Sharrock's (2004, 2005) non-epistemic views⁶. Very roughly, this family of views can be seen as originating from a common desire to capture in full the richness of Wittgenstein's insightful intuitions. One of these in particular stands out for having inspired the christening of this epistemological tradition:

[...] the questions that we raise and our doubts depend upon the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like *hinges* on which those turn. (OC 341) (my emphasis).

From this shared point of departure, different hinge epistemologies can be distinguished based on the way they characterise (a) the features they attribute to these special ‘hinge propositions’ (or *hinges* for short), and (b) the role they take hinges to play with respect to the rational system of

⁶ For a more exhaustive taxonomy, see Coliva (2016)

which they are part. In what follows I will be primarily concerned with one of the most popular formulations of hinge epistemology to date, known as the ‘framework reading’. Proponents of this view, popularised by influential work by Coliva (2015) and Pritchard (2016), can be seen to converge over the following two claims:

Non-Epistemicity Thesis: Hinges are very general, *sui generis* commitments⁷ that are not the target of standard⁸ epistemic appraisal⁹.

Basic Hinge Commitment: The system of rational evaluation is relative to a set of (more or less) fixed assumptions, called hinges.

The Non-Epistemicity Thesis is supposed to capture the framework theorists’ commitment to the idea that hinges (which are taken to be very general, non-empirical commitments such as that ‘I am not radically deceived’, ‘I am not a brain in a vat’, ‘there are physical objects’, ‘my perceptual faculties are generally reliable’ and so on) are rationally *inert* —i.e., that they are ‘visceral’, ‘non-optional’ commitments that are not responsive to positive *or negative* rational evaluation (like justification or doubt). The Basic Hinge Commitment, on the other hand, captures the framework theorists’ broadly foundationalist commitment about the structure of rational evaluation.

Combining these two theses together, we obtain the following concise summary of the main commitment of the framework theory:

⁷ Here I use the word ‘commitment’ in a fairly liberal, non-technical, sense. See Pritchard (2016, ch.3) and Ranalli (2020) for a helpful overview of the disagreement between hinge epistemologists about the exact nature of the attitude we have towards hinges.

⁸ For reasons that will become clear in section 2, the term ‘standard’ is here used for rationality to distinguish it from Coliva’s ‘extended’ sense.

⁹ Following Coliva, I don’t make a sharp distinction in this paper between a belief’s rationality and its justifiedness: Unless explicitly noted (see fn.21), I take expressions like “rational”, “justified”, “warranted”, “subject to rational assessment”, “subject to rational appraisal” to be equivalent.

Locality: Our system of rational evaluation is grounded on a set of fundamental commitments that are not themselves the target of standard epistemic appraisal.¹⁰

In summary, then, the framework theory is a particular version of hinge epistemology that takes hinges to be the (a) not epistemically assessable (b) ground of our rational system. The picture of the structure of our rational evaluation that the framework reading invites us to buy, then, is one where a set of propositions, hinges, are, at one time the *ground* and the *limit* of our rational system. They are the ground in virtue of being those basic assumptions from which our belief system draws its rational validity; and they are its limit in virtue of lying outside epistemic appraisal.

Now, how does the framework theorists' commitment to the Locality claim help them offer the unitary and charitable response to the problem of scepticism they promised¹¹? Start with Cartesian scepticism. The core challenge of this form of scepticism is directed at *what* we can sensibly claim to have justification or knowledge of, and it is about the *scope* or *boundaries* of our epistemic practices. To carry out this challenge, the Cartesian sceptic typically begins conjuring radical sceptical scenarios where nothing is as it seems, and where the gap between appearance and reality appears insurmountable (e.g., think of Matrix-style scenarios, evil demon possibilities, dream-like experiences and so forth). On the basis of the ineliminability of these sceptical hypotheses, a Cartesian-style type of scepticism about the external world can be raised that makes

¹⁰ Commitment to locality is offered more explicitly by Pritchard (2016), and endorsed by Coliva (2020, 9).

¹¹ The two main ways of doing this proposed in the literature are Annalisa Coliva's extended rationality view and Duncan Pritchard's 'biscopic' proposal. After setting up a general Pyrrhonian-based challenge to the framework theory, I move on in the next two sections to discuss each strategy in turn.

leverage on the closure principle for justification (or CPJ)¹² for knowledge or justification in the following way:

The Cartesian sceptical argument from closure

- (P1) We are not justified in believing that (\neg SH) sceptical hypotheses do not obtain
- (P2) If I am justified in believing an empirical proposition E , then I am justified in believing \neg SH (i.e., that sceptical hypotheses do not obtain).¹³
- ★ I am not justified in believing E ¹⁴

Virtually applicable to any empirical fact we take ourselves to know or believe justifiably, this argument provides a powerful, universal challenge to our knowledge of the external world.

In some sense, the advantage that endorsing the framework reading can give with respect to scepticism of the external world is clear. The Cartesian sceptical challenge relies on the closure principle, which is about extending one's justification via competent deduction. Proponents of the framework reading start from this observation to derive the following condition for the applicability of the CPJ:

Condition for the applicability of CPJ: Given two propositions P and Q , where P entails Q , it is possible for a subject S to extend (via competent deduction) their justification from P to Q only if Q can be epistemically appraised by S .

¹² A standard formulation of the closure principle (for justification) goes like this: "CPJ: If one is justified in believing that P and competently deduces Q from P , thereby coming to believe Q while retaining their justification for P , then one is justified in believing that Q ."

¹³ Assuming (as it seems plausible) that E entails \neg SH, if one accepts the general principle of closure, it follows that, if one is justified in believing E , then one is thereby justified in believing what is entailed by E (i.e., \neg SH) —provided that one competently draws the inference from E and \neg SH.

¹⁴ Given that knowledge requires justified belief, this argument naturally entails lack of knowledge of ordinary empirical propositions. I phrased the argument as focussing on justification rather than knowledge because it is issues surrounding the former, more so than the latter, that I have in mind in this paper.

This is intuitive: after all, how would it be possible to extend one's justification via inference if the entailed proposition wasn't available for epistemic assessment? In such a case, the CPJ wouldn't be applicable. Crucially, a consequence of buying into the framework view is that the inference that goes from our justification of everyday propositions to our justification of the denial of the sceptical hypotheses (e.g., that I am not radically deceived) is precisely one where the consequent (i.e., a hinge proposition) is not in the market for epistemic appraisal. It follows then that the CPJ cannot be legitimately applied to the couple of propositions (i.e., E and $\neg SH$) that make up the Cartesian sceptical challenge¹⁵. For the framework theorist, then, to the extent that it purports to generate, through the principle of closure, a warrant for something (i.e., a hinge commitment) which is not itself warrantable (because it is one of the very conditions for the possibility of warrantability practices) then, premise 2 of the Cartesian argument should be rejected. By making a distinction between the denial of closure and its failure of application, then, the framework theorist can meet the challenge by exploiting a unique feature of hinge commitments which provides them with a principled way of rejecting premise 2¹⁶. At the cost of buying into a revisionary story about the structure of our rational evaluation, they can claim to have obtained a powerful anti-sceptical argument that allows one to retain justification and knowledge of the external world in spite of one's inability to know the denial of the sceptical hypotheses—without, with this, denying closure.

So far so good. But what about the other sceptical challenge? Recall that Pyrrhonism is not (primarily, at least) interested in undermining our grasp of empirical facts. Its doubt is cast over

¹⁵ For Pritchard, this anti-sceptical feature of the framework reading is granted by his commitment to a particular set of 'anti-sceptical' hinge commitments, specifically designed to block the application of the closure principle in these kinds of arguments.

¹⁶ Note that this is closely connected (but not identical) to a similar move (made originally by Wright 1985 and 2004) "according to which an argument cannot generate (or enhance one's previous) warrant for a conclusion if, and only if, the warrantedness of its premises depends on already possessing a warrant for its conclusion" (Coliva 2020, 19).

the standard of validity of our epistemic practices —i.e., it concerns whether we can sensibly claim to possess a valid way of rationalising our beliefs. In particular, the challenge gets started from the observation that epistemic justification is a matter of believing on good grounds, and that there can be such a thing as a justified belief. On this basis, the Pyrrhonian sceptic carries out the following considerations about rational support: if we take our beliefs to be justifiable, then they are justified either independently of reasoning (i.e., they are *basic*) or by another belief (i.e., they are justified *inferentially*). The Pyrrhonian sceptic rejects the first horn on the ground that basic justified beliefs are either rationally *arbitrary* —in which case they are *not* rationally compelling— or they aren't —in which case they *are* indeed supported by reason, and so they aren't *basic* after all. And they reject the second horn too by noting that, when we attempt to justify a belief by means of another belief, the support ultimately turns out to either be circular (*mode of circularity*) or terminate in an unjustified belief (*mode of hypothesis*) or continue endlessly (*mode of infinite regress*). Given that none of these 'modes' to end inquiry is acceptable, the sceptic concludes, there is no valid way we can provide justification for our beliefs.

In summary, we can identify three main claims from which the Pyrrhonian sceptic mount their challenge:

Cliffordian Principle: Justification is a matter of believing on good grounds.

Pyrrhonian Demand: There are no basic justified beliefs.

Agrippian Modes: No belief is justified by (1) an infinite chain of reasons (*mode of infinite regress*), (2) a circular chain of reasons (*mode of circularity*) or (3) one terminating in an unjustified belief (*mode of hypothesis*),

where the latter two (the Pyrrhonian Demand and the Agrippan Modes) can be seen as specifying when the grounds mentioned in the former (Cliffordian Principle) are indeed *good* grounds. Hence, the Pyrrhonian challenge can be roughly characterised as setting the following desideratum, which cannot be satisfied:

Pyrrhonian Desideratum In order for our justificatory practices to be valid, it must be possible to find a non-arbitrary ground for our beliefs capable of offering support that is not circular or leading to an infinite regress.

Can the framework reading help us deal with this challenge? To start with, one could notice that by endorsing Locality, the framework reading seems to be committed to a broadly foundational response to Pyrrhonism, although perhaps only so *in spirit*. The response is foundationalist to the extent that it aims to resist the challenge by stopping the regress —hinges, according to the framework reading, are “regress-stoppers”, the solid foundation on which our rational system is built. But it is nonetheless a foundationalism *sui generis*, since standard foundationalist views normally take the grounds to be themselves *rational*¹⁷.

In fact, while foundationalist views normally offer overriding responses to Pyrrhonism by arguing that there *are* some beliefs that are basically justified (i.e., by denying the Pyrrhonian Demand), framework theorists concede that to Pyrrhonian sceptics, and instead claim that some of our core ‘beliefs’ are not the kind of thing that can be subject to rational assessment. At this point, one may wonder whether this *really* is a response to Pyrrhonism. For notice that, if the solution offered by the framework reading simply *is* that such propositions ought to be taken for granted, then this doesn’t seem to be significantly different from embracing the Agrippan *mode of hypothesis*¹⁸. Clearly, however, this would not be a very desirable result. Not only because it would

¹⁷ Here ‘rational’ should be interpreted broadly to give space to internalist or externalist notions of rationality.

¹⁸ Note that I am not raising this as a knock-out argument against the framework theory. Instead, this is just to bring to light the kind of pressure

consist in a capitulation, more than a solution, to Pyrrhonian scepticism —which in itself is a rather bad result for any self-proclaimed anti-sceptical strategy. Even worse, this would give the sceptic a new way of reinstating scepticism of the external world —the one that targets justification and knowledge of everyday empirical beliefs¹⁹.

How so? Assume, with the Pyrrhonian sceptic, that a belief is justified only if it rests on a good ground (recall the Pyrrhonian Demand). This means that a belief B is rationally grounded only if it rests on some ground, G. As per the Pyrrhonian Desideratum, however, B won't ultimately be rationally grounded unless G itself rests on a good ground (G*). Iterating this reasoning (within the foundationalist structure the framework theorists endorse), we have that any everyday empirical belief is ultimately grounded on hinge propositions, which are, by definition, rationally unresponsive. Since the ultimate ground of any empirical belief is not rationally held, and since a belief ought to sit on solid ground in order to be rational, it follows that none of our empirical beliefs would be rationally grounded.

You can put it this way: the framework reading shares with foundationalism a picture of the rational validity of the system of our beliefs as flowing upstream from the rationality of its foundations. At the same time, however, since it is a *sui generis* form of foundationalism, it doesn't enjoy the resources available to standard foundationalist views for drawing rational force from basic justified beliefs —hinges are the ground, yes, but they are *not* rationally responsive. And from the groundlessness of hinges, nothing prevents one from inferring the groundlessness of all the beliefs resting on them, including ordinary empirical propositions about the external world.

proponents of this strategy are under, even if only *prima facie*, when it comes to addressing the Pyrrhonian challenge (see Coliva 2020, 12 for a similar argument). In what follows, I will show how different strands of hinge epistemology can be distinguished by the way they attempt to relieve this pressure (I should thank an anonymous reviewer for pushing me to clarify this).

¹⁹ This ensuing scepticism, which is embedded in The Central Challenge I introduce next, is what Coliva and Wright refer to as 'Humean scepticism'. In what follows, I keep the 'Pyrrhonian' terminology because what I am interested in is connecting the Humean worry to the original Pyrrhonian challenge it derives from.

This is a problem the framework theorist must avoid. I will call it ‘The Central Challenge’, and reconstruct it thus:

*The Central Challenge*²⁰

(P1) Hinges are the ultimate grounds of our belief system (*from commitment to the framework reading*)

(P2) For a belief to be rational, it must be possible to find a non-arbitrary ground capable of offering support that is not circular or leading to an infinite regress. (*from the Pyrrhonian Demand*)

(P3) Hinges are assumed without support, and are not themselves rationally grounded (*from commitment to the framework reading*).

★ Our beliefs are not rationally grounded

Since premise 1 and 3 come with acceptance of the framework reading, there are only two possible ways its proponents can address the Central Challenge: deny premise 2, and show that hinges can be rationally held, even if not in the way envisaged by the Pyrrhonian Demand; or deny the validity of the argument, and show how our belief system can be rationally valid despite the arationality of hinges. In the next sections I will address each option in turn.

§II.

EXTENDING RATIONALITY

Denying premise 2 allows proponents of the framework reading to respond to the problem by arguing that, despite being rationally unresponsive, and thus being in *this* sense arational, commitment to hinges is still *somehow* rationally compelling. But how exactly? One influential proposal to this effect has recently been defended in a series of influential works by Annalisa

²⁰ This problem has first been discussed by Wright (2004) as the ‘leaching problem’. I will have something to say about this problem in the final section.

Coliva (2015, 2016, 2020). The fundamental insight of her proposal is simple: instead of attempting to bring hinges under the received notion of epistemic rationality (by showing how they can be mediately or immediately justified), she argues that we should instead *extend the notion of rationality itself* to include hinges.

The idea, in a nutshell, is to take hinges to be rational*²¹ not because they draw their justification from other beliefs or from other facts, but in virtue of the role they play in the structure of our rational system. This role is often explained by analogy with rule-based games like chess: proponents of this strategy take hinge propositions to play a similar role to the one rules play in the game of chess—they are the instructions that make it possible to determine the practice of forming, assessing, and withdrawing ordinary empirical beliefs. The core insight Coliva draws from this analogy is that, like rules, which are a constitutive part of a game, hinges too are constitutive of our system of rational evaluation.

Following this line of thought, Coliva motivates a way of rethinking the notion of rationality to include—in addition to beliefs that *inherit* their justification status, mediately or immediately, from other beliefs or other facts—also those assumptions (read: hinges) that are *constitutive* of this practice—i.e., assumptions that “make justifications within inquiry possible in the first place” (2020, 15). In this way (i.e., by extending rationality to the very conditions of validity of our epistemic practices) proponents of the framework reading can arguably have their cake and eat it too: they can preserve the sense in which hinges lack evidential support (because they are non-evidential) while at the same time proposing a way hinges can still be considered rationally* held (that is, because they are constitutive of the notion of rationality itself)²². Because it does the former, the framework theorist is capable of retaining the advantage of their position

²¹ I have used the notation ‘rational*’ and ‘rationality*’ to refer to the extended use of the term by Coliva, and distinguish it from more ‘standard’ uses of the term. The precaution is adopted with a purely clarificatory intent.

²² Wouldn’t this undermine the “non-epistemicity” of the general framework reading? Given the special (or ‘extended’) sense of the term ‘rational’ in use here, they are not ‘epistemic’ in a way that undermines the Non Epistemicity Thesis, which concerns rationality, not rationality*.

with respect to the closure-based challenge; and because it does the latter, the Pyrrhonian regress can be blocked in a way that preserves the rationality* of the system as a whole.

If this is correct, and so long as one is disposed to endorse a suitable (i.e., constitutive) interpretation of the rationality* of hinges, then, this proposal seems to offer an elegant way out of the rational collapse threatened by the Central Challenge. But does it really? Here's Crispin Wright's reason to think it doesn't: if hinges lack evidential support, there must be no (rational) criterion to assess their 'objective correctness' —that is, our endorsement of hinges must be completely *arbitrary*²³ (Wright 2004, 205). And if hinge commitments are arbitrary, Wright notes,

“there will be no obstacle *in principle* to the idea of alternative, equally valid ways of conceiving the substance of the world [...]. What are the barriers to an entitlement to wood spirits, ectoplasm, gods and a plethora of existing but non-actual spatio-temporally unrelated concrete possible worlds?” (*ibidem*, my emphasis).

Let me explain. For Coliva, hinges are rational* because the very fact that we engage in epistemic practices of a certain kind tells us that there must be *some* set of rules in place that makes this epistemic activity possible in the first place. The question raised by Wright can thus be expressed like this: if that's so, how can we tell *which* rules one *should* be committed to? Wouldn't some epistemic practice work just as fine if one were committed to radically different hinges and incompatible with our own? Hinges rational unresponsiveness seems to rule out the possibility of finding a rationale for evaluating different sets of hinge commitments. Without a rationale, a criterion, however, *any* set of commitments would be *rationality on a par* —i.e., even systems based on bizarre, harmful or aberrant grounds (e.g., one committed to 'wood spirits, ectoplasm and gods').

²³ Ohlhorst (2023) identifies in the 'arbitrariness' of hinge commitments the root of the relativistic challenge engendered by the considerations Wright raises in this passage (which he refers to as 'the demarcation problem' (Wright 2004)).

The issue raised by Wright (what he refers to as ‘the problem of demarcation’) is a serious one, and one that, if unaddressed, leads proponents of this view to committing to an undesirable form of *extreme relativism* —i.e., a form of relativism licencing an unlimited number of self-warranting systems of thought that are equally rationally valid²⁴. My interest is in two aspects that make such extreme relativism epistemically problematic: first, the fact that it allows justification for *beliefs* we wouldn’t otherwise take to be justified; and second, the fact that it allows *basic*²⁵ *methods* for justifying beliefs that are intuitively problematic²⁶. Accordingly, a proponent of the framework reading who wants to resist the charge of relativism will have to explain two things: first, why it is not possible, according to their view, for the methods we use to justify our beliefs to justify different and incompatible beliefs; second, and related, why it is not possible for beliefs to be justified by different and unacceptable methods.

One way of doing the latter would be to argue that there is only one set of methods that can legitimately be used to rationalise beliefs, and it is our own. Why think so though? An obvious reason could be to say that any rational enquirer, like us, ultimately forms their beliefs on the basis of the deliverance of their senses or their rational faculties (Coliva 2015, 144; Boghossian 2006). But this seems to be misguided. Imagine a community of people whose everyday beliefs are grounded, for the most part, on information obtained by consulting celestial bodies²⁷. Their methods may well be not very reliable, and their beliefs may ultimately turn out to be unjustified. Still, their rational system, we can imagine, is roughly structured like ours: they, like us, search for

²⁴ Not all forms of relativism have the obvious problematic consequences of the extremist variety discussed here (see Kusch (2002, 2019), MacFarlane (2003) or (but this may be more controversial) Rorty (1979)). For useful mappings of relativism see also Boghossian 2006 and Coliva and Baghramian 2020.

²⁵ Coliva (2015) offers the following rough characterisation of what a basic method of justification is —i.e., a method that “is at the core of all human life given the kind of creatures we are”. More specifically, this will be the case when “it does not presuppose other instances of itself and is necessary for other epistemic practices”.

²⁶ For simplicity, I subsume ‘epistemic principles or rules’ (à la Boghossian 2006) under “basic methods”.

²⁷ Patently unreliable belief-forming methods are self-defeating (Wright 2004). But this need not be the case in this example —perhaps this community has unimaginably advanced knowledge of the universe.

reasons to support their beliefs, and are able to give them upon being asked. The only difference is that while we base our beliefs about the weather by looking at the sky, say, they do so by looking at the position of the planets. Why wouldn't it be possible to even conceive of some such community?

The framework theorists could respond by saying that consulting celestial bodies is not a *basic* method for justifying a belief (Coliva 2015, §4.4). Someone who relied on this method must have used *their eyes* to consult the planets, and possibly *infer* from what they saw following basic rules of logic (and the same would go for other funky practices as well). This, however, won't be entirely satisfactory either. For it doesn't follow, from the fact that some justificatory practices often function only if coupled with others, that they aren't epistemically basic. Testimony is made possible by the fact that we have eyes and ears to read and listen, but it would be quite of a stretch to draw from this the conclusion that testimony can be reduced to perception²⁸. When a person from a remote community comes to believe that they are going to have a bad Monday because their Jupiter is in Pluto, a truly nefarious occurrence, their belief is not justified by their having seen (or read) that it is so —or at least, not only: for they could have seen or read about Jupiter and still not formed the belief. What makes the belief justified for them is having learned about the position of Jupiter *coupled with* their taking astrology to be an adequate means for rationally forming their beliefs²⁹.

Still, a point could be made by the proponents of this strategy that, since perception is often a key ingredient for belief justification, members of this faraway community would not end up forming beliefs that are substantially different from our own, and so the relativist threat would not be a serious one. However, this may lead to an unjustifiably chauvinistic image of rational

²⁸ In the epistemology of testimony, reductionism and its denial, anti-reductionism, are hotly debated positions, and neither can be unreflectively taken to be true. For a useful introduction to the debate, see Nick Leonard's 2023 SEP entry on the "Epistemological Problems of Testimony".

²⁹ In fact, that different methods can be used to justify a belief is not just a possibility, but a reality (e.g., see Rorty's discussion of Galileo and Bellarmine disagreement on 'world systems' (1979)). A similar point is made also in Piedrahita (2021).

inquiry. For why think that all rational inquirers *ought to* be like us and justify beliefs the way we do? Wouldn't it be possible to at least *conceive of* alternative practices of epistemic inquiry? Wouldn't a God endowed with divine intuition, allowing her to grasp truths about her environment without the use of (humanoid) senses, count as a rational inquirer? And what of alien creatures? We could imagine aliens (who may as well be, all in all, ultimately not that different from us) who enjoy a felicitous attunement with their environment, so much so that facts that are relevant for them in a particular circumstance would cause them to form (defeasibly) true beliefs about them. What could a proponent of the framework reading do to block this line of thought?

So much then for epistemic practices intended as *the methods* by which we justify our beliefs. Now, what about the possibility that the same methods justify different and incompatible beliefs? Could (say) my perceptual experience as of a cup justify not only ordinary beliefs about the presence of that cup but also, say, the sceptical belief about the mere appearance of a cup? Presumably, the answer to this question will depend on one's preferred view about perceptual justification. One option then could be to pick and defend a strongly externalist view of perceptual justification that understands perception as a reliable process that puts us in direct contact with the world. This view would have the advantage of ruling out the possibility that some odd beliefs (different and incompatible to beliefs we ourselves form via perception) could be perceptually justified. This might seem quite *ad hoc*, but theoretically feasible.

A problem with this, however, is that framework theorists take hinge commitments to play a central role with respect to the justificatory status of individual beliefs. Recall that, independently of one's preferred internalist or externalist constraints on justification, framework theorists take hinges as the condition of possibility for justification. Referring to perceptual justification in particular, for example, Coliva writes that:

[p]erceptual [...] warrants depend for their obtainment on two ingredients: an experience with a given phenomenal and representational content *together with the assumption of some very general proposition*, such as ‘There is an external world’, ‘My sense organs are generally reliable’ [...] and possibly other ones’. (Coliva 2013, 249) (my emphasis).

The idea then is that, irrespectively of the particular view (in this case, of perception) adopted by the framework theorist, what can be justified will ultimately depend on the hinges one is committed to. Imagine you have an experience as of a cup in front of you. For this experience to provide justification (a perceptual warrant) for the belief that there is a cup, it must be the case that one is *also* assuming that there is an external world out there made out of, among other things, that very cup one sees in front of them —and possibly that they aren’t radically deceived too —or so the thought goes. If one *didn’t* assume these very general propositions (if one were committed to the thought that, say, perception is a grand illusion) then one would *not* have justification for that belief but, perhaps, *another* radically different and incompatible one —say, that there is a very elaborated virtual reconstruction of a cup in your head.

The anti-relativist gambit of proponents of this view consists in the naturalist strategy of showing how our system of rational evaluation is *de facto* unique³⁰. They do this either by arguing that alternative basic methods are not available, or that communities holding radically different beliefs would ultimately have a system of beliefs not radically different from our own. If I’m right, however, it seems implausible to think that there is anything *unique* about our system of thought. Most importantly, however, even if this were *actually* the case, this line of argument hardly suffices to quiet the worry that other radically different and incompatible rational systems could not be

³⁰ Coliva is not the only one to have attempted this. Although I don’t have the space here to discuss other strategies in detail, I wanted to mention two that I have found particularly promising —Ohlhorst’s ‘virtuous hinge trust’ (2023), and Zanetti’s ‘inescapable hinges’ (2021).

possible at least *in principle*. This, recall, is precisely the crux of the extreme relativistic worry that, given a conception of hinge commitments that are rational* but unresponsive to reasons, “there will be no obstacle *in principle* to the idea of alternative, equally valid ways of conceiving the substance of the world” (Wright 2004, 206, my emphasis).

The key intuition of this strategy is that the structure of our rational practices mandates that *some* propositions must be taken for granted. From this, it would indeed be tempting to infer that the propositions that are to be taken for granted must necessarily coincide with our fundamental commitments (i.e., that there is an external world, that we are not radically deceived and so on). The transcendental consideration that we engage in particular epistemic practices, like that of giving and asking for reasons, however, concerns the *structure* of epistemic evaluations —what Wittgenstein calls “the logic of our investigations”³¹. Precisely because it concerns its logic, however, this view is by its very nature neutral with respect to the content of the system thus constituted. We *can*, in fact, come up with radically different thought-systems with a structure similar to our own —and we can do that quite easily. Think for instance of a community —call them Bostromians— whose members, perhaps seduced by Elon Musk’s own endorsement of Bostrom’s simulation theory³², have come to accept that the reality we live in is a computer simulation. What’s interesting about Bostromians is that, when presented with chair-like objects, they don’t tend to form beliefs about chair-looking physical objects but about, say, mere appearances of a chair (or about ‘virtual’ chairs). Like us, Bostromians would go about in their everyday epistemic business forming beliefs about things around them, and upon being questioned, they would give the same perceptual or testimonial reasons we would also give. Only, they would take themselves to be surrounded by ‘virtual’ objects, products of an elaborate

³¹ Coliva’s move is inspired by the following often quoted passage of Wittgenstein’s *On Certainty*: “That is to say, it belongs to the *logic of our scientific investigations* that certain things are indeed not doubted.” (OC 341) (emphasis added).

³² This, alas, belongs to the oddities of our actual world (<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/apr/19/oxford-future-of-humans-institute-closes>). I wish to thank an anonymous referee for pointing this out, and for suggesting to re-think this passage in light of this (sad) news story.

simulation, created by a super-intelligent computer and fed to us (we can suppose) through something like a Matrix-style brain implant. Is it possible to imagine this within the constraints of this view? I don't see why not. On the contrary, the framework theorist doesn't seem to be in a position to explain how such beliefs could not be justified.

If this is right, then, and despite attempts by proponents of this strategy to argue for the *de facto* uniqueness of our epistemic practices, the point has not gone away that their view exposes itself to the *in principle* arbitrariness of the rational* basis of our system of rational evaluation. And to the extent that this arbitrariness, as I have shown, engenders an undesirable form of *extreme* relativism, the framework theorist's putative merits in dealing with the Central Challenge are thereby also put in jeopardy.

§III.

SURRENDERING TO THE ANGST

Recall the Central Challenge: on the one hand, we have the Pyrrhonian Demand that, in order to be rational, a belief must be supported by another fact or a belief. On the other hand, we have the framework theorist's commitment to a *sui generis* foundationalism according to which a belief's chain of support ultimately bottoms down on a set of fixed propositions that lack evidential support. The Central Challenge then asks how we can preserve the rationality of our belief system if its validity rests on the rationality of its grounds.

In the previous section, I've looked at an attempt to steer clear of the problem by questioning the Pyrrhonian Demand and argue that there are other ways in which beliefs (and, in particular, hinges) can be said to enjoy some kind of rational standing (i.e., by being constitutive of rationality). But that move appears to lend itself to a characterisation of rationality that is relativistic in a bad way. So what else can the framework theorist do to avoid the Central Challenge?

Another option could be to endorse the Pyrrhonian Demand, admit that, ultimately, our rational system *is* groundless, but at the same time resist the temptation to conclude from this that our everyday empirical beliefs are not justified³³. After all, the idea goes, if we could preserve the rationality of (nearly) all empirical beliefs *individually*, the arationality of our belief system *as a whole* wouldn't pose that much of a Challenge, would it?

Maybe. But how so? One option could be to distinguish between two ways of rationally evaluating a system of beliefs: a summative and a non-summative one. Summative rational evaluation would take the rationality of the belief system *taken as a whole* to be tightly connected to the rationality of the *individual beliefs* that constitute the system —such that, quite roughly, the system would be rational if all (or most) beliefs that constitute the system are themselves rational. Non-summativism about rational evaluation, on the other hand, would simply deny the summative claim and decouple the rationality of the system from the rationality of the individual beliefs.

The interesting thing about this distinction is that it makes it possible (if one is disposed to endorse non-summativism about rational evaluation) to conceive of a belief system that, while being non-rational when considered *as a whole* (say, due to the fact that it sits on arational grounds), is nonetheless constituted by a series of perfectly rational beliefs. According to Pritchard, this result is, in fact, a natural consequence of the framework theorist's commitment to Locality³⁴. Because hinges are exempt from epistemic appraisal, any attempt to ground ordinary empirical beliefs on them is doomed to failure in a similar way in which the sceptic's attempt to infer the lack of groundedness of our everyday empirical beliefs from the lack of groundedness of the denial of sceptical hypotheses is also, from a hinge theoretical point of view, fundamentally

³³ One may worry that this move will raise relativistic worries again. Here I'll put this worry aside, since I believe this particular variation of the framework reading raises new and interesting problems of its own.

³⁴ The notion of 'uber-hinge' (2015, 95) also plays an important role in motivating this move, in that it allows Pritchard to identify a set of hinge commitments underwriting the system as a whole, and which function as a wholesale foundation for all our beliefs.

misguided. For Pritchard, this is what commitment to an image of rational evaluation as *local* entails —i.e., it entails that the rational validity of our empirical beliefs does not flow upwards all the way from the very bottom of the system (i.e., from hinges) but, say, from other, more ‘local’ sources of support³⁵ —or so at least the thought would go.

If this is correct, then, it could be possible to solve the Central Challenge by endorsing non-summativism about rational evaluation and reject the connection between the lack of groundedness of our belief system and that of our individual beliefs and argue that, although hinges’ arationality *does* ultimately undermine the rational validity of the system taken as a whole, *provided one had good reasons for them individually*, each and every individual belief could still be rationally grounded.

Will this strategy be successful? I don’t think so, and here’s briefly why: according to non-summativism, at a local level —i.e., when considering the rational standing of some everyday belief— the rational standing of a belief (about, say, the fact that the moon is full) must be independent of the ultimate ground on which it stands (according to the framework theorist, the hinge that, say, we are not radically deceived in our perceptual judgements). In other words, it must be only the local perceptual reason (say, that I see that the moon is full) that rationalises the belief. However, as per classical sceptical scenarios, we can conjure a situation in which an epistemic subject is in the exactly same internal state as ours but, unluckily, finds themselves in an epistemically ‘bad’ environment —they could be a brain in a vat, for instance³⁶. Arguably, then, all their perception can justify is, at best, beliefs about appearances —such as that it *looks to them as though* the moon were full. However, if this is plausible, whichever rational support we (in the good case) have for our belief is also available to the subject in the bad case (since, by stipulation, the two subjects are internally identical). But if the evidence in the two cases is the same, and it

³⁵ Here is a passage where Pritchard attempts to motivate just this thought: “[t]ake my putative rationally grounded knowledge that the car I drive is dark blue. That this is so”, he claims, “is entirely compatible with my being radically and fundamentally in error in my beliefs” (2015, 98).

³⁶ This problem is typically discussed in the literature as the New Evil Demon problem (see Cohen 1984).

can at most justify beliefs about appearances, how can we claim to have evidence for the ordinary belief that there *is* a full moon today (and not the mere appearance of one)? More exactly, this point can be made by relying on the following:

Underdetermination Principle (UP): If one cannot have favouring support³⁷ for P over Q (where P and Q describe incompatible alternatives), then one is not justified in believing that P.

In this case, the underdetermination principle can be employed to show that, since the evidence locally available to a subject in the good scenario (us) is the same as that available to a subject in the bad scenario, and the latter can only justify appearance beliefs, then there is no evidence available to us that can favour our empirical belief about the moon over, say, the belief that there is only the appearance of a full moon. For each and every individual empirical belief, then, a new form of radical scepticism about the external world ensue:

External-World Sceptical Argument from Underdetermination

(P1) We do not have favouring reason for P over Q

(P2) If one cannot have favouring support for P over Q (where P and Q describe incompatible alternatives), then one is not justified in believing P

★ I am not justified in believing P

In response, it could be pointed out that the soundness of the argument threads on an internalist conception of local support. Consider the following:

³⁷ For more on the notion of “favouring support”, as opposed to that of “discriminating support”, see Prichard (2012).

Sameness of Evidence Lemma (SEL) A subject's perceptual evidence (e) is compatible with the obtaining of sceptical scenarios (SH) where e is false.

The plausibility of this lemma rests on a broadly internalist notion of evidence, whereby evidence supervenes exclusively on facts internal to the subject (namely, on the subject's mental states). If this is true, since externalist evidence isn't available to the subject in the bad scenario, it would suffice to replace the notion of evidence at play in this case with an externalist one to get rid of SEL, and with it the problem that triggers the underdetermination principle.

Notice however that not any kind of externalist notion of evidence will do (if any), as the framework theorist is under some pressure to accept *at least some* internalist constraint on the notion of justification. This is because not doing so would undermine a strong motivation for the view itself. If you recall, the framework theorists promised to offer a charitable response to scepticism capable of bringing internalism home safe and, possibly, of carving out a sceptic-free conception of *internalist* rational support (no less). Following Bergmann (2006), then, a minimal internalistic requirement for this strategy could be phrased as follows:

Subjective Condition Demand (SCD): In order for X to count as that which contributes to the rationalisation of a belief B for subject S, it ought to be the case that X's role (as that which contributes to the rationalisation of B) depends in some important way on S's internal subjective perspective,

where the fact that X 'depends in some important way' on the S's subjective perspective is what makes X an *internalistically* conceived reason. With this requirement in place, we can then formulate a new underdetermination principle that embeds this demand in the following way:

UP_{SCD} If one cannot have internalistically conceived favouring support for P over Q (where P and Q describe incompatible alternatives), then one is not justified (in an internalistic way) in believing that P³⁸.

Naturally, UP_{SCD} licences the construction of a sceptical challenge similar to the one above, and one that the framework theorists cannot ignore, given their commitment to SCD. Notice however how SCD (and consequently UP_{SCD} as well) is compatible with the idea that some other, non-internalist reason may play a role in supporting our ordinary beliefs. That's precisely what makes it a minimal requirement: so long as it is possible to reserve some space for internalistically conceived reasons, the SCD is happy to concede, that'll do.

This may be good news, for it seems to open the door to the possibility of combining together externalist and internalist strategies for epistemic justification. Imagine for instance we could have externalist support that was also rationally grounded: being externalist, it would elude the sameness of evidence lemma by granting favouring support to epistemic agents in the good case that wouldn't be available to those in the bad case. Being rationally grounded, on the other hand, it would guarantee that this favouring support is also cashed out in internalist-friendly terms, thus offering the kind of response to the sceptic that the framework theorist is committed to giving. In his book *Epistemic Angst* (2016), Duncan Pritchard motivates precisely one such idea by embedding it in his disjunctivist treatment of underdetermination-based radical scepticism. According to Pritchard's epistemological disjunctivism, agents in the good and bad cases do not possess the same evidence because perception in the good case provides them with *reflectively accessible factive support* —namely, a kind of externalistically conceived support that the perceiver can also access reflectively.

³⁸ Pritchard (2016, 29)

But how does this work more precisely? Recall that the SCD asks that our individual empirical beliefs are *also* supported by internalistically conceived reasons. For this strategy to work, then, it must be the case that the support enjoyed by my empirical belief (say, the belief that *p*: “there is a tree in front of me”) isn’t provided only by local external facts (like, say, that “I see *p*”) but also by some other internalist condition. One straightforward way of satisfying this requirement (and the one Pritchard proposes) is to cash out this internalistically conceived condition in simple access internalist terms. Roughly, according to access internalism one is justified in believing *p* if one can have reflective access to one’s basis for believing that *p*. Overall, then, according to this strategy, in paradigmatic cases of perception we can have local support of our empirical beliefs because: (1) we have a factive reason for them —namely, the fact that we *see that p*, which entails the truth of *p*—, and (2) we have reflective access to this factive reason that satisfies the internalist condition.

Combining these requirements in a coherent disjunctivist view of epistemic justification has proven to be exceptionally difficult³⁹. In what follows, however, I want argue that *even if* epistemological disjunctivism *were* capable of offering the kind of hybrid support that is needed to satisfy the minimal internalist requirement and reject SEL, it would not be able, as part of the broader anti-sceptical programme proposed by the framework theorist, to avoid the view’s relapse into scepticism.

To see this, take a closer look at the access requirement in (2). A natural way to conceive of reflective access is in terms of a subject’s awareness of an object (read: a fact, a reason) *as* something that is relevant to or contributes to the justification of the relevant belief. The reason for this is clear, and I take it is part of what motivates this strand of internalism about epistemic justification in the first place —roughly, the thought that reasons are precisely those things that we can conceive of as *that which justifies our beliefs*⁴⁰. Following Bergmann (2006), let’s call this

³⁹ Critics of epistemic disjunctivism include: Fratantonio (2019), Zalabardo (2015), Ashton (2015), Ranalli (2014), Dennis (2014) and Ghijsen (2015).

⁴⁰ Here I use ‘conceive of’ rather liberally, as broadly synonymical to ‘be aware of’, and encompassing both conceptual/nonconceptual and

version of access internalism *strong access internalism*. According to a strong access internalist version of epistemological disjunctivism, then, claim (2) ought to be understood as maintaining that when we have reflective access to a factive reason for p , we have reflective access to this reason *as a basis* for our belief that p .

The problem with strong access internalism is that it is vulnerable to generating familiar Pyrrhonian worries. How so? By the light of strong access internalism, in order to count as a reason for my believing that p , the factive support that “I see that p ”, must be coupled with my awareness of it *as a basis* for my belief that p . But naturally, my awareness of this factive support is itself susceptible to being evaluated with respect to its justification status⁴¹. For how can I be sure (say) that this awareness is genuine, and I am not confused? Or: how can I rule out the possibility that I wasn’t utterly irrational or insane in conceiving of that support as a basis for my belief? Crucially, answers to this question will have to meet the standard imposed by the Pyrrhonian Demand —i.e., not be arbitrary, circular, or leading to an infinite regress. Can proponents of this strategy satisfy the demand?

I think we should give a negative answer to this question. For what would a good ground look like in this case? On the one hand, proponents of this strategy cannot appeal to hinges, for this would establish a direct grounding relationship between individual empirical beliefs and hinges, which would undermine their commitment to a non-summativist view of hinges’ foundational role. On the other hand, however, nothing short of hinges would do. For suppose some relevant non-hinge belief could somehow stand up to the Pyrrhonian demand. Even if this was possible (and it would be indeed rather puzzling if it *were* possible) this would not be a good result, since it would undercut the framework theory’s core anti-sceptical insight about hinges’ role as ‘regress stoppers’.

doxastic/non-doxastic connotations. For a more nuanced discussion, see Bergmann (2006).

⁴¹ Note that this is independent of doxastic or non-doxastic conceptions of ‘awareness’. For a more detailed discussion see Bergmann (2006).

So maybe the proponent of this strategy may want to opt for a weaker form of access internalism, one that need not commit to *conceiving* (whether conceptually or not) of the factive support *as* relevant to the justification of the belief. That is, they could endorse *weak access internalism*⁴² and reject the claim that one's awareness of that which justifies a belief ought necessarily to involve that one *conceives* of it *as* that which does that job. In this way, they could retain the intuition that subjects have *some* conception of the factive support for their belief that *p*, while at the same time blocking the emergence of the Pyrrhonian worry by leaving the entirety of the 'justificatory work' in the hands of the (externalistically conceived) factive reason.

The obvious problem for framework theorists that choose this strategy, however, is that the thought motivating strong access internalism constitutes a main advantage of internalist views of justification compared to externalist ones, and the crucial motivation for imposing an awareness requirement in the first place. For weak access internalists, someone who bases their belief that *p* on good grounds, since they are not aware of such ground *as a basis* for that belief, would be in the same subjective state concerning the status of their belief as a subject for whom the justifiedness of their belief may as well be *a mere accident*. Naturally, however, this clashes with the hinge epistemologists' commitment to the subjective condition demand, according to which something counts as an internalistically conceived reason only if it depends in some important way on S's internal subjective perspective. Clearly, if weak access internalism is compatible with someone being completely in the dark about the role of the accessed belief as a justifier, there is no way (let alone 'important') in which S's justification can be said to depend on S's own subjective perspective.

The minimal internalist requirement is supposed to pick out a condition no internalism can give up without undermining some key motivating reasons for their view⁴³. Even if this

⁴² See Moser (1985, 1989) and Fumerton (1995)

⁴³ Bergman proposes a similar argument with the intent to undermine weak access internalism *in general*. The claim I make here is weaker, since it only concerns the extent to which commitment to the SCD is something that gives internalism an advantage over competing theories of epistemic justification (rather than being a necessary condition)

wasn't a *conditio sine qua non* for epistemic internalism, it does constitute an important insight one should not want to give up too easily. A main selling point of the framework reading is that it promises to offer a solution to scepticism that is charitable precisely because it doesn't sacrifice key internalist insights that put internalist theories of epistemic justification in a position of advantage over externalist ones. By adopting a weak version of access internalism, proponents of this strategy give up precisely one of these benefits, thus undermining what motivated the main appeal of the hinge project in the first place.

In conclusion then, framework theorists who choose to rely on the virtues of epistemological disjunctivism in order to steer clear of the underdetermination-based sceptical worry without giving up the minimal internalist requirement are confronted with two infelicitous alternatives: endorse strong access internalism and face the same Pyrrhonian puzzle they attempted to escape, or opt for weak access internalism, and undermine what motivated the choice of their strategy in the first place.

CODA

The main appeal of hinge epistemology is the fact that it purports to offer a unitary solution to scepticism without sacrificing fundamental internalistic insights about the nature of justification. If I am right, however, the two most prominent formulations of the framework reading fail to deliver their promise. The strategy of 'extending rationality', championed by Annalisa Coliva, may be able to successfully salvage an internalist conception of justification, but it does so at the cost of committing to a radically relativistic structure of rational evaluation. The strategy of 'surrendering to the angst', on the other hand, championed by Duncan Pritchard, may be able to provide some solace from one formulation of the sceptical threat, but only at the cost of renouncing key internalist insights about epistemic justification. Since this was a major advantage

of the framework theory compared to competing anti-sceptical strategies, however, this strategy ends up undermining a crucial motivation for the view itself.

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