

Review of: "Either you know or you've gotta believe"

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Gruber's paper questions an assumption usually made in standard analysis of knowledge, namely that knowledge entails belief. She calls this thesis, following common usage, the entailment thesis. Moreover, Gruber contends that these notions are mutually exclusive, in the sense that someone cannot know what she believes and vice versa. The author combines the views of philosophers who have criticized the entailment thesis and proposed alternative views on knowledge and belief, like Myers-Schulz and Schwitzgebel, Murray, Stysma and Livengood, and Bernard Williams. She thusly arrives at a view according to which belief is a more complex notion than knowledge: while belief would require consistency in our thoughts and actions, an attitude of mental assent or the possibility to freely choose not to express one's belief or even to lie, knowledge would only require having true information and the absence of the conditions for belief, or at least the absence of sufficient conditions for belief (otherwise, the two notions would not be mutually exclusive). By the end of the paper, Gruber appeals to Frank Ramsey's work on decision making in order to defend a view that explains all these features that belief would have by linking it to action. According to this view, belief requires to act on the believed content while knowledge does not require to act on the information known, and mental assent should be understood as this requirement to act on the assented content.

To question the entailment thesis, Gruber mainly appeals to hypothetical cases presented by Myers-Schulz and Schwitzgebel on one hand, and Murray, Stysma and Livengood on the other, and to the intuitions these cases elicit on us and on many people not trained in philosophy who were consulted. For instance, Myers-Schulz and Schwitzgebel present a case where a student, Kate, is taking a history exam that she has studied many hours for. She is about to answer the last question when the teacher tells the class that the exam will be over in one minute. Kate gets nervous and answers the last question in a rush, without being sure whether her answer is correct. As it happens, the answer is correct and she learned it when studying for the exam. Most of the people consulted by Myers-Schulz and Schwitzgebel had the intuition that Kate knew the answer despite not believing in it. Thus, this hypothetical case casts doubt over the entailment thesis.

To be sure, Gruber's case against this thesis and in favor of her view is not only made by means of the previous cases, but also by considering the problems that the traditional analysis of knowledge as justified true belief has faced since Gettier's cases, and the possibility of giving an alternative unified account of belief and knowledge based on the philosophers we have mentioned.

I think the paper succeeds in casting doubt over the entailment thesis and in showing the availability of an alternative account of knowledge and belief that rejects this thesis. This in itself is a relevant contribution, given that the just mentioned thesis is widely accepted. I have, however, two concerns about the alternative account put forward by

Gruber, and a concern with an assumption possibly made by Gruber and other authors who conduct conceptual analysis.

To begin with, while the hypothetical cases Gruber mentions do question the truth of the entailment thesis, they do not support the thesis that knowledge and belief are mutually exclusive (let us call it *the exclusion thesis*). For instance, in the case of the student Kate, we would only have the intuition that knowledge can occur without belief, and so that the entailment thesis is false. Gruber mentions two authors who defend the exclusion thesis, namely Thomas Aquinas and Cook Wilson. According to Aquinas, knowledge would come from perception, memory or induction, while belief does not. In turn, for Cook, belief involves a decision to accept a given content, while knowledge does not. In the context of the paper, these two views do not lend support to Gruber's view on belief and knowledge. Aquinas's view is a particular one that does not accord with Gruber's view, which, as we saw, treats knowledge as simply having true information. In turn, Cook's view does have a connection to Gruber's thesis that belief, unlike knowledge, involves an attitude of mental assent. Be that as it may, in the paper Cook's view is presented but not argumentatively defended.

In the second place, I think that the relation between knowledge and action that Gruber sketches by the end of the paper needs to be further explained, since, as it stands, gives rise to the following concern. Gruber holds that belief, unlike knowledge requires action, while also acknowledging that both are somehow linked to action. So, the difference seems to be that while belief *necessarily* leads to certain actions -insofar as the conditions for doing these actions are satisfied- knowledge does not. I think that there are counter-examples to this way of understanding the link between knowledge and action. According to Gruber, knowledge would consist in having true information without sufficient conditions for belief. Now, suppose that I casually read a sign telling that the emergency exit of the building where I am is in a certain place. Let us assume that I know this information by merely having it available in my mind. I take it that, if I had that information somehow available in my mind and there was a fire that puts my life at risk, I would necessarily act on this information and run towards the emergency exit. Similarly, in the case of student Kate, it seems that having the information for the last answer of her exam makes her necessarily act on it when the teacher tells the class that the exam will be over in one minute. Hence, I suspect that the thesis that knowledge does not require action is problematic, because there are situations where it appears that, if one has the information available in one's mind and the capacity to act on it, one would necessarily act on it.

Finally, Gruber, as well as other philosophers, seems to assume that a single intuitive or pre-theoretical concept of knowledge or belief is expressed in (almost) all contexts where the words "know" or "believe", as well as their derivatives, are used. I think that this assumption is dubious and, if it is made, it should be justified. We could even hold that what it takes for a concept to be intuitive is context sensitive, so that in the context of, say, a mathematical analysis the notion to be elucidated and that is taken to be intuitive or pre-theoretical can be an already quite precise one. Following this line of thought, we could hold that there are concepts of knowledge and belief that are at the same time part of the analytical philosophical tradition and intuitive, in the sense of not being part of a particular theory of knowledge and belief. To be sure, these notions could be incoherent or somehow defective, and may deserve to be changed for others. And to this end, it could be useful to compare them to other related intuitive notions expressed in other contexts. Thus, I wonder whether the task carried out by Gruber in her paper, where evidence of how "know" and "belief" are used is gathered from

different contexts, should be described as a conceptual analysis, as she suggests, or only as a proposal to reform some traditional concepts from analytic philosophy. A reform that, to be sure, could appeal to the analysis of intuitive concepts taken from other non-philosophical contexts.