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Introduction

- Comments:

- *Discuss which definition to choose as a starting point.*
- *Suggest that the inferentialist schemata are too coarse-grained to be unequivocally applied to cases. Other cases seem to suggest that which account of justification is adopted affects whether there is delusion or not according to the schema.*
- *Question whether strongly held collective beliefs ought to be considered as delusions.*
- *Place doubt on the claim that whether a belief is a delusion depends on perspective from which it is judged.*

Section One: Delusions

- Delusion in DSM-IV (2000, p. 765):
 - *A **false belief** based on incorrect inference about external reality that is firmly sustained despite what almost everyone else believes and despite what constitutes incontrovertible and obvious proof or evidence to the contrary. The belief is not one ordinarily accepted by other members of the person's culture or subculture (e.g., it is not an article of religious faith). When a false belief involves a value judgment, it is regarded as a delusion only when the judgment is so extreme as to defy credibility. [...]*
- Definition of delusion in DSM-5 (2013, p. 87):
 - *Delusions are **fixed beliefs** that are not amenable to change in light of conflicting evidence. Their content may include a variety of themes (e.g., persecutory, referential, somatic, religious, grandiose). [...] The distinction between a delusion and a strongly held idea is sometimes difficult to make and depends in part on the degree of conviction with which the belief is held despite clear or reasonable contradictory evidence regarding its veracity.*
- No requirement of falsehood in DSM-5
- The issue of **truth does not necessarily in the focus** in a discussion of delusion.

Section Two: Inferentialism

- **Schemata:**

Standard: attribute commitment and entitlement to p , and can either acknowledge commitment to p or not.

Delusion: we attribute commitment to p , but do not attribute entitlement to p , and we do not acknowledge commitment.

- **Caveat:** If a concept of delusion is to be useable in psychiatry, it should not be overly inclusive.

Section Two: Inferentialism

■ ANNE

Anne thinks that vaccines are highly dangerous. She has formed this belief on the basis of viewing Youtube videos. Mary confronts Ann with scientific papers that argue that vaccines are safe. Anne refuses to read the research and is unwilling to readjust her belief in response. She says that scientists are often liars, paid off by pharmaceutical companies.

- *While Anne's belief is problematic, beliefs like this are not generally recognized as a delusions. (and perhaps shouldn't, especially if we accept the caveat).*
- *Not clear that Anne is justified in her belief, so not clear that she can be attributed entitlement.*
- *Anne might turn out delusional according to the schema.*

Section Two: Inferentialism

■ BRITTA

Britta has consistent hallucinations that she is being followed by government agents. She forms the belief that the government is after her. She is not willing to change her belief in response to other people telling her that she is not being followed.

- *She seems like a candidate for persecution delusion.*
- *Not clear that Britta is not justified in her belief (at least on internalist conception of justification). She might be justified. So she might be attributed entitlement.*
- *Britta might turn out not to have a delusion according to the schema.*

Section Two: Inferentialism

- The inferentialist schema might overgenerate delusion.
- What schema applies to which case seems to depend on which conception of justification we adopt.

Section Three: Perspectives and Delusional Communities

- Are religious beliefs really delusions?
- Are all beliefs that are irrational (from someone's perspective) delusions?
- A notion this inclusive might be unusable for psychiatric purposes.
- Suggestion: sharply distinguish between strong collectively held beliefs (e.g. dogmatic beliefs) and delusions.

Section Three: Perspectives and Delusional Communities

- Claim: which beliefs are delusional depends on perspective.
 - *The scientologists are deluded from Alpha's perspective.*
 - *Alpha is deluded from the scientologists' perspective.*
- Crucial difference: Alpha appropriately responsive to evidence, scientologists not.
- How an epistemic agent ought to respond to evidence does not depend on perspectives.
- Plausible assumption: testimony can only justify a belief if there are no undefeated defeaters – evidence that contradicts it (such as untrustworthiness, bad reasoning skills, conflict with other types of evidence). (cf Lackey 2006)
- There are defeaters for Ron's testimony, so beliefs based on his testimony are not justified, independently of perspective.

Section Three: Perspectives and Delusional Communities

- Ron's followers do not change their beliefs in response to defeaters (e.g. Alpha's arguments, evidence from perception and memory), so they are not appropriately responsive to evidence.
- Alpha does not base his beliefs on Ron's words, which are defeated by other evidence.
- Since Alpha is responsive to evidence, he is not deluded.
- It is a further question whether scientologists are deluded.
- Suggestion: clear distinction between "being delusional" and "seeming to be delusional from a perspective"



THANK YOU!

References

- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-5®)*. American Psychiatric Pub.
- Lackey, Jennifer (2006). Knowing from testimony. *Philosophy Compass* 1 (5):432–448.