

HOW TO ARGUE FOR BELIEF-CREDENCE DUALISM

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1. INTRODUCTION

Five views of the relationship between belief and credence:

Questions:	Belief-eliminativism	Credence-first	Dualism	Belief-first	Credal-eliminativism
1) Belief exists?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2) Belief reduces to credence?	---	Yes	No	No	---
3) Credence reduces to belief?	---	No	No	Yes	---
4) Credence exists?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Credence-first splits into two further views:

- **Belief-is-credence-1:** Belief is credence 1.
- **Threshold view:** Belief is credence above some threshold less than 1.

Goal: to argue for dualism based on the functional roles of belief and credence.

2. NARROWING OUR FOCUS

Against belief-eliminativism: requires an extensive error theory about commonsense psychology and much of everyday discourse.

Against credal-eliminativism: we are more confident in some things we believe than in others.

Against belief-is-credence-1:

- Standard objections:
 - Intuitive counterexamples.
 - Conflict with decision theory; standard responses requires context-sensitivity about belief.
- Newer objection: Belief-is-credence-1 views undermine motivations for positing credences in the first place.

3. REDUCTIONISM

Aside: reduction as identity, supervenience, or grounding?

Two remaining reductionist views:

- **Belief-First:** Credences are beliefs with particular contents, e.g. epistemic probability- or epistemic modal-beliefs.
 - **Belief-First challenge** (Moon and Jackson 2020): if we have beliefs about probabilities, why would we need credences?
- **Threshold view:** Belief reduces to credence above some threshold < 1 .
 - **Bayesian challenge** (Kaplan 1996): if we have both a belief in p and a credence in p , what use is the belief? The credence is more accurate and fine-grained; this suggests belief is either superfluous or inaccurate.

4. AGAINST THE BELIEF-FIRST VIEW

Counterexample from **irrational** thinkers: suppose S is irrational. It's not clear what prevents S from having a credence that is out of step with her probabilistic or modal beliefs.

Answering the Belief-First Challenge:

Roles for probability-belief: cognitively thicker	Roles for credence: cognitively thinner
Useful when undergoing certain types of probabilistic reasoning (Staffel 2013).	Creatures lacking concepts or cognitive capacities required for probability-beliefs can have credences (Frankish 2009).
<i>Rational</i> credence may closely track epistemic probability.	Creatures who cannot form the relevant probability belief (because, e.g. it is too complex to grasp) can have credences.
Flexibility: Note that it may sometimes be useful to form different beliefs about different conceptions of probability (e.g. I know the objective probability of p is either 1 or 0, but the epistemic probability of p is 0.5).	Allows one to be uncertain without having to represent that uncertainty in the <i>content</i> of the attitude, so one can have a belief and a credence in the same proposition.

5. AGAINST THE THRESHOLD VIEW

Counterexample from **irrational** thinkers: certain cases of doublemindedness, self-deception, and akrasia are best explained by dualists (Jackson and Tan forthcoming).

Answering the Bayesian Challenge:

Roles for belief: closing off possibilities	Roles for credence: leaving possibilities open
Rules out the possibility of not-p, and not simply in a "let's pretend that p" way, but a mental, representational ruling-out.	A high credence in p represents p as likely, but leaves open the possibility of not-p.
Efficiency: We cannot consider every error possibility relevant to our reasoning, so beliefs let us rule out possibilities and simplify our reasoning (Staffel 2019).	Precise and accurate representation of our evidence; they track one's exact level of evidential support.
Intuitively, cognitively sophisticated agents have beliefs, too. This suggests that closing off possibilities isn't just useful for simplification: it lets us take a stand (Ross & Schroeder 2014). In this, we can remain steadfast in our commitments, even when we receive counterevidence against them (Buchak 2014, 2021).	Help us keep track of counterevidence: a role belief cannot play when the non-decisive counterevidence does not warrant a change in belief.

6. SUMMING UP: A POSITIVE VIEW

Two main goals: (1) to carve out a unique role for credence, that beliefs cannot play, i.e. a cognitively less-demanding way to represent uncertainty and (2) to carve out a unique role for belief, that credence cannot play, and in this, unify the two motivations for dualism into a fundamental role for belief, i.e. believing p closes off the possibility of not-p when p is uncertain.

Two outstanding objections regarding (2):

- Objection 1: why not acceptance?
- Objection 2: when do we act on our belief in p, as opposed to our credence in p?