

Eugene Chislenko

Moore's Paradox and Akratic Belief

Draft; final version in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*

92:3 (May 2016), pp. 669-90

Abstract: G.E. Moore noticed the oddity of statements like: "It's raining, but I don't believe it." This oddity is often seen as analogous to the oddity of believing akratically, or believing what one believes one should not believe, and has been appealed to in denying the possibility of akratic belief. I describe a Belief Akratic's Paradox, analogous to Moore's Paradox and centered on sentences such as: "I believe it's raining, but I shouldn't believe it." I then defend the possibility of akratic belief against appeals to this analogy, arguing both that akratic belief does not require belief-akratic-paradoxical belief, and that the latter is importantly different from Moorean belief. I conclude by considering the implications of these arguments for an understanding of both Moorean and akratic belief.

I. Introduction

Akratic action and intention have an analogue in belief. *Akrasia* in belief—also known as ‘epistemic’ or ‘doxastic’ *akrasia*, or believing ‘against one’s own better judgment’—is having a belief one believes one should not have. To put it more formally: A’s belief that *p* is akratic if and only if A believes that A should not believe that *p*. For example, we might find ourselves believing that our plane will crash, even though the evidence of airplane safety convinces us that we should not believe it.¹

How can we do that? If we believe we should not have some belief, do we not give it up? The phenomenon of *akrasia* in belief, if there is one, is itself puzzling and paradoxical. Like *akrasia* in action and intention, it has been thought to be impossible.²

I believe that akratic belief is possible, and that we can account for it in a way that resolves our puzzlement about it and answers doubts about its possibility. In this paper, my aim is to defend the possibility of akratic belief against appeals to Moore’s Paradox. That aim

¹ From here on I will avoid most of the roughly synonymous terms I mention here. “Epistemic *akrasia*,” though common in the literature on akratic belief, is misleading, since ‘epistemic’ suggests that the topic is akratic knowledge rather than belief. “Doxastic” is closer, suggesting that the *akrasia* pertains to belief. But it adds nothing helpful to talking simply of akratic belief, and does not as clearly exclude akratic suspension of belief, which is not my topic here. The phrase “against one’s better judgment” is worth keeping in mind since it is so widely used, but it brings a danger of uncritically identifying judgment with belief, and raises questions about the sense in which the better judgment is “better.” To avoid these complications, I talk simply of akratic belief, and beliefs one believes one should not have.

The plane example is familiar in the literature; see Shah and Velleman (2005, 507-8), and Greco (2014) for recent discussion.

² See especially Hurley (1989, 131-5), Adler (2002a) and (2002b), and Owens (2002). For defenses of the possibility of akratic belief, see Rorty (1983), Heil (1989), Scanlon (1998, 35), and Levy (2004). The literature on akratic belief is gradually growing, but vastly smaller than its practical counterpart. As I go on to say in the text, one of the motivations of this paper is the need to consider particular arguments against the possibility of akratic belief in greater detail.

sets the structure of the paper: I will describe the paradox (§I), and then try to explain why an appeal to it is natural in this context, how the appeal can be developed, and why it cannot succeed (§§II-IV). I will conclude by considering what further insight this discussion can give us about the nature of akratic (and Moorean) belief (§V).

G.E. Moore noticed the oddity of statements like: “It’s raining, but I don’t believe it.” Such an assertion strikes most people as odd, absurd, incoherent, or even nonsense. On hearing it, we might ask what the speaker means. Moreover, the absurdity is itself puzzling. Suppose it is raining, but our friend in another room does not believe it. This is entirely possible, and there is nothing contradictory about supposing it. She may have seen a misleading weather report, believed someone’s deception, mistaken an artificial light for the light of the sun, or just not have looked outside yet. It can be true, at the same time, both that it is raining and that she does not believe it. We can intelligibly say this about her; “It’s raining, but she doesn’t believe it” does not strike anyone as absurd. Nor does a statement about one’s own past; she can say later “It was raining, but I didn’t believe it.” But there is something strange about her saying it about herself in the present—even when it is true. Moore (1993, 209) presents the paradox in these two interrelated ways: both as a paradox about why the problem does not arise in the past or third-person, and as a paradox about why “it should be perfectly absurd to utter assertively words of which the meaning is something which may quite well be true – is not a contradiction.” For Moore, it is *absurd* to assert “It’s raining, but I don’t believe it”; the *paradox* is that such an assertion is absurd only in the first-person present tense, and despite the fact that what it asserts is consistent and can be true.³

³ Moore’s paradox first arises in Moore (1944a, 175; 1944b, 543; and 1993). In the first two of these, Moore mentions it mostly in passing, as a way to illustrate a distinction between asserting and implying. The last, an unpublished talk dated by its editor to 1944, is where Moore presents the paradox in the two interrelated ways I mention in the text. According to Moore, the latter presentation of the

Despite its limitation to the first-person present tense, Moorean ‘absurdity’ comes in different forms. It arises in “It’s raining, but I don’t believe it,” and also in “It’s raining, but I believe it isn’t.” These two versions are often called *omissive* and *commissive*; the first reports omission or ignorance, while the second reports committing a mistake. The paradox also applies to both assertion and belief. Just as it is odd to say: “It’s raining, but I don’t believe it,” it is hard to imagine someone *believing* such a thing. The paradox about belief will be especially important here.⁴

It is common to mention Moore’s paradox and akratic belief in the same breath.⁵ The budding literature on akratic belief includes brief but central appeals to Moore’s paradox in

paradox is “the fundamental one”(209). Sorensen (2007, 47-8) traces the paradox, and the distinction between asserting and implying that it was meant to illustrate, to Moore’s resistance to analysis of concepts in purely subjective terms, and so to his rejection of idealism and expressivism.

Malcolm (1958, 66) reports Wittgenstein remarking that “the only work of Moore’s that greatly impressed him was his discovery of the peculiar kind of nonsense involved in such a sentence as, e.g., ‘It is raining but I don’t believe it.’” Wittgenstein devoted (1953, Part II, §x) and parts of (1980a; esp. §§460-504) and (1980b; esp. §§278-90) to the paradox, drawing out its importance, giving it the name “Moore’s paradox”(1953, 190-1), and bringing it much wider attention.

⁴ Moore introduced both the omissive “I went to the pictures last Tuesday but I don’t believe that I did”(1944b, 543) and the commissive “I believe he has gone out, but he has not”(1944a, 175), as well as the now standard rain example in the omissive form “I don’t believe it’s raining, but as a matter of fact it is”(1993, 207). But neither Moore nor Wittgenstein explicitly distinguished or contrasted the omissive and commissive forms of the paradox, and other early treatments of it often applied to one but not the other. Moore and Wittgenstein also limited their treatment to assertion rather than belief. Sorensen (1988), Shoemaker (1995), and others have come to see the paradox about belief as more fundamental. Variants concerning higher-order beliefs and other mental states such as knowing and guessing also abound in the literature, and it is even a bit loose to say, as I do, that the paradox only concerns the present tense; for a discussion of the future tense variant, see Bovens (1995). Explanations of the paradox come in even more varieties; Green and Williams’ introductory discussion of 18 different types in their (2007) is a useful starting point.

⁵ Huemer (2007, 146) includes as a Moore-paradoxical statement: “It is raining, but I have no justification for thinking so.” Gallois (2007, 166-7) writes: “Additional examples of Moore-paradoxicality are provided by... ‘P, but I am not at all justified in believing that P.’” According to De Almeida (2007, 56), “P, but it’s not rational for me to believe that p” and “P, but it’s rational for me to believe that not-p” are a kind of “doing what, by your own lights, you shouldn’t be doing,” and “intuitively seem to be no less cases of Moorean absurdity” than the standard cases. For Adler and Armour-Garb (2007, 161-2), “Instances of the following are variants of M[ooore’s] P[aradox]...: *p*, but I lack sufficient evidence that *p*. *p*, but my reasons do not establish *p*.... Any statement of the form ‘*p* but I M that *p*,’ if all-out believed, will be a version of Moore’s Paradox, if M serves to cancel the

denying the possibility of *akrasia*.⁶ The connection has never been defended systematically. As I will explain, I think this is not a coincidence. But since the association is natural and often made, it is worth asking whether Moore's paradox can provide an argument for the impossibility of *akrasia* in belief. I will now develop the natural appeal to Moore's paradox, in order to show why it cannot be successful.

II. The Belief Akratic's Paradox

To develop the analogy to Moore's paradox, we can look for a formulation of *The Belief Akratic's Paradox*. One example of a belief-akratic-paradoxical assertion might be: "I believe it's raining, but I shouldn't believe it." The oddity again depends on the first person present tense; "She believes it's raining, but she shouldn't believe it" is not odd or absurd, and neither is: "I believed it was raining, but I shouldn't have." And as in Moore's paradox, it would be too quick to assume that there is only one standard formulation. Since we are evaluating an analogy that has never been systematically developed, it is worth stopping to ask what the basic forms of the paradox will be.

An akratic belief is a belief that one believes one should not have. The 'absurd' statement should express or report both of those beliefs: the akratic belief itself, and the belief

grounds or reasons for fully believing that *p*." This general schema presumably includes "*p* but I should not believe that *p*" as a central instance of cancelling the grounds for fully believing that *p*.

⁶ See Pettit and Smith (1996, 448) and Adler (2002a, 21). Owens (2002, 382-3) includes a brief rejection of impossibility arguments from Moore's Paradox, taking the passage from Pettit and Smith as his main example and criticizing them for conflating fact and evidence. In the text I avoid criticizing Pettit and Smith's quick formulation of the appeal to Moore's paradox, in part because I think it can be reformulated to avoid Owens' criticism. I focus instead on developing the best version of the appeal to Moore's paradox before explaining why I believe it cannot work.

that forbids that belief and renders it akratic. Whether we treat *expressing* or *reporting* as central already makes a difference. Simply saying “It’s raining” can express a belief that it is raining. But this expression does not report the belief; only “I believe it’s raining” does that. An expression of both beliefs might be: “It’s raining, but I shouldn’t believe it.” A report of both would be: “I believe it’s raining, but I believe I shouldn’t believe it.” It may seem obvious that we can at least ignore hybrids of expression and report, such as: “It’s raining, but I believe I shouldn’t believe it.” But my first example—“I believe it’s raining, but I shouldn’t believe it”—is itself such a hybrid, reporting the akratic belief but merely expressing the prohibitive one.⁷

Does the Belief Akratic’s Paradox have omissive and commissive versions? A disavowal of the first belief would yield: “I do not believe it’s raining”—which, to preserve the absurdity, would be followed by: “but I should believe it.” We would then have: “I do not believe it’s raining, but I should believe it,” or, less awkwardly: “I should believe it’s raining, but I don’t.” What this statement suggests about its speaker is puzzling, and may count as akratic, but it is not akratic belief. It is akratic suspension or lack of belief: an akratic *not* believing, while believing one should in fact have a belief. This is an interestingly related phenomenon, but not an instance of the Belief Akratic’s Paradox, since it involves no akratic belief at all.⁸ We can try instead a disavowal of the second belief: “I believe it’s raining, but I

⁷ For an excellent discussion of expressing and reporting, see Moran (2001, esp. 100-107). My use of “mere” follows Moran in avoiding the view that a report cannot also be a kind of expression.

⁸ Owens (2002, 383) proposes “a broader notion of ‘epistemic akrasia,’” which includes failing to believe. I think he and I would agree that akratic suspension of belief does not count as akratic believing, but does count as *akrasia* pertaining to belief, and so is worth keeping in mind. The difference is mainly in emphasis. I nevertheless focus on akratic belief as the central case, partly because, if we conclude from the possibility of akratic suspension of belief that “epistemic akrasia is possible,” this can distract us from the question of whether akratic belief is possible.

Because I do not consider suspension of belief in the text, I also do not consider the distinction between suspending and merely lacking a belief, the way most of us simply lack beliefs about the size

don't believe I should believe it," or: "It's raining, but I don't believe I should believe it." This does sound odd, and we might want to ask the speaker why she believes it's raining, if she doesn't believe she should believe it. But it is once again not akratic belief. The speaker does not display a belief she believes she should not have. She displays a belief that she may not have a further evaluation of at all. Neither of the two component beliefs can be disavowed, or 'omitted', while preserving *akrasia* in belief. This paradox thus shows a different set of variations than Moore's. It has expressive and reportive versions, but no omissive one. All of its forms must be commissive.⁹

The basic forms of the Belief Akratic's Paradox are then as follows:

Expressive: "It's raining, but I shouldn't believe it."

Reportive: "I believe it's raining, but I believe I shouldn't believe it."

Hybrid 1— expressive-reportive: "It's raining, but I believe I shouldn't believe it."

Hybrid 2— reportive-expressive: "I believe it's raining, but I shouldn't believe it."

All of these sound odd, both as assertions and as the corresponding beliefs; all are at least closely connected to *akrasia* in belief; and in each case, one can see why philosophers would think of Moore. Each version is a distinctively first-person, present-tense conjunctive belief or statement that is not self-contradictory and yet seems to somehow involve the speaker or

of some nearby stars. But I have this distinction in mind when I mention "suspension or lack," and say that it "may" be akratic. I suspect that some cases of mere lack of belief may not count as akratic, but I do not take a stand on that here.

⁹ I do not mean that the omissive versions are not puzzling—only that they are not akratic. They might be called the Non-Believer's Paradox and the Non-Endorsing Believer's Paradox, respectively. These continue the paradoxical theme, without involving beliefs one believes one should not have.

There is one other variant which can sound omissive: "I believe it's raining, but I believe it's not true that I ought to believe it." This version differs from the reportive one by denying an 'ought' instead of asserting an 'ought not', allowing that the belief might be neither required nor prohibited but merely permitted. This is distinctive, but not an omission, since it reports a particular belief, rather than the absence of one. Nor is it akratic, since it involves no belief that the believer believes she should not have.

believer in absurdity. The Belief Akratic's Paradox, one might think, is like Moore's but worse. The belief or assertion does not just make a commitment and undermine it in the same breath. It expresses (and in some cases, reports) two beliefs, one of which explicitly forbids the other.

III. The Argument from Moore's Paradox

We can use the term "Moorean belief" for a belief expressed by an assertion that is odd in the way Moore drew attention to: e.g., the belief that (it's raining, but I don't believe it). Similarly, we can call beliefs expressed by an assertion in the Belief Akratic's Paradox "belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs." An argument appealing to the analogy can then be reconstructed as follows:

The Argument from Moore's Paradox

- (1) Moorean beliefs are impossible.
- (2) Akratic belief requires belief-akratic-paradoxical belief.
- (3) If Moorean beliefs are impossible, then belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs are impossible.
- (4) Belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs are impossible. (From (1) and (3).)
- (5) If belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs are impossible, then akratic beliefs are impossible. (From (2).)
- (6) So, akratic belief is impossible. (From (4) and (5).)

This argument is valid. (4)-(6) are easy inferences from premises (1)-(3), and they reach the needed conclusion.

I will concede (1), the impossibility of Moorean belief. I believe Moorean belief is possible, but I will not rest the answer to the Argument from Moore's Paradox on that possibility. This makes things more difficult for a defender of the possibility of akratic belief, but it also keeps the focus on *akrasia*, avoiding a systematic consideration of Moore's paradox that would itself be a book-length project. Still, it is worth noticing that (1) is essential for the argument, and is itself controversial.¹⁰ Without it the Argument from Moore's Paradox could not even begin. But I will try to answer the argument in a different and shorter way, by arguing that, even if Moorean beliefs are impossible, the analogy with *akrasia* does not hold. I will argue that (2) is false, and (3) is question-begging.

(2) is, I think, the assumption that remains conveniently hidden when one merely gestures at Moore's paradox in denying the possibility of *akrasia*. It may seem obviously true. Does the paradox not express exactly the akratic state? But in fact, akratic belief is importantly different from belief-akratic-paradoxical belief. An akratic belief is some particular belief,

¹⁰ Though he did not consider Moorean beliefs, Moore said of Moorean assertion that "It's perfectly absurd or nonsensical to say such things"(1993, 207). Although 'absurd' is itself ambiguous between 'ridiculous' (but possible) and 'unintelligible' (and therefore impossible), Moore seems to have in mind the latter. Wittgenstein similarly wrote in a letter to Moore that "It makes *no* sense to assert 'p is the case and I don't believe p is the case'"(see Baldwin (1990, 226-32) for discussion). So both can be read as likely to endorse (1), since the corresponding assertion seems to have nothing to express. But there is the possibility of seeing Moorean beliefs as possible but inexpressible, and, more importantly, Wittgenstein's later qualification that under some circumstances Moorean assertions can have a sense.

For more explicit endorsements of (1), see Hintikka (1962, 67); Van Fraassen (1984, 247); Shoemaker (1996, 85-6); and Goldstein (2000, 86). Shoemaker writes that "Belief in such a proposition is impossible"(1995, 222), but then, in response to Albritton (1995), retreats to saying that these propositions "could not be *coherently* believed"(1995, 227n1). Acceptance of the possibility of Moorean belief is nevertheless widespread, including de Almeida (2007), Kriegel (2004), Sorensen (1988), and others, whose explanations of the paradox often aim to explain not impossibility but irrationality. These denials of (1) parallel more recent arguments that akratic belief must be irrational, such as those in Greco (2014) and Horowitz (forthcoming), which also tend to assume its possibility.

accompanied by a second belief that one should not have the first one. In any of its four versions, belief-akratic-paradoxical belief would be a *third* belief, distinct from the other two.

To take just one example, consider the reportive version: “I believe it’s raining, but I believe I shouldn’t believe it.” To believe this is to believe that one has both component beliefs in the akratic state. One must make a substantive assumption to think that, if one has an akratic belief, along with the second belief forbidding it, one must have the third belief *that one has the first two*. *Akrasia* in belief does not require that further, third belief. In general, having two beliefs does not require having a third one about them.¹¹

Admittedly, the two beliefs in the akratic state are much more closely connected than most pairs of beliefs. In “I should not believe it,” it seems, the ‘it’ already refers to the first belief, that it is raining. If one of the beliefs is about the other, it can be hard to see how one can not “put two and two together” to form the third belief. Does this not show that *akrasia* does put us in a belief-akratic-paradoxical state?

This objection rests on at least two mistakes. The first mistake is ignoring the distinction between believing that one should not believe something, and having the further,

¹¹ Such a general “third belief” requirement would have at least two problematic consequences. First, it would generate an infinite regress. The third belief, together with the second, would also be two beliefs. To have those, one would then need a fourth belief about the second and third. That would require a fifth belief, and so on *ad infinitum*. Every randomly selected pair of one person’s beliefs would have an infinite number of beliefs attached to it. If that idea is coherent at all, it is unlikely to be true.

This first, formal problem points to a second one. The general requirement ignores the psychological separateness of a person’s beliefs. Suppose our friend in the other room believes that it is raining, and that Mongolians use a Cyrillic alphabet. These two beliefs may never have been considered at the same time, or interacted in any way. She may never have “put two and two together” to form a belief about those two beliefs. There is so far no reason to attribute to her a third belief about those two. There may sometimes be such a reason, once a connection is seen. If I am late and running for the bus, but recall that the train is faster, I can more easily be said to believe that I believe both that I am late, and that the train is faster than the bus. But to think that, for any two beliefs of mine, I must have a third belief that I have those two, is to treat all beliefs as connected, if not immediately in awareness, then at least by further belief. There is little motivation for such a general view. But, in the reportive case, that is what premise (2) must assume about akratic beliefs.

third-order belief that one has that second-order belief. These are still distinct. There is still no reason to think that, whenever we believe we should not be in some state, we also believe that we believe we should not be in that state. Even in this somewhat less general form, the assumption is unsupported and unlikely. The second mistake is assuming that either the further belief or the original prohibitive one must lead to a further, conjunctive belief. This belief too is different from the prohibitive belief itself.¹²

The point about the formation of a conjunctive belief applies to all four versions of the Belief Akratic's Paradox. Although they differ in important ways, all four are conjunctive; and in each case, akratic belief does not essentially require a conjunctive belief. So far, this leaves open the possibility that the most extreme cases do involve belief-akratic-paradoxical belief. What does require the third, belief-akratic-paradoxical belief is what we might call "clear-eyed" *akrasia* in belief—the kind in which one sees clearly that one has both component beliefs, and nevertheless maintains both. I will come to these. But akratic belief in

¹² This mistake remains even if we can justify the first 'mistake' by showing that belief is essentially self-aware, and either gives rise to or is partly constituted by a belief that one has the belief. Such self-awareness would not require awareness of conjunctions of which the belief provides only one component.

A third mistake is failing to distinguish the content of a belief from the state itself—or, in other words, what is believed, from the believing. This distinction is left out in the simple description of akratic belief as a belief one believes one should not have. But it is important here. Consider these two pairs of beliefs:

It is raining; I should not have this belief of mine.

It is raining; I should not believe that it is raining.

The second of these is enough for *akrasia*, without assuming that I do believe it is raining. Someone who has both beliefs in the second pair believes that it is raining, but believes that she should not believe it. The second belief is about the rain, and about believing that it is raining. But it does not require believing or noticing that one has the first belief oneself. In the less glaring cases of *akrasia*, one can have both components of the akratic state without yet "putting two and two together" in the sense of believing that one has both. This is how we tend to see akratic action as well. I can deliberate, from my belief that I should not eat sweets, to the conclusion that I should not eat this very sweet in front of me. This conclusion is about what is done, not about my doing of it; it is not the conclusion that this action of mine is something I should not be doing. It is simply the conclusion that I should not eat this. But we tend to think that this is enough for *akrasia*. When I believe I should not eat this sweet, and I eat it anyway, I am being akratic.

general requires a second, prohibitive belief, and not a third, belief-akratic-paradoxical one. (2) is false.

At this point one may want to rephrase (2) to rely only on the *possibility* of belief-akratic-paradoxical belief. (2) could then become

(2*) If akratic beliefs are possible, belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs are possible.

This revision would preserve the validity of the Argument from Moore's Paradox. Moreover, it can be thought to have a deep and general motivation: the thought that, if someone is in a mental state, it must be possible for her to believe she is in that state. It would be odd if we could have akratic beliefs, without being able to believe we have them.

This revised Argument from Moore's Paradox would still depend on the impossibility of belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs, which I will come to with premise (3). But even if belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs are *not* possible, there is still good reason to reject (2*). Suppose that belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs are not possible. Akratic beliefs, if there are any, would then depend on the believer's ignorance of having both the akratic belief and the prohibitive one. She could not "put two and two together" to form the belief that (she believes that her plane will crash, but she shouldn't believe it). Akratic belief would cease to exist as we become aware of it. If *akrasia* depends on ignorance, this is not surprising. States like ignorance or forgetting are paradigm cases of states that cease to exist as we become aware of them. These states undercut the general motivation for (2*); there do seem to be states we cannot believe we are in while we are in them. Most importantly, the impossibility of belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs would not show that such essentially unaware *akrasia* is not possible. (2*) is then at best a question-begging premise, which assumes in advance that unaware akratic belief is not possible. And if akratic belief is possible—a possibility (2*)

cannot help undermine—and belief-akratic-paradoxical belief is not, then (2*) is false. In either case, whether or not belief-akratic-paradoxical belief is possible, (2*) cannot help the Argument from Moore’s Paradox.

We can turn to (3): “If Moorean beliefs are impossible, then belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs are impossible.” This conditional statement is of course true if Moorean beliefs are *not* impossible. But the argument needs it to be true even assuming, as (1) does, that Moorean beliefs are impossible.

It may seem unfair to think that (3) begs the question by simply adding the consequent. The thought (3) gestures at is that beliefs expressed in the Belief Akratic’s Paradox are impossible *in the same way* as Moorean beliefs. In other words, they share a feature which, if impossible in one case, would also be impossible in the other. The thought is that the impossibility of Moorean beliefs carries over to the impossibility of belief-akratic-paradoxical ones. This is an appealing thought. But despite their similarities, it is worth noticing the ways in which the Belief Akratic’s Paradox differs from Moore’s.

The belief: ‘It is raining, but I believe it isn’t’ requires a belief that it is raining and a belief that one believes that it is not. (Here I assume that belief distributes over conjuncts.) The belief: ‘It is raining, but I don’t believe it’ requires a belief that it is raining and a belief that one does not have that first belief. Whatever the explanation of the paradox, it is at least natural to think that a contradiction is at the heart of it.¹³ The Moorean believer seems to be believing and denying the same thing at the same time.

¹³ I say “at least natural” because I have not systematically considered alternative explanations of the impossibility or irrationality of Moorean belief. But it is striking how many of the existing explanations (usefully surveyed in the Introduction to Green and Mitchell (2007)) appeal to some kind of underlying contradiction. I leave the details out here, because the disanalogy cuts across them. Belief-akratic-paradoxical belief does not require denying either a believed proposition, or that one believes it.

The belief-akratic-paradoxical believer is in a different position. Recall the four forms of the belief. None of them reject or deny having a belief that they also express or report. Nor could they in general depend on any kind of contradiction. Many beliefs—about God, or abortion, or an upcoming election—are ones we believe we should not have, because we *believe we should suspend judgment*. We do not have to believe that the akratic belief is false. We may simply believe we do not have access to the relevant evidence, either in principle or temporarily. So even if contradiction is at the heart of Moore’s paradox, it cannot be at the heart of the Belief Akratic’s. Despite its structural similarities, the Belief Akratic’s Paradox concerns beliefs in two distinct propositions, neither of which is a simple negation of or denial of believing the other. So if belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs are impossible, they are not, as (3) suggests, impossible in the same way as Moorean ones are.

Akrasia in belief does not require *any* version of the beliefs or assertions in the Belief Akratic’s Paradox. And this paradox itself differs in important ways from Moore’s, making it unclear why, if Moorean beliefs are impossible, the impossibility should carry over even to belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs. After developing the analogy between the paradoxes, we still have no independent argument against the possibility of *akrasia* in belief. What we have is just an expression of underlying puzzlement. We do not yet understand how belief can be akratic.

IV. Transparency and Self-Attribution

I may seem to have left out a key underlying analogy between akratic belief and Moore's Paradox. Beliefs, or reasoning or questions about them, are often described as *transparent*, in the sense that each of us answers the question "Do I believe p ?" by answering the question " P ?", or "Is p true?" One so to speak "looks through" questions about our own psychology and out to what our beliefs are about. When asked: "Do you believe it's raining?", you think about the weather. As Moran (2001, 62) puts it: "A first-person present-tense question about one's belief is answered by reference to (or consideration of) the same reasons that would justify an answer to the corresponding question about the world."¹⁴

Transparency holds only in the first-person present. We cannot answer questions about others' or our own earlier beliefs about the rain simply by thinking about whether it is or was raining at the time. Transparency seems to hold, in other words, in the same range of beliefs that are subject to Moorean absurdity. And it can seem to explain the absurdity. I settle the question whether I believe it is raining by settling the question whether it is raining; so I seem to be settling it both affirmatively and negatively (or, in the omissive case, at least

¹⁴ Moran traces the term 'transparency' to Edgley (1969, 90). For references to other literature see Byrne and Boyle (2011, esp. 23), who trace the term back to G.E. Moore's well known discussion of the 'transparency' of sensation. There is some variation in the literature in characterizations of what transparency is. Moran (2001, 61) criticizes Edgley's characterization of transparency in terms of our inability to distinguish two questions from each other. Adler and Armour-Garb (2007) characterize transparency in terms of what is true from one's "point of view"; I avoid this, since it is hard to make sense of the notion of what is true from one's point of view except in terms either of a relativistic notion of truth, which they do not have in mind, or of what one believes, which would make transparency trivial. As I describe it, a belief, and a question about belief, can both be described as transparent if a question about the belief is answered by answering a different question. My usage is stipulative; it allows both beliefs and questions about beliefs to be called "transparent," and I do not claim that everyone uses the term this way. Those who prefer to limit the bearers of transparency either to beliefs, or to questions about them, but not both, can adapt what I say to fit an alternative usage.

agnostically) when I believe or say “It’s raining but I don’t believe it,” or “It’s raining but I believe it isn’t.”

The same feature can seem to provide an independent explanation of the impossibility of *akrasia* in belief. One might think that both the question of what I believe, and the question of what I should believe, are transparent to the corresponding question about the world.¹⁵ In that case, we answer the normative and psychological questions in the same way. When I ask: “Do I believe it’s raining?” or “Should I believe it’s raining?”, I look to the evidence of rain. There is then no way to answer one question affirmatively and the other negatively.

This line of thought can seem to offer some hope for developing the Argument from Moore’s Paradox. If it is right, akratic and Moorean beliefs may be impossible in the same way. Both would lack transparency, a key feature of belief in general. This would provide independent support for premise (3) above. But I think the appeal to transparency cannot save the argument from Moore’s Paradox. It is worth pausing to see why.¹⁶

¹⁵ See, e.g., Shah and Velleman (2005, 502), and for discussion, Owens (2002, 384).

¹⁶ In the text I do not go on to consider Owens’ (2002) reply, which introduces examples of emotion to bring out the way in which an attitude and a belief that the attitude is ‘unreasonable’ can arise in response to the same evidence. Anger, for example, can be a reaction to evidence of a friend’s incompetence in fixing my computer. But if I believe the evidence does not give me good reason for my anger, I can believe the anger is unjustified, in response to the same “ineffectual tappings, etc.” that infuriate me (385). Owens also thinks “it is worth pointing out that the argument from transparency would make practical *akrasia* seem no less problematic than theoretical *akrasia*”(386). Like anger, desire and intention can arise in response to the same features of the world as the belief that makes a decision akratic.

Owens’ response is entirely concerned with attitudes other than belief. The focus on other attitudes leaves open the possibility that belief is simply unlike them—that anger, for example, is not transparent in the same way as belief. A defender of the possibility of akratic action and intention could similarly insist that they are not transparent. It would not be hard to make the case for a disanalogy. In the case of these other attitudes, it is hard to see how questions about them could *ever* be transparent. The question of whether I have some emotion or intention is hardly settled *only* by looking at the evidence in the way that we do to determine whether the object of the emotion or intention is true. The question is certainly not transparent to the corresponding question about the world. If asked whether I am angry that it is raining, I cannot answer this question simply by answering the question whether it is raining. So it seems it cannot be enough to consider the evidence in the way the question about truth does. Anger formation involves a further process, which makes it no longer transparent in an analogous

A question about belief is not transparent to a question about what one ought to believe, when the question about belief is not in the first-person present tense. Does my friend believe it is raining? Did I believe it yesterday? To answer these questions, it is not enough to recognize that the weather reports and the sound of falling drops on the roof present a compelling case for rain. We do not attribute beliefs in these cases based only on what we think someone should believe. To attribute the belief in rain, at the very least, we still need to know whether the person herself recognizes the evidence. We sometimes attribute beliefs that we think are mistaken. We attribute them nevertheless, based largely on observable behavior. If our friend is grieving her husband, she may not notice the sounds of the rain or the weather report on TV. We may see in her demeanour that she is in no position to notice these things. If she sighs and says that at least it's sunny, we may not know exactly what she is thinking, but, if she seems sincere, we normally attribute the belief that it's sunny to her, even though we think she should not believe it. Without a general skepticism about the existence of other minds, the default is to continue to make such attributions, and to see them as normally justified.

This kind of "third-personal" belief attribution, in the sense of belief attribution based on observation of behavior, does not require a third person. The attribution of beliefs based on behavior is something we do to ourselves. We sometimes make *third-personal self-attributions* of belief. These are, for example, a key component of various kinds of psychotherapy. Moran (2001, 85) writes:

Empirically, I can well imagine the accumulated evidence suggesting both that I believe that it's raining, and that it is not in fact raining.... In various familiar therapeutic contexts, for instance, the manner in which the analysand becomes aware

way. Owens' example can be taken simply as bringing out the disanalogy between anger and belief, leaving the argument about belief just as compelling.

of various of her beliefs and other attitudes does not necessarily conform to the Transparency Condition. The person who feels anger at the dead parent for having abandoned her, or who feels betrayed or deprived of something by another child, may only know of this attitude through the eliciting and interpreting of evidence of various kinds. She might become thoroughly convinced, both from the constructions of the analyst, as well as from her own appreciation of the evidence, that this attitude must indeed be attributed to her. And yet, at the same time, when she reflects on the world-directed question itself, whether she has indeed been betrayed by this person, she may find that the answer is no or can't be settled one way or the other. So, transparency fails because she cannot learn of this attitude of hers by reflection on the object of that attitude.

Therapeutic contexts are one kind of counterexample to the necessity of transparency. In therapy, patients often answer the question of what they believe independently of answering the question of what they should believe (and independently of answering the question of what is true). This much is true *even if they are mistaken* in attributing these beliefs to themselves, and even if there is no such thing as the kind of unconscious belief with which therapy is sometimes concerned. The unacceptability of particular therapies is of little relevance here. That the patients *attribute* the beliefs to themselves, rightly or wrongly, already shows that we can sometimes settle the question of what we believe in a non-transparent way. This is a key feature of third-personal self-attribution of belief.

According to Heil (1984, 69), this kind of failure of transparency is paradigmatic of akratic—or, as he calls it, incontinent—belief. For him, “The incontinent believer is typified by the psychoanalytic patient who has acquired what might be termed an intellectual grasp of his plight, but whose outlook evidently remains unaffected....He continues to harbor beliefs, desires, and fears that he recognizes to be at odds with his better epistemic judgment.” I will not insist that what psychotherapy calls “belief” will always count as belief. But even if it does, I think it is not the most paradigmatic case of akratic belief, and certainly not the only kind. Therapeutic cases are often on one extreme, in which the attributed beliefs are not (yet)

conscious. But there is so far no reason to concede that *akrasia* depends on a belief's being subconscious, preconscious, unconscious, or in any way less than fully conscious.¹⁷

For a more typical case of *akrasia* in which the beliefs are conscious, consider an example from Adler (2002a, 20).¹⁸ Someone

suffering from anorexia nervosa can be imagined to be entertaining some thought to the effect that I desperately need to lose weight, but it is evident, as I look in the mirror, that I am thin and do not need to lose weight.

An anorexic typically believes that he desperately needs to lose weight. But if he looks in a mirror, and compares himself to pictures of other familiar and famous people, he might notice that he is thinner than almost everyone he has ever seen. He might then come to believe (here I avoid potentially distracting talk of what is evident) that he should not believe he desperately needs to lose weight. But he might also understand—especially after many iterations of this—that he continues to believe that he desperately needs to lose weight. He might recognize his

¹⁷ Here my line of thought follows Moran (2001, 67):

From the stance of an empirical spectator one may answer the question of what one believes in a way that makes no essential reference to the truth of the belief, but is treated as more or less a purely psychological question about a certain person, as one may inquire into the beliefs of someone else. If I have reason to believe that some attitude of mine is *not* 'up to me' in this sense, that is, for example, some anger or fear persisting independently of my sense of any reasons supporting it, then I cannot take the question regarding my attitude to be transparent to a corresponding question regarding what it is directed upon. Transparency in such situations is more of an achievement than something with a logical guarantee.

The clash between these two perspectives on oneself is most clearly exemplified in such phenomena as *akrasia*, self-deception, and other conditions where there is a split between an attitude I have reason to attribute to myself, and what attitude my reflection on my situation brings me to endorse or identify with. In such a situation, someone may have good theoretical reason to ascribe an attitude to himself that he cannot become aware of in a way that reflects the Transparency Condition. It may require his best resources of theory and experience to learn what he thinks or feels about something.

¹⁸ I have changed the gender in Adler's example from female to male, to avoid perpetuating the stereotype that all anorexics are female. I also do not claim that Adler would interpret the anorexic as I do; I borrow only the example.

It is worth noting that implicit racial, sexist, or other bias can itself provide examples of akratic, belief-akratic-paradoxical, and Moorean beliefs with failures of transparency. But because it is controversial that implicit biases take the form of beliefs, such examples can be especially complex, and I leave them out here.

own belief, and might struggle with and resign himself to a belief that the desperate belief will not go away despite its lack of justification. He would then also see that his answer to the question of what he should believe does not settle the question of what he believes.

The anorexic can make self-attributions of belief that are third-personal in a further sense than those of some patients in psychotherapy. His self-attributions can be based on observations of his own behavior (like the patient in therapy), and also on observation of his own recurring thoughts and feelings (unlike some patients). He can notice these by introspection, without observing his behavior. The recurring thoughts and feelings he notices by introspection may be signs that he interprets as he would if he observed them in his own behavior, just as he would if they were reported by someone else. He might gather evidence of his own beliefs and other psychological states, both through behavior and through introspection. When his self-attribution is based on this kind of evidence of his own psychological states, rather than evidence about his weight, it is still, in an extended sense, third-personal. And whether he uses behavioral evidence, introspection, or both, the beliefs he has evidence of having may be beliefs he believes he should not have.

If it is impossible for an anorexic to be akratic in this way, pointing to transparency does not explain why. Adler goes on: “The [anorexic’s] thought seems an instance of akratic believing, yet, he does have the thought and so, trivially, it is possible. But what is not possible...is that he cannot *attend* to both conjuncts simultaneously”(2002a, 20). There are two ways to understand what the anorexic cannot attend to simultaneously. One pair of conjuncts is: “I desperately need to lose weight; I should not believe I desperately need to lose weight.” Another is: “I believe I desperately need to lose weight; I should not believe I desperately need to lose weight.” These correspond to the expressive and reportive-expressive

versions of belief-akratic-paradoxical belief in the previous section. The first is closer to Adler's example, in which the anorexic's thought includes "I desperately need to lose weight." But only the second pair contains the anorexic's answer to the question of what he believes. The first pair concerns what is true independently of belief, and what he should believe. The second pair concerns what he believes and what he should believe. We so far have no reason to think that he cannot attend to the latter two conjuncts simultaneously. He might, like the patient in therapy, see that he has a belief that he himself thinks is unjustified. Even fully self-aware or in this sense "clear-eyed" *akrasia* in belief is not ruled out here. Someone might say: "Of course the evidence shows that flying is not particularly dangerous—certainly less dangerous than driving comparable distances, but I just can't shake the belief that if I fly, my plane will crash and I will die."¹⁹ She would be reporting a belief that, according to her, is unjustified. To think that, in her case, the question of what she believes must be settled by the question of what she ought to believe, is both to disregard what she says, and to beg the question against the possibility of akratic belief.

These examples bring out that transparency is most properly said to be present or lacking not in belief formation or retention, but in belief *attribution*. It is in answering the question whether we have some belief that we normally look to evidence of its truth. The transparency of a belief, or of a question about whether one has some belief, then has only indirect bearing on whether we can actually form or retain a belief that we believe we should not have.²⁰ Whatever this bearing is, the appeal to transparency in this context assumes a

¹⁹ The example is from Greco (2014).

²⁰ One might think that, even if the question whether I believe it is raining is not transparent to the question whether I should believe it, the question whether *to* believe it is raining *is* transparent in this way. That question is more directly relevant to the formation and retention of belief. But here the same conclusion can be reached in a slightly different way. Consider the belief that my father betrayed me. Even if my answer to the question whether to believe this depends entirely on my answer to the

common feature of belief to be a necessary one. That assumption is false. Transparency sometimes fails. The akratic anorexic would be an example of its failure. The assumption of the necessity of transparency is an unlikely one, and rules out some forms of akratic belief in advance. It thus cannot revive the Argument from Moore's Paradox. There is, once again, no successful independent argument here against the possibility of akratic belief.

V. Implications

If I am right, the arguments against the possibility of akratic belief that I have considered have no independent force. They are derivative expressions of a genuine and, I think, legitimate puzzlement about how belief can be akratic. I have not yet addressed that underlying puzzlement, either about akratic beliefs or about Moorean ones. But I want to say in conclusion what the consideration of these arguments can contribute to a conception of both Moorean and akratic belief.

The consideration of transparency and third-personal self-attribution offers one way to explain the formation of a belief-akratic-paradoxical belief from an akratic one. The anorexic I described earlier believes he should not believe that he desperately needs to lose

question whether I should believe it, a negative answer might not stop me from having the belief. There is still the possibility that I can decide not to believe something, and nevertheless continue to believe it.

Shah and Velleman (2005) offer a systematic treatment of the transparency of the question whether *to* believe. What I say is in line with their view, which insists that belief can be formed independently of, and be unresponsive to, our views of what we should believe. "One may reason one's way to the conclusion that one's plane is not going to crash, for example, and yet find oneself still believing that it will.... In this case, an irrational phobia has had a dominant hand in determining what one believes."(507-8). They even accept that in such cases, "one is in a position to have a thought with the form of Moore's paradox: 'The plane will crash, but I don't believe it'"(508).

weight. He also believes that he desperately needs to lose weight. He can form the conjunctive belief—that he believes this, but should not believe it—by continuing to attribute the akratic belief to himself through observation of his thoughts and behavior. If he remains dissociated from his akratic belief in the way that third-personal attribution requires, he may not be able to endorse both beliefs from within a single perspective. But he can see that he has the akratic belief, while maintaining the prohibitive one. We here see one way to knowingly believe what one believes one should not believe.

Although I granted the impossibility of Moorean belief for the sake of argument, a similar explanation can be given for the possibility of commissive Moorean belief. The same anorexic can come to believe: ‘I don’t desperately need to lose weight, but I believe I do.’ Once again, he can attribute a false belief to himself—either rightly or wrongly—through observation of his own thought and behavior. This explanation of his Moorean belief offers a surprising twist on the Argument from Moore’s Paradox. There, a crucial step was premise (3): “If Moorean beliefs are impossible, then belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs are impossible.” As it turns out, there is a way of understanding the underlying idea on which (3) may be *true*. If third-personal self-attribution of belief explains the possibility of both belief-akratic-paradoxical and commissive Moorean beliefs, we now have the contrapositive of (3): If belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs are possible, then Moorean beliefs are possible. Even without assuming that the consequent is true, we can see the underlying thought: that Moorean beliefs are possible in the same way as, or by sharing a feature with, belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs. If the feature is that both can be formed by third-personal self-attribution, the underlying idea may be right. The possibility of Moorean and belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs may hinge on a single feature—the possibility of formation by third-personal self-

attribution—which accounts for the possibility in each case. Premise (3) would then express an important truth that supports, rather than undermining, the possibility of both kinds of belief.²¹

Perhaps more surprisingly, consideration of third-personal self-attribution suggests a way in which some Moorean and belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs may be not only possible, but rational. Convinced by his doctor, an anorexic may conclude: “I do not need to lose weight.” But he may also acknowledge the persistence of his belief that he does need to lose weight, based on observation of his own continued and often extreme emotion and behavior. His belief that he does need to lose weight may well be irrational; but the belief that he has

²¹ Here we are now also in a better position to classify the relevant phenomena. More specifically, appreciation of the possibility of third-personal self-attribution of belief highlights a disanalogy between the variants both of Moore’s Paradox and of the Belief Akritic’s Paradox. One may be able to form the *commissive* Moorean belief: “I’m thin enough, but I believe I’m not,” in part through third-personal self-attribution of belief, by observing one’s own anorexic thoughts and behavior. Third-personal self-attribution of belief can in general provide an argument for the possibility of Moorean belief in the commissive form. In the omissive case, it is less clear that we can come to believe “I’m thin enough, but I don’t believe it” in this way. The third-personal self-attribution (or denial) may have to take into account the belief that I’m thin enough, which in turn undermines the required conclusion that I don’t believe I’m thin enough. Though the difference between omissive and commissive forms can at first seem merely technical, consideration of third-personal self-attribution offers a way of understanding the formation of commissive Moorean beliefs, while suggesting that omissive ones are impossible or at least more difficult to maintain.

By analogy, consider belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs in which the akratic belief is reported: for example, the reportive “I believe I need to lose weight, but I believe I shouldn’t believe it” and the reportive-expressive hybrid version: “I believe I need to lose weight, but I shouldn’t believe it.” These belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs can be reached through third-personal self-attribution, by, for example, observing one’s own thoughts and eating habits. The expressive “I need to lose weight, but I shouldn’t believe it” is disanalogous, involving no attribution of belief at all. Once again, third-personal self-attribution offers a way to account for the formation of reportive and reportive-expressive belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs, but not expressive ones. This is, once again, a significant difference between the variants.

Hybrid 1, the expressive-reportive version “I need to lose weight, but I believe I shouldn’t believe it,” is more complex. It does make a self-attribution of belief, but not of an akratic belief. Instead, it affirms the content of the purportedly akratic belief, while attributing the prohibitive belief. In cases of misattribution—think again of the potential for error in third-personal attributions in therapeutic and other contexts—the believer may not even have the prohibitive belief. Hybrid 1 thus neither directly exhibits nor directly attributes *akrasia*. Nevertheless, it can be formed through third-personal self-attribution. In this way it is analogous to the reportive and Hybrid 2 forms. The purely expressive form of belief-akratic-paradoxical belief is the one whose possibility is left most in doubt.

that belief, and that it is false or that he should not have it, can itself be a rational one. The ‘anorexic’ belief may be the product of insecurity and a warped body image; but the Moorean and belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs themselves can indicate an impressive and hard-won self-awareness.

Indeed, for Moorean and belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs to be rational, the third-personal self-attribution does not even have to be correct. A psychotherapist, a friend, or an observer may, through incompetence or malice, leave me misinformed about the details and implications of my current mental life. I may be told that I yell “Traitor!” at my father every night while asleep. Or I may be misled into accepting that my anger and loneliness are reliable signs of belief in betrayal. With enough negligence or intrigue on the part of others, I may justifiably come to believe that I believe my father betrayed me, even as I continue to believe that he in fact did not, and that any such belief about him is grossly unfair. I can then have the Moorean belief: “I believe my father betrayed me, but he didn’t,” and the belief-akratic-paradoxical belief: “I believe my father betrayed me, but I shouldn’t believe it.” Although my having these beliefs is still troubling, in such cases the fault can lie with someone other than myself. I may thus be able to falsely but justifiably attribute to myself a belief that I believe is false and *unjustified*, again resulting in rational Moorean and belief-akratic-paradoxical beliefs.

Lastly, and most importantly, we can begin to explain how akratic belief itself is possible. The disanalogies between akratic and Moorean belief helped bring out the ways in which akratic belief can fall short of direct self-contradiction. It is helpful here to contrast Donald Davidson’s view that we can believe two contradictory propositions, but not their conjunction. As Davidson (1985, 198) puts it: “It is between these cases that I would draw the

line: someone can believe p and at the same time believe non- p ; he cannot believe (p and not- p)." ²² For example, it might be possible to believe that it is raining, and believe that it is not raining. But, for Davidson, I could never believe that (it is raining and not raining). Here he sets a limit on the possible extent of incoherence.

There is something to be said for this view. When we have a belief, we tend to be sensitive to the evidence for it; recall it in relevant contexts; reason from it; feel some conviction in it; and report it to others. We might be able to do this for two contradictory propositions; each belief might be sensitive to some of the available evidence, felt with at least intermittent conviction, and recalled, reported, and reasoned from at least some of the time. This is not as obviously true of beliefs of the form: "P and not P."²³ It is natural to think that there is no evidence for such beliefs; no particular relevant circumstances in which to recall them; and, perhaps, no way to feel conviction in them, form further beliefs on the basis of them, or sincerely report them to others. Even if two contradictory beliefs, taken separately, can maintain their character as beliefs, it is natural to think that belief in the corresponding conjunction cannot.

If Davidson is right, I cannot believe: "My plane will crash and it will not crash." But I may be able to believe *that I should not believe* that my plane will crash, with evidence, conviction, and so on, and *also* believe that it will. To some extent, the two beliefs are likely to interfere with each other. But we have begun to see why the conflict is not as extreme as it is in Moorean belief. To be akratic, I do not have to believe the expressive belief-akratic-

²² See also Davidson (1986) and (1997).

²³ There are other ways to motivate this denial. For example, proponents of truth-conditional semantics can motivate it in a semantic way: To understand a statement is to understand under what conditions it is true, and contradictions, many of us think, are not true under any conditions. They may then not even make sense, let alone be believed.

paradoxical conjunction “My plane will crash, but I shouldn’t believe it.” I can simply have both component beliefs. And as before, I can see that I have both, if, for example, I attribute the akratic belief to myself through self-observation.

These two component beliefs can both display central features of belief. I may feel conviction in both, respond to some of the evidence for each one, reason sometimes from one and sometimes from the other, and recall and report both, sometimes by making puzzling or seemingly absurd statements. This may leave me unable to unify my beliefs into a single point of view, as we imperfectly rational beings sometimes fail to do. It may even lead me into straightforward inconsistency, if the prohibitive belief leads me to form the belief that my plane will not crash. But this much imperfection may well be possible. Consideration of the puzzling features of Moorean and belief-akratic-paradoxical belief helps to bring out the various features of ordinary belief, and in particular its relation to evidence, recall, conviction, reporting, and further reasoning. And considering how much it would take to fall into absurdity helps to make conceptual room for more ordinary akratic cases. I may believe that I should not believe my plane will crash—with evidence, conviction, and further reasoning—while at the same time believing that it will.

Considering Moore’s paradox in the context of akratic belief is thus doubly worthwhile. Spelling out the details helps us see why the appeal to Moore’s paradox seems successful only when it is not spelled out in detail. And though it does not paint a full positive picture, it helps us begin to see how belief can be akratic.²⁴

²⁴ Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the University of California, Berkeley; the American Philosophical Association 2013 Eastern Division Meeting; and the 2013 Berkeley-London Graduate Philosophy Conference. I gratefully acknowledge the audiences there, and, for their especially valuable and insightful comments, Hannah Ginsborg, Charles Goldhaber, James Hutchinson, Adam Marushak, Dylan Murray, Kirsten Pickering, Barry Stroud, R. Jay Wallace, and Yuan Wu.

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