

[As it stands, this paper is written to be read aloud. There's a handout to which I refer; it's the last two pages of this PDF.]

LEARNING BELIEF FROM ASSERTION

I aim in this paper to clarify and support a thesis assigning a specific feature to knowledge of belief. In the first of three parts, I offer a partial characterization of belief as a state to which its bearer is deliberately related. Implied by that characterization is a feature of knowledge of belief: to ascribe belief to someone is to take him to be deliberately related to the state ascribed.¹ The remaining two parts of the paper consist in a defence of this thesis. In the second part, I develop an account of a specific way in which we learn one another's beliefs: from assertion. When we ascribe belief to another based on his assertoric speech, I argue, we take him to attend deliberately to the state in question. Rather than being a peculiarity of that specific means of learning belief, the ascriber's taking the speaker to attend deliberately to the state ascribed manifests a general feature of knowledge of belief as such. So I argue in the third part.

The interest of the thesis lies in its specifying part of what is distinctive about knowledge of rational agents. Belief is among those mental states for which their bearers are responsible-- a fact we might expect to be reflected in the epistemology of such states. In the case of belief, arguably, the form of responsibility in question is itself distinctive. The thesis that the ascriber of belief takes the person to whom she ascribes the state to be deliberately related to it captures how doxastic responsibility affects the epistemology of belief. The thesis, then, also belongs to the wider enterprise of understanding the nature of recognition among selves as rational agents.

A A PARTIAL CHARACTERIZATION OF BELIEF & AN IMPLIED FEATURE OF KNOWLEDGE OF BELIEF

Belief is a state to which its bearer stands in a deliberative relation. What do I mean? Arguably, a belief itself consists most basically in a relation, namely, a person's holding a content true. Any relation to a belief, then, will be a relation to a relation. The range of possible attitudes a person can adopt to his own belief is wide; he can be intrigued by it, proud or ashamed of it. These are all second-order relations. Let me begin by distinguishing from the

¹ I use "know", "learn" and their cognates non-factively.

rest those attitudes that are broadly epistemic, those forms of attention whose purpose is to identify or otherwise judge their object. I will reserve “reflection” and its cognates for such epistemic attitudes. In asking *whether* one is ashamed of one’s own belief, one reflects on the belief; in *being* ashamed of one’s belief, one does not reflect on it.

What I am calling the deliberative relation of a believer to his state specifies how he may reflect on it. To bring the relation into view, consider a distinction developed by Richard Moran (2000) between two kinds of reflective question a person can ask himself about his mental states: theoretical and deliberative. To inquire theoretically into one’s state is to seek to identify it as an antecedent fact. If I ask myself theoretically whether I regret having missed the dinner party, I simply inquire into whether there is, in me, such a regret. To inquire *deliberatively* into one’s own mental state is, by contrast, to set about determining or reconsidering it. If I ask *deliberatively* whether I regret missing the dinner party, I consider whether *to* regret it. Whereas *theoretical* inquiry issues in a *judgment* as to whether in fact I have the regret, *deliberative* inquiry issues in *actual* regret or its absence.

To be *deliberatively* related to one’s state is to stand in a relation to it such that, when one reflects on the state, one does so in a deliberative spirit.² The substance of the characterization is a denial that a believer can reflect theoretically on his state. Attending to one’s belief in a deliberative spirit need not mean either weighing the evidence in its favour or meeting any epistemic standard in relation to it. To be clear on this point, consider how my characterization applies to a person’s forming a new belief on the basis of a prior one. By hypothesis, he calls the prior belief to mind. I am not suggesting that he therein *re-opens* the question whether to hold the belief. Rather, all that the deliberative nature of his attention requires is that, in bringing the belief to mind, he brings to mind--with whatever level of epistemic care--its *content*.³ Indeed, if he is to reason from the prior belief to a new one, he must reason from--that is, endorse--its content.⁴

² In the case of belief, deliberation is guided by the question “Should I believe that *p*?” It is a further question what norm or norms govern how one answers this question--govern doxastic deliberation.

³ The claim that a believer is *deliberatively* related to her state is largely neutral with regard to what might be called the empirical character of belief-governance. My claim, then, has no bearing on the discussion in empirical psychology about whether belief-formation is a form of automatic or controlled, rule-governed cognition.

⁴ This last point is elaborated by Sebastian Rödl (2007) 69ff.

The characterization applies to the concept of belief *per se*: the concept of belief is the concept of a mental state such that its bearer is in that state only if he is deliberately related to it.

In making this claim, I aim to describe a concept which I think finds application in our mental lives. How wide is that application? It does not cover everything for which we use the word “belief”. For one, the concept applies only to states of creatures capable of reflection, like us, since the characterization is given in terms of kinds of reflective activity. So, I am not talking about the dog’s belief that his toy is under the couch. Nor does the concept pertain to every world-representing state of human beings capable of reflection.⁵ That said, I do mean it to apply to the very familiar phenomenon of a person’s committing to things being thus and so; “belief”, here, does not designate an elite sub-category of such commitments.

This partial characterization of belief has an interesting implication for the nature of belief ascription. If I am right, part of what one knows in grasping the concept of belief is that the bearer of any belief is deliberately related to it. As competent users of the concept, each of us knows that it’s true of each of us that he is deliberately related to his beliefs. To *apply* the concept of belief, then, is to think of the person to whose state one applies it in a certain way. It’s to think of him as a deliberative agent with respect to that state. Assuming, indeed, that ascribing a belief to someone consists in applying the relevant concept to his state, then, just in ascribing belief to someone, one takes him to be deliberately related to the state in question. This means that one cannot be said to be ascribing *belief* if one treats it as a further question whether the state-bearer does or can reflect theoretically on the state in question.

B AN ACCOUNT OF LEARNING BELIEF FROM ASSERTION

One way to learn a person’s belief is from his assertion. In what follows, I set out two variables for any account of this phenomenon. Having explained the variables, I go on to discuss the accounts generated by combining their values.

The first variable is whether learning a person’s belief this way is mediate or immediate. Our question falls under the scope of work on what it is to find out about someone’s mind

⁵ It excludes, for instance, fixations and unconscious beliefs.

from his behaviour. Examples include learning someone's grief from his tears, learning he is thirsty from his saying "I'm thirsty", and learning he wants an umbrella from his reaching for one. In our case, a person learns another's belief from a bit of linguistic behaviour--his assertion. In the philosophical literature on these questions, the organizing disagreement is over whether the learning is mediate or immediate. To construe the learning as mediate is to take there to be an epistemic gap between confronting the behaviour and ascribing the relevant state. The learner's knowledge is justified by the cogency of a gap-bridging argument available to her.⁶ We can picture this argument as combining the fact of the behaviour the learner confronts--the tears, the utterance, the reaching--and some further fact her grasp of which allows her to interpret the behaviour. Examples of this further fact include linguistic conventions, regularities linking a symptom with whatever it's a symptom of, and inductive generalizations. In our case, to illustrate, the further fact might be an inductive generalization. Perhaps we each know from experience that one who utters a grammatically indicative sentence meaning that p believes that p . Confronting such an utterance, and having the background generalization, we're justified in ascribing the relevant belief.

Mediation by grasp of some background fact is essential, on these construals, insofar as the behaviour itself warrants only descriptions that are too weak--descriptions that are either psychologically neutral or insufficient in their intentional elements for the ascription of the relevant state. When I see you reach for an umbrella, what I see alone will not warrant my ascription to you of a desire to have the umbrella. Confronting your assertoric utterance, likewise, I have insufficient reason to ascribe the corresponding belief to you; I need to appeal to something else, such as an inductive generalization.

Now, some have wanted to reject this picture of learning about a person's mind from his behaviour. Charles Taylor (1979) and John McDowell (1998), for instance, have argued that a person's knowledge of another's state of mind from his behaviour can be immediate. On this construal, there is no epistemic gap between confronting the behaviour and ascribing the relevant state. For Taylor and McDowell, the gap is prevented from opening by the notion of expression. Some human behaviour is expressive of feelings, sensations or states: crying expresses grief, reaching expresses desire, assertoric speech expresses belief. If a person's

⁶ See McDowell (1998).

expressing some state can itself be the object of the knower's experience--if what the knower experiences is someone's expression of his state--then there is no epistemic gap between confronting the relevant behaviour and ascribing the state expressed. Seeing you reach for an umbrella, what I see is the expression of your desire; so, what I see is sufficient for ascribing the desire to you.

The second consideration for any account of the phenomenon of learning belief from assertion is whether the believer himself figures in such learning and, if so, in what sense.⁷ I use the vague formulation of the believer's "figuring" in someone's learning in order to make room for two quite different roles it is possible to imagine a person himself playing in another's acquisition of knowledge: a person himself may be the object of the learner's experience or he may be the source of testimony.

Let me explain these. Arguably, a person himself can play a role in a learner's acquisition of knowledge--knowledge about him, as it happens--in being the object of the learner's experience. Supposing we can understand experience in a sufficiently wide way, we can distinguish between experiencing facts merely true of a person and experiencing facts he himself brings about--facts constituted through his agency. Suppose I see that you have blue eyes, or I find you asleep or I see you holding your head in pain; in each of those cases, the fact I experience--your eye-colour, your being asleep, your being in pain--is *merely* true of you. But suppose I hear you announce your intention to become a pilot or I see you close the door behind you; in those cases, the facts I experience--your having a certain intention, your leaving the room--are indeed true of you, but not *merely* so. They are made true *by* you; they are constituted through your agency. The idea that a person himself can figure in another's acquisition of knowledge in being the object of her experience is the idea that his exercising his agency--his action--is available to her experience.

The second role a person himself may play in another's acquisition of knowledge is to be a source of testimony. Here, the person himself offers his assurance as to the truth of whatever fact he communicates. Suppose you tell me that it's raining. On a plausible account of testimony developed by Moran (2005), you yourself play a role in my acquisition of knowledge

⁷ I am appealing to what Geach (1972) pointed out is the function of reflexive expressions such as "the believer himself." These pick out, in a third-personal way, something essentially first-personal.

about the weather from your words. I learn about the weather by recognizing and accepting your offer to rely on you for the truth of what you say.

In summary, whether the hearer learns mediately or immediately, and whether and how the believer himself figures in the learning, are two variables faced by any account of our phenomenon. On my account, it will turn out that learning a person's belief from his assertion is immediate, and the believer himself does figure in the phenomenon, and in the first sense.

Please refer to the table at B3 on the handout. In the remainder of this section, I exclude the possibility that the believer himself does *not* figure in the phenomenon. [→bottom row] Once we are confident that he does figure in one way or the other, I consider whether he can figure in the learning if it's mediate. [→first column] Then I consider how the believer might figure if the learning is immediate. [→second column]

There's reason to think that, when a person learns another's belief from his assertion, the believer himself figures, in one or the other sense, in that acquisition of knowledge. To see why, consider a scenario where the assertion from which the hearer learns is given in reply to a question. Suppose Canadian Broadcasting Corporation host Eleanor Wachtel asks John Updike, "Do you think the American dream is still alive?" And suppose Updike begins his reply, "Yes, the American dream is still alive." Even just intuitively, it looks as though the particular way Wachtel seeks to find out what Updike thinks is by enlisting him himself in that process. But beyond intuition, on a plausible account of what it is to ask a question, Wachtel makes a request of Updike.⁸ To make a request is to seek to bring something about through the addressee's action, and not simply by brute force, for instance. So, in asking Updike what he thinks about the American dream, Wachtel appeals to him as agent, or him himself, in order to discover what she wants to know. In then learning his belief from his reply to her question--from an action of his she requests--it seems her acquisition of knowledge involves Updike himself.

The question, then, is how? Does he figure as a source of testimony or as the object of her experience?

[→the top two boxes of the first column of the table]

Construals of learning about a person's mind from his behaviour as mediate are incompatible with the person himself figuring in the learning in either sense. The first sense in

⁸ See Groenendijk and Stokhof (1997).

which the believer himself might figure in the learning is as the object of the learner's experience. On the mediate picture, however, as we saw, the behaviour the learner experiences does not bear any psychologically-loaded description, never mind one portraying it specifically as the person's action, such as making an announcement or closing the door.

The believer himself does not figure in the second sense, either. As we saw, the mediate learner acquires her knowledge by a combination of confronting behaviour and appealing to other knowledge of hers. So, she doesn't learn by anyone's testimony, but rather perceptually and inferentially.

Let's now turn to the second column. [first remarks on immediacy; then combinations]

To construe learning about a person's mind from his behaviour as immediate is, as we saw, to deny that there's an epistemic gap between confronting a person's behaviour and ascribing the relevant state. If the learning is immediate, then what the learner confronts is sufficient for ascribing the state.

How does the mediacy/immediacy distinction work in the case of learning a person's belief from his assertion? If such learning is mediate, then, by hypothesis, what the learner takes in, in taking in the assertion, is insufficient for ascribing the belief. What might she take in? It might be sheer noise. It might be the utterance of a sentence meaning that p ; it might even be the utterance of a sentence meaning that p with the illocutionary force of assertion. In each of those cases, there remains a gap between confronting these facts in behaviour and ascribing a belief to the speaker. Even in the last case, knowledge that a person has uttered a sentence meaning that the dog is asleep with the illocutionary force of assertion does not by itself amount to knowledge that he believes that the dog is asleep.

In the general discussion of learning about a person's mental states from his behaviour, as we saw, it's the notion of expression that's meant to prevent the epistemic gap from opening. It does this by enriching what is available in experience. In our case, the idea is that the speaker's assertion that the dog is asleep expresses his belief that the dog is asleep. What the learner confronts is itself the speaker's expression of his belief. As such, her experience by itself gives her sufficient reason to ascribe the belief.

So, if we picture Wachtel as learning from the expressive character of Updike's behaviour, what room is there for Updike himself to figure in her learning? I'll go through each of our two senses, starting with the second. I'm now dealing with box #5 on your table.

The second sense in which a person himself can figure in another's learning is to provide testimony. Bringing this idea to bear in our scenario, we're imagining that Updike, in saying "Yes, the American dream is still alive," provides testimony as to his own belief. If Wachtel is to learn from his utterance that Updike believes the American dream is still alive, and he is to figure in this event as a source of testimony, we have to somehow construe his utterance as that testimony. Now, this is hard to do. After all, the utterance is not about Updike and his beliefs, but about the American dream. And, usually, when a person gives testimony, it's the content of their utterance to which they testify.

The only way we can understand Updike's utterance about the American dream as his telling Wachtel what he believes about the American dream is to imagine that Updike, in speaking, is reporting a fact about his mind. Here is an analogous situation: suppose there's a room only Updike can see into, and he has the task of telling someone else what's in it. He might do this by simply calling out what is there: "a telephone", "a carpet", "a chifforobe"... Now, imagine that Updike takes the same reporting stance towards his own mental states. So, in saying "The American dream is still alive", he is, as it were, reading off, or calling-out, the content of a belief of his.

To envision our scenario this way, however, exacts a price when it comes to our understanding of assertion and speech. In an assertion, a speaker can be said to report something and to express or show something. On any natural understanding of assertion, what the speaker reports corresponds to the content of the uttered sentence; so, Updike is reporting that the American dream is still alive. And he may be seen to express his belief or judgment that the American dream is still alive. The problem with the picture just imagined is that it requires us to think of Updike as saying or reporting nothing at all about the American dream. Rather, in uttering "The American dream is still alive," Updike reports his first-order belief about the American dream and expresses, at best, a second-order belief that he has the first-order belief.

On a natural understanding of assertion, as I said, a person reports the fact that is the content of the uttered sentence, and expresses a belief with the same content. This natural understanding also, of course, fits better with the givens of our scenario, for we're taking it for granted that an assertion that the American dream is still alive affords a hearer knowledge of the speaker's belief precisely that the American dream is still alive.

Supposing that a hearer learns from the expressive character of assertion, then, can we make sense of the believer himself figuring in that learning in the first sense? Having excluded all but one combination of values, we're left with the last one, which is box number 4 on the table.

And it's a plausible combination. Understanding our phenomenon as one in which the hearer learns from the expressive character of assertion does leave room for the believer himself to figure as the object of the hearer's experience. Provided, as I said, that we can think of experience in sufficiently rich terms, one can be said to confront, in the expressive behaviour of others, psychologically-rich facts.

Let me explain. Earlier, I distinguished roughly between facts merely true of a person and those he brings about--those constituted by his agency. The first included the colour of a person's eyes and being in pain; the second included having the intention to become a pilot and leaving the room. I floated the idea that both sorts of fact could be available to experience, without trying to say how that might be. Now, with the notion of expression, we have the beginning of an answer to how some psychologically-rich facts can be experienced by an observer.

Both kinds of fact are subject to expression: a person can hold his head in pain and can announce his intention to become a pilot. If I were giving an account of how a person learns of another's pain from seeing him hold his head a certain way, I would land on box 6 in the table. Such learning is immediate, I'd maintain, involving learning through the expressive character of the behaviour, but the person himself does not figure in the learning in either sense. He neither tells the observer of his state nor is he himself the object of her experience. In our phenomenon, on the other hand, the hearer learns a fact that is, arguably, not merely true of the observed person, like being in pain. In learning Updike's belief, Wachtel learns a fact constituted through his agency.

At this point, one might ask what distinguishes the expression of facts merely true of a person and facts he brings about. Such a broad question is beyond the scope of this paper. That said, I am claiming that, when a hearer learns a speaker's belief from the expressive character of his assertion, the believer himself figures as the object of her experience. This means I'm committed to the idea that assertion, unlike holding one's head, is a behaviour expressive of a fact constituted through the speaker's agency. It's because such a fact is the object of the

hearer's experience, in taking in the assertion, that the believer himself may be said to figure as the object of her experience.

So, why think assertion is expressive of this sort of fact? Why think that making an assertion is expressing a fact about oneself that one brings about through one's agency? Assertion is a form of speech act, and there is reason to think that several speech acts, including apology and promise-making, are expressive of facts constituted through the speaker's agency. Speech acts themselves are, of course, actions. Some of them--the ones of interest here--have sincerity conditions. An agent meets a speech act's sincerity condition if he indeed has the mental state the act purports to show him to have. To meet this condition for apology, for example, is to actually regret whatever one apologizes for. Now, in meeting the sincerity condition of a speech act, the speaker must be at least aware of the state he's expressing. If I sincerely apologize for missing your dinner party, it's at least clear that I'm aware of my own regret. But just in undertaking speech acts such as apology and assertion, the speaker goes further: he endorses the state he expresses. A sincere apology shows the apologizer, not simply to be aware of the regret he expresses, but to take himself to have reason to have this regret. Likewise, a sincere assertion that the dog is asleep shows the speaker, not simply to be aware that he believes the dog is asleep, but to actually believe it, to take it that the dog is asleep. The states expressed in certain speech acts, including assertion, then, are facts constituted by the speaker's agency. This means that Wachtel, in taking in Updike's assertion, takes in his expression of a state he brings about. As such, he himself figures in the first sense in her acquisition of knowledge of his belief from his assertion.

C IMPLICATIONS FOR KNOWLEDGE OF BELIEF

Recall that I proposed that ascribing a belief to someone involves thinking of him as deliberately related to the state in question. How is this thesis about knowledge of belief supported by what we've seen about learning belief from assertion?

On my account of the phenomenon, an aspect of learning a person's state from his assertion is that the learner thinks of the speaker as attending deliberately to the state she learns (handout C1). As we saw at the end of the last section, some kinds of speech act show, not only the agent's awareness of the state he expresses, but his taking it that he ought to have

the state in question. That formulation--the agent's taking it that he ought to have the state in question--captures the upshot of a specifically deliberative reflective awareness on the agent's part. In learning from Updike's sincere assertion, Wachtel learns, not simply that Updike is aware of his belief that the American dream is still alive, but that he indeed takes it that the American dream is still alive. So, the state she learns from his assertion is one to which she takes him to attend deliberately.

Now, Wachtel's taking Updike to attend deliberately to the state she learns is, I want to suggest, a manifestation of any belief-ascriber's conceiving of the person to whom she ascribes belief as deliberately related to his state. (handout C2) If that is correct, it is not enough to say that Wachtel takes Updike to *in fact* attend in some way to the state she learns from his assertion. Rather, *in* taking him to in fact attend deliberately to his state, she takes him to be deliberately related to that state. That a person who learns the state expressed in an assertion takes the speaker to in fact attend deliberately to that state is, then, to be explained by the fact that the state expressed in assertion is belief. (handout C3)

Why think so? Part of the burden of such a claim is to show the relevance of observations about specific *ways of learning* belief to the nature of belief ascription as such. The phenomenon of learning a person's belief from his assertion does indeed bear on the question of the nature of knowledge of belief. According to my proposal, ascribing belief to someone involves expecting that the person's state will come to mind for him in only a deliberative spirit. Now, among the ways we learn others' beliefs, some involve the believer, and indeed the believer attending to his own belief. Some don't, of course, as when I learn your belief from a third party. If I am right about knowledge of belief, we can expect that, where we learn a person's belief from some way the believer himself attends to it, we learn from his deliberative attention to it. Learning belief from assertion meets that expectation, for, in making an assertion, a speaker attends deliberately to his belief.

Now, it's one thing to show, as I did, that the state a hearer learns from another's assertion is one to which she takes the speaker to in fact attend deliberately. I went ahead and *explained* that fact by noting that the state the hearer learns--the state that's expressed in assertion--is belief. The deliberative attention a speaker pays to his belief in making the corresponding assertion, I want to say, manifests his being deliberately related to that state. Let me conclude by pointing out and setting aside an alternative possible explanation. (handout

C5) On this explanation, Wachtel's taking Updike to attend deliberately to the state she learns from his assertion is not a manifestation of a feature of knowledge of belief in general. Rather, it's an accident of the way the state is learned. To see what I mean, consider learning regret from apology. A sincere apology, as I noted, shows the apologizer to take himself to have reason to regret whatever he regrets. As I might have gone on to say, then, learning a person's regret from his sincere apology includes thinking of him as in fact attending deliberately to the regret in question. Making a sincere apology involves endorsing one's regret, but a person needn't endorse a regret in order to have it. Unlike belief, the state of regret is not constituted by the agent's standing in any particular reflective relation to it. So, the fact that the state expressed in an apology is one to which the agent attends deliberately is contingent.

On the alternative explanation I want to reject, Wachtel's thinking of Updike as attending deliberately to the state he expresses might be just like that. She might think of him *simply* as in fact attending deliberately to his state, and that in virtue of his expressing it through assertion. In other words, this alternative explanation denies the connection I affirmed between Wachtel's taking Updike to in fact attend deliberately to his state and her taking him to be deliberately related to it. It presupposes a conception of belief as logically independent of the believer's own reflective relation to the state, just like regret. Whatever makes a state a belief that *p* is antecedent to the question of how the state-bearer may attend to it. The idea is that a person's assertion partly settles the open and independent question of how he may attend to his state by fixing how he attends to it on a given occasion--the occasion of his expressing it. On this picture, then, Wachtel learns two independent facts: that Updike believes that the American dream is still alive, and that he is attending deliberately to the belief.

If belief were independent of the believer's reflective relation to it, however, and if, therefore, knowledge of belief did not involve conceiving of the believer as deliberately related to his state, then we'd have the following two frustrated expectations. First, we'd expect there to be ways of learning a person's belief from the believer's paying theoretical attention to it. But there don't seem to be any such ways. When we do learn a person's world-representing state from his paying theoretical attention to it, it's an unconscious belief or a fixation we're finding out about. I'm thinking of a case of a person's reporting that, perhaps despite his actively thinking otherwise, he somehow can't shake the "belief" that his father hates him. Second, we might expect that a person who wants to know another's belief on some matter could and

would appeal to him as a theoretical inquirer into his state. But when we ask others about their beliefs, we don't enlist them as fellow theoretical inquirers into a logically independent fact. Indeed, what we want to know in wanting to know whether someone believes the dog is asleep is not whether such a state is to be found among his stock of world-representing states, but rather whether he takes it that the dog is asleep. We want to know what he responsibly thinks on the matter.

Given that these two expectations are unmet, we ought not to adopt the explanation that generates them. If learning a person's state from the expressive character of his assertion involves thinking of him as attending deliberately to that state, that's not because the state in question is one that happened to come up for assertion. It's rather because of the nature of the state assertion expresses, belief.

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LEARNING BELIEF FROM ASSERTION

TALK OUTLINE

- A a partial characterization of belief & an implied feature of knowledge of belief
- B an account of learning belief from assertion
- C implications for knowledge of belief

A A PARTIAL CHARACTERIZATION OF BELIEF & AN IMPLIED FEATURE OF KNOWLEDGE OF BELIEF

1. forms of inquiry into one's own mental states:
 - theoretical: identifies state as antecedent fact ; issues in judgment whether one has the relevant state
 - deliberative: determines or revises the state ; issues in the state or its absence
2. partial characterization of belief:
 - The concept of belief is the concept of a mental state such that its bearer is in that state only if he is deliberately related to it.
 - To stand in a deliberative relation to one's state: any attention one brings to the state is deliberative.
3. a feature of knowledge of belief:
 - To apply the concept of belief is to conceive of the person to whose state one applies it as deliberately related to that state.

B AN ACCOUNT OF LEARNING BELIEF FROM ASSERTION

1. One way to learn another's belief that p is from his assertion that p .
2. two variables for any account of learning belief from assertion:
 - immediacy vs. mediacy
 - mark of mediate learning: epistemic gap between confronting behaviour and ascribing state
 - whether the believer himself figures in the learning
 - sense #1: believer himself as object of experience
 - sense #2: believer himself as source of testimony

3. interaction of the two variables

	mediate learning	immediate learning
believer himself figures as object of experience (sense #1)	1. not applicable	4. right combination
believer himself figures as source of testimony (sense #2)	2. not applicable	5. implausible
believer himself does not figure	3. implausible	6. implausible

C IMPLICATIONS FOR KNOWLEDGE OF BELIEF

1. An aspect of learning a person's state from his assertion is that the hearer thinks of the speaker as attending deliberately to that state.
2. The learner's taking the state she learns through the speaker's assertion to be one to which he attends deliberately is a *manifestation of any* belief-ascriber's conceiving of the person to whom she ascribes belief as deliberately related to his state.
3. That a person who learns the state expressed in an assertion takes the speaker to attend deliberately to that state is *explained* by the fact that the state expressed in assertion is *belief*.
4. methodological question: Why think the details of a particular way of learning belief can support or undermine a thesis about knowledge of belief in general?
 - My claim about knowledge of belief: Knowledge of belief involves conceiving of the believer as deliberately related to his state.
 - Some ways of learning belief involve being confronted with the believer's attending to his own state.
 - So, prediction: Any way of learning a person's belief from some form of attention he brings to it should involve his attending to it *deliberatively*.
5. Alternative explanation of the fact that a person who learns the state expressed in an assertion takes the speaker to attend deliberately to that state:
 - Belief is logically independent of the believer's reflective relation to it.
 - Assertion is a way of attending to one's belief that is deliberative.
 - Thus, any belief *learned through assertion* will be known to be one to which the speaker attends deliberately.
 - This explanation yields two frustrated expectations:
 - There should be ways of learning a person's belief from him that involve his attending *theoretically* to the state.
 - In seeking to know a person's belief, we should be able to appeal to him as a theoretical inquirer into his state.