



1 The prescriptive and the hypological: A radical detachment

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5 Abstract

6 My aim in this paper is to introduce and motivate a general normative framework,
7 which I call *feasibilism*, and to sketch a view of the relationship between the pre-
8 scriptive and the hypological in the epistemic domain by drawing on the theoretic-
9 al resources provided by this framework. I then generalise the lesson to the moral
10 domain. I begin by motivating *feasibilism*. A wide range of norms appear to leave
11 uncharted an important part of the normative landscape. Across different domains
12 we need norms more directed at the subject, and less dependent on how the world
13 beyond our control plays out. In the beginning of this paper I briefly outline two
14 broad ways of seeking such subject-directed norms: *perspectivism* and *feasibilism*.
15 According to *feasibilism*, the ultimate reason why more objectivist norms are inad-
16 equate on their own is not that they fail to take into account the limits of an agent's
17 perspective, but that they are not sensitive to limits on what ways of choosing, act-
18 ing, and believing are feasible in a given situation. I think of these ways of choos-
19 ing, acting, and believing in terms of an agent's dispositions. This paper focuses on
20 a gnosticist implementation of *feasibilism*. Such a view supplements a knowledge
21 norm with a norm urging one to only be in doxastic states that are manifestations
22 of the most knowledge-conducive feasible dispositions – that is, a norm urging one
23 to be in doxastic states that are *reasonable*. But how should we think about the nor-
24 mative statuses of knowledge versus reasonableness? By drawing on two general
25 hypotheses about the relationship between succeeding (e.g. knowing) and manifest-
26 ing dispositions conducive to success (e.g. reasonable belief), I argue for a view on
27 which the *prescriptive* and the *hypological* come radically apart. The result is that an
28 epistemic analogue of a thesis that many have assumed to hold in the moral realm
29 should be rejected. This thesis is *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs*: we can only ever
30 be blameworthy for acts that are morally wrong. I argue that on the picture pre-
31 sented, we can be epistemically blameworthy for doxastic states that do not violate
32 any prescriptive epistemic norms. I then generalise the considerations to the moral
33 realm, arguing against *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs*.

34 **Keywords** Epistemic blame · Responsibility · Blameworthiness · Feasibilism ·
35 Prescriptive · Hypological · Knowledge first

A1 Extended author information available on the last page of the article

36 1 Feasibilism

37 It is widely agreed among normative theorists that we must distinguish between
38 prescriptive assessments – assessments regarding what is required, permitted, or
39 forbidden – and ones having to do with blameworthiness and praiseworthiness.
40 However, the precise relationship between the *prescriptive* and the *hypological* is
41 a matter of controversy. Most theorists recognise, for instance, that there are cases
42 of morally blameless wrongdoing. But it is much more controversial whether one
43 could be blameworthy without violating a moral prescription. Similar questions
44 could be asked regarding the epistemic domain, assuming there to be something
45 akin to epistemic blame.

46 My aim in this paper is to introduce and motivate a general normative frame-
47 work, which I call *feasibilism*, and to sketch a view of the relationship between
48 the prescriptive and the hypological in the epistemic domain by drawing on the
49 theoretical resources provided by this framework. I will give a novel argument
50 for a radical detachment of the prescriptive and the hypological. Though the main
51 focus will be on the normative status of two kinds of epistemic assessments gen-
52 erated by *feasibilism*, toward the end of the paper I generalise the arguments to
53 the moral domain.

54 Let me begin by explaining some of the general motivations for *feasibilism*.
55 The aim here is to paint a rather big picture, introducing some considerations
56 defended in more detail elsewhere that will be drawn on later.

57 Consider a range of norms or standards, such as those listed below:

- 58 *Choose the best!*
59 *Keep your promises!*
60 *Believe p just in case p !*
61 *Only believe what you know!*

62 Many would agree that normative theorising cannot stop here, for such stand-
63 ards appear to leave uncharted an important part of the normative landscape. For
64 instance, I might fail to know because I am in a Gettier case. I might fail to truly
65 believe because my evidence happens to be misleading. Which choice is best
66 depends on how things play out in the world much beyond me. And even facts
67 about just what would constitute keeping a promise aren't always that easy to
68 track. Not all of normativity is so thoroughly subject to the contingencies of how
69 the world and our relation to it plays out.

70 The push for what we might cautiously call more *subject-directed* norms and
71 assessments is driven by a group of distinct motivations often run together. As
72 already pointed out, sometimes we can only conform to a wide range of norms by
73 fluke or luck. For instance, I may only be able to choose the best option by get-
74 ting lucky. Here the notion of guidance is often brought in. At least sometimes,
75 many have complained, we cannot be guided by norms like those listed above.
76 And in any case, some normative assessments we want to and need to make are
77 just not captured by these norms. On their own, they provide us with impover-
78 ished resources, failing to map out a part of normative space. For instance, the

79 beliefs of victims of evil deceivers can be positively assessable, even if they fail
80 to be true, and fail to constitute knowledge.

81 Though I am not moved by all of these motivations – in particular, the one
82 appealing to guidance – I agree that a full normative picture needs assessments more
83 attuned to what goes on with a particular subject, and less hostage to the fortunes of
84 how the world plays out. Moreover, I tend to think that the kinds of positive assess-
85 ment that norms like the above fail to capture cannot be captured just by appeal to
86 blamelessness and excuses. We can all agree, for instance, that a subject in a Gettier
87 case is blameless for not knowing. But something more positive can and should be
88 said about their beliefs.

89 What more, then, can be said? We should begin by asking why more objectivist
90 norms like those listed above are inadequate on their own. For instance, why do they
91 give rise to the problem of luck? Here is a familiar diagnosis, one that may even
92 seem obvious. The problem with such norms is that their applicability in a particular
93 situation sometimes depends on facts that lie outside a subject's *perspective*. Either
94 the subject lacks epistemic access to these facts, or they fail to figure in her mental
95 states in an appropriate way. Either way, they are not within her ken. A perspective,
96 as I am using the term, is a kind of representation of the world: it may consist of a
97 subject's beliefs, her evidence, a select class of mental states such as the seemings
98 of phenomenal conservatives, or even the totality of things she knows, or is in a
99 position to know. The hope, then, is that by perspectivising our norms, we avoid the
100 kinds of problems alluded to above.

101 As obvious as it might seem, I do not think that the perspectivist diagnosis is
102 correct.¹ The fundamental problem is not that our perspectives are limited, but that
103 there are limits on what ways of choosing, acting, and believing are feasible in a
104 given situation. The above norms don't take into account limits of feasibility. Non-
105 lucky conformity to a norm requires choosing, acting, or believing in a way that con-
106 formity to the norm robustly depends on. The applicability of any norm in a given
107 situation depends on how things stand within some domain of facts. But for just
108 about any domain, in some situation there is no feasible way of choosing, acting, or
109 believing that tracks how things stand within that domain. In such cases non-lucky
110 conformity to the norm is out of reach.

111 The perspectivist and feasilist diagnoses may at first sight look deceptively
112 close. After all, the limits of a subject's perspective often helps explain the limits of
113 feasibility. For instance, I may not be able to make a choice in a way that tracks what
114 is best because I don't know a range of facts about the world. I may fail to choose the
115 best way to get to work just because I don't know that my normal cycling route has
116 been closed early in the morning.

117 But the differences between the perspectivist and feasilist diagnoses have wide-
118 reaching ramifications for normative theory. Moreover, perspectivism doesn't solve
119 the problems that it has often been motivated by. In some situations it is not feasi-
120 ble to track facts about our own perspectives – our own beliefs, evidence, what we
121 know, or even how things seem to us. That is why perspectivist norms themselves
122 are susceptible to the problem of luck. Just like more objectivist ones, perspectivist

1FL01 ¹ See Lasonen-Aarnio (forthcoming b, c).

123 norms leave a portion of normative space unmapped: we want to sometimes posi-
124 tively assess acts that fail to conform to a wide range of perspectivist norms, and to
125 negatively assess ones that do.

126 Hence, my claim is that the correct diagnosis of why more objectivist norms are
127 inadequate on their own, giving rise to problems like the problem of luck, has to do
128 with limits of feasibility, not the limits of our perspectives. When seeking a more
129 subject-directed kind of normativity, we should take into account limits on what
130 ways of choosing, acting, and believing are feasible in a given situation. I prefer to
131 think of these feasible ways of choosing, acting, and believing in terms of specific
132 dispositions of the agent. Hence, we need norms that take into account what disposi-
133 tions can feasibly be manifested in a given situation.²

134 The feasibility standard does not reject more objectivist standards of assessment, but sup-
135 plements them. For instance, I am sympathetic to there being a knowledge norm
136 on belief. A more subject-directed level of epistemic normativity is gotten, I have
137 argued, by focusing on ways of believing that manifest dispositions that are condu-
138 cive to knowledge. I understand the relevant kind of conduciveness in a comparative
139 way, as being good in comparison with *feasible alternative dispositions*. Feasibility
140 is a kind of possibility. There is much more to say about this notion of feasibility, but
141 for our purposes here a close enough approximation is to understand it as taking into
142 account human cognitive limitations. Feasible alternative dispositions are ones that
143 it is not only feasible to have, but to manifest in the situation at hand. Dispositions
144 that are *alternatives* are ones that would manifest in one's situation as the having
145 of a relevant doxastic state regarding a given subject matter, or as the making of a
146 choice among a menu of available options.

147 Faring well by a feasibility standard of assessment is a matter of manifesting rela-
148 tively success-conducive dispositions, dispositions that do well in comparison with
149 feasible alternatives. Feasible alternative dispositions are compared across a range
150 of relevant cases, scoring their manifestations by using a value function centered
151 on the relevant standard of success. Each disposition is assigned an overall score
152 that is a function of the values of its manifestations across the relevant cases. The
153 higher the score, the more success-conducive the disposition. For instance, in my
154 favoured epistemic implementation of the feasibility framework I deploy a gnosticist,
155 knowledge-centric value function. A manifestation that is a knowledge-constituting
156 belief gets the highest value, a manifestation that is a false belief gets the lowest
157 value, the values of suspension of judgment and merely true belief being somewhere
158 in between. On the resulting view a disposition can be among the best feasible ones
159 even if it is not a disposition to know. More generally, a disposition can be among
160 those most conducive to a relevant normative success even if it is not a disposition to
161 achieve that success. As a result, the account applies straightforwardly to states like
162 suspending judgment: suspending judgment can be a manifestation of a disposition

² Within my epistemic picture dispositions play a theoretical role similar to the role played for process reliabilism by belief-forming processes, for some by the rules or methods one follows when forming and revising beliefs, and for others by talk of basing beliefs on evidence or reasons. The basic feasibility idea could be developed, however, given some alternative view of ways of forming and retaining doxastic states.

163 that is most conducive to knowledge or true belief in the relevant sense. And choices
164 that knowably result in sub-optimal outcomes can still manifest the best feasible dis-
165 positions, dispositions most conducive to success.

166 In addition to assessments focused on some valuable standard of success and fea-
167 sibilist ones focused on manifesting relatively good dispositions, the framework out-
168 lined can also be deployed to make a third kind of assessment, one having to do with
169 whether a success is creditable to an agent. In this way the feasibility framework can
170 be deployed to make three distinct kinds of normative assessments:

- 171 1. Valuable success (e.g. *true belief, knowledge, morally right action*)
- 172 2. Manifesting dispositions that are among the most success-conducive feasible ones
- 173 3. Creditable success

174 Elsewhere I defend a view of what such creditable normative success involves
175 (Lasonen-Aarnio forthcoming b, c). The right kind of modally robust dependence
176 must obtain between the dispositions that one manifested and the normative success.
177 These dispositions manifest across a wide range of relevant cases as norm-conforming
178 doxastic states, choices, or actions.³ However, in what follows I will focus on
179 the first two kinds of assessments: ones tied to a relevant valuable success, and ones
180 having to do with manifesting success-conducive dispositions.

181 My favoured implementation of the feasibility framework in epistemology is
182 gnosticist. The relevant standard of success is knowledge. A doxastic state is *rea-*
183 *sonable* just in case it manifests dispositions that are among the most knowledge-
184 conducive feasible ones.⁴ It looks, then, like I endorse the following distinct norms:

- 185 (K) Believe *p* just in case you know *p*!
- 186 (R) Be in doxastic state D just in case D is reasonable!

187 Knowledge-firsters often talk as if (K) is prescriptive: one ought only to believe
188 what one knows, and in the absence of an excuse is blameworthy for believing oth-
189 erwise. I will for now assume that this is right, though much of what I say about the
190 normativity of manifesting good dispositions will remain intact even given a picture
191 on which there are no authoritative prescriptive epistemic norms. But what about
192 (R): how should we think of the normativity of reasonable belief? I discuss the rela-
193 tionship between success and success-conducive dispositions in more detail below.
194 For now note that manifesting knowledge-conducive dispositions is not sufficient
195 for knowing. Assume, for instance, that my evidence regarding some matter is mas-
196 sively misleading, but I have no inkling of this. Then, it might be reasonable for me
197 to believe *p* – and not reasonable to adopt any other doxastic state – even if I violate
198 (K) in virtue of holding a false belief. In that case I conform to (R), but not (K). And

³ My favoured view of this dependence is explanationist: creditable success requires that there be a
robust explanatory generalisation linking the manifesting of the relevant dispositions and the success, a
generalization that explains the success on this occasion.

⁴ It is worth emphasizing that I think there is knowledge that is not creditable to the agent: knowing can
in this sense be a kind of fluke. One can in certain cases know even if the success of knowing does not
robustly depend on one's manifesting relatively knowledge-conducive dispositions.

199 indeed, in so far as it is not feasible in my situation to hold no doxastic state what-
200 soever regarding p , it is then not feasible for me to conform to both norms. In what
201 follows I will outline a picture on which matters of epistemic blameworthiness and
202 praiseworthiness depend on the knowledge-conduciveness of the dispositions mani-
203 fested by one's beliefs. Such a picture, I will argue, need not view (R) as a prescrip-
204 tive epistemic norm.

205 In the next section I discuss the general relationship between succeeding and
206 manifesting success-conducive dispositions. I argue for two general hypotheses that
207 will serve as premises in the subsequent discussion.

208 **2 Success and success-conducive dispositions**

209 My focus will be on two central kinds of normative assessments generated by the
210 feabilist framework. There are, first, assessments tied to a success such as choosing
211 the best, keeping one's promises, believing the truth, and knowing. And then there
212 are assessments tied to manifesting dispositions that are relatively conducive to the
213 relevant successes, dispositions that do well in comparison with the best feasible
214 alternatives.

215 What is the relationship between success and success-conducive dispositions?
216 The arguments below will rely on the following pair of hypotheses⁵:

217 **Hypothesis 1: Competent failure** Manifesting good, success-conducive dispositions
218 is not sufficient for succeeding.

219 **Hypothesis 2: Incompetent success** Manifesting good, success-conducive disposi-
220 tions, or even failing to manifest deficient ones, is not necessary for succeeding.

221 I understand success-conduciveness in the feabilist way outlined above, as being
222 relatively success-conducive in comparison with feasible alternative dispositions.
223 However, I also think these hypotheses are true on a different, non-relative reading
224 of "success-conducive". On such a reading a disposition is success-conducive just
225 in case it manifests as a successful act (e.g. choice or doxastic state) across a wide
226 range of relevant cases.

227 For a fairly wide range of candidate successes, these hypotheses are not particu-
228 larly controversial. Consider, for instance, the successes of believing truly. Manifest-
229 ing truth-conducive dispositions is not necessary for believing truly. A lucky guess,
230 for instance, can be true, even if it is not a manifestation of dispositions conducive to
231 true belief -- and indeed, even if it is a manifestation of disposition that tend to man-
232 ifest as false belief. But neither is manifesting good dispositions sufficient. Some-
233 times we are unlucky to have deceptive evidence, even if there is nothing deficient
234 with the way in which we came to have such evidence. For instance, if I come to

⁵ These labels are easy to recall and capture the essence of the hypotheses, though the reader should bear in mind that my dispositions should not be thought of as competences à la virtue epistemologist: they are not dispositions to believe truly, or dispositions to know.

235 form a belief based on reading a reputable newspaper that just happens to contain
236 a misprint, then my belief is plausibly a manifestation of dispositions conducive to
237 truth both in absolute terms and in relative ones, in comparison with feasible alter-
238 natives. Similar points apply to the success of choosing the option that is in fact the
239 best. A random guess can lead to the best choice, and my evidence about which
240 choice is best can be highly misleading.

241 Consider the success of keeping one's promises. Assume that I promised to return
242 a book of yours, but have forgotten which book I borrowed. Since I am very bad at
243 keeping these sorts of promises, my bookshelf is full of books that belong to oth-
244 ers. I now randomly pick out a book and give it to you, which just so happens to be
245 the one I promised to return. This case falls under *Incompetent Success*. To see that
246 manifesting dispositions conducive to keeping promises does not suffice for keeping
247 a promise, consider the following case. Assume now that I promised to return your
248 book, and have not forgotten which book that was. However, the cover of the book
249 in question was swapped by a trickster with that of another book. I am not in any
250 way negligent: I carefully placed your book in a particular place in my shelf, and
251 check the cover to make sure it is the right one. However, I unwittingly return the
252 wrong book (cf. Ross, 1939: 147). Indeed, given my state of ignorance, it may be
253 that I can only do what I promised by a strange twist of luck.

254 Consider now various perspectivist successes, such as proportioning one's beliefs
255 to the evidence, or believing or doing what one's reasons support. *Incompetent Suc-*
256 *cess* is not, I take it, very controversial: one can form a belief that just happens to
257 be proportioned to one's evidence or reasons. More generally, one can conform to
258 a perspectivist norm by luck. But more interestingly, the kinds of considerations
259 already mentioned above show that *Competent Failure* also holds for the success of
260 conforming to pretty much any perspectivist norm, a norm the applicability of which
261 in a given situation depends on how things stand with respect to one's perspective.⁶

262 Here is why. According to perspectivism normative facts depend on one's per-
263 spective. Assume, for the sake of argument, that the normative facts are different
264 depending on whether I have Perspective₁ or Perspective₂: in the former case I ought
265 to φ , whereas in the latter case I ought not to φ . Sometimes it is just not feasible for
266 us to believe (to choose, to act) in ways that track, across a relevant range of cases,
267 how things stand with respect to our own perspectives (Lasonen-Aarnio 2019b,
268 forthcoming b, c). For instance, sometimes it is not feasible to track our own beliefs,
269 our own evidence, what we know, or even how things seem to us. And, in particular,
270 sometimes it is not feasible to track how things stand with respect to those perspec-
271 tival facts that make a normative difference. Assume, then, that it is not feasible for
272 me to manifest dispositions that discriminate between whether I have Perspective₁ or
273 whether I have Perspective₂. The claim is that in a case in which I have Perspective₂
274 instead of Perspective₁, I might still be manifesting the best feasible dispositions
275 – and indeed, that any of the best feasible dispositions might still manifest as φ 'ing.
276 Hence, I might be manifesting dispositions that are among those most conducive to
277 conforming to the relevant perspectivist norm, without in fact conforming to it. Such
278 cases fall under *Competent Failure*.

6FL01 ⁶ See Lasonen-Aarnio (2019a, forthcoming b, c).

279 I have also argued that the two hypotheses hold for the success of knowing. The
280 first hypotheses is not very surprising: one can fail to know, despite manifesting
281 dispositions conducive to knowledge. A subject's environment may be epistemi-
282 cally hostile, whether locally or globally, without this affecting the quality of her
283 dispositions. A subject might fail to know simply because she is in a Gettier case,
284 or because her evidence is misleading. I have argued that the same is true of some
285 cases involving massively deceptive environments.⁷ Victims of massive deceit can
286 manifest dispositions conducive to knowledge, even if the deceivers systematically
287 block these good dispositions from manifesting as true belief or knowledge.

288 But, one might wonder, how could *Incompetent Success* hold for knowing? What-
289 ever knowing involves, I have argued that it does not necessarily involve manifesting
290 dispositions that are conducive to knowledge.⁸ Knowing is no exception to the gen-
291 eral rule that succeeding does not entail manifesting success-conducive dispositions.
292 This is not to deny that knowledge paradigmatically comes about by manifesting
293 knowledge-conducive dispositions. My preferred diagnosis of many putative cases
294 of knowledge defeat rests on this idea: a subject can continue to know, but in retain-
295 ing a belief, she is no longer manifesting dispositions that are among the best.⁹ This,
296 I argue, does a good job in explaining the pull in two directions that many feel espe-
297 cially when considering so-called cases of defeat by higher-order evidence.¹⁰ In such
298 cases a subject who in fact knows, and whose belief came about in a perfectly good
299 way, acquires misleading evidence that her belief is flawed.

300 These points related to a distinction I draw between *epistemic* and *dispositional*
301 discrimination. Epistemic discrimination is a matter of epistemic access: I know that
302 I am in one region of logical space rather than in another. By contrast, dispositional
303 discrimination is a matter of a kind of modal tracking, of dispositional responsive-
304 ness and sensitivity to differences between the relevant regions of logical space.
305 It requires the feasibility of dispositions that discriminate between the regions by
306 manifesting differently in them. These two kinds of discrimination can come apart.
307 For instance, I know that I am not in the Matrix, even if I cannot dispositionally dis-
308 criminate between my actual case from a counterfactual Matrix case. This does not,
309 however, make my belief that I am not in the Matrix unreasonable, as such *recherché*
310 cases are not relevant when assessing the reasonableness of my belief. But in other
311 cases lack of dispositional discrimination can make one's belief unreasonable. Con-
312 sider a case in which I originally know a proposition *p*, but then acquire evidence
313 from a reliable source that my belief in *p* is the output of a flawed cognitive process.
314 In so far as I can retain knowledge of *p* in light of such putatively defeating higher-
315 order evidence, perhaps I can also infer that the higher-order evidence is mislead-
316 ing. However, I cannot dispositionally discriminate my case from ones in which the
317 (higher-order) evidence is not misleading. And when assessing the reasonableness
318 of the belief I retain in light of higher-order evidence that the belief is flawed, it is

7FL01 ⁷ See Lasonen-Aarnio (forthcoming a, c).

8FL01 ⁸ Lasonen-Aarnio (2010, forthcoming c). See also Hirvelä (2019).

9FL01 ⁹ See Lasonen-Aarnio (2010, 2021, forthcoming c).

10FL01 ¹⁰ Christensen (2010a: 193) nicely describes this. For more on why defeat by higher-order evidence cre-
10FL02 ates specific problems, see Lasonen-Aarnio (2010, 2019a, 2021).

319 relevant to consider cases in which such evidence is not misleading. Evidence from
 320 reliable sources is often not, after all, misleading. Because the very dispositions I
 321 manifest would manifest as retaining a botched belief across a wide range of relevant
 322 cases in which my higher-order evidence is not misleading, they are not conducive
 323 enough to knowledge or true belief. These are cases of *unreasonable knowledge*.

324 I have sketched the kinds of considerations that support thinking that *Incompetent*
 325 *Success* and *Competent Failure* hold for a wide range of successes. But in fact, the
 326 arguments outlined support a stronger kind of detachment of success and success-
 327 conducive dispositions. They support the claim that at least for a very wide range of
 328 candidate normative successes, in some situations one *cannot* succeed by manifest-
 329 ing success-conducive dispositions: one's circumstances are set up so that the best
 330 feasible dispositions will fail. One can only succeed by manifesting suboptimal dis-
 331 positions. This is a stronger claim than *Incompetent Success*.

332 Consider, for instance, the successes of believing truly or of knowing, and the
 333 victims of evil deceivers mentioned above, whether ones plugged into the Matrix
 334 or deceived in some other way. Due to the machinations of the deceivers, none of
 335 the best humanly feasible dispositions manifest as true beliefs about the surrounding
 336 world. Our deceived twins can only believe truths by manifesting bad dispositions.
 337 The same is true of the candidate cases of unreasonable knowledge described: a sub-
 338 ject with higher-order evidence that her belief is flawed can only continue to know
 339 by manifesting a kind of obstinacy, by manifesting problematic dispositions.

340 Similar points apply to perspectivist norms. A general consideration that already
 341 came up is that normative facts sometimes depend on differences between cases
 342 that it is not feasible for us to track, differences that it is not feasible to disposition-
 343 ally discriminate. As a result, sometimes normative facts regarding what one ought
 344 to do can be changed without changing the facts about what would manifest good,
 345 success-conducive dispositions. Assume that according to a norm N whether one is
 346 required to φ depends on whether a proposition p is true or not. Assuming N to be a
 347 perspectivist norm, p is a proposition about how things stand with respect to one's
 348 perspective. In case c_1 norm N requires one to φ (to believe a given proposition, to
 349 make a given choice, to perform a given action, etc.), since p is true in c_1 . Assume
 350 further that in c_1 all of the best feasible dispositions manifest as φ 'ing. In another
 351 case c_2 , however, p is false and hence, by N one is required not to φ . However, it is
 352 not feasible to dispositionally discriminate between cases c_1 and c_2 . Moreover, the
 353 best feasible dispositions still manifest as φ 'ing in c_2 .

354 Hence, on any candidate norm N, I claim, there will be pairs of cases of the fol-
 355 lowing sort:

c_1	c_2
p , and therefore one is required to φ	Not- p , and therefore one is required not to φ
The best feasible dispositions all manifest as φ 'ing	The best feasible dispositions all manifest as φ 'ing

357 The general claim is that on a wide range of views, including perspectivist ones,
 358 there can be pairs of cases that one cannot dispositionally discriminate between and

359 in which the same dispositions are feasible, but in which the normative facts regard-
360 ing what one ought to do are nevertheless different. Further, in both cases the best
361 feasible dispositions manifest as the same choice, belief, or action.

362 Because the general argument given is rather abstract, it might be helpful to
363 look at a recently popular perspectivist way of thinking, one that deploys so-called
364 knowledge filtering. The thought is that a range of normative facts depend on a sub-
365 ject's *possessed normative reasons*, and that a proposition is among her possessed
366 normative reasons just in case she knows the proposition, or is at least in a position
367 to know it. On such a view a perspective is comprised of one's possessed normative
368 reasons. Let me consider, in particular, a view on which facts about moral rightness
369 depend on one's possessed reasons. Consider first the following case:

370 **Beatrix**

371 Bill intends to brutally murder Beatrix's family, including her children. In fact,
372 he is already on his way to do so. Beatrix, however, has no reason whatsoever
373 to suspect any of this. The only way Beatrix can prevent Bill from killing her
374 children is by shooting him now. As she sees Bill on the street, she shoots him
375 out of pure hatred and malice toward men.¹¹

376 On some views, Beatrix is morally permitted – perhaps even required – to kill
377 Bill, for this is in fact the only way to prevent Bill from killing or seriously injur-
378 ing her children.¹² Indeed, on those views Beatrix's case is one in which she can-
379 not do what is morally right by manifesting dispositions conducive to doing what is
380 morally right, or by manifesting morally good will.¹³ But on the knowledge filter-
381 ing view envisaged, Beatrix is not permitted to kill Bill, for facts about moral right-
382 ness depend on possessed normative reasons, and Beatrix has no inkling of Bill's
383 intentions.

384 Contrast the case described above, *Beatrix*, with another case that I will label
385 *Enlightened Beatrix*. In this case Beatrix knows that Bill is about to murder her chil-
386 dren, and also knows that the only way to stop Bill is by killing him. Let us assume
387 that since enlightened Beatrix possesses both the reason *Bill is about to murder my*
388 *children* and the reason *the only way I can stop Bill is by killing him*, morality pre-
389 scribes – indeed, requires – killing Bill. Doesn't such a view avoid the detachment
390 of success and success-conducive dispositions I have pushed? It does not, and it is
391 instructive to see why.

392 Knowledge filtering makes normative facts – in this case, facts about moral right-
393 ness – depend on facts about what one knows. But sometimes it is not feasible to
394 track facts about what one knows.¹⁴ Compare *Enlightened Beatrix* with yet another
395 case, *Gettiered Beatrix*. Beatrix is in a Gettier case. Gettiered Beatrix believes, but
396 does not know, that Bill is about to murder her children and that the only way she
397 can prevent this is by killing Bill. This Gettiered twin does not possess the reasons
398 enlightened Beatrix does, though it looks to her as though she does. Indeed, we can

11FL01 ¹¹ The case is very close to one described by Capes (2012).

12FL01 ¹² See e.g. J. J. Thomson (1991).

13FL01 ¹³ Cf Capes (2012).

14FL01 ¹⁴ For more detailed arguments, see Lasonen-Aarnio (2019b, 2020).

399 assume enlightened and Gettiered Beatrix to be internal duplicates. Gettiered Bea-
400 trix may well possess reasons like *I believe that Bill is about to murder my chil-*
401 *dren*, or even *It is likely on my evidence that Bill is about to murder my children*.
402 However, such weakened reasons may not suffice to make taking Bill's life morally
403 permissible: after all, they do not speak as strongly in favour of killing Bill as the
404 reasons that enlightened Beatrix has do. In any case, there will be some pairs of
405 cases in which knowing allows one to possess reasons that render morally permis-
406 sible actions which would not be permissible given the reasons possessed by one's
407 Gettiered counterpart. It simply cannot be that for every proposition p and for every
408 possible case, p is no stronger a reason than reasons like *I believe p*, or *p is likely*.
409 The kinds of pairs of cases described are bound to arise, and I will assume that
410 *Enlightened Beatrix* and *Gettiered Beatrix* constitute such a pair.

411 By the knowledge filtering view of moral rightness assumed, enlightened Beatrix
412 is morally required to kill Bill. Moreover, if enlightened Beatrix kills Bill because
413 she knows this is the only way to protect her children, perhaps even lamenting the
414 fact that doing so requires her to take a human life, then I will assume that she is
415 manifesting good dispositions, dispositions conducive to doing what is morally
416 right. By contrast, it is not morally permissible for Gettiered Beatrix to kill Bill.
417 However, the difference between enlightened Beatrix's knowledge of the relevant
418 facts and Gettiered Beatrix's lack of knowledge is not a difference that it is feasible
419 to track. A dispositional, motivational profile that manifests as killing Bill in the
420 first case, but as not killing Bill in the second, is just not humanly feasible. The very
421 same dispositions that manifest as killing Bill in the enlightened case will also mani-
422 fest as killing him in the Gettier case, even though in the Gettier case such an action
423 is morally wrong. Nevertheless, the action would still manifest good dispositions,
424 dispositions conducive to doing what is morally right.

425 Knowledge is, of course, just one filter that one might deploy. But similar argu-
426 ments can be constructed for any other filter appealing to some sort of perspectivist
427 condition.¹⁵ The colour of the filter could be changed, but on any such view a fact is
428 among an agent's reasons just in case it is part of her perspective. Such reasons fil-
429 tering makes normative facts – in this case, facts about moral rightness – dependent
430 on facts about what is and isn't part of an agent's perspective. But no matter how one
431 thinks of perspectives, I claim, sometimes it is just not feasible for an agent to track
432 facts about her perspective.

433 I have briefly stated the considerations I see as supporting both the two hypothe-
434 ses *Competent Failure* and *Incompetent Success*, as well as an even stronger detach-
435 ment between success and success-conducive dispositions. In what follows I will
436 appeal to these considerations to argue for a radical detachment of the hypological
437 and the prescriptive in epistemology. But before giving the argument, I will say a bit
438 more about the prescriptive and the hypological.

15FL01 ¹⁵ See Lasonen-Aarnio (2019b, 2020).

439 3 The evaluative, the prescriptive, the hypological

440 There is a sense of ‘norm’ and of ‘normativity’ that comes rather cheap, one that
441 I want to set aside at the outset. “Don’t form beliefs on Tuesdays!”. This sentence
442 takes the form of a command: it prescribes not forming beliefs on Tuesdays. But
443 we are not really required to do as it urges. Such a standard is not what we might
444 call *normatively authoritative*.¹⁶ I will simply assume that there are normatively
445 authoritative epistemic standards which include the kinds of epistemic assessments
446 I have been concerned with. Both knowing and reasonably believing have normative
447 weight not had by conforming to the standard of not forming beliefs on Tuesdays.

448 It is somewhat standard to think that normativity can be partitioned into distinct
449 categories. There is the *deontic* or *prescriptive*, sometimes just referred to as the nor-
450 mative in a narrower sense, and then there is the *evaluative*, also sometimes referred
451 to as the *axiological* (the Latin *valores* and Greek *ἄξιος* meaning ‘that which has
452 worth’). The prescriptive requires, permits, or forbids. By contrast, while the evalu-
453 ative may involve a kind of approval or disapproval, it has no direct deontic entail-
454 ments. For instance, it would be good if I supplied the departmental coffee room
455 with a selection of novels today, for such an action would add value the lives of my
456 colleagues. It does not follow from this, however, that I am required to, or that I
457 ought to, do this. Perhaps I am not even permitted to do so, for there are more press-
458 ing concerns like living up to my actual commitments. These different categories
459 of normativity have different structural properties. For instance, it is rather widely
460 accepted that whereas axiological properties and concepts are gradable – something
461 can be more or less good – prescriptive or deontic properties are not. To these two
462 normative categories some add a third, the *fitting*, irreducible to either the evaluative
463 or the prescriptive.¹⁷

464 I will also be using the term *hypological*. Indeed, my main concern is with how
465 the prescriptive and hypological are related, both in epistemology and in ethics. I
466 borrow the term from Zimmerman (2002), who uses it to refer to judgments about
467 moral responsibility. As I use the term, the hypological has to do with responsibility,
468 whether moral or epistemic. Responsibility in this sense is closely connected with
469 credit, praise, and blame: to deserve moral praise or blame for something, one must
470 be morally responsible for it. Likewise for epistemic credit, praise, and blame, and
471 epistemic responsibility. When we say that an agent has an excuse for acting wrongly
472 and hence, that they are not blameworthy, we are making a hypological appraisal.
473 Similarly when we say that they are creditable for acting rightly and hence, deserve
474 praise for doing the right thing. In so far as an action’s having moral worth is a mat-
475 ter of the agent being creditable or praiseworthy for doing the right thing (e.g. Sliwa
476 2016, Lord 2017), assessments of moral worth are likewise hypological.

477 Even though prescriptive and hypological assessments are distinct, certain con-
478 nections between the two are sometimes taken for granted. In particular, the pre-
479 scriptive/deontic has often been assumed to be essentially tied to responsibility and

¹⁶ Cf. McHugh (2012).

¹⁷ See Berker (2022).

480 blameworthiness in a way that the evaluative (or the fitting, for that matter) is not. At
481 least in the absence of an excuse or exemption, we are accountable for violating pre-
482 scriptive norms and hence, appropriate objects of blame. But further, blame is only
483 appropriate when a prescriptive norm has been violated. A necessary condition on
484 being an appropriate target of moral blame is that one has done something morally
485 wrong or impermissible, something one ought not to have done. Indeed, many take
486 this connection with blameworthiness to be a distinctive mark of the prescriptive/
487 deontic, as opposed to the evaluative.¹⁸ On such a view blameworthiness is a mark
488 that a moral prescription or requirement has been violated:

489 ***Only Blameworthy for Wrongs (OBW)***

490 S is morally blameworthy for φ 'ing (not φ 'ing) only if φ 'ing (not φ 'ing) is
491 morally wrong.

492 As we will see, however, OBW is quite controversial.¹⁹ One could defend a cor-
493 responding thesis for praise: S is morally praiseworthy for φ 'ing only if φ 'ing is
494 morally required.²⁰ My main focus below will be on blameworthiness. Putting the
495 above thoughts regarding blameworthiness and moral prescriptions together we get:

496 ***Blameworthy for Wrongs***

497 S is morally blameworthy for φ 'ing (not φ 'ing) just in case φ 'ing (not φ 'ing) is
498 morally wrong and S lacks an excuse or exemption.

499 I am here assuming that something is morally wrong just in case moral norms
500 prescribe against it. On this view, then, blameworthiness is an exclusive mark of
501 the prescriptive. Negative prescriptive/deontic appraisal is a necessary condition for
502 blame, and in the absence of an excuse or exemption, it is sufficient.

503 Below I sketch a picture of the relationship between epistemic responsibility and
504 epistemic prescriptions that rejects the epistemic analogue of *Only Blameworthy for*
505 *Wrongs*:

506 S is epistemically blameworthy for being in doxastic state D only if D violates
507 a prescriptive epistemic norm.²¹

18FL01 ¹⁸ See e.g. Smith's (2007: 5) and McHugh's (2012: 9) characterization of the prescriptive/deontic. As
18FL02 Zimmerman (2009: 170–171) points out, such a thesis is often implicitly endorsed.

19FL01 ¹⁹ See e.g. Capes (2012), Fassio (2020), Graham, P. A. (2010: 93–94), Scanlon (2008: 124–125), and
19FL02 Thomson (1991: 295). The principle is often rejected for reasons that are rather different from those that
19FL03 I give below. For instance, Haji (1998) and Zimmerman (2009) argue that a subject can be blameworthy
19FL04 in virtue of acting against their judgment about what is morally right, even if what they do is not objec-
19FL05 tively morally wrong. But I do not, for instance, think that Huckleberry Finn is blameworthy in virtue of
19FL06 doing something he believes to be morally wrong. Parfit (1984: 25), for instance, distinguishes between
19FL07 subjective and objective rightness, claiming that an agent can be blameworthy for certain acts that are
19FL08 subjectively right but objectively wrong. My argument, however, does not rest on such a distinction.

20FL01 ²⁰ Someone who wants to recognize the category of the *supererogatory* might want instead to defend the
20FL02 thesis that S is morally praiseworthy for φ 'ing only if φ 'ing is morally right, where being morally right
20FL03 is being either required or merely permitted. Which thesis for praiseworthiness one opts for won't make
20FL04 much difference to the discussion to follow: ultimately I think that both should be rejected.

21FL01 ²¹ Whiting (2020) argues that there are epistemically right but criticisable beliefs, though he does not
21FL02 talk about blame. Hawthorne and Srinivasan (2013) allow for cases of epistemically blameworthy right-
21FL03 doing, drawing on considerations of the sort that I defend in Lasonen-Aarnio (2010).

508 Some are sceptical about the very existence of epistemic blame. I briefly address
509 such scepticism below. Note that *Blameworthy for Wrongs* is compatible with the
510 hypological and prescriptive coming apart in various ways. Indeed, I take it to be
511 rather widely accepted even in the moral case that the hypological and prescriptive
512 are distinct in that there are no entailments from wrongness to blameworthiness, or
513 from rightness to praiseworthiness: there are both cases of *blameless wrongdoing*
514 and of *praiseless rightdoing*.

515 Though there are many ways to argue for the existence of blameless wrongdoing
516 and praiseless rightdoing, here is one that I find convincing. Strawson (1962)
517 famously argued that our responsibility responses – on Strawson’s view, our reactive
518 attitudes – are reactions to the quality of will or regard manifested by the actions of
519 others.²² I won’t assume the full package of views defended by Strawson, remaining
520 neutral, for instance, on the nature of blame itself. But I do find the following, rather
521 minimal, claim to be plausible: we are only ever morally blameworthy or praise-
522 worthy in so far as our actions manifest a certain quality of will or regard. One can
523 only be morally blameworthy for an action if one’s action manifests ill will, or at
524 least insufficient good will. Similarly, one can only be morally praiseworthy for an
525 action if one’s action manifests good will and regard for others. Whatever else it may
526 depend on, deserving credit or blame depends on the quality of one’s will.

527 This amounts to a very minimal version of a so-called *quality of will* view of
528 moral responsibility. What I will assume is that the quality of one’s will is a nec-
529 cessary, though not sufficient, condition on blame- and praiseworthiness. I certainly
530 don’t take this to entail that the domain of our responsibility is in our heads, or that
531 we are only ever responsible for the quality of our own will. Our responsibility
532 reaches far out into the world, but on the view I find plausible, it reaches out into the
533 world only through the quality of our will.

534 It is important to emphasise that my talk of quality of will here is a placeholder
535 for something playing a given role in hypological assessments. The quality of will
536 manifested by an action is a matter of the source of the action within the agent, and
537 in particular those morally relevant properties or states of the agent that impact the
538 action’s blame- or praiseworthiness. The substantive assumption I am making here
539 is that the kind of valenced responsibility at issue in blame- and praiseworthiness is
540 always a function of certain properties of the agent from which a morally assessable
541 action stems. I here leave largely open just how we should think of quality of will.²³

542 What is the relationship between facts about the quality of one’s will and facts
543 about moral rightness or permissibility? It is rather widely accepted that acting out
544 of good will does not suffice to make actions right or permitted: facts about moral
545 rightness at least sometimes depend on facts outside one’s will.²⁴ This is so on most

22FL01 ²² Strawson (1962).

23FL01 ²³ See Shoemaker (2013) for a discussion of different ways of understanding quality of will. I should
23FL02 note that commitments I make elsewhere (see Lasonen-Aarnio forthcoming c) entail that manifesting
23FL03 good will requires manifesting dispositions that are at least relatively conducive to doing what is morally
23FL04 right. Note that thinking about will in terms of dispositions manifested in one’s choices and actions does
23FL05 not rule out other accounts, such as thinking of quality of will in terms of an agent’s motives.

24FL01 ²⁴ Cf Khoury (2011: 136). Of course there are those who disagree – perhaps, for instance, the twelfth-
24FL02 century philosopher Pierre Abélard, some Kantians, and some virtue ethicists (e.g. Slote 2001: 14).

546 implementations of the major approaches to moral rightness. Whether, for instance,
547 an action maximises utility does not supervene on the will of the agent performing
548 that action. Nor does whether an action constitutes killing an innocent person or
549 breaking a promise.

550 Good will is not sufficient for doing the right thing, but neither is it necessary. It
551 is widely accepted that it is possible to do the right thing “for the wrong reasons”,
552 without one’s action manifesting good will or regard. The claim that not all morally
553 right actions are morally worthy, where moral worth places constraints on one’s men-
554 tal states not placed by rightness, is widely accepted.²⁵ An action has moral worth
555 just in case one deserves credit for doing the right thing, which in turn requires that
556 it not be merely due to luck or accident that one did what was right. There will be
557 cases in which one fails to manifest good will or proper regard – perhaps even cases
558 in which one manifests ill will – but still does what is right. Hence, there are cases of
559 praiseless rightdoing.

560 It is important to see, however, that the case for this detachment of the hypologi-
561 cal and prescriptive – for cases of both blameless wrongdoing and praiseless right-
562 doing – can be made independently of the quality of will view assumed. Indeed, a
563 wide range of views agree on the possibility of both kinds of cases. Hence, I take a
564 somewhat standard view of the relationship between the hypological and the pre-
565 scriptive to be represented by Fig. 1.

566 Note that ‘Permitted’ labels cases that are morally permitted but not required.
567 The double thumbs up indicate categories that are wholly uncontroversial. As an
568 example of a case in which one does something merely morally permitted that one
569 is not praiseworthy for (bottom right corner of the figure), think of morally neutral
570 choices like which route around the park to take whilst walking to work. The single
571 thumbs up indicate widely recognized categories of cases in which the hypo-
572 logical and prescriptive are not perfectly aligned. These include cases of blameless
573 wrongdoing and praiseless rightdoing discussed above. I also include cases in which
574 one is praiseworthy for doing something that is merely permissible, but not morally
575 required. Supererogation falls into this category. The categories with question marks
576 are more controversial. *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs* entails that it is not possible
577 to be blameworthy for doing something that is morally right – that is, either morally
578 required or permitted. This, as will become clear below, rules out so-called *subero-*
579 *gation*. A thesis entailing that one can only be praiseworthy for doing what is at least
580 morally permitted, in turn, rules out cases in which one is praiseworthy for doing
581 something that is wrong.

582 In what follows I argue that my epistemological picture entails that the prescrip-
583 tive and hypological come apart in a more radical way, allowing for epistemic ana-
584 logues of all of the categories of cases represented in Fig. 1. I will then revisit moral
585 normativity, giving a structurally analogous argument for a radical detachment of
586 the hypological and prescriptive in the moral domain as well.

25FL01 ²⁵ See e.g. Arpaly (2003) and Markovits (2010).










HYPOLOGICAL → PRESCRIPTIVE ↓	Blameworthy	Not Blameworthy	Praiseworthy	Not Praiseworthy
Forbidden		 Blameless wrongdoing	? Praiseworthy, but wrong	
Required	? Blameworthy, but required			 Praiseless rightdoing
Permitted	? Blameworthy, but permitted		 Supererogation	

Fig. 1 The relationship between the hypological and the prescriptive

587 **4 A radical detachment of the prescriptive and hypological**

588 We have practices of epistemic criticism that involve holding others responsible
 589 for their doxastic states, and these resemble our practices of holding others morally
 590 responsible. In what follows I will talk about epistemic blame and blameworthiness.
 591 One might object on the grounds that all blame proper is moral. But even if this is
 592 right, we need to be able to draw distinctions within the epistemic domain analogous
 593 to those that arise in the moral domain. For instance, some things might be epistemi-
 594 cally good to do, but one is not in any way criticisable for not doing them. Instead of
 595 listening to some music to relax after work, it might be epistemically good to spend
 596 the hour refreshing my memory of twelfth century history, triple-checking my tax
 597 returns, or working out some logical entailments of my beliefs. However, I am not
 598 epistemically criticisable for failing to do these things. Perhaps these examples even
 599 involve epistemic analogues of morally supererogatory action. Similarly, we need to
 600 draw a distinction between justifications and excuses, between conforming to epis-
 601 temic norms and blamelessly flouting them (see Brown 2017, 2020a, 2020b).

602 However, I concede at the outset that epistemic blame does not take many of the
 603 forms that moral blame does: it is not clear, for instance, whether resentment or
 604 indignation are ever fitting responses to violations of epistemic norms, though other
 605 affective states, such as frustration and even varieties of anger, might be. Below I
 606 discuss the possibility that not only blame, but the nature of epistemic responsibility
 607 itself, is importantly different from moral responsibility.

608 I will now argue that the epistemological framework presented supports a radi-
 609 cal detachment of the prescriptive and hypological, one that entails the falsity of the
 610 epistemic analogue of *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs*. The argument will rest on two
 611 assumptions. The first is the pair of hypotheses already laid out above, *Competent*
 612 *Failure* and *Incompetent Success*. The second is what I will call a *quality of disposi-*
 613 *tions* condition on epistemic responsibility, a condition that is analogous to the qual-
 614 ity of will condition on moral responsibility mentioned above. The thought is that
 615 we are only ever epistemically responsible for our doxastic states through the quality
 616 of the dispositions that those states are manifestations of. Moreover, good disposi-
 617 tions are dispositions that are relatively conducive to beliefs that are epistemically

618 right: they are amongst the most success-conducive feasible dispositions. One might
619 take such rightness to consist in truth, knowledge, being proportioned to the evi-
620 dence, or something else. Hence, the argument does not rely on a particular under-
621 standing of epistemic rightness.

622 On my view there is an important connection between what doxastic states
623 (choices, actions, etc.) are manifestations of an agent's dispositions and facts about
624 what she is responsible for, at least in a sense of attributability. Such attributability
625 is widely taken to be necessary for responsibility in a fuller sense of accountabil-
626 ity.²⁶ It follows that one is only responsible for beliefs or other doxastic states in the
627 first place that are manifestations of one's own dispositions: it is only then that one
628 can deserve credit or blame for them. Hence, one way to be blameless for a dox-
629 astic state is for it to fail to manifest one's own dispositions. However, in so far as
630 epistemic blameworthiness involves responsibility in a sense that goes beyond such
631 attributability, I concede that more conditions may need to be imposed on the rele-
632 vant dispositions, conditions that go beyond their being an agent's own. These plau-
633 sibly include conditions on how the agent came to have the dispositions in the first
634 place. For instance, dispositions that have their source in neuropsychiatric disorders
635 plausibly don't satisfy these conditions. And perhaps dispositions acquired in closed
636 fundamentalist communities sometimes don't satisfy these conditions either. In such
637 cases an unreasonable belief may be a manifestation of an agent's dispositions, but
638 the agent is not epistemically blameworthy for the belief.

639 Assume that we have settled what further conditions the dispositions manifested
640 in an agent's doxastic state must satisfy in order for the agent to be appropriately
641 responsible for the doxastic state. The claim I am making is that the valence of the
642 agent's responsibility depends on the quality of the dispositions she manifests when
643 forming, revising, and retrieving the doxastic state from memory. One can only be
644 blamed for a belief, or for violating an epistemic norm such as a truth or knowledge
645 norm, if the dispositions one manifested are deficient. Blameworthiness requires
646 at least that one failed to manifest good dispositions, and it may require that the
647 dispositions one manifested are positively bad, being significantly worse than the
648 best feasible ones. Similarly, one can only be praised for a belief, or for knowing,
649 if one's belief is a manifestation of good, knowledge-conducive dispositions. The
650 claim is that when one's dispositions do satisfy the conditions for responsibility, the
651 valence of one's epistemic responsibility depends on the quality of the dispositions
652 manifested.

653 Now consider a candidate array of normatively authoritative prescriptive epis-
654 temic norms:

655 (T) Believe p just in case p !

656 (K) Believe p just in case you know p !

657 (E) Only be in doxastic states that are proportioned to the evidence!

26FL01 ²⁶ See Watson (2004) for the distinction.

658 What I want to now show is that the dispositions one manifests in one's doxastic
659 revision are in the domain of epistemic normativity *even if* we do not assume that
660 there is also a prescriptive norm along the lines of (R):

661 (R) Be in doxastic state D just in case D is reasonable!

662 On my favoured view a doxastic state is reasonable just in case it is a manifesta-
663 tion of dispositions that are knowledge-conducive relative to feasible alternatives.
664 However, there are alternative epistemic implementations of the feasibility frame-
665 work. Indeed, for each of the norms listed, we can interpret (R) in a corresponding
666 way, understanding reasonableness instead as conduciveness to a different stand-
667 ard of epistemic success: to truth, or to proportioning one's doxastic states to the
668 evidence.

669 The above list of candidate prescriptive epistemic norms does not, of course,
670 exhaust the options. But it is an instructive starting point. Irrespective of which epis-
671 temic standard of success one takes as a starting point, the picture I have presented
672 predicts epistemic analogues of cases of blameless wrongdoing and praiseless right-
673 doing. But, in line with a more radical detachment of the hypothetical and prescrip-
674 tive, it also predicts cases in which one is blameworthy for a doxastic state that is
675 epistemically right in the sense of being permitted by prescriptive epistemic norms.
676 It also allows for cases in which one is praiseworthy for a doxastic state that violates
677 these norms.

678 Let me begin with cases of *blameless wrongdoing*, and the norms (K) and (T).
679 By *Competent Failure*, manifesting truth- or knowledge-conducive dispositions
680 does not entail knowing or truly believing. Consider, for instance, mundane cases
681 in which one's evidence is misleading, supporting a falsehood. A false belief can be
682 a manifestation of the most knowledge- and truth-conducive feasible dispositions.
683 I have argued, in connection with the New Evil Demon Problem, that even victims
684 of massive deceit can have beliefs that manifest dispositions that are conducive to
685 knowledge and true belief. If a belief is reasonable – if it is formed and retained by
686 manifesting dispositions that are among the most success-conducive feasible ones
687 – then one cannot be rightly blamed or criticised for not knowing. This follows from
688 the quality of dispositions condition on epistemic responsibility. Manifesting knowl-
689 edge-conducive dispositions provides a kind of excuse, a way to be blameless for
690 false belief. Hence, victims of massive deceit provide us with epistemic analogues
691 of blameless wrongdoing, of blameless false belief and hence, blameless violations
692 of (K) and (T).

693 However, manifesting dispositions that are among the best feasible ones doesn't
694 merely provide one with an excuse. If we were merely looking for blamelessness
695 or excuses, we could perhaps have considered subjects who are jetlagged or under
696 the influence of drugs. Unlike other subjects with excuses, the kinds of victims of
697 deceit under discussion are positively praiseworthy for at least some of their beliefs.
698 This follows from the quality of dispositions view, assuming the relevant disposi-
699 tions pass the required conditions for responsibility. We have here not merely a case
700 of blameless wrongdoing, but one in which an agent is praiseworthy for doing some-
701 thing that violates (K) and (T).

702 What about (E)? Note that (E) is a perspectivist norm. Sometimes, I have argued,
703 there is no feasible way of tracking facts about one's perspective and hence, no
704 feasible way of tracking the application conditions of perspectivist norms. So, for
705 instance, sometimes manifesting the dispositions most conducive to doxastic states
706 proportioned to one's evidence or reasons does not entail succeeding in proportion-
707 ing one's beliefs to the reasons or evidence. Hence, there are also blameless – and,
708 indeed, praiseworthy – violations of (E). The same points apply to other perspectivist
709 norms, such as norms formulated in terms of possessed epistemic reasons.

710 My framework also predicts cases of *praiseless rightdoing*. It also predicts cases
711 in which one is blameworthy for a norm-conforming doxastic state. According to
712 *Incompetent Success*, manifesting success-conducive dispositions is not necessary
713 for succeeding. In so far as this also holds for the success of conforming to the
714 above norms, then it is possible to conform to them in a praiseless manner. Con-
715 sider (T) or (E). A lucky guess or belief formed by reading tea-leaves can be true,
716 proportioned to the evidence, and proportioned to one's reasons. In such cases one
717 conforms to the relevant norm without being praiseworthy for doing so. Further,
718 one's belief may be positively blameworthy. Indeed, it is possible to conform to
719 these norms while manifesting very bad dispositions. Hence, in line with the more
720 radical detachment of the hypological and prescriptive discussed above, we also
721 have cases in which one is blameworthy for a doxastic state that conforms to the
722 relevant prescriptive norms.

723 (K) is different from the other norms listed in that it is possible to conform to (K)
724 without knowing. One trivially conforms to (K) by suspending judgment on p , or
725 by failing to form any doxastic state whatsoever regarding p . As a result, a disposi-
726 tion can be conducive to conforming to (K) without being conducive to knowledge.
727 Consider, for instance, a Pyrrhonian sceptic who suspends judgment on almost eve-
728 rything. By systematically opting out of believing, the Pyrrhonian manifests disposi-
729 tions that are among the most conducive to conforming to (K): by not believing they
730 trivially conform to (K). It does not follow, however, that they manifest the most
731 knowledge-conducive feasible dispositions. Indeed, they would do better, given the
732 value of knowledge, by forming beliefs about a range of ordinary matters, for those
733 beliefs would constitute knowledge across a wide range of relevant, somewhat nor-
734 mal cases.²⁷ On the gnosticist implementation of the quality of dispositions condi-
735 tion on epistemic responsibility that I have outlined, praise and blame depend on
736 the knowledge-conduciveness of one's dispositions, not on their conduciveness to
737 conformity to (K). A sceptic who systematically suspends judgment on a wide range
738 of matters despite the fact that knowledge is right at her fingertips is not praisewor-
739 thy for her suspension of judgment. Assuming (K) to be a correct prescriptive norm,
740 then, some instances of suspending judgment should on my view be classified as
741 cases of praiseless rightdoing – praiseless because the dispositions one manifests

27FL01 ²⁷ This is to make some assumptions about how the gnosticist value function works. Assume knowledge
27FL02 to have a positive value k , false belief to have a negative value $-f$, and suspending judgment to have
27FL03 the neutral value 0. I am here assuming that f is not so much greater than k that dispositions that invariably
27FL04 manifest as suspending judgment get a higher score than ones that often manifest as knowledge, but
27FL05 sometimes manifest as false belief.

742 are not conducive to knowledge. And indeed, perhaps these are even cases in which
743 one is blameworthy, despite doing what is right. Skeptical dispositions may fall very
744 short of the most knowledge-conducive feasible ones.

745 Further, I have argued that there are cases of unreasonable knowledge. Some
746 cases of unreasonable knowledge plausibly provide instances not only of praise-
747 less rightdoing, but of doing something that is right but nevertheless blameworthy.
748 I see no reason to think that knowledge is an exception to the general hypothesis
749 that success does not entail manifesting success-conducive dispositions.²⁸ Paradigm
750 cases of knowledge are ones in which one knows precisely in virtue of manifesting
751 dispositions conducive to knowledge, but it is not a condition on knowledge itself
752 that one's belief be formed by manifesting relatively knowledge-conducive feasible
753 dispositions.

754 On the picture that emerges, the normative significance of the kinds of dispo-
755 sitions one manifests when forming and revising doxastic states is evaluative and
756 hypological, but not prescriptive. There is no need to view (R) as a prescriptive
757 norm.

758 I now want to consider an objection to this picture, which is that if it is right,
759 then there is a structural disanalogy between moral and epistemic normativity. My
760 picture entails that the epistemic analogue of *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs* is false:
761 one can be blamed for being in doxastic states that do not violate epistemic prescrip-
762 tions. But one might worry that this creates an objectionable structural divergence
763 between the epistemic and moral domains, since in the moral domain the prescrip-
764 tive and hypological are not thus radically detached.

765 First, we cannot simply assume that the moral and epistemic domains are struc-
766 turally isomorphic when it comes to the relationship between the prescriptive and
767 the hypological. For instance, many moral philosophers have tied together prescrip-
768 tiveness with a kind of direct control, but it is widely agreed that we don't have such
769 direct control over our beliefs. Moreover, several authors have argued that epistemic
770 blame is importantly different in nature from moral blame. For instance, Kauppinen
771 (2018) draws a distinction between *reactive blame*, connected with Strawsonian
772 reactive attitudes, and *relational blame*, connected with Scanlonian relationship
773 modification, arguing that epistemic blame is relational, not reactive. Boulton (2024)
774 follows suit, arguing that epistemic blame is a distinctive kind of modification of
775 epistemic relationships.²⁹ If the nature of epistemic and moral blame is different,
776 then the nature of moral and epistemic blameworthiness, and the kind of responsi-
777 bility involved, will likewise be different, and moral blameworthiness might be con-
778 nected to prescriptiveness in ways that epistemic blameworthiness is not.

779 Even more ambitiously, however, I want to argue that a structurally analogous
780 line of argument to that given above supports a radical detachment of the prescrip-
781 tive and hypological in the moral domain.

28FL01 ²⁸ Lasonen-Aarnio (2010), see also Hirvelä (2019).

29FL01 ²⁹ See also D. Greco (2021), who draws on Kauppinen (2018).

782 5 The independence of moral rightness and moral blameworthiness

783 The moral analogue of my picture in epistemology allows for cases in which one
784 is morally blameworthy for an action that violates no moral norms. It also allows
785 for cases in which one is morally praiseworthy for an action that is morally wrong.
786 Since I have focused more on the relationship between blame and wrongness, and
787 less on that between praise and rightness, the discussion below will be focused on
788 the former, and in particular, on *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs* (OBW). If this prin-
789 ciple is correct, then a subject cannot be morally blameworthy for doing something
790 that is morally right.

791 Though *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs* is often taken for granted without argu-
792 ment, it is controversial, and rightly so. Indeed, many who explicitly discuss the
793 principle reject it. Consider, for instance, the category of the *suberogatory*. Sube-
794 rogatory actions are morally bad, but not morally wrong or forbidden. Numerous
795 authors recognize the category of the suberogatory, arguing that in such cases agents
796 can be blameworthy without doing anything that is morally wrong.³⁰ While I am
797 very sympathetic to these views, my case against OBW won't rest on presenting
798 putative examples of suberogatory actions.

799 I will now give what I see as the most convincing argument against OBW, which
800 I call the *Independence Argument*. The argument appeals to a kind of independence
801 between facts about the quality of will manifested by an action and the prescriptive
802 status of the action. The argument bears a structural analogy to the one presented
803 above for a radical detachment of the hypological and prescriptive in the epistemic
804 domain. In particular, it draws on premises that are analogous to *Competent Failure*
805 and *Incompetent Success*.

806 The argument will draw on a weak quality of will condition on moral responsibil-
807 ity of the sort already discussed above. I do not assume, as some quality of will the-
808 orists do, that failing to manifest good will or regard, or even manifesting ill will, is
809 a sufficient condition on blameworthiness. I only assume that it is necessary. There
810 may be cases in which an agent manifests ill will, but is exempted from being held
811 responsible. And perhaps there are even cases where the agent is excused for mani-
812 festing ill will. Psychopaths, sociopaths, and children can arguably manifest ill will,
813 even though they are not thereby blameworthy (Cf. Watson, 2004: 228). All that is
814 needed is the assumption that in some cases an agent's ill will, or lack of good will,
815 can render an otherwise blameless act blameworthy. The act is rendered blamewor-
816 thy when the other conditions for moral accountability are in place.

817 The Independence Argument relies on the following analogues of *Competent*
818 *Failure* and *Incompetent Success*:

819 ***Goodwilled wrongdoing***

820 Manifesting good will is not sufficient for doing the morally right thing: mor-
821 ally wrong actions can manifest good will.

³⁰ For defences of the suberogatory see e.g. Driver (1992), McKenna (2012, Ch 8), Macnamara (2011, 2013), Schoemaker (2013), Mason (2017), Harman (2016a, b), Thomson (1971).

822 ***Illwilled rightdoing***

823 Manifesting good will, or even failing to manifest ill will, is not necessary for
824 doing the morally right thing: morally right actions can manifest defective or
825 even ill will.

826 By ‘morally right’ I mean either morally permitted or morally required. These
827 two theses entail that there is a kind of modal independence between facts about the
828 quality of one’s will and facts about moral rightness, just as *Competent Failure* and
829 *Incompetent Success* entail that there is a kind of modal independence between facts
830 about the quality of one’s dispositions and facts about whether one’s doxastic state
831 is successful by various standards built into candidate prescriptive epistemic norms.
832 The argument against *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs* will rely on *Illwilled Rightdo-*
833 *ing* in particular. *Illwilled Rightdoing* entails that the fact that an action manifests
834 lack of good will, or even the fact that it manifests ill will, is not a sufficient condi-
835 tion for its being morally wrong. As pointed out above, according to a wide range
836 of views, good will is not necessary for doing what is morally right; even an action
837 that is morally required can fail to manifest good will. The claim now is that one can
838 do what is morally right even while manifesting ill will.³¹ Note that the case against
839 *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs* being made here is compatible with the claim that
840 *some* actions are morally wrong in virtue of manifesting ill will; what is denied is
841 just that manifesting ill will *always* suffices to make actions morally wrong.³²

842 Just what a case of illwilled, and thereby blameworthy, rightdoing would look
843 like depends on one’s first-order moral views. I do not here want to take a stance on
844 normative ethics beyond the claim that the correct first-order theory of moral right-
845 ness should allow for the kind of modal independence of facts about an agent’s will
846 and facts about moral rightness or wrongness expressed in *Goodwilled Wrongdoing*
847 and *Illwilled Rightdoing*. Moral rightness and wrongness are not just matters of the
848 will: good will is neither necessary nor sufficient for the rightness of an action, and
849 ill will is neither necessary nor sufficient for its wrongness.

850 It is instructive, however, to have a few candidate cases on the table. I urge the
851 reader to bear in mind that my argument does not rest on intuitive verdicts about
852 cases, but on general theoretical considerations. Nevertheless, here is one candidate
853 case:

854 ***Trolley***

855 James can divert an out-of-control trolley away from 500 trapped track work-
856 ers and onto Paul. He diverts the trolley, however, not to save the 500 people,
857 but solely in order to see Paul, whom James hates, die.³³

³¹ Perhaps one can be blameworthy without manifesting ill will, just by manifesting insufficiently good will. Indeed, cases of this sort were pointed out above in connection with the suberogatory. If this is right, then one can argue against OBW without appeal to *Illwilled Rightdoing*.

³² According to what Liao (2012) calls the *Intention Principle*, sometimes an agent’s intention can render an otherwise permissible act impermissible. Those who subscribe to the Doctrine of Double Effect, for instance, are committed to some such claim. Graham (2014) also discusses cases in which an agent seems to be violating a moral prescription in virtue of manifesting ill will.

³³ The case is adapted from ones given in Graham (2014: 395) and Kamm (2001: 156).

858 We can, of course, make the number of trapped workers arbitrarily high. I find it
859 plausible that at least if there are enough people in the way of the trolley, James is
860 not only permitted, but morally required, to divert it. James very well knows that by
861 diverting the trolley he would inevitably be killing Paul. Perhaps, then, he is mor-
862 ally required to kill Paul. Someone with a more perspectivist or subjectivist view
863 of moral rightness can concur: after all, James knows all the relevant facts about his
864 situation. James's motives can be further embellished. Perhaps, for instance, James
865 has a deep-seated hatred of persons of a certain social or ethnic group that Paul
866 is a member of. By diverting the trolley and killing Paul, James does what moral-
867 ity requires. But he is nevertheless blameworthy for doing so. Or, to give a differ-
868 ent variant of the case, assume that James is convinced that a certain deontological
869 moral theory is correct, perhaps reasonably so. The theory prohibits diverting a trol-
870 ley onto one person in order to save the lives of even 500 people. However, James
871 is malicious, and set on doing whatever is morally wrong. Due to his moral befud-
872 dlement, James does not succeed in his intention of wrongdoing, but his malicious
873 intention nevertheless makes him blameworthy.³⁴

874 This is, of course, just one candidate case, and my argument does not rest on
875 intuitions regarding particular cases. The general considerations appealed to by the
876 Independence Argument are *Illwilled Rightdoing*, which amounts to the claim that
877 manifesting ill will is not a sufficient condition on moral wrongness, together with
878 the claim that in some cases of illwilled rightdoing the quality of one's will – or,
879 more generally, the mental states such as intentions, concerns, motives, desires and
880 so forth leading to one's action – renders the action blameworthy. I find the case
881 for *Illwilled Rightdoing* so strong that I won't discuss the possibility of rejecting it.
882 However, the defender of *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs* could accept this, while
883 rejecting the claim that in some cases of illwilled rightdoing the ill will manifested
884 by an action renders the agent blameworthy for the action itself. In the above case,
885 for instance, they could claim that James is not blameworthy for diverting the trolley
886 onto Paul.

887 It is difficult to see how such a view could be reconciled with the thought that at
888 least in the absence of an excuse or an exemption, an action that manifests ill will
889 is morally blameworthy. For instance, James's action of diverting the trolley does
890 manifest ill will: after all, he diverts the trolley out of nefarious motives and inten-
891 tions, and he has no excuse or exemption.

892 The proponent of *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs* might try to argue that James is
893 not blameworthy for diverting the trolley, but that he is blameworthy for doing so
894 out of nefarious motives. Alternatively, one might simply argue that what James is
895 blameworthy for is the ill will itself manifested by his action. Either way, James is
896 blameworthy at least for manifesting ill will. Note, however, that if James is blame-
897 worthy for his will or motives, and if *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs* is true, then it
898 follows that James is morally required to manifest good will, or at least required to
899 not manifest ill will: if James can only be blamed for what is morally wrong, and
900 he is to be blamed for his will or motives, then morality must prohibit manifesting

³⁴ According to Zimmerman (1997) acting freely while believing that what one does is morally wrong suffices for blameworthiness. I disagree with this general claim.

901 or acting out of such will or motives. It would be ad hoc, however, to accept this in
902 response to my argument without accepting that the prescriptions of morality gener-
903 ally extend to an agent's will.

904 In the following section I discuss a view on which morality, in addition to every-
905 thing else it prescribes, prescribes manifesting good will, or at least not manifesting
906 ill will. Part of my reason for doing so is to respond to the outlined attempt to save
907 *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs*. But the discussion has independent interest in that it
908 outlines a view of the normative status of good will in ethics that parallels my view
909 of the normative status of good dispositions in epistemology.

910 **6 Doing the right thing out of ill will**

911 In the previous section I gave an argument against *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs*.
912 If there are cases of illwilled rightdoing, and the quality of will condition on blame-
913 worthiness assumed is right, then in some cases an agent is blameworthy for an
914 action that is morally permitted, perhaps even required. I now want to discuss the
915 response that in such cases agents are not blameworthy for the morally right actions,
916 but instead, for manifesting ill will. So, for instance, while James is not blamewor-
917 thy for diverting the trolley, he is blameworthy for manifesting ill will, and perhaps
918 for diverting the trolley from ill will. But then, by *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs*, it
919 is morally wrong for James to manifest such ill will. To avoid an ad hoc view, the
920 defender of *OBW* must accept that morality makes prescriptions concerning one's
921 will or motives: morality universally requires manifesting good will, or at the very
922 least, it requires not manifesting ill will.

923 However, it is far from clear how such prescriptions concerning one's will are
924 to be reconciled with other moral prescriptions. Indeed, I will now argue that if the
925 requirements of morality thus extend to one's will, then its prescriptions will some-
926 times come into conflict: there will be cases in which one cannot both satisfy the
927 requirements concerning one's will and satisfy other moral requirements. The rela-
928 tionship between manifesting good will and doing what is morally right is struc-
929 turally analogous to that between manifesting dispositions conducive to a valuable
930 epistemic success and conforming to a prescriptive epistemic norm tied to the suc-
931 cess in question. Just as success-conducive dispositions can have epistemic norma-
932 tive relevance even if there are no prescriptions to manifest such dispositions, one's
933 will can have moral normative relevance even if morality does not make universal
934 prescriptions concerning one's will.

935 Why would a universal prescription to manifest good will, or to not manifest ill
936 will, come into conflict with other moral prescriptions? Because in some situations
937 morality prescribes doing things that one just cannot do – that it is not feasible to do
938 – while manifesting good will. And conversely: because in some situations morality
939 prohibits doing the very things that manifest good will. Sometimes one is doomed to
940 either goodwill wrongdoing or to illwilled rightdoing.

941 Why so? *Incompetent Success* states that certain kinds of cases are possible: it is
942 possible to succeed by various candidate prescriptive norms whilst failing to mani-
943 fest good, success-conducive dispositions, and perhaps even by manifesting bad

944 ones. But as pointed out above, the arguments supporting the principle support
 945 stronger claim, which is that in some situations one *can only* succeed by manifest-
 946 ing suboptimal dispositions. In some situations none of the most success-conducive
 947 humanly feasible dispositions would manifest in successful choices, actions, or dox-
 948 astic states. For instance, victims of evil deceivers cannot form true beliefs about
 949 the world by manifesting dispositions conducive to true belief. The same points, I
 950 argued, apply to perspectivist norms. For instance, sometimes one can only propor-
 951 tion one's beliefs to the evidence by manifesting dispositions that are not conducive
 952 to proportioning one's beliefs to the evidence.

953 The Independence Argument against *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs* appealed
 954 to *Illwilled Rightdoing*, which claims that it is possible to do what is morally right
 955 while manifesting ill will. I now want to make a stronger claim, which is supported
 956 by considerations stated above: there are situations in which one cannot do what is
 957 morally required by manifesting good will. Compare: there are situations in which
 958 one cannot succeed while manifesting success-conducive dispositions. Whatever
 959 facts about one's mental life enter into determining facts about the quality of will
 960 manifested, only certain combinations of those facts are feasible in a given situation.
 961 We could talk of feasible *motivational profiles*, talk of motivation being a place-
 962 holder for the states or properties of the agent that facts about blameworthiness and
 963 praiseworthiness depend on. In any given situation, only a limited range of motiva-
 964 tional profiles are feasible. We can evaluate these profiles as good or bad, or better
 965 or worse, depending on the quality of will that they exemplify.

966 My hypothesis, then, is that whichever first-order normative theory is correct, it
 967 will give rise to cases in which the best humanly feasible motivational profiles mani-
 968 fest as actions that are morally wrong. Sometimes a subject just cannot do what is
 969 morally right while manifesting good will. She is doomed to either doing what is
 970 morally wrong, or to doing what is right while manifesting a defective will. And in
 971 some such cases, I claim, one's will is defective enough to make blame appropriate.

972 For now, let the morally required actions be those prescribed by the moral norms
 973 that do not concern an agent's will. The claim is that sometimes the facts that set-
 974 tle what one is morally required to do are independent and separable from the facts
 975 that settle what manifests good will. That is, the prescriptive facts can be changed
 976 without changing facts about how good will manifests itself. The hypothesis is that
 977 on any plausible view of moral rightness there will be pairs of cases of the following
 978 sort:

c_1	c_2
p , and therefore one is required to φ	Not- p , and therefore one is required not to φ
Good will manifests as φ 'ing and no other action	Good will manifests as φ 'ing and no other action.

979

980 In case c_1 one is required to φ , and whether or not one is required to φ depends on
 981 the truth of a proposition p that does not concern one's will. While p is true in case
 982 c_1 , in an otherwise similar case c_2 in which p is false, it would be morally wrong
 983 for one to φ . Whether morality requires φ 'ing might depend, for instance, on facts

984 about another person's intentions, facts about exactly where and when one promised
985 to meet a friend, facts about what the desires and needs of a loved one are, or even
986 facts about the expected utilities of available actions. Assume further that in c_1 good
987 will manifests as φ 'ing, and it is not possible for the agent to perform any of the
988 other available actions while manifesting good will. The claim is that there is a pos-
989 sible case c_2 in which p is false and hence, in which morality prohibits φ 'ing, but in
990 which good will nevertheless still manifests in φ 'ing. That is, it is just not feasible to
991 manifest good will while doing anything other than φ 'ing in c_2 , even though moral-
992 ity requires not φ 'ing. If there is, in addition, a norm that prescribes manifesting
993 good will, then that norm will prescribe φ 'ing. Morality will make prescriptions that
994 one cannot jointly satisfy.

995 Could the problem be evaded by perspectivising moral norms? It cannot, for rea-
996 sons similar to those already rehearsed. As an instructive example, consider again
997 a perspectivist view that deploys knowledge filtering. On such a view facts about
998 moral rightness depend on the normative reasons a subject has, and a proposition p
999 is among the subject's reasons only if she knows p . Knowledge filtering makes nor-
1000 mative facts – in this case, facts about moral rightness – depend on facts about what
1001 one knows. But sometimes there are no feasible motivational profiles that track facts
1002 about one's own epistemic position.

1003 Recall the two cases described above, *Enlightened Beatrix* and *Gettiered Beatrix*.
1004 Gettiered Beatrix believes, but does not know, that Bill is about to murder her chil-
1005 dren and that the only way she can prevent this is by killing Bill. Hence, Gettiered
1006 Beatrix does not possess the reasons that enlightened Beatrix does, though it looks
1007 to her as though she does. As a result, though enlightened Beatrix is morally permit-
1008 ted and perhaps even required to kill Bill, Gettiered Beatrix is not morally permitted
1009 to do so. If enlightened Beatrix kills Bill because she knows this is the only way to
1010 protect her children, perhaps even lamenting the fact that doing so requires her to
1011 take a human life, her will is certainly not defective, and she is not blameworthy for
1012 killing Bill. Indeed, if anything, she would be blameworthy for not taking action to
1013 protect her children. By contrast, it is not morally permissible for Gettiered Beatrix
1014 to kill Bill. However, the difference between enlightened Beatrix's knowledge of the
1015 relevant facts and Gettiered Beatrix's lack of knowledge is not a difference that it
1016 is feasible to track. A motivational profile that manifests as killing Bill in the first
1017 case, but as not killing Bill in the second, is just not humanly feasible. In so far as
1018 enlightened Beatrix would be morally blameworthy for failing to protect her chil-
1019 dren, so would Gettiered Beatrix. It is just not feasible for Gettiered Beatrix to do
1020 what morality requires except by manifesting a defective will. Note, once again, that
1021 my argument does not rest on appeal to intuitions about a particular case. A view
1022 that deploys knowledge filtering is bound, I argued, to give rises to pairs of cases
1023 with the structure described.

1024 Let me wrap up my discussion of a view that retains *Only Blameworthy for*
1025 *Wrongs* by adopting moral prescriptions that universally require manifesting good
1026 will, or at least ones that universally prohibit manifesting ill will. Since morality
1027 does not merely concern matters of will, such prescriptions will, I argued, some-
1028 times come into conflict with other moral prescriptions: the two kinds of prescrip-
1029 tions will make requirements that it is impossible to jointly satisfy. In some cases it

1030 is just not feasible to do as morality requires while manifesting good will, and it may
1031 not even be feasible to do as morality requires without manifesting ill will.

1032 But why think that the requirements of morality cannot come into conflict? First,
1033 it is good to recall the broader dialectical context. It was argued that my view of
1034 epistemic normativity is problematic since if I am right, then the hypological and
1035 deontic come apart in the epistemic domain in ways that they cannot come apart
1036 in the moral domain. *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs*, it was objected, is a widely
1037 accepted principle amongst moral philosophers. As pointed out above, numerous
1038 authors who consider the principle reject it. But further, an *Ought Implies Can* prin-
1039 ciple is itself widely accepted.³⁵ And yet, I have argued, given plausible assump-
1040 tions, the principle is in conflict with *OBW*. But my case here does not ultimately
1041 rest on assuming an *Ought Implies Can* principle. For every new layer of moral pre-
1042 scriptions that sometimes cannot be jointly satisfied with other, existing prescrip-
1043 tions, strikes me as a theoretical cost. I have argued that facts about quality of will
1044 can have relevance for moral normativity without there being universal moral pre-
1045 scriptions that concern matters of will. Quality of will can have normative relevance
1046 of both an evaluative and hypological kind even if morality does not issue in general
1047 prescriptions concerning the quality of one's will.

1048 I have sketched a broad view of how and why *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs*
1049 fails in the moral domain. The argument is structurally similar to the argument I
1050 gave for why the epistemic analogue of *OBW* is wrong. Nothing that has been said
1051 casts doubt on the thought that in the absence of an excuse or exemption, we are
1052 blameworthy for violating prescriptive norms. But if *Only Blameworthy for Wrongs*
1053 is false, then blameworthiness is not an exclusive mark of the prescriptive. We can
1054 no longer use being an appropriate object of blame as evidence that a prescriptive
1055 norm has been violated.³⁶

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³⁵ See e.g. Vranas (2007).

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