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# ON THE TENABILITY OF NON-FACTUALISM WITH REGARD TO THE A PRIORI

BY

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Abstract: In a number of recent articles, Hartry Field has attempted to reclaim the *a priori* for his own brand of non-factualist epistemology by introducing a non-epistemic notion of the *a priori* based purely upon the position of individual beliefs within belief systems. In this article we examine (i) whether a robust enough notion of apriority is available to Field, and, by extension, to the radical empiricist and (ii) whether it is possible to connect up the non-epistemic notion of apriority with questions about the epistemic status of those beliefs that happen to be *a priori* in the non-epistemic sense.

Let us distinguish between two preliminary notions of the *a priori*. The first notion counts those beliefs as *a priori* that are believed for reasons independent of the empirical support available to them. Call these *weakly a priori* beliefs. The second notion adds to the concept of the *weakly a priori* the requirement that no empirical evidence could count as evidence *against* those beliefs. More precisely, no empirical evidence could both leave the status of those beliefs as *weakly a priori* untouched *and* count as a defeater for the beliefs in question. Call this notion that of *strongly a priori* beliefs.

It ought to be clear that even the most radical empiricist (at least those who countenance the notion of *beliefs* at all) can, without difficulty, accept the notion of the *weakly a priori*. For the relevant requirements involve only that a subject believe a particular proposition that *p* independently of the empirical support for that proposition.<sup>1</sup> Consider Quine's statement that "[t]he totality of our so-called knowledge or beliefs ... is like a field of force whose boundary conditions are experience. A conflict with

experience at the periphery occasions readjustments in the interior of the field ... But the total field is so underdetermined by its boundary conditions, experience, that there is much latitude of choice as to what statements to reevaluate in the light of any single contrary experience. No particular experiences are linked with any particular statements in the interior of the field ....”<sup>2</sup> The fact that any particular statement within the interior of the field is *potentially* independent of falsifying experience might seem to make the notion of the weakly *a priori* completely trivial – any statement at a distance from the periphery of the field could then be considered weakly *a priori*. It is not clear, however, that the radical empiricist could not use his knowledge of the dispositions of believers to determine those beliefs that are in fact, under normal circumstances, vulnerable to falsification by contrary experience. Despite their position within the interior of the field, those beliefs could then be discounted as belonging to the weakly *a priori*. Note, however, that the caveat “under normal circumstances” cannot be ignored here without running the risk of dissolving the distinction between the weakly *a priori* and the strongly *a priori*. Strongly *a priori* beliefs would then be those that would not be vulnerable to falsification under any circumstances, *given the dispositions of the believers for whom those beliefs are strongly a priori*. The Quinean *must* take into account the dispositions of the believers whose beliefs are under consideration, for otherwise *no beliefs* would be strongly *a priori*.<sup>3</sup>

In Quine’s explication of the relation between belief and evidence in “Two Dogmas,” the highly metaphorical talk of belief systems as “fields of force” never gets cashed out in a more perspicuous manner. The central point, however, remains obvious. To think of the weakly and strongly *a priori* in this manner is to think of them, chiefly, as being divorced from epistemic notions such as truth-conducivity or reliability. The Quinean account sketched here is one of the *psychology* of belief, viz., *how* it is that – given a certain experiential history – people have the beliefs that they do. Thus, even were one to give a Quinean account of the notion of the *a priori* on the lines sketched above, the question would still remain whether – and if so, how – to connect the Quinean notion to more properly epistemic ones involving the connection between those Quinean *a priori* beliefs and what is true.

## 1.

Hartry Field’s account of the *a priori* in his recent article “The Apriority of Logic”<sup>4</sup> seems to be an attempt to answer precisely that question. Beginning with the notions of the weakly and strongly *a priori* under consideration here, Field sees the further question concerning the epistemic status of *a priori* beliefs, so construed, to be “whether or not it is a good

thing to have an evidential system that licenses the beliefs in a (weakly or strongly) *a priori* fashion.” (Field, 364) As Field gives no more than the hint of an answer to this question, and devotes the bulk of his discussion to the question as to whether our logical beliefs are in fact strongly *a priori*, in the non-epistemic sense here developed, we ought first turn to an examination of Field’s points on this matter. As Field’s discussion is far more perspicuous than Quine’s discussion, considered earlier, this will also allow us more clearly to examine the idea of a radical empiricist notion of aprioricity.

Field defines a person’s *evidential system* as being an idealized description of that person’s belief-forming and belief-retaining behavior. Field terms the sort of non-epistemic “justification” under consideration here *quasi-descriptive justification*, and defines it in terms of being licensed by an evidential system. If S’s evidential system E licenses S to believe that *p* under conditions C, and S does in fact believe that *p* under C, then S is quasi-descriptively licensed to believe that *p* under C. Given these notions, we may define the notions of the weakly and strongly *a priori* more rigorously. A claim is weakly *a priori* for S iff S’s evidential system E licenses the belief in that claim even in the absence of any particular sensory inputs. A claim is strongly *a priori* for S iff that claim is weakly *a priori* for S and S’s evidential system E does not license the retraction of the belief in that claim on the basis of any sensory inputs (cf. Field, 363).

## 2.

Field offers two arguments for the strong aprioricity of logic. The first takes the form of a dilemma for the skeptic with regard to the aprioricity of logic, whereas the second is something of a transcendental argument involving the definition of quasi-descriptive justification. We shall consider them in turn. In the first argument, Field asks the skeptic to consider an instance in which S, upon encountering certain contrary evidence, retracts the belief in a particular logical truth, *q*. In this case there are two possible reasons for S’s retracting her belief: (a) rejecting *q* does not require a radical shift in S’s cognitive practices; (b) rejecting *q* does require a radical shift in S’s cognitive practices. If (a), then rejecting *q* was a conceptual possibility for S all along, in which case the rejection of *q* should not count as empirically-based. If (b), then rejecting *q* involves a shift in S’s entire evidential system. But then, according to Field, neither choice involves accepting that *q* was not strongly *a priori*. For, if (a), then S’s rejection of *q* was not on the basis of sensory inputs, and thus did not violate *q*’s status as strongly *a priori*. And, if (b), then S’s rejection of *q* does not impinge upon *q*’s status as strongly *a priori* with respect to S’s

original evidential system,  $E_0$ ; rather, S's rejection of  $q$  marks the beginning of her embrace of a new evidential system,  $E_1$ .

One ought – at the very latest here – to begin to feel unease at the prospect of the availability of a robust notion of the *a priori* for the radical empiricist. For clearly, if this argument is valid, then it seems that *any* number of statements could be strongly *a priori*, so long as we envision an appropriate evidential system. The problem with Field's conception that this argument underscores is that Field's conception quite simply fails to do justice to our pretheoretic notion of the strongly *a priori*. When we say of a belief that  $p$  that it is strongly *a priori* for S, we generally take this to mean that S will hold on to her belief that  $p$  come what may. According to Field's account, however, the most we can say is that a particular belief (say, the belief that  $q$ ) is strongly *a priori* for S *under a particular evidential system  $E_i$* . As Field's account explicitly allows for the possibility that S may radically change her evidential system, Field can no longer satisfy our expectation that certain beliefs (e.g., beliefs in certain fundamental logical truths) *must* be held by all believers (or, at the very least, all human believers).

Thus, Field's first argument results in the abandonment of the idea that there are certain beliefs found at the core of all belief systems in favor of the far weaker notion that certain core beliefs are definitive of certain belief systems (so that the abandonment of those beliefs necessarily involves a change of belief system). That is, the most that Field can say of the status of a given belief as *a priori* is that its status as *a priori* is definitive of a certain belief system. For S to claim that a particular belief (say, the belief that  $p$ ) is *a priori* for her is merely for her to claim that she has one of a number of belief systems for which it is definitive that the belief that  $p$  have a *a priori* status.

A point raised in Field's second argument only exacerbates this difficulty. Field notes that, because the classification of a particular belief's being strongly *a priori* for S involves an index to a particular evidential system – which is itself an idealization of S's belief practices – and because we can idealize in a variety of ways, “there is simply no idealization-independent fact as to whether [a] contemplated shift in logic would be evidence driven. In that case, the question of whether all of classical logic is empirically infeasible for us ... has no fully determinate answer” (Field, 368). This seems to be less an argument than a capitulation. For Field is accepting the possibility that, for any given statement in logic, there is an idealization of our belief-practices for which that statement would not be strongly *a priori*. Indeed, when pressed, Field admits that he merely wants to argue that there would be no way to “concoct one evidential system that allowed for *every* such change” (Field, 368 n. 9; boldface mine). It seems that the skeptic could be perfectly satisfied with this admission. No one is suggesting that the skeptic must provide one single evidential system allowing for every change from

our currently held logical beliefs. It is enough that, in response to any claim of S's that "My belief that  $q_n$  is strongly *a priori*," the skeptic could confront S with  $E_n$ , an idealization of S's belief practices according to which  $q_n$  is not strongly *a priori*, and point out that S can appeal to no fact of the matter to show that her evidential system is not  $E_n$ . That is, for any belief  $q_m$  of S's, the skeptic can show that S can appeal to no fact of the matter in support of her claim that  $q_m$  is strongly *a priori* for her.

### 3.

Field's account of the strongly *a priori* not only seems to violate pretheoretic intuitions about the *a priori*; it also undermines Field's main argument in support of the fact that our beliefs in logical truths are strongly *a priori*. Field's argument rests on the exploitation of what he considers to be a crucial distinction between our beliefs in logical truths and our beliefs in, e.g., the truths of geometry. He considers a case in which "the advocate of an evidential system in which geometry is strongly *a priori* realizes that it's *false* that the geometric beliefs licensed by his evidential system depend on the geometric facts about space" (Field, 374). Field sees this case as pointing to an "epistemologically crucial" distinction between geometry and logic, and it is this distinction that supports the status of beliefs in the truths of logic as strongly *a priori*, while allowing us to accept that one ought to deny that status to beliefs in the truths of geometry.

In the case of an evidential system that treated geometry as strongly *a priori*, Field points out, "we would have reason to think that we would have the same geometric beliefs whatever the geometric facts. This would create a serious epistemological problem: it would tend to undermine those beliefs, or at least create a considerable epistemological puzzle about their legitimacy" (Field, 374–5). How precisely does the serious epistemological problem arise? Field provides the answer earlier in his discussion, when he notes that if our geometric beliefs were strongly *a priori*, then they "wouldn't depend on the geometric facts in the way they should; more generally, the accuracy of our geometric beliefs would not be counterfactually persistent" (Field, 372–3). Field's argument here seems to play on a distinction between geometric beliefs and beliefs in logical truths involving the fact that we cannot make sense of the notion of counterfactual persistence without first presupposing our beliefs in logic.

The difficulty with this argument is that it is, on Field's own account, problematic – at least in a number of cases – that someone whose evidential system was such that her beliefs about geometry were strongly *a priori* could come to see that it's false that those beliefs depend on the geometric facts about space. Let us consider one such case in greater detail.

Call our evidential system, in which we recognize that space behaves locally as if it were Euclidean – although it is, in fact, non-Euclidean –  $E_1$ . Call the evidential system in which it is strongly *a priori* that space behaves locally as if it were Euclidean – although it is non-Euclidean –  $\hat{E}_1$ . Now it does seem possible that someone whose evidential system is  $\hat{E}_1$  could imagine the universe being globally Euclidean, in which case it would be true that someone with evidential system  $\hat{E}_1$  could come to see that her geometric beliefs are not counterfactually persistent. But consider someone for whom Euclidean geometry *alone* is strongly *a priori*. Call their evidential system  $\hat{E}_0$ . It is not clear that someone with evidential system  $\hat{E}_0$  could come to see that her beliefs were not counterfactually persistent, because it is not clear that someone with evidential system  $\hat{E}_0$  would envision possible worlds in which Euclidean geometry were not true. For someone with evidential system  $\hat{E}_0$ , Euclidean geometry would be metaphysically necessary in precisely the same way that logical truths are metaphysically necessary – Euclidean geometry would define the framework of possible worlds just as does the law of non-contradiction.

Despite the fact that this case seems to re-establish a similarity between geometric beliefs and beliefs in logical truths sufficient enough to undermine Field's argument in favor of the strongly *a priori* status of our beliefs in logical truths, we must consider a further complication. For, although Field's initial argument seems to rest on a distinction between geometric beliefs and beliefs in logical truths stemming from considerations of the metaphysical necessity of the subject matter of those respective beliefs, this does not seem to be Field's intention. He makes this point clear when he stresses that his "response to the sceptical problem for logic doesn't turn on the logic of counterfactuals. What it turns on rather is reasoning about the application of rules to counterfactual inputs. And [his] point [is] *not* that there is a difficulty making sense of the counterfactual inputs in the case of logic; rather the point [is] that we had no idea how to apply the rules if we were taking logic as up for grabs" (Field, 376).

Field's point here seems to be that the very rules of argumentation used to assess claims about, e.g., counterfactual persistence, involve the logical beliefs whose status is under question. Thus, in contrast to the case of belief in Euclidean geometry, one simply cannot – even hypothetically – relinquish one's belief in logical truths and still be able to *assess* those beliefs, for their very assessment requires that one rely on those beliefs. Recall, however, that Field believes it perfectly possible that there be other belief systems whose core logical beliefs differ from our own. And if this is the case, then it would seem that we do – theoretically – have the opportunity to assess our own logical beliefs without relying on those very beliefs; we can adopt a rival belief system. Field makes much of the fact that we *cannot*, in reality, adopt such a rival system. None are in the offing. This response, however, involves a merely practical consideration;

such a response does not address the question as whether our logical beliefs in particular have a special status that *requires* that they be *a priori*.

In order to see this more clearly, consider the case of someone with the belief system  $\hat{E}_0$ , considered above. It is quite possible that an  $\hat{E}_0$ -believer could worry about the *a priori* status of his beliefs in Euclidean geometry; like Field, he could also claim that no other systems were *available* from whose vantage point he could assess the merits of his own geometry. The fact that no other belief systems are available to an  $\hat{E}_0$ -believer at a particular time does not, of course, mean that he will not later come to discover, e.g., the consistency of Riemannian geometry; this would merely be, on Field's account, the adoption by that (now former)  $\hat{E}_0$ -believer of a new evidential system. But then this case is no different from a case in which we come to develop a new logic that (we believe) better meets our needs and abandon the old logic for the new. If this is the case, however, then the argument for the strong apriority of our beliefs in the truths of logic does not seem to be different in kind from the  $\hat{E}_0$ -believer's argument for the strong apriority of Euclidean geometric truths.

#### 4.

Suppose that we grant for a moment that Field's conception of the strong *a priori* – despite the seemingly damning difficulties considered above – were plausible. How would we go about hooking up that conception in interesting ways with the questions involving the epistemic status of those beliefs that happen to be strongly *a priori*? As we noted earlier, Field suggests that we take the question of the epistemic status of a particular strongly *a priori* belief – say the belief that *p* – to be that of whether it is good that the belief that *p* is strongly *a priori*. Field – noting that we can take strongly *a priori* beliefs to be roughly those that are insensitive to empirical evidence – rephrases this question in terms of whether it is good that certain beliefs be insensitive to empirical evidence. Now, in the case of logic, one way to defend the strong apriority of logical beliefs would be to claim that there is no possible empirical evidence that could contradict those beliefs. As it is hard to fault beliefs for being insensitive to nonexistent evidence, this would seem to be a plausible defense. This route, however, is not open to Field. As he notes, he “sympathize[s] with ... nonfactualism about the special sort of necessity that logical truths are often said to possess” (Field, 370, n. 12). Thus, questions of possibility and necessity are themselves, for Field, evaluative claims, and any appeal to the necessity of logical truths as a way of rendering contradictory evidence impossible would simply shift the discussion without settling the issue. Unfortunately for Field, however, he can offer little in the way of positive support for the value of our evidential systems that take logic to be strongly *a priori*. He has this to say in defense of our evidential system:

Perhaps there are ... evidential systems that are better than any system that idealizes our current practice. But even if we knew there to be such a preferable system ... this knowledge wouldn't be terribly interesting if we had no idea what it was like. In particular, it wouldn't undermine the system we employ: that system could be an extremely good one, even if there were better ones. (Field, 370)

Again, this does not seem to be much of a defense of *a priorism* with respect to logic. It amounts to little more than the recognition that logical truths are strongly *a priori* for us, and to the further point that part of what it means to be strongly *a priori* is to be deeply held, so deeply held that it is hard to imagine our not having those beliefs (in this case, the beliefs about logical truths). The problem with the defense *qua defense* is that there is very little here above and beyond the observation that, *with respect to our psychology of belief*, truths of logic are treated as being strongly *a priori*. Field offers nothing in the way of support for the claim that this is good: in speaking of the *value* of our own system in the above quote, he merely says that the system "could be an extremely good one." This is clearly insufficient.

Compare the situation for Field with that of a *factualist* with regard to epistemology – i.e., someone who thinks "there are facts about evidence, and that an evidential system is 'correct' if it accords with those facts." Despite Field's protestation that "a factualist approach to epistemology seems ... seriously misguided," it is unclear what Field's objection could amount to in the case of factualism about the *a priori*. As Field admits, he "take[s] for granted that the so-called logical truths are indeed true in the most straightforward sense" (Field, 370). Thus it would seem that, in the case of logical truths, there *are* – even for Field – facts about evidence. Given this, it is not clear why Field should (could?) deny that an evidential system *can* only be correct if it accords with those facts, viz., the facts about "the so-called logical truths." Certainly, there could clearly be no better defense of the strong apriority (taken in the non-epistemic sense) of logic than that those indefeasible beliefs (in the so-called truths of logic) are in fact *true*. Indeed, if we were to combine the maligned factualisms of epistemology *and* necessity, we would have the best defense of the strong apriority of logic: our indefeasible beliefs are beliefs in propositions that *cannot be false*. In such a case, we could describe the strong apriority of logic not as insensitivity to (albeit impossible) countervailing empirical evidence, but as *sensitivity* to the metaphysical necessity of logical truths.

## 5.

The discussion of factualism with regard to epistemology points to an underlying problem with Field's cashing out the epistemic status of beliefs

in terms of the value accrued by the believers who hold them. Field wishes to rephrase the question of the epistemic status of a particular belief in terms of whether it is good to hold that belief. And, as Field himself notes, assessing whether an action is good is hardly a straightforward manner (cf. Field, 364). In many situations, it might be more conducive to one's psychological well-being for one to believe a falsehood than to know the truth. Indeed, cases demonstrating the health benefits stemming from taking placebos are excellent examples that even one's *physical* well-being can be positively affected by believing falsely. Furthermore, Field suggests that one weigh reliability against explanatory and predictive power in assessing justificatory methods.<sup>5</sup> The immediate difficulty for Field is this: as with the problem stemming from the myriad choices available in the idealization of a given evidential system, there are going to be a huge number of definitions of the good against which to judge the value of a particular belief.

Field's response to this difficulty will be to embrace it as grist for his mill: this is precisely why, on Field's account, epistemology is non-factual. But this would be too quick. There doesn't seem to be any obstacle to the epistemological factualist's taking truth, for example, to be *the* measure of epistemic status – a belief is (epistemically) good iff it is true. By doing this, the factualist would then have a similar definition available to her in the case of decision methods with regard to belief: a method is (epistemically) good iff employing it leads one to retain true beliefs and reject false ones.<sup>6</sup> This is not to claim that the factualist has yet come up with an exhaustive account of what it is for a belief (or a decision method) to be good in the epistemically relevant sense. It is merely to point out that the search for such an account is not obviously misdirected. If this is the case, however, the factualist is allowed to appeal to common sense intuitions to the effect that there is a fact of the matter regarding epistemic merit in deciding which beliefs – and, by extension, which methods – are (epistemically) good. It is the non-factualist who is not entitled to make such an appeal, and who must therefore provide an alternate account as to what he is doing. If Field truly wishes to embrace epistemological nonfactualism, the onus remains on him to demonstrate that *he* is entitled to use the term “epistemic” clearly and informatively – and that his program is substantively epistemological.<sup>7</sup>

## 6.

It is, however, not entirely clear that Field is in fact the non-factualist about epistemology that he takes himself to be. Consider Field's discussion of the “epistemologically crucial” distinction between geometry and logic considered in section 3. There, that distinction rested on the fact

that if our geometric beliefs were strongly *a priori*, then they “wouldn’t depend on the geometric facts in the way they should; more generally, the accuracy of our geometric beliefs would not be counterfactually persistent” (Field, 372–3). The fact that Field himself holds this point to be “epistemologically crucial” seems to license us in formulating a tentative criterion for epistemic legitimacy (call it CEL): our beliefs are epistemically legitimate when their accuracy is counterfactually persistent.

Something akin to CEL would seem to be involved in the reliability considerations that Field takes to be a constraint on our assessment of epistemic merit (along with explanatory and predictive power). Thus, Field writes in his “Nonfactualism and Apriority” that, just as one need not deny “the relevance of facts about human well-being to ethical debate,” one also need not deny “the relevance of facts about such things as reliability and power to epistemological debate” (“Nonfactualism and Apriority,” 8). What, however, is the status of CEL? Is it merely a further element of certain evidential systems? If so, how is one to decide on the relative merits of two evidential systems, one of which contains CEL as an element, and one of which doesn’t? Does the merit of systems containing CEL rest on their satisfying a deeper criterion? And if so, what does the merit of the deeper criterion rest on?

These questions emphasize a – perhaps *the* – central difficulty for Field’s view (and, by extension, for radical empiricist view *per se*). Field seems to have two options: either (a) reject epistemological nonfactualism and embrace CEL as a metacriterion, or (b) retain epistemological nonfactualism and resign himself to having no global criteria with which to compare the values of competing evidential systems. Although Field protests that he is an epistemological non-factualist, his own arguments betray a marked sympathy for option (a). If this is the case, however, then it seems that the options (a) and (b) present a dilemma for Field. If Field treats CEL as a necessary criterion, then he would have to argue that CEL is not merely a criterion that we *take* to be an intrinsic measure of epistemic merit, but a criterion that is in fact a measure of epistemic merit – whether we recognize it as such or not. But this would be (as noted above) to abandon epistemological nonfactualism. If, however, Field retains epistemological nonfactualism (choice (b)) and thereby denies that CEL is a necessary criterion for epistemic merit, then he violates a deeply held intuition (and one that he himself seems to share). For it certainly seems that someone who denied that reliability considerations were involved in assessments of epistemic merit would be making a *mistake*; he would be failing to recognize a *fact* about what it is to have epistemic merit. If Field embraces (b), however, the most that he could do would be to claim to have an explanation as to why it *seems* to us to be a mistake to deny the importance of reliability considerations in assessing epistemic merit. Denying the importance of reliability considerations would

not *be* a mistake, because – for the epistemological nonfactualist – there can be no *mistakes* when it comes to epistemic evaluation, but only differences of opinion.

Note that it is not enough for Field to argue that there remains an open question as to how to weigh the need for reliability against the need for explanatory/predictive power, nor is it enough for him to argue that it is not clear how we ought to measure reliability and power.<sup>8</sup> That may or may not be the case. But that fact alone – leaving aside the question as to whether Field could claim that this is a *fact* about epistemic evaluation, as opposed to merely a further opinion – would not be enough to establish the need for epistemological nonfactualism. For Field here accepts that it is *reliability* that needs to be weighed against explanatory/predictive power, and that it is *reliability* for which we need to find a more precise account, in order to assess epistemic merit. And if this is the case, then it still needs to be determined how it is that we can recognize *reliability* and explanatory/predictive *power* as the criteria by which to measure epistemic merit. This is where the dilemma becomes threatening to Field: either he gives reliability and power a special status and thereby rejects nonfactualism, or he clings to nonfactualism and admits that reliability and power just happen to be the criteria for epistemic goodness that he himself *prefers* – a preference based on little more than a matter of taste.<sup>9</sup>

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Nothing ought here to ride on the notion of *propositions*. The radical empiricist may feel free, if she is so inclined, to reformulate the notion of believing the proposition that *p* however she is most comfortable – i.e., being disposed to assent to the statement that *p*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> W.V.O. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," in his *From a Logical Point of View* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), pp. 42–3.

<sup>3</sup> As we will see, this reliance of the strongly *a priori* upon the dispositions of believers will prove deeply problematic for the radical empiricist (see Section 2, pp. 3–4).

<sup>4</sup> Hartry Field, "The Apriority of Logic," in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (1998), pp. 359–379.

<sup>5</sup> See Field, "Nonfactualism and Apriority," in *Philosophical Studies* 92 (1998), pp. 8–9.

<sup>6</sup> It seems quite plausible that one ought to add to this definition the requirement that the method allows one to be sensitive, in counterfactual situations, to which beliefs are true and which are false. Note, however, that I am not here concerned with providing accounts that would satisfy any particular factualists. These are merely examples.

<sup>7</sup> Of course, this is only a criticism in so far as Field truly intends to explain traditional epistemological notions, as opposed to merely explaining them away. Some evidence that he believes himself to be engaging in the former endeavor is that he sees himself as providing a response to the skeptic (cf. "The Apriority of Logic," 378–9).

<sup>8</sup> These are Field's two arguments for epistemological nonfactualism in "Nonfactualism and Apriority." There he writes that, "[f]irst, reliability is obviously not the only desirable goal, since high reliability is easily achieved by excessive caution. Reliability must be traded off against other things such as power, and people can differ as to how the tradeoff is to be made. But second, reliability and power are themselves far from clear goals. For instance, in the case of reliability, one must distinguish reliability in the long run from reliability in the short run ..." (8).

<sup>9</sup> My thanks to Ernest Sosa and David Matheson for comments on earlier drafts of this article.