

## GETTIER AND FACTIVITY IN INDO-TIBETAN EPISTEMOLOGY

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*The similarities between contemporary externalist theories of knowledge and classical Indian and Tibetan theories of knowledge are striking. Drawing on comparisons with Timothy Williamson's recent work, I address related topics in Indo-Tibetan epistemology and show that correct analysis of these issues requires externalist theories of mind and knowledge. The topics addressed range from a discussion of possible Gettier cases in the Tibetan philosophical tradition to an assessment of arguments for and against the existence of factive mental states/events that fail to be knowledge states/events. I conclude by explaining how these matters in Indian and Tibetan epistemology can inform us about the viability of externalist epistemologies of the sort articulated by Williamson.*

Timothy Williamson defends the views that *knowing is a state of mind* and that *all factive mental states are instances of knowing*.<sup>1</sup> These claims represent a radical departure from standard Cartesian epistemology, and I find both of them difficult to accept. As Williamson points out, in order for knowing to be a mental state, there must be *factive* mental states – mental states that necessarily have true propositional contents. That factive states exist is beyond question. What is difficult to accept is that there are factive *mental* states – states of the mind that are factive. Yet, unappealing as I find Williamson's account, his views are both carefully defended and intellectually charming. What I wish to note here, however, is the striking fact that the existence of factive mental events has been at the heart of classical Indian theories of knowledge for well over a thousand years. Indeed, while comparisons between contemporary analytic epistemology and classical Indian epistemology have been for a number of good reasons largely ignored by analytic philosophers, there are unquestionably strong links between contemporary externalist theories of knowledge and both Indian theories of knowledge and the subsequent Tibetan accounts derived from the Indian tradition. In this paper I shall discuss several issues in classical Indian and Tibetan epistemology, and show that a proper understanding of these issues presupposes externalism.

<sup>1</sup> T. Williamson, *Knowledge and its Limits* (Oxford UP, 2000).

At its most general level, this paper will carry out an investigation of a particular type of mental event whose existence is first posited by eleventh- and twelfth-century Tibetan epistemologists – a mental event that I shall translate into English as *factive assessment* (*yiid dpyod*). In examining whether this hypothesized type of mental event is philosophically viable, we stand to learn a great deal not only about the externalist nature of Indian and Tibetan epistemology, but also about the viability of externalist epistemologies of the sort put forward by Williamson. Within this study, three particular topics will be examined. First, I shall address the question of whether appeals to factive assessment provide us with analogues to the Gettier problem. This investigation will be used as a springboard for my subsequent discussion of the nature of *cognition* and *knowledge* in the Indian and Tibetan Buddhist epistemological tradition. I shall show that Indo-Tibetan Buddhist theories of mind and knowledge are best understood as externalist. I shall then examine in greater detail the concept of factive assessment in Tibetan philosophical thought, drawing out the philosophical controversies that surrounded appeals to the concept in eleventh- to thirteenth-century writings. The general points made earlier will make plainer the full depth of the debates over whether factive assessment constitutes a genuine type of mental episode, and will expose the controversial status of factive mental states of the sort proposed by Williamson.

## I. FACTIVE ASSESSMENT AND THE GETTIER PROBLEM

In their attempts to resolve a number of epistemological problems which had been raised by Indian Buddhist epistemologists from the latter half of the first millennium AD, eleventh- and twelfth-century Tibetan epistemologists residing at Sangpu Monastery in central Tibet formalized a class of cognitive events whose instances are similar to cases of genuine inferential knowledge, but which fall short of knowledge because the alleged evidence put forward to support these ‘inferences’ is either non-existent or unsupported. Hence we might say that these mental events, while affirming true states of affairs, lack justification. These mental episodes, which I call episodes of *factive assessment* (*yiid dpyod*), are to some extent comparable to ordinary examples of true but unjustified beliefs. In fact, a number of distinguished scholars of Indian and Tibetan epistemology<sup>2</sup> have maintained that those traditions entertain epistemological problems analogous to the

<sup>2</sup> Two good examples are B.K. Matilal, *Perception: an Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 193–5, 135–40; G. Dreyfus, *Recognizing Reality: Dharmakīrti's Philosophy and its Tibetan Interpretations* (SUNY Press, 1997), pp. 292–3.

Gettier problem by which knowledge is shown to be distinct from justified true belief. My primary aims in the first part of this paper will be (a) to argue that episodes of factive assessment provide us with no true examples of Gettier cases, and (b) to cast doubt on the more general claim that there are any true analogues of the Gettier problem discussed in the broader Indo-Tibetan epistemological tradition. It is no doubt true that there are examples in the Indian and Tibetan traditions that are similar to Gettier cases in some respects. Yet these examples are not, I contend, similar in any respect that would warrant them to be classified as genuine analogues of the Gettier problem.

There are two initial problems which make it difficult to compare factive assessment with true belief and the Gettier problem. The first is that factive assessment is held to be a specific *type* of mental episode, whereas true belief is not. No one thinks that true belief is a particular type of mental state different from (mere) belief. Yes, some beliefs are true and others are false; but this distinction applies to the content of beliefs, and not to the mental state of belief. The second problem is that the justified true belief analysis of knowledge is quite remote from Indo-Tibetan epistemology, and so finding a parallel to 'justification' within this context is not straightforward. This problem is compounded by the fact that if we are to attribute theories of justification to Indo-Tibetan epistemologists, many of these theories will need to be externalist in nature. Externalists commonly eschew the justified true belief model of knowledge, however.

I shall discuss both of these two issues at greater length in subsequent portions of this paper. For the time being, I shall temporarily ignore these two problems, so that I can draw closer comparisons between Tibetan examples of factive assessment and both Gettier cases and genuine examples of inferential knowledge. By detailing each of the various subtypes of factive assessment discussed by Tibetan thinkers, I can show better where Gettier cases would be located in this typology, and why Tibetan typologies of factive assessment do not provide Gettier situations. While this discussion focuses entirely on the Tibetan notion of factive assessment, I believe that it is possible to generalize from this single case to a much broader domain of the Indo-Tibetan tradition of epistemology, and conclude that there are no relevant analogues of Gettier cases.

As is well known, the Gettier problem is grounded in and dependent on the so-called justified true belief analysis of knowledge. Part and parcel of acceptance of the justified true belief analysis of knowledge is the critical assumption that justification neither entails nor is entailed by truth. It is commonly supposed both that there can be beliefs which are true but not justified, and, more importantly, that there can be beliefs which are justified

but not true. A second assumption which lies behind Gettier's original examples is the belief that justification is preserved through justified entailment. For instance, suppose

1. *S* is justified in believing *p*
2. *S* is justified in believing that *p* entails *q*.

Gettier assumes that from these two premises it follows that

- C. *S* is justified in believing *q*.

As long as this inference scheme is valid and justification is logically independent of truth, it is possible to construct a story in which (a) *S* justifiably believes some proposition *e*, although *e* is false; (b) *S* justifiably believes that *p* follows from *e*, thus allowing for a justified belief that *p*; and (c) *p* is true. Yet these three conditions can all hold without there being a robust enough link between *S*'s basis of justification *e* and the true proposition *p* which is believed, thus providing a reason to think that justified true belief falls short of knowledge. Structurally, this sort of possibility might look as follows:

Get. Cognitive agent *S* justifiably believes that *e*, knows that *e* entails *p*, and thus forms the justified belief that *p*. Yet in this situation *e* is false and *p* is true. As a result, *S* has a justified true belief that *p*.

While this yields a situation in which the cognitive agent *S* has a justified true belief that *p*, there is the strong conviction that *S* does not know that *p*, for *S*'s justification for *p* derives from *S*'s false belief that *e*. Hence this appears to be a case in which justified true belief falls short of knowledge.

It is essential to Gettier examples like this that contemporary epistemological theories allow justification to be consistent with falsity. Because justified true belief accounts of knowledge require both justification and truth, the logical independence of these two components makes it possible to generate scenarios in which a justified belief ends up being true for a completely unexpected reason – one which is entirely independent of the justification itself. As I shall now show, there are Tibetan examples that are structurally quite similar to Gettier cases. There is, however, a crucial difference with respect to the logical relation between justification and truth; and it is this difference that prevents true analogues of the Gettier problem from arising.

## II. TIBETAN TYPOLOGIES OF FACTIVE ASSESSMENT

Tibetan proponents of factive assessment divide this type of cognition into three subtypes differentiated by way of the distinct properties possessed by

the evidence used to generate the judgement in question.<sup>3</sup> First, there is (FA<sub>1</sub>) *factive assessment lacking evidence* (*rgyu mtshan med pa'i yid dpyod*). Here a cognitive agent *S* judges that *p*, and this judgement is in fact true, but the judgement is made without relying on any evidence at all in support of *p*. The typical example given here is of a person *S* who forms the opinion that there is water in an old well. *S* apparently has no reason at all for believing that there is water in the well, but forms the opinion none the less; and as it turns out, there actually is water in the well. In this case, it is obvious that while *S* does have the true belief that there is water at the bottom of the well, *S*'s cognitive episode should not be regarded as a knowledge episode – it was just a lucky guess.

A second subtype of factive assessment is (FA<sub>2</sub>) *factive assessment possessing incorrect evidence* (*log pa'i rgyu mtshan can gyi yid dpyod*). In this case, the cognitive agent *S* takes himself to have evidence *e*, knows that *p* follows from *e*, and thus judges that *p*. Unfortunately, *S* is in error about his inferential basis *e*, for *e* is false; *p*, however, is true. Thus, we have a case where *S* has a true judgement that *p*, and this judgement is derived from an inference-like activity. Because *S*'s evidence is mistaken, however, we can reasonably conclude that he does not actually know that *p*. A truly wonderful example of this, given by the eighth-century Indian philosopher Dharmottara and reproduced by later Tibetan writers, is of a situation in which a burnt food offering is being made. There is a fire on which meat is being cooked. While the fire has not produced any smoke, the cooking meat has enticed a large number of flies to swarm above the fire. Some person, looking at this scene from a distance, but without perceiving the fire, glimpses the swarm of flies and forms the mistaken belief that it is smoke. As a result of believing that there is smoke he 'infers' that there is fire. His belief that there is fire is true, but because he deduces the existence of fire from the false belief that there is smoke, his cognition should not be regarded as a knowledge episode.

(Matilal (p. 136) provides an example very similar to this given by the twelfth-century Indian Advaita scholar Śrīharṣa, and comments 'Notice that the person acquires a justified true belief in this case, as does the subject in most Gettier examples'. We should not be overhasty and conclude that these examples support the conclusion that such a person has a justified belief. It is arguably the case that this example *could* be described in such a way as to confer justification to the resultant belief. Nevertheless, this is not how these examples are in fact described or employed in the Indian and

<sup>3</sup> The names for the following three kinds of factive assessment come from Ngog Lotsawa's text: Rngog blo ldan shes rab, *Tshad ma mam nges kyī dka' gnas mam bshad* (Qinghai: Chinese Tibetological Press, 1994), p. 33. The names given by later Tibetan thinkers vary slightly, but the underlying typologies are the same.

Tibetan Buddhist context. Examples of this sort, including the well known case of a person mistaking a rope for a snake, are put forward as examples of *mistaken* beliefs, and it is never claimed by Indian or Tibetan writers that these mistaken beliefs should be considered epistemically justified.)

The third type of factive assessment described by these Tibetan writers is (FA<sub>3</sub>) *factive assessment based on true but uncertain evidence* (*bden pa'i rgyu mtshan gtan la ma phebs pa'i yid dpyod*). In this type of case, the agent *S*, while uncertain as to whether the evidence *e* obtains, none the less appeals to that evidence in order to deduce that *p* (where *e* does entail *p*). Both *e* and *p* are true, and so *S* has the true belief that *p*, and this belief is derived from true evidence *e*. Yet since *S* does not *justifiably* believe *e* to be the case, we should deny that *S* possesses knowledge that *p*. Here is an example: there is a fire burning and smoke rising from the fire. *S*, some distance from the fire, sees something rising into the air. Uncertain whether it is smoke or something else (e.g., steam or dust), in the face of this doubt *S* nevertheless 'infers' the existence of fire, citing the existence of smoke as evidence. While *S* does correctly believe that there is fire, his uncertainty with respect to the evidence (smoke) implies that the deduction is unjustified. Hence it should be denied that *S* possesses knowledge that there is fire.

There is undoubtedly a strong structural similarity between genuine cases of inferential knowledge, the Gettier scenario which I detailed in the previous section, and the three varieties of factive assessment discussed by these Tibetan thinkers. Simplifying their structures to some extent, each of the five cases can be assimilated quite neatly:

FA<sub>1</sub>. *S* lacks evidence, but judges that *p*  
           *p* is true

FA<sub>2</sub>. *S* takes *e* as evidence, and knowing that *e* entails *p*, judges that *p*  
           *e* is false, *p* is true, and *S* is not justified in believing *e*

FA<sub>3</sub>. *S* takes *e* as evidence, and knowing that *e* entails *p*, judges that *p*  
           *e* is true, *p* is true, and *S* is not justified in believing *e*

Get. *S* takes *e* as evidence, and knowing that *e* entails *p*, judges that *p*  
           *e* is false, *p* is true, and *S* is justified in believing *e*

Infer. *S* takes *e* as evidence, and knowing that *e* entails *p*, judges that *p*  
           *e* is true, *p* is true, and *S* is justified in believing *e*.

(FA<sub>1</sub>) expresses the basic sentiment of factive assessment and true opinion, but does so without taking into account any facts about evidence. The other four members of this schema do appeal to evidence and justification, capturing the four possible ways of attributing truth and justification to the evidence. In both (FA<sub>2</sub>) and (FA<sub>3</sub>), appeals to the evidence are unjustified,

whereas in (Get) and (Infer) the cognitive agent *S*'s appeals to the evidence are justified. In (FA<sub>2</sub>) and (Get) the evidence to which *S* appeals is false, whereas in (FA<sub>3</sub>) and (Infer) the evidence is true.

Inference (Infer), which is a genuine instance of knowledge, can thus be represented as the success case here: it is the only judgement derived from evidence which is both true and justified. Classic Gettier situations like (Get) share justified evidential foundations in common with inferential knowledge (Infer), but fall short of knowledge because their evidential bases are false. The two relevant varieties of factive assessment in the Tibetan philosophical tradition, (FA<sub>2</sub>) and (FA<sub>3</sub>), both fall short of knowledge because the evidence taken to ground the inferred belief is unjustifiably believed.

As can also be seen from this schematic presentation of these different varieties of factive assessment, while these Tibetans do recognize the possibility of inferential knowledge (Infer), factive assessment based on false evidence (FA<sub>2</sub>), and factive assessment based on unjustified true evidence (FA<sub>3</sub>), there is *no discussion at all* in these Tibetan writers of Gettier scenarios in which judgements are formed through appeals to justifiably believed but false evidential bases. To put it more bluntly, examples of factive assessment in the Tibetan tradition provide no true parallels to the Gettier problem.

This does not point to some sort of oversight on the part of these Tibetan philosophers. That they do not discuss Gettier-like examples of justified true beliefs is, I contend, indicative of a significant dissimilarity between Indo-Tibetan epistemology and contemporary Anglo-American epistemology. For while virtually all contemporary analytic philosophers believe that it is possible to be justified in believing something that is false, it is doubtful whether this view would be accepted by philosophers in the Indo-Tibetan epistemological tradition. There is some difficulty in drawing a forceful conclusion about this, for there is no obvious parallel to 'justification' in the Indo-Tibetan epistemological tradition. Nevertheless, the concept most similar to justification – that is, being rooted in a *pramāṇa* – is one that entails truth.<sup>4</sup> If *S*'s judgement that *p* is justified – i.e., supported by a *pramāṇa* – then *p* is true. Hence of the five types of 'true belief' which I have schematized above, the fourth type (Get) would probably be regarded as utterly impossible by Tibetan epistemologists. In fact, if we take the presence of a *pramāṇa* to be the Indo-Tibetan analogue of the concept of justification, then there simply cannot be any relevant analogues of Gettier cases in the Indian and Tibetan epistemological tradition, since Gettier cases require the logical independence of justification and truth.

<sup>4</sup> This view is not universally accepted. For one dissenting voice, see K. Potter, 'Does Indian Epistemology Concern Justified True Belief?', *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 12 (1984), pp. 307–27.

Even if perfect parallels to Gettier cases cannot be found within the Tibetan philosophical tradition, this examination of factive assessment can still reveal something important about Tibetan epistemology. Thinkers in this tradition obviously do realize that the mere possession of (something like) true belief is not sufficient for knowledge, and the concept of factive assessment is developed in order to expose this insufficiency. Yet the explanation given of *why* cases of factive assessment fail to yield knowledge is not articulated in terms of lack of justification in the traditional Cartesian sense. What is really missing in cases of factive assessment is *knowledge* (not *justification*) of the evidencing claim *e* which is to ground the subsequent inference. Only in cases in which *S* knows both that *e* obtains and that *e* entails *p* is *S*'s subsequent judgement that *p* reliably formed. By distinguishing inference from factive assessment, criteria are established by these Tibetan thinkers for what should or should not count as inferential knowledge – but the criteria are not formulated through an appeal to justification.

While acceptance of the view that justification entails truth would be sufficient to show that there could be no true analogues of the Gettier problem in Tibetan epistemology, I shall, in the next section, show that there are even more fundamental reasons why Gettier situations do not arise in that tradition. By looking more closely at why this is the case, I can clarify a number of issues in Indian and Tibetan epistemology, and unfold more about the role played by factive assessment in the Tibetan tradition.

### III. WHAT IS KNOWING?

Indian epistemology is notable for the great emphasis it places on detailing the legitimate means or instruments of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Non-Buddhist philosophers draw a distinction between these means of knowledge and the mental event of knowing (*pramā*). Buddhist epistemologists, following the sixth-century Indian epistemologist Dignāga, reject this distinction and maintain that the event of knowing is not different from its means or instrument.<sup>5</sup> What is important in this context is that in the Indian Buddhist epistemological tradition *pramā* (knowing) is a mental event – a cognitive episode. In this way, Indian Buddhist accounts of *pramā* differ greatly from typical analytic accounts of knowledge, in which knowing is ordinarily not

<sup>5</sup> In S. Phillips and N.S. Tatacharya, *Epistemology of Perception* (New York: American Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2004), pp. 8–10, it is claimed that in the later Navya-Nyāya (New Logic) tradition of Indian philosophy, not all *pramā* are generated by *pramāṇa*. In this tradition it is not the case that all *pramā* are events of knowing. Nevertheless, in the Buddhist tradition, since no distinction is made between *pramā* and *pramāṇa*, all *pramā/pramāṇa* are episodes of knowing.

regarded as a mental event. In order to reveal the full importance of this distinction, I must begin by discussing the mental states figuring in knowledge.

All knowledge, at least as it is ordinarily attributed to rational animals, requires some sort of mental state or event. From this, however, it does not follow that knowing *is* a mental state/event. In the Indian tradition of epistemology, the most basic mental episode is *jñāna*, which is often translated as ‘cognition’, but which I shall quite often render as ‘mental episode’. Cognition (*jñāna*) is necessary, but not sufficient, for knowing (*pramā*). In Western philosophy, the mental state used as the typical basis for epistemological theorizing is the doxastic state of *belief*. It is commonly, though not universally, assumed that belief is a necessary but not sufficient condition for knowing. Thus while belief is the most fundamental mental state addressed within analytic epistemology, belief’s counterpart in Indian epistemology is cognition (*jñāna*). In so far as this is the case, recent scholars of Indian epistemology have been quick to point out that belief is ordinarily understood as a *disposition*, whereas Indian philosophers construe cognition (*jñāna*) as a momentary *event* or *episode*.<sup>6</sup> This difference alone should not prevent us from translating *pramā* as ‘knowledge’, but at least it does require us to be cautious with our comparisons. However, the fact that the Indian tradition of epistemology treats cognition as episodic, whereas the Anglo-American tradition presents belief as a dispositional state, is a relatively minor difference when compared to the fact that in the Indian tradition knowing (*pramā*) is a type of *mental* episode, while Anglo-American thinkers widely contend that knowing is not a type of mental state at all. Even on the plausible assumption that knowing entails believing and believing is a type of mental state, it does not follow that knowing is a type of mental state.

Knowing, so the standard analytic account contends, requires both that an agent is in the mental state of believing *p*, and also (at the very least) that the propositional content of that belief *p* is true. This is expressed clearly by Timothy Williamson (*Knowledge and its Limits*, pp. 21–2):

Someone might expect knowing to be a state of mind simply on the grounds that knowing *p* involves the paradigmatic mental state of believing *p*. If those grounds were adequate, the claim that knowing is a state of mind would be banal. However, those grounds imply only that there is a mental state being in which is *necessary* for knowing *p*. By contrast, the claim that knowing is a state of mind is to be understood as the claim that there is a mental state being in which is *necessary and sufficient* for knowing *p*. In short, knowing is *merely* a state of mind. This claim may be unexpected. On the standard view, believing is merely a state of mind but knowing is not, because it is *factive*: truth is a non-mental component of knowing.

<sup>6</sup> See Matilal, *Perception*, ch. 4; Potter, ‘Does Indian Epistemology Concern Justified True Belief?’, pp. 309–10.

Knowledge entails the existence of a mental state – presumably, *belief* – but on the justified true belief account of knowledge, knowledge is not simply belief, nor is it some separate mental state distinct from belief.

By contrast, *pramā* are mental episodes. To put it simply, for Indian and Tibetan Buddhist philosophers, knowing is a specific kind of mental event. There is for this reason a radical dissimilarity between the concept of knowledge in the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist tradition of thought and the typical understanding of knowledge in the Anglo-American tradition: in the former tradition knowing is a kind of mental event, whereas in the latter it is not. While scholars have consistently mentioned that in the Indian and Tibetan traditions knowing is a mental episode, little has been done to draw out the philosophical importance of the distinction between knowing understood as a type of mental event and knowing not thus understood. Matilal, for example, devotes an entire chapter (*Perception*, ch. 4) to ‘Knowledge as a Mental Episode’, comparing and contrasting Indian accounts of knowledge with the Western philosophical interpretation of knowledge. Yet though he does make many brilliant observations, he pays little attention to the mental/non-mental distinction.

Although the distinction here is somewhat subtle and easy to gloss over, failure to point out its implications has, I believe, led to a number of philosophical confusions with respect to certain scholars’ treatments of Indian and Tibetan epistemology. In particular, because the most prominent theories of knowledge and mind in the history of Western philosophy have been internalist (both with respect to justification and with respect to mental content), Western scholars have by and large examined Indo-Tibetan epistemology under the guidance of an internalist conceptual scheme, thereby arriving at misplaced conclusions about those epistemological theories.<sup>7</sup>

Within the context of this discussion, it is notable that Timothy Williamson (pp. 33–41) rejects the standard analytic account of knowledge, and adopts the view that knowing is a mental state. In this regard, Williamson’s account of knowledge can be assimilated to Indo-Tibetan Buddhist accounts while standard analytic accounts cannot. He is quick to point out that one can maintain the view that knowing is a mental state only by rejecting the analysis of knowledge as justified true belief. (He believes that knowledge is unanalysable.) In as much as this is the case, however, it is already evident that any attempt to incorporate discussions of the Gettier problem in Indo-Tibetan Buddhist epistemology will face insurmountable difficulties. This is because the Gettier problem arises within the philosophical context of the justified true belief analysis of knowledge, but this account of knowledge

<sup>7</sup> This is obviously a far-reaching remark, and one which cannot be defended in any detail within the context of this paper.

cannot be adopted if, as Indian and Tibetan Buddhist philosophers contend, knowing is to be understood as a mental episode.

There are a number of other notable consequences which follow from the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist philosophers' belief that knowing is a mental episode. The first important item to point out is that these epistemologists must grant not only the existence of *factive* mental events, mental events which necessarily have true contents, but also grant that all knowledge episodes are factive mental events. That is, when a person has a knowledge episode, it is not merely the case that the content of this mental episode is true. It is, rather, that having *this* mental episode guarantees that its content is true. This may sound benign, but the existence of factive mental states represents a radical departure from the relation between truth and mental states in standard Anglo-American epistemological theories. While it is not unheard of to grant that mental episodes whose contents pertain to matters internal to the cognitive agent's own mind could be factive, in cases in which the contents of the mental episodes pertain to contingent states of the external world, it is standard to hold that mental states/events do not have the property of being factive. Yet Indian and Tibetan Buddhist epistemologists do maintain that the intentional contents of many (but not all) knowledge episodes are about external reality.

Along similar lines, the combination of granting that knowing is a mental episode together with adopting the view that the contents of some knowledge episodes are about external reality requires an endorsement of externalism about mental events.<sup>8</sup> Here, externalism is to be understood as the thesis that mental states/events do not, in general, supervene on a person's internal state. In this way, the nature of at least some mental states/episodes can only be individuated by external elements of reality – ordinarily, the elements that cause the mental states/events. It is now common in the philosophy of mind to characterize externalism about the mental as the thesis that mental states do not, in general, supervene on physical brain states. Because Buddhist philosophers adopt a form of dualism about the mental and physical, however, this way of construing it would not be applicable.

Here is an example of the kind of externalism that I am talking about. There are two situations,  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ , in which a cognitive agent, Sodrak, has a mental episode wherein he has the phenomenal experience as of seeing a circle of fire. In situation  $\alpha$  there really is a circle of fire in external reality, and it is the presence of this circle that causes Sodrak's cognition. Situation  $\beta$  is just like  $\alpha$ , except that there is no circle of fire, only a branding iron

<sup>8</sup> See H. Putnam, 'The Meaning of "Meaning"', repr. in his *Mind, Language, and Reality* (Cambridge UP, 1975), pp. 215–71; T. Burge, 'Individualism and the Mental', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 4 (1979), pp. 73–121.

being swung in a circular motion so that it looks exactly like a circle of fire. Sodrak's internal state could be identical in situations  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ ; his phenomenal experience and the operations of his sense faculties could be identical. Yet, according to Tibetan epistemologists, Sodrak's mental episodes could *not* be the same in the two situations. Sodrak's cognition in  $\alpha$  is an episode of *perceptual knowledge*, whereas in  $\beta$  his mental episode is not a knowledge episode at all: it is a *mistaken cognition*. In particular, Tibetan epistemologists maintain that the two cognitive episodes must have different contents, thus implying that the episodes are non-identical. The content of the perceptual episode in  $\alpha$  is said to be a real object, the circle of fire, but this object does not exist in situation  $\beta$ , thus ensuring that the mental episode in  $\beta$  is different from the mental episode in  $\alpha$ . Hence Sodrak must be in a mental state in  $\alpha$  different from his state in  $\beta$ , even though it could be the case that the only difference between the two episodes lies in the external features of the world which brought about his experience. It is in this way that Indian and Tibetan Buddhist epistemologists who accept that the contents of (at least some) knowledge episodes are external to the knower are required to endorse a form of externalism about the mental.<sup>9</sup>

The previous example was cast within the domain of perceptual sensation, as opposed to perceptual judgement. In the former case, Buddhist epistemologists hold that the content of a mental episode is non-propositional. Nevertheless, similar observations can be made, *mutatis mutandis*, about the propositional contents of mental episodes. Though the contents of many mental episodes are non-propositional on the Indo-Tibetan model, in order to make for easier comparisons with Anglo-American epistemology I shall for the remainder of this paper be assuming propositional interpretations of the contents of mental episodes. For example, if after being in the above cognitive states Sodrak were to form the judgement 'There is a circle of fire', his mental episode in situation  $\alpha$  would need to be different from his mental episode in  $\beta$ . The (propositional) contents of these mental episodes are identical, but because the content is true in  $\alpha$  but false in  $\beta$ , Tibetan epistemologists maintain that the mental episodes themselves are qualitatively different. Thus even though Sodrak forms a judgement in both situations which would be rendered propositionally as 'There is a circle of fire', the two mental episodes of cognitive judgement would be different.

This latter (propositional) case would be explained quite differently by those who reject the view that knowing is a mental state. It is open to the

<sup>9</sup> Mark Siderits has voiced his agreement that Yogācāra-Sautrāntika Buddhists appear to be externalists about thought content. See M. Siderits, 'Perceiving Particulars: a Buddhist Defense', *Philosophy East & West*, 54 (2004), pp. 367–82. This issue is also discussed in S. Phillips, 'Perceiving Particulars Blindly: Remarks on a Nyāya-Buddhist Controversy', *Philosophy East & West*, 54 (2004), pp. 389–403, at pp. 391–2.

proponent of the justified true belief account of knowledge to understand the mental state, i.e., *believing* that there is a circle of fire, as wholly separable from the *truth* of the matter, i.e., whether there is a circle of fire. As long as they are separable, it would be quite natural to maintain that Sodrak is in the same mental state in both  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ , a mental state in which he judges ‘There is a circle of fire’. This option is not available, however, to those who hold that knowing is a mental state/event.

Because Tibetan epistemologists are externalists with respect to mental episodes, they should also grant at least the *possibility* of knowing  $p$  without knowing that one knows that  $p$ . Because there are at least some mental episodes in which all the introspectively ascertainable evidence is not enough for the cognitive agent  $S$  to determine what mental episode he is having – e.g.,  $S$  cannot introspectively distinguish some knowledge episodes from false cognitions – it is possible for a person to have an episode of knowledge without realizing it. In this respect, knowledge can be *non-luminous*. In turn, it is possible for someone to have a mental episode of knowing that  $p$  and yet not to be able to examine the mental episode introspectively and verify that the content  $p$  of that cognition is true.

While there could plausibly be certain subtypes of knowledge episodes which are introspectively verifiable, one would expect it to be the case that when  $S$  has a non-knowing mental episode,  $S$  could not in that same mental event verify that the content is factual. More explicitly, for any *non-knowing* mental episode  $\Phi(p)$  with true content  $p$ , when  $\Phi(p)$  occurs,  $S$  cannot in the very same mental event ascertain that  $p$  is true. After all, if one could ascertain from within the mental episode itself that the content  $p$  of the episode is true, it would appear to follow that one *knows* that  $p$ , which by hypothesis is not the case. On the other hand, there is still an open question whether there could be non-knowing cognitions in which having such a cognition *logically entails* that the content of the cognitive episode is true. That is, can there be mental episodes that by definition have true contents but none the less fail to be knowledge episodes? Can there be *factive* mental episodes that are not knowledge episodes? The above elucidated notion of *factive assessment* is supposed to be one such mental episode. There is controversy in the Tibetan tradition, however, over whether this type of cognition is epistemologically coherent.

#### IV. FACTIVE ASSESSMENT AND TRUE OPINION

Modern scholarship on the Tibetan concept of factive assessment is not extensive, and the implications of construing factive assessment as a wholly

mental episode have not been adequately pointed out. Nevertheless, these implications can potentially add much to our understanding of Tibetan philosophical controversies surrounding the inclusion of factive assessment as a genuine subtype of cognition, and also help to clarify some more general issues pertaining to the existence of factive mental states. Followers of the late eleventh-century Tibetan scholar Ngog Lotsawa from the Kadam tradition contend that factive assessment is a type of cognitive episode in which a person forms a novel true judgement, but does so without relying on adequate evidence or experience. The Tibetan polymath Sakya Paṇḍita (1182–1251) and many of his followers from the Sakya tradition, on the other hand, reject the legitimacy of factive assessment. In his extensive study of Tibetan epistemology, Georges Dreyfus notes this disagreement, but contends (*Recognizing Reality*, p. 390) that objections raised against factive assessment by Sakya Paṇḍita (Sa-pan) offer little in the way of *philosophical* value:

What is interesting in Sa-pan's refutation is not its intrinsic philosophical merit, for it is not decisive. There is room to argue that a mental state assuming some facts is not a form of doubt. Why would an unfounded but correct opinion be a form of doubt? This seems to be a problematic extension of the concept of doubt. Hence, the concept of correct assumption [i.e., factive assessment] is defensible on philosophical grounds.

I think that Dreyfus takes too lightly the philosophical merit of Sa-pan's arguments, and that a greater depth to the philosophical dispute between the Kadam and Sakya schools of thought is revealed by the significance of understanding factive assessment as a mental episode.

As I showed earlier in this paper, because the examples of factive assessment offered by Kadam Tibetan epistemologists are comparable with examples of true belief in our own philosophical tradition, there is a natural temptation to associate factive assessment with true belief. These two items differ greatly, however, in that the former is taken to be a type of mental episode, whereas the latter is not; no one thinks that true belief is itself a particular kind of mental state. If factive assessment is conflated with true belief, much if not all of the philosophical punch of Sakya Paṇḍita's criticisms of the former concept is lost. It is also important that for Kadam Tibetans, factive assessment is, by its very definition, a *factive* mental event. It is factive in the sense that 'S factively assesses that *p*' logically entails '*p* is true'. It is the very fact that factive assessment is both factive and a mental event which contributes the most to the philosophical disputes between Tibetan Kadam and Sakya thinkers over the legitimacy of this type of mental event.

Knowing, when treated as a mental state/episode, is obviously factive. Necessarily, if someone knows that *p*, then *p* is true. Timothy Williamson

(ch. 1, *passim*) upholds the view that knowing is the most basic factive mental state – that all factive mental states are instances of knowing. If this is right, it creates a problem for Tibetan presentations of factive assessment, for given the Kadam definition, this too is a factive mental episode. Yet these Tibetan thinkers also wish to defend the view that factive assessment is not an episode of knowing. How is this possible?

This is a real question, and one that was consciously entertained by twelfth- and thirteenth-century Tibetan epistemologists. Sakya Paṇḍita puts forward a number of criticisms against factive assessment, arguing that the very concept is incoherent and leads to absurd consequences. Most important for my argument is his contention that given its very definition, episodes of factive assessment stand or fall alongside episodes of genuine inferential knowledge. One must either grant that factive assessment is a kind of knowledge episode (like inference), or deny that inference is a knowledge episode (like factive assessment). Sakya Paṇḍita remarks ‘Because there is ascertainment of a fact, factive assessment should become a third type of knowledge episode [beyond perception and inference].... If it is not a knowledge episode despite its being a novel ascertainment of a fact, then inference likewise [will not be a knowledge episode].’<sup>10</sup> The two features that Kadam thinkers claim distinguish genuine inference from factive assessment, i.e., (1) that inference is a mental event rooted in pristine evidence (*rtags yang dag*) whereas factive assessment is not, and (2) that inference is introspectively verifiable (*bden pa rang las nges pa*) whereas factive assessment is not, have little or no bearing on the heart of the criticism being levelled by Sakya Paṇḍita here. How is it possible for both inference and factive assessment to be cognitive events in which (necessarily) a person ascertains truth, and for the former type of mental episode, but not the latter, to be a knowledge episode?

A more direct argument against factive assessment that makes this very point<sup>11</sup> is elucidated by the thirteenth-century Tibetan scholar Rigpay Railtri (1227–1305). Responses to this same general argument are given by earlier Kadam philosophers, thus making clear that Rigpay Railtri was not the first person to put forward this argument. I shall thus refer to Rigpay Railtri’s general argumentative structure as the *argument from entailment*. To put this argument more formally, I shall use ‘ $M_{fa}(x)$ ’ as an abbreviation for the mental episode of factive assessment with content  $x$ . The argument begins by asking whether an occurrence of  $M_{fa}(p)$  does or does not entail the

<sup>10</sup> Sa skya paṇḍi ta kun dga’ rgyal mtshan, *Tshad ma rigs pa’i gter gyi rtsa ba dang ’grel pa* (Qinghai: Tibet People’s Press, 1989), p. 60.

<sup>11</sup> This argument is found in Bcom ldan rigs pa’i ral gri, *Tshad ma sde bdun rgyan gyi me tog* (Qinghai: Tibet People’s Press, 1991), p. 37.

truth of  $p$ . As mentioned above, this entailment is required, for otherwise the definition of factive assessment would not be satisfied. To say that the existence of  $M_{fa}(p)$  entails that  $p$  is true is simply to say that  $M_{fa}(p)$  is a factive mental episode. Having granted this, we need to look into the nature of this entailment. Is this entailment guaranteed by some sort of dependence of  $M_{fa}(p)$  on  $p$ , or not?

This question ties into the larger issue of internalism/externalism about thought content. For to accept that the existence of  $M_{fa}(p)$  might depend on the truth of  $p$  is to open oneself to the possibility of externalism about content. In as much as a cognitive agent could not possibly factively assess that  $p$  unless  $p$  were true, it appears to be the case that  $M_{fa}(p)$  does depend on  $p$ . Amongst Tibetan epistemologists, there is widespread acceptance of two forms of dependence – metaphysical dependence (*bdag gcig tu 'brel ba*), and causal dependence (*de byung 'brel ba*). Metaphysical dependence requires the two items (ordinarily, properties) in question to share the same ontological substratum. This sort of dependence could not obtain in the case in question, for it would require the adoption of full-blown idealism about mental content – something which these thinkers deny. The other option, causal dependence, appears to be a much more promising possibility. Externalism allows for the possibility that elements of  $p$  are causally responsible for the occurrence of  $M_{fa}(p)$ . Yet Rigpay Railtri contends, and his opponents appear to agree, that if this were the case, it would follow that  $M_{fa}(p)$  is a knowledge episode. He thus concludes that there is no plausible way to make sense of factive assessment which is consistent with its being factive and yet not being a knowledge episode.

If factive assessment is to be a viable type of mental episode, some part of the argument from entailment must be rejected by Ngog Lotsawa and his Kadam followers. The famed twelfth-century Kadam scholar Chaba Chokyi Sengge (1109–69) and at least one of his successors, the author of the text *Summary of the Quintessence of Epistemology* (c. twelfth century), although both were writing prior to Sakya Paṇḍita and Rigpay Railtri, attempt to defend factive assessment against the argument from entailment.<sup>12</sup>

Chaba purports to defuse the argument from entailment by upholding the view that while the occurrence of  $M_{fa}(p)$  does indeed *logically entail* that  $p$  is true,  $M_{fa}(p)$  *does not depend* on  $p$ . In this way, Chaba believes that he has

<sup>12</sup> Phywa pa chos kyī seng ge, *Tshad ma yid kyī mun sel* (unpublished), p. 10b; Klong chen rab 'byams, *Tshad ma'i de kho na nyid bsdus pa* (Chengdu: Sichuan People's Press, 2000), p. 58. The latter text is attributed to the fourteenth-century Tibetan Longchenpa (klong chen rab 'byams). It is quite clear, however, that this attribution is incorrect. For more on the authorship of this text, see L. van der Kuip, 'A Treatise on Buddhist Epistemology and Logic Attributed to klong chen rab 'byams pa (1308–1364) and its Place in Indo-Tibetan Intellectual History', *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 31 (2003), pp. 381–437.

found a middle ground on which the definition of factive assessment can be preserved without making factive assessment a knowledge episode. Chaba does not provide a positive argument in favour of the view that the occurrence of  $M_{fa}(p)$  does not depend on  $p$ . Instead, this conclusion is reached by a *reductio* from the absurd consequences that would follow were one to accept that the existence of  $M_{fa}(p)$  did depend on  $p$ . Chaba must provide some explanation, however, of how it could be that the existence of  $M_{fa}(p)$  entails the truth of  $p$  without depending on  $p$ . Here he relies on an analogy, claiming that there are other cases in which  $x$  entails  $y$  but  $x$  does not depend on  $y$ . His example is that of the relation between thought (*rtog pa*) and concepts (*don spyi*). While it is accepted by these Tibetan epistemologists that episodes of thought entail the manifestation of concepts, it could not be the case that thought *depends* on concepts, for, so Chaba claims, this would require concepts to be real causally effective entities (*dnngos po*), which, according to Tibetan epistemologists, they are not. Nevertheless, it is part of the accepted understanding of thought that it is invariably accompanied by concepts. Chaba contends that a similar relation exists between episodes of factive assessment and true content. All occurrences of  $M_{fa}(p)$  entail the truth of  $p$  without  $M_{fa}(p)$  depending on  $p$ .

Even if Chaba is correct that the relation between  $M_{fa}(p)$  and  $p$  does not fall under either of the two types of dependence accepted by Buddhist epistemologists, this does not solve the problem of how  $M_{fa}(p)$  can logically entail  $p$  without being a knowledge episode. Provided that, as Timothy Williamson proclaims, all factive mental states/episodes are instances of knowing, and given that factive assessment is a factive mental episode, how can it be that factive assessment fails to be a kind of knowledge? Does it not follow that there is something conceptually incoherent about positing the existence of factive assessment as a distinctive kind of mental event?

Casting this issue within a wider context, the disagreement between those Tibetan epistemologists who accept factive assessment and those who do not is reflective of a larger disagreement between those Tibetan epistemologists who accept a sevenfold typology of cognitive episodes and those who reject this sevenfold typology. Following Ngog Lotsawa's lead, Chaba Chokyi Sengge and many other Kadam (and later Geluk) Tibetans defend the view that there are seven different types of cognitive episodes:

1. (valid) perception
2. inference
3. indeterminate appearing
4. subsequent cognition
5. factive assessment

6. mistaken cognition
7. doubt.<sup>13</sup>

Sakya Paṇḍita and many of his Sakya followers reject this sevenfold typology, denying, in particular, the legitimacy of (3)–(5) on this list. (1)–(5) are all, loosely speaking, factive mental episodes. (I say ‘loosely speaking’, since perception and indeterminate appearing have, according to Tibetan epistemologists, non-propositional contents. Hence to call these cognitions ‘factive’ is something of a misnomer. Nevertheless, the contents of all five of these types of cognitions are said to ‘accord with reality’.) Yet of these five only the first two, perception and inference, are held to be knowledge episodes. This means that Sakya Paṇḍita objects to the three putative mental events held to be factive but not to be knowledge episodes. Even if he does not directly state his case in this way, Sakya Paṇḍita is defending the view that *all factive mental episodes should be knowledge episodes*. We can thus see Sakya Paṇḍita as standing in support of Timothy Williamson’s views concerning the relation between factive mental states and knowledge.

## V. EVALUATION

Stepping back and looking at this Tibetan dispute from outside its historical context, the following observations can be made. At issue is how we are to understand the relation between mental episodes and the truth-values of the contents of those episodes. On the one hand, we can speak of mental episodes such that merely having *this* episode guarantees that the propositional content of the episode is true. These are factive mental episodes. On the other hand, we may just want to talk about the class of mental episodes that have, as a (contingent) matter of fact, true propositional contents. Ordinarily, contemporary analytic philosophers concern themselves with this latter class. The thought that there even are factive mental states/events is foreign to the contemporary epistemological landscape. Timothy Williamson’s defence of factive mental states has encountered a measure of scepticism, precisely because it is so far removed from the standard understanding of the way in which mental states relate to the truth-values of the contents of those mental states.

I contend that matters are precisely the opposite in the Indian and Tibetan Buddhist epistemological tradition. It is standard in that tradition to uphold the existence of factive mental events (of which perception and

<sup>13</sup> In Tibetan: (1) *mngon gsum tshad ma*, (2) *rjes dpag*, (3) *snang la ma nges pa*, (4) *bcad pa'i yul can*, (5) *yid dpyod*, (6) *log shes*, and (7) *the tshom*.

inference are the two most salient subtypes). More generally, the truth-value of the content of a mental event is normally held to be constitutive of the mental event itself. That is, had the truth-value of the content of a mental episode been different from what it actually is (false as opposed to true, say), the mental episode would have been different from what it actually is. Given this situation, it is difficult in the Buddhist epistemological tradition to speak simply of a mental episode that accidentally or contingently has a true content. This difficulty comes to the forefront in the Tibetan debate over the status of factive assessment.

Given that factive assessment is put forward as a type of mental event which by definition has true content, it seems that it does qualify as a type of factive mental event. This is surely how Sakya Paṅḍita understands factive assessment when he argues against its existence. Yet in trying to be charitable to Sakya Paṅḍita's Kadam opponents, we might think that what these philosophers are trying to discuss, what they are trying to capture with the term *yiḍ dpyod* (factive assessment), is one particularly salient subclass of the class of all those mental events that have true contents but none the less fail to be knowledge events. Presumably, what these thinkers want to demonstrate is the important fact that not all truth-hitting mental episodes are knowledge episodes. In particular, they want to show that there can be inference-like cognitive events that are truth-hitting, but none the less fall short of what is needed for knowledge.

The problem with this idea is that when factive assessment is understood as a *contingently* truth-hitting mental episode (as opposed to a factive mental episode) it fails to designate a genuine *type* of mental episode, even though Kadam Tibetans do claim that factive assessment is a type of mental episode. This would be to divide mental events on the basis of a property (truth or falsity) of the *contents* of the episodes, and not on the basis of any properties constitutive of the mental episodes themselves. So, for example, while believing is a different type of mental state from wishing, true belief is not a different type of mental state from false belief. By contrast, the division of mental episodes into those that are factive and those that are not would constitute a legitimate means by which to characterize two genuine types of mental episodes, since the property of being factive is, for the externalist, a property constitutive of mental events themselves.

It is in this sense that I speak of Tibetan epistemology as having a difficult time talking about contingently truth-hitting mental episodes. In that tradition, having a particular mental episode ordinarily fixes the truth-value of the content of the episode. This stands in stark contrast with the contemporary analytic epistemological tradition, where mental states like belief are generally held not to fix the truth-value of their propositional contents.

Timothy Williamson's contention that there are mental states whose contents do have their truth-values fixed, namely, factive mental states, stands out as an awkward exception within contemporary epistemology.

My hypothesis is that the distinct attitudes Indo-Tibetan and Anglo-American epistemologists take towards factive mental states/episodes is best explained by the fact that Indian and Tibetan philosophers adopt an *episodic* theory of mental *events*, while contemporary analytic philosophers typically adopt a *dispositional* theory of mental *states*. Given the episodic nature of mental events in the Indian and Tibetan traditions of thought, it is quite natural to develop an account of factive mental events and quite awkward to talk about contingently truth-hitting mental events. Provided that each mental episode lasts for only a fleeting moment, the origins of these mental events are readily articulable in terms of causal connections with earlier mental episodes and causal connections with fleeting events in external reality. In this way, Indian and Tibetan theories of knowledge can be compared with causal theories of knowledge of the sort formerly proposed by Alvin Goldman.<sup>14</sup> Both systems deal with Gettier examples in similar ways, eschewing Cartesian justification and requiring a faultless causal link between the external content and the mental state/event. It also appears to be the case that Tibetan accounts of knowledge fall prey to the barn/barn-façade counter-example which Goldman himself used against the causal theory of knowledge.<sup>15</sup> On the Tibetan account, a person's cognition as of there being a red barn in the distance would be upheld as knowledge provided that the cognition arose through a faultless causal connection with a genuine red barn. The ability to discriminate between real barns and barn-façades would not be required for knowledge.

In contrast with this causal/episodic account of cognition, in the contemporary analytic tradition of philosophy, which emphasizes the dispositional nature of mental states like belief, it is most natural to uphold a contingent link between mental states and the truth-values of the contents of those states, and rather unnatural to propose the existence of factive mental states. Epistemologists typically allow that belief formation may occur independently of the facts of the matter in the external world. Beliefs, especially in so far as they are held to take eternal abstract propositions as their contents, can arise without there being any causal connections between these beliefs and their contents. Traditionally, causation enters the picture only precognitively – when, for example, external events give rise to certain (non-propositional) experiences. These experiences may be momentary

<sup>14</sup> A. Goldman, 'A Causal Theory of Knowing', *Journal of Philosophy*, 64 (1967), pp. 357–72.

<sup>15</sup> Goldman, 'Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge', *Journal of Philosophy*, 73 (1976), pp. 771–91.

events, but there has been a longstanding uncertainty about how these experiences are related to the dispositional beliefs which a cognitive agent forms.

Where I agree with Williamson is in his contention that so long as dispositional beliefs and abstract propositions remain the central building blocks of analytic epistemology, discussions of factive mental states will be encountered only at the margins of philosophy. Williamson recognizes that the introduction of factive mental states requires a move from *belief* to *knowledge* as the primary mental state to be used in epistemological theorizing. Yet his continued reliance on dispositional states as opposed to momentary events makes it difficult to explain just how it is that knowledge states are tied to the external world in such a way that these states can be factive.

To express this somewhat differently, it appears that externalist accounts of epistemology, including Williamson's, would be much more defensible were the knowledge states at the foundations of these theories held to be purely *occurrent* states, as opposed to *dispositional* states. On such an account, the possession of knowledge consists in having a particular kind of occurrent mental state. While such an understanding of knowledge might create problems for certain theses which Williamson develops, such as his contention that one's totality of evidence is identical with one's totality of knowledge, it also helps to defend externalism against a number of criticisms which have been put against it. As a single example, Keith Lehrer's racist doctor (Mr Raco) argument against reliabilism crumbles when beliefs are interpreted as occurrent states as opposed to dispositional states.<sup>16</sup> Provided that a racist initially forms a belief as a result of prejudice, Lehrer would have us believe that reliabilism must concede that the belief is therefore unjustified, even if the racist later obtains information which would justify it. But this argument only succeeds if we conceive of beliefs as persisting dispositional states, as opposed to momentary occurrent states. Provided that the beliefs at issue are occurrent, the externalist can simply maintain that the racist has one occurrent belief formed through prejudice, and a subsequent occurrent belief based on scientific evidence.

Williamson's account of knowledge evidently does indeed share many features in common with classical Indian and Tibetan theories of knowledge. Both endorse externalist requirements on knowledge, and both accept the existence of factive mental states/events. Yet the momentary event-based epistemological theory developed by Indian and Tibetan thinkers appears to have a much easier time accounting for the existence of factive

<sup>16</sup> See K. Lehrer, *Theory of Knowledge* (Boulder: Westview, 1991), pp. 169–71.

mental events. For this reason, Williamson's account of factive mental states, while having some affinities with Indian and Tibetan accounts of mental episodes, is importantly different from those accounts, and, I contend, even more controversial.<sup>17</sup>

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