Reconceptualizing Belief as Alief: A Case Study in Conceptual Engineering

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Abstract

In this paper, I examine Gendler's notion of Alief as a case study in conceptual engineering. For this purpose, it draws on contemporary work on the notion of belief. There are certain perplexing phenomena, like being unable to throw darts at our loved one's face despite knowing that it will not harm them, that our notion of belief fails to explain. To explain phenomena like the above, Gendler introduces a new cognitive state which she calls Alief. The introduction of the notion of this state is taken as a case in conceptual engineering. The purpose of this paper is to examine whether it is a successful case of the same. For this purpose, I set out success criteria that involve two conditions a concept must fulfill. These are (1) the demarcation condition and (2) the function condition. Following this, I argue that while Gendler's case successfully fulfills the first condition, it fails to fulfill the second meaningfully. A method to understand how it can approach the second condition is provided. Following that, I conclude that Gendler's project could be successful only on a broader notion of conceptual engineering.

Keywords: Meta philosophy, Alief, Belief, Conceptual Engineering, Philosophy of mind

Introduction

Gendler in "Alief and Belief"argues for a certain kind of cognitive state that she terms alief. She posits this state in order to explain the perplexing phenomena that remain unexplained by other states. More precisely, it explains the phenomena where humans act or are disposed to act in contradiction to their beliefs and desires.

Gendler enumerates several examples of such phenomena in her text. For instance, a study by Paul Rozin demonstrates that the principle of sympathetic magic, which is rooted in traditional belief systems, remains present in modern Western culture. It means that modern Western adults, despite their commitments to more rational belief systems, sometimes act in a way that aligns with the principle of sympathetic magic like the law

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of Contagion ("Once in contact, always in contact") and the law of Similarity ("the image equals to the object") (Rozin et.al. 711). In their study, they asked 50 American adults if they would be willing to drink juice from a cup in which a sterilized cockroach had been dropped. Most subjects expressed reluctance to drink from the same cup. Such cases are not limited to a specialized environment. For instance, in Indian culture, it is not uncommon for people to give a separate water bottle to a lower-caste wage worker and refuse to drink from the same bottle or offer them only single-use cups. Vegetarians often refuse to eat food cooked in a utensil that has been used to prepare non-vegetarian food. This law of similarity is also evident in everyday life when subjects are asked to throw darts at a picture of a loved one. Most would refuse or hesitate to do so. Even though they believe that throwing darts at a picture won't hurt the person, they still act in a manner contrary to their own belief. Consider a similar case of a person being served chocolate cake in a toilet pot-shaped bowl instead of a plate. Naturally, they would hesitate to eat it. The skepticism in such cases is warranted. But even if they are told by a reliable source, they completely trust that this is really a clean, freshly baked chocolate cake being served in a clean utensil that resembles the toilet-pot just in shape, their reluctance would stay firm. What explains this reluctance? In these cases, subjects often know the truth, they believe in it, but still hesitate. It appears that they are acting contrary to their self-professed beliefs. Why?

To explain such phenomena, Gender argued that the relevant cognitive state here is not belief, but alief. She argues that the subjects believe one thing, they *alieve* something entirely different. Take the chocolate cake example: the subjects believe that it is a chocolate cake in a clean bowl, but they alieve something like: *Brown squishy stuff in a toilet pot. Disgusting. Don't eat.* Their alief explains their reaction. She defines alief as:

> "A paradigmatic alief is a mental state with associatively linked content that is representational, affective, and behavioral, and that is activated—consciously or non-consciously— by features of the subject's internal or ambient environment. Aliefs may be either occurrent or dispositional" (Gendler, "*Alief and Belief*" 642).

This formulation of alief tells us that the content of alief contains three components: (1) Representation of some object, situation, or circumstances; (2) some affective or emotional state; and (3) activation of some motor routine. Call this Representational-Affective-Behavioral Content (R-A-B). These components are linked associatively, and when we alieve, this cluster is activated. The chocolate cake is represented as Brown, squishy stuff in a toilet pot, which results in an emotional state of disgust. This mental state, in turn, results in the motor reaction that prohibits the consumption of the cake. Due to the association of these three elements, the reluctance arises. It is also possible for not all elements to be activated at the same time.

But is it necessary to posit a separate mental state that explains and causes this particular kind of phenomenon? Could it not be something else, like belief, imagination, or instinct?

Could it be that when we are presented with the chocolate cake in the toilet-shaped bowl, we *believe* it to be excreta even if we profess, we don't believe that, or that our mind *imagines* it to be so (subconsciously, perhaps)? The question is why can't it be a special sort of belief like 'unprofessed-belief' or a special sort of imagination like 'subconscious-imagination.' Introducing a new notion like 'alief' complicates matters, and for the sake of parsimony, it would be better if we do not inflate our conceptual repertoire by unnecessary additions. The challenge is then to show that there is a necessary need to posit alief. Gendler is aware of this demand and argues that alief is not a specialized case of belief, imagination, or instinct as it doesn't share the same nature with them. She states that such an assumption depends on a classical cognitivist picture, where alief is to be subsumed under some other, seemingly more *natural* notion. However, she contends that this is a mistake. The classical cognitivist picture is inadequately equipped to address the cases in question. The reason for this is that it misses some key differences among the proposed notions and fails to recognize the similarities among the cases.

Both belief and imagination interact with reality in ways that alief does not. Belief is reality-sensitive while Imagination is reality-insensitive (Gendler, "Alief and Belief" 647). Here, to be reality-sensitive means to be truth-apt. For example, if I believe that it is true that elephants have wings and in reality, they do not, then my belief is false. Thus, my belief is reality-sensitive. Imagination, on the other hand, is not reality-sensitive. I can very well imagine a pink elephant with wings gliding over the Rocks of Gibraltar without violating any norm. One could argue that even imagination is affected by reality: simple concepts like 'pink' or 'wings' are borne out of reality; they exist in the world. Perhaps, in an indirect way, we are dependent on reality even for our imagination. Here, elements of the environment play a constitutive role. However, this is not what it means to be reality-sensitive in this context. Sensitivity here is defined in terms of truth-aptness. Where does alief fit in here? According to Gendler, it is somewhere in the middle. She writes:

> "But alief just isn't reality-sensitive in the way belief is. Its content doesn't track (one's considered impression of) the world. At the same time, it's not reality-insensitive in the way that imagination is. For while we can (for the most part) imagine at will, we do not seem to have the same sort of freedom in alief " (Gendler, "*Alief and Belief*" 651).

Moreover, belief and imagination are propositional attitudes, whereas alief is not. Alief operates on a different plane. Gendler points out that, unlike belief and imagination, alieving P does not involve accepting P. We cannot alieve at will, either. For the most part, we can imagine at will even the situations that we are resistant to imagining. But unlike imagination, Alief is quite resistant to the control of will. This does not mean that nothing can be done about them or that they are firmly established in us. Aliefs can be changed using strategies that Gendler calls 'sub-rational mechanisms'. The possibility of alief-control, however slow or complex, suggests that Alief's alleged resistance to control is enough to introduce alief. The central force lies elsewhere. It is Alief's 'explanatory utility'

that is the reason for introducing this new notion. Gendler ("*Alief in action*" 555) warns that she does not, by any means, intend to claim alief as a fundamental mental state. Alief is introduced solely because the cases in question raise problems for other notions. We find our pre-alief conceptual repertoire inadequate. The cases mentioned above are not only unexplainable but also detrimental to our theories of belief. If we want to preserve this notion, then a reconceptualization is required. Alief is the result of this reconceptualization. Thus, Gendler's project can be taken as a case study in Conceptual engineering.

The question that follows this is whether this project is successful. To assess this, we will put Gendler's notion through two tests. We will check if:

1. The engineered concept is sufficiently demarcated theoretically from the pre-engineered concept (Call it the demarcation condition).
2. The engineered concept performs its functional role (Call it the function condition).

To understand the rationale behind the demarcation condition, we must first understand what it is for a concept to be demarcated from another concept. In the case of conceptual engineering, a post-engineering concept is demarcated theoretically from a pre-engineering concept when the former is not merely a disguised form of the latter. In other words, the concept originally at hand must have been revised to acquire (or eliminate) some characteristics. The necessity of this revision follows from the very definition of Conceptual engineering. After all, conceptual engineering is a revisionary project, and most accepted definitions and paradigmatic examples of this project are a testament to the same. For instance, Capellen presents Clark and Chalmers 'revision' of the concept of belief as an instance in conceptual engineering (11). He explains how their new concept is an example of conceptual engineering in philosophy using the terminology of 'revision'. Similarly, conceptual revision figures in Koch and Ohlhorst, who define conceptual engineering as 'the process of assessing and improving our conceptual repertoire' (Koch and Ohlhorst 2; emphasis added). At the same time, there are even instances of cases where conceptual engineering is explicitly presented as 'revisionary projects' (for more, see Scharp). The formulation of conceptual engineering as a revisionary project shows that for a concept to be a candidate for a successful case of conceptual engineering, it must undergo certain revisions. The demarcation condition ensures that this has been done.

But to what extent is this revision possible? At this point, it is important to ask to what extent we can add or eliminate characteristics of a concept for it to remain the same concept. Is this revision limitless? Surely not. We cannot imagine eliminating all the characteristics of one concept (say 'Red') and substituting them with the characteristics of some other concept (say 'Blue') and expect to call the same concept 'Red'. We cannot revise to the point of absurdity. We cannot substitute in name of revision. Thus, there must be a guiding principle that limits this revision and ensures the post-engineering

concept remains the same as the pre-engineering concept. The function condition provides for this assurance. The root of the function condition is in the functionalist view of conceptual engineering, according to which our concepts are required to perform certain functional roles, and they are engineered in compliance with these roles. Proponents of this view consider that a concept that fails to perform its required function adequately requires revision. But that is not all. The functionalist view not only provides a method to point out the defective concept, but it also explains how a concept preserves its identity post-engineering. For instance, Prinzing explains that, in his view, 'concepts are functional kinds, so conceptual identity is a matter of functional equivalence. Consequently, the essential features of a concept are those that are necessary for it to perform its function' (877). These essential features, pointed out by function, set out the limits for its revision and help in preserving a concept's identity. Therefore, for a case to be a successful case in conceptual engineering, the engineered concept must fulfil its function and hence satisfy the function condition.

These considerations show that for a project to be a successful case of conceptual engineering, it must fulfill these two preliminary conditions. In the next section, we will see how alief fares against these.

Conceptual engineering, according to Chalmers, is the project of 'designing, evaluating, and implementing concepts.' It involves fixing our old concepts or designing new concepts (1). An example of the former is Sally Haslanger's work on Gender, which she calls ameliorative projects (Haslanger, *Resisting Reality*). As for the latter, Kevin Scharp's work on truth is one example. Scharp replaces the pre-engineered notion of 'truth', which was inconsistent with ascending truth and descending truth (Scharp). Gendler's project is also a case of the latter. She extracts the notion of alief from the pre-engineered notion of belief. But unlike Scharp, who abandons the old, she leaves the rest untouched and retains the older notion (belief, in this case). As alief is presented in Gendler's work, it is not sufficient by itself to replace belief. Nor is that Gendler's aim. She simply wants a notion to explain those cases of reluctance, and for that, she engineers this concept. For Gendler's project to be a project in conceptual engineering, she needs to ensure that alief is not merely a disguised form of belief. She does so by providing the explanatory utility and the points of difference we discussed in the previous section. But does it work?

Mandelbaum in '*Against alief*' examines this. He differentiates between the robust notion of alief and the deflated notion of alief. On the former, aliefs are distinct from other psychological kinds in our psychological ontology, while on the latter, they are subsumed under other psychological kinds, with alief being simply a new name we have given to that set. To fulfill the demarcation condition, a robust notion of alief is required, which Mandelbaum demonstrates as implausible.

The distinctive character of alief is rooted in the associative nature of its content, which clearly separates it from belief, which is understood to have propositional content. Mandelbaum asks why it is that the representation content of alief cannot be

propositional. Gendler, however, does not establish a limit herself; She leaves the question of the nature of representational content open. She writes:

> "In paradigmatic cases, an activated alief has…the representation of some object or concept or situation or circumstance, perhaps propositionally, perhaps non-propositionally, perhaps conceptually, perhaps nonconceptual" (Gendler, "Alief and Belief" 643).

Mandelbaum, on the other hand, argues that the representation content of alief is propositional. If he can prove this, it would be difficult to establish how the notion of alief can be interpreted in a robust sense. To support his view, he provides two arguments: (1) the Argument from Binding, and (2) the Argument from Inferential Promiscuity.

The Argument from Binding-

In presenting alief, Gendler relies on an experiment conducted by Paul Rozin and colleagues (Rozin et al.). In this experiment, the participants are shown two empty bottles. Then, in front of them, these bottles are filled with sugar from a commercially labeled sugar box. The experimenter provides the participants with two labels; one reads 'sucrose,' and the other reads 'Sodium cyanide.' The participants are asked to affix the label on the bottles in any order they want. The experimenter then takes the contents of two bottles and mixes them with water in separate glasses, and the participants are asked to drink from any one glass. The result was that the participants hesitated to drink from the glass labeled with content from the bottle labeled as 'sodium cyanide,' even though they themselves had labeled it.

Gendler explains this hesitancy by claiming that the participants, in this case, alieve the content to be sodium cyanide. The content of this alief can be '*Cyanide. Dangerous. Avoid*'. On the robust notion, these three elements are associatively linked. Mandelbaum, however, points out that the content does not specify what we should avoid. In other words, why should we avoid the bottle and its contents rather than something else, like the glass or the spatula? He writes:

> "Since the behavior is bottle/bottle-content specific, the putative alief must somehow bind to the bottle (and its contents), or else participants would not show the avoidance behavior toward it. Merely saying that the alief's content is associated with the bottle doesn't explain why the alief binds to the bottle (and its contents) alone" (Mandelbaum 203).

For alief's content to be bound to the bottle, it must have a structure. This structure, he claims, is not provided by associative content.

The Argument from Inferential Promiscuity

Another argument for alief's content being propositional comes from the observation that aliefs allow for inferences. But if they are 'purely associative chains,' then inference

should not be possible. He writes: "In other words, aliefs seem to be inferentially promiscuous, but if they are essentially associative then they should be inferentially dormant—after all, one cannot make inferences from associative chains" (Mandelbaum 204). So, for example, the participants in Rozin's study can make inferences based on their aliefs such as "sodium cyanide is the same color as sucrose", "that cyanide mixes with water", etc. Innumerable inferences can be made. This phenomenon can only be explained by ascribing a propositional content to alief.

Mandelbaum further points out many similarities between belief and Gendler's definition of alief. He claims that all the characteristics Gendler attributes to alief are also exhibited by other mental states. The type of associations linked to alief are also found in belief. Alief also activates responses such as the fear response and readiness to fight or flee. Even the activation condition of aliefs applies to beliefs. According to Gendler, aliefs may be activated by the features of the subject's 'internal or ambient environment' ("Alief and Belief" 644). In many everyday cases, the ambient environment triggers the activation of a belief. Another characteristic she proposes is that aliefs may occur unconsciously. Again, the same holds true for belief and other cognitive states as well.

Mandelbaum's criticism attempts to show that alief cannot be reasonably demarcated from other mental states. If he is correct, then it fails the demarcation condition and cannot be a project in conceptual engineering. While Mandelbaum's arguments are convincing, they do not paint a fully accurate picture. Danon suggests that alief must have propositional content, but this must be of a deflated kind. She calls this "semi-structured propositional contents" (8513). She differentiates between the content of alief and belief. In the case of belief, all the constituent contents are detachable and redeployable. If a person has a belief that 'The powder in the bottle is poisonous,' then the person can detach the concepts "Powder", "Bottle", and "Poisonous" at will and redeploy them. For Alief, however, this is not the case. Aliefs are marked with some kind of un-detachability. That means that some concepts are hardly linked together, like 'cockroach' with 'disgusting'. So, even if a 'sterilized' cockroach is whirled in a cup, the reluctance to drink from it still appears. Because some concepts are undetachable, the propositional content is to be said 'semi-structured'. If Danon is correct, then the demarcation condition can be fulfilled successfully. As for the functional condition, we will see how it fares next.

II

Many philosophers, such as Haslanger (*Resisting Reality*) and Thomasson, suggest that concepts serve certain functions, and considering these functions is necessary for any project in conceptual engineering. Call this the functionalist view. According to this view, a project in conceptual engineering is successful if the concept performs its functional role efficiently. The appeal of the functionalist view lies in its ability to meet several challenges to conceptual engineering. For instance, it explains what speakers do when they engage in a debate over a concept (Plunkett & Sundell 2013), it tells us when our concepts are

inadequate (see Haslanger 2020). It also addresses a central challenge to conceptual engineering known as the topic-continuity problem. According to this challenge, conceptual engineers, in their effort to revise a concept, change the topic in question. For example, while we might have been arguing about 'justice'earlier, post-revision, we would be talking about 'justice$_1$,' which is not the same thing. Conceptual engineering is much more than merely changing our views on a topic. It involves a change in the meaning of a word. This sort of challenge was first raised by Strawson against Carnap's explication. Strawson accuses Carnap of failing to answer our original problems with a topic and instead replacing it with something new (Strawson). It is not that old questions have been answered, but that the questions have been changed. In arguing against the topic-continuity challenge, Prinzing resorts to the functionalist view (Prinzing). According to him, concepts are functional kinds that are individuated by the functions they serve. As long as concepts perform the same function, they preserve their 'identity', and the topic stays the same.

In traditional analytic philosophy, concepts were taken to have just representational functions. This viewpoint is known as functional monism. However, recent trends suggest that a concept can have more than one function. We must ask: what does a concept enable us to do? What is its use? The proponents of a pluralist view argue that it's highly unlikely that a concept only has one use. The same concept of 'marriage' can serve both a representational function and a function of 'marking a range of close relationships that we would help protect by affording a special legal and social status' (Thomasson 443). Similarly, Haslanger ("Gender") suggests that our concept of 'woman' also serves a political function. Keeping this in mind, she engineers this concept. Among many functions a concept might serve, identifying which function it should serve is the task of conceptual engineers. In the case of alief, Gendler makes the relevant function clear. She posits 'alief' for its explanatory role. Prima facie, aliefs provide an adequate explanation for the phenomenon discussed earlier. To argue against alief, we must ask: can our descriptive repertoire provide an adequate explanation of the phenomenon without appealing to aliefs?

Kwong thinks that the belief-discordant cases Gendler uses can be explained without appealing to this new type of mental state. According to Kwong, not all of them require a recourse to alief. It is possible by broadening the set of our beliefs relevant to a situation (81). He demonstrates this by using Rozin's dog feces experiment (Rozin et al. 705). In the said experiment, the subjects were first offered a piece of square-shaped, high-quality chocolate fudge and were asked to mark their desire for another piece. Then, two more pieces were brought for them; one was a square-shaped piece, and the other was in the shape of highly realistic dog feces. The desire for another piece among the subjects dropped. Gendler explains this phenomenon using her notion of alief. She writes:

> "The visual appearance of the feces-shaped fudge renders occurrent a belief discordant alief with the content: 'dog-shit, disgusting, refuse-to-eat'—an alief

> that runs counter to the subject's explicit belief that the object before her is composed of a substance that she considers delicious and appealing" (Gendler, "Alief and Belief" 641).

The belief that is explicitly assigned to the subject is

(a) The piece of fudge before her is composed of a substance that she takes to be both delicious and appealing.

If she believes this, then she should not feel disgusted by the piece of fudge, yet she does. The only explanation, according to Gendler, is that a belief-discordant alief pulls her in the opposite direction. For Kwong, the last step is superfluous. He suggests that, along with belief (a), we can reasonably attribute to the subject a set of beliefs that have not been mentioned. They could be as follows:

(b) This piece of fudge in front of her looks like Dog feces.

(c) Any food item that looks like dog feces tends to be unappetizing,

(d) Any food item that is unappetizing should generally be avoided. (81)

He further argues that if we can reasonably attribute the beliefs (b)-(d) to her, then we can reasonably attribute another added belief:

(e) This piece of fudge should be avoided.

This conclusion follows from the consideration of (b)-(d). So, not only is the belief that (a) is in her mind, but there are parallel beliefs (b)-(e) too. She sees the shape of the piece of fudge resembling dog feces and infers (b). (c) and (d), both generalizing claims, are then invoked, and the conclusion (e) is reached. (e) is a normative claim, but it is not necessary that she would follow it. She might eat it with a residual sense of disgust, or she might avoid it completely. Her action in this case would depend upon the tug-of-war between her desire to eat the delicious fudge and her desire to avoid the disgusting dog feces-resembling substance in front. So, according to Kwong, an account of belief and desire together adequately explains the behavior of the subject.

Kwong understands that his account is similar to the behavioral account that Gendler argues against. Call it the competing tendencies account. Gendler ("Alief in action") states that these accounts tend to put competing tendencies 'on a par' (563). The attraction of behavioral account, she states, is in its naturalness. However, she contends, it is mistaken. The reason is that the role of belief is essentially tracking the truth. If the belief is provided with enough evidence, then its norms require it to conform to the evidence. A belief is revised in order to track the truth. This tracking-the-truth condition is necessary for an attitude to qualify as a belief. According to Gendler, in the competing tendencies account, not all tendencies track the truth. So, for Kwong to advance further, it is important to satisfy this condition. He shows the same in his example. He demonstrates that all the competing attitudes track the truth and are thus instances of belief.

Kwong's defense is promising. If his explanation of the concerned scenario without recourse to alief is correct, it shows that alief is not really needed for explanation. However, his account does not make alief completely redundant. He himself points out

that his explanation of the phenomenon is limited only to certain kinds of cases and cannot be extended to cases involving 'automaticity'. In such cases, he concedes the explanatory power of alief. He writes, "In regards to these 'automaticity' cases, my view is that they perhaps merit consideration for introducing the notion of alief." (Kwong 88)

So, to the question, "Can we explain these phenomena without recoursing to alief?", the answer, at present, is "No." We need it for certain cases. The explanatory power of alief is its central merit. It is its function and the reason why we need to engineer this concept. It would appear, then, that this new concept successfully fulfills the demarcation condition and the functional condition, and that we could take alief to be a successful attempt at conceptual engineering. However, I think that this conclusion is premature. All these considerations have shown is that alief can be demarcated from belief and that alief can perform the explanatory role that belief fails to perform. It is unclear why belief must be deemed inadequate in this case. Stating that it fails to explain is not enough. It must be established that it is the belief's job to explain those phenomena. The same, by extension, could be applied to other mental states.

In other words, while Gendler is right in identifying a want of a mental state that would explain the phenomenon in question, taking her project as a case in conceptual engineering would require assuming that it is up to the elements of our current conceptual repertoire to explain it. There is a difference between deeming our conceptual repertoire inadequate and finding an element of it (say, belief) inadequate. To check whether our notion of belief is inadequate—i.e., whether it is not performing its function well—we must first identify what function *belief* is supposed to play. For this, we require a normative standard for belief. How must we establish it? To claim "look at its required function" is simply vague and uninformative, as it doesn't specify a method. What we require is a methodology that not only tells us what needs to be done but also why it needs to be done in an informative sense. Queloz provides one that fits the requirement. He calls it *vindicatory pragmatic genealogies*. He writes:

> "These genealogies reveal their object to serve an important practical need, and that need can itself be indicatory of how to improve things further. It offers not simply negative guidance (what to move away from), but positive guidance, indicating what to move to. By presenting a cultural phenomenon—say, a concept—as performing some function that we want to see performed, a vindicatory pragmatic genealogy hands us a normative standard that can guide further elaborations of our conceptual apparatus" (Queloz 446).

Queloz characterizes a genealogical project as vindicatory when it non-reductively traces a higher element to a lower element that is a pragmatic need. An instance of the same is William's genealogical treatment of Truth as an intrinsic value. Queloz argues that Bernard Williams, in his book Truth and Truthfulness, shows that the value of Truth could be non-reductively traced to many lower elements like 'the fundamental human concern to obtain information about one's immediate environment and the risks and

opportunities it affords' (438). This illustration shows the two conditions of a vindicatory pragmatic genealogical project in action. These two conditions are: (1) the concept is traced to a pragmatic need, and (2) the concept is not reduced to it. Queloz further explains that genealogy works well in cases where we do not know what we want the concept to do for us. He states that an example of this sort of concept is that of 'knowledge', which can be benefited from the genealogical project (446). Similarly, belief is another concept that requires a genealogical treatment, as it is unclear what we want the notion of belief to do. In the absence of a proper understanding of the function of belief, we cannot reasonably claim that belief doesn't perform its function well. Therefore, in what follows, I will attempt to undertake this task for the case of belief.

For this, I will begin with the simple, pragmatic observation that to navigate their environment, human beings needed to tentatively posit something to be the case so they could act on it. For illustration, consider a man faced with a man-eating cheetah in a jungle. In this scenario, he needs to posit that the beast in front is a cheetah and not a Thomson's gazelle. This is important because what he would posit would determine his course of action. If he takes it as a cheetah, he would run away from it to safety, and if as a gazelle, he would run after it to hunt. For this basic, pragmatic need, they needed a certain mental state that could posit something to be the case. But this is not all that is required of this mental state. On further observation and reasoning, we can see it is essential that this mental state doesn't remain unchecked. If it does, there could be a case where the man would run after a cheetah and away from a gazelle, thereby harming himself. This would clearly be detrimental to his needs. So, to further guide their conduct, human beings needed this mental state to be checked against reality. In other words, they needed it to be reality-sensitive. A part of being reality-sensitive is to determine whether it is true or false that 'p' is the case. Hence, this mental state also needs to be evaluated in terms of truth and falsity, thereby giving it a propositional content. Then, to sum up, human beings require a specific mental state that is both reality-sensitive and has propositional content to navigate their environment. The concept of belief represents this mental state. This genealogical account shows how we can trace the concept of belief to a more pragmatic concern (its lower element) and satisfy the first condition.

As for the second condition, we must ask: Does this tracing mean a reduction to the lower element? The answer is no. The fact that belief as a reality-sensitive mental state with a propositional structure stands in a genealogical relation with the pragmatic need to navigate our environment doesn't mean that the notion of belief in the aforementioned terms is merely an illusion. Our pragmatic needs only explain our notion of belief; they do not take its place. Belief can also be explained by recoursing to its relation with knowledge (See Williamson). An inquiry into knowledge would reveal that the notion of belief characterized so is not merely an illusion. It is not reduced to our pragmatic need. Thus, the satisfaction of the two conditions above makes it a case of vindicatory pragmatic genealogy.

What genealogies like this show is that not only do theyprovide us with a model for the development of a concept but, as stated earlier, could also guide us in our engineering projects. It is precisely for the latter concern that we have arrived at a vindicatory pragmatic genealogy of our concept of belief. The genealogy of the concept of belief shows us that the requirement posed upon belief is to be reality-sensitive and have propositional content. Nowhere do we find a demand for it to also explain the kind of cases Alief is supposed to explain. Then why must belief be taken as defective and in need of revision? Belief, as it stands in this case, is not a problematic concept. The need for proposing the concept of Alief does not follow from any defect the concept of belief might have.As long as conceptual engineering is formulated in terms of revisionary projects aiming at fixing the defects in our concept, Alief cannot be considered as belief-engineered. While it is true that the notion of alief might be desirable for explanatory reasons, considering it a successful case in conceptual engineering is wrong.

Our consideration of the case of Alief and Belief and its failure as a project in conceptual engineering brings us to a rather important insight. This could be gleaned from how the success of Gendler's project as a case in conceptual engineering can be vindicated. In my view, instead of considering it a case in conceptual engineering formulated as conceptual repair, Gendler's project should be considered a case of *conceptual innovation*.Conceptual innovation is a notion closely related to conceptual engineering, where the focus is not on 'fixing defects,' but on introducing new concepts. Simion and Kelp propose a reorientation of the focus of conceptual engineering projects from 'conceptual repair' to engineering 'new representational tools from scratch' (985). I think that this is exactly what Gendler has done with the notion of Alief. It is not belief that was lacking and needed fixing, but our conceptual repertoire that needed a concept to explain certain cases. Additionally, on this view, our conceptual innovation is guided by the functions our concepts are supposed to perform. The function in the case of Alief, as established earlier, is to explain those peculiar cases. And, this is precisely what the introduction of Alief does. Gendler's project cannot be a case of conceptual engineering as long as conceptual engineering is taken as a practice of conceptual repair. Thefailure of Gendler's project as a case in conceptual engineering, therefore, could be explained in the inadequacy of the traditional, narrower notion of conceptual engineering. This also shows that that the to improve our conceptual repertoire it is best to recalibrate our notion of conceptual engineering itself to also include conceptual innovation.

Conclusion

In this article, I have examined Gendler's notion of Alief as a case study of conceptual engineering. For this, I put the notion of Alief through two conditions, the success of which I consider necessary for a project to be a case of conceptual engineering. The two conditions in question are: the demarcation condition and the function condition. For the first condition, I derive the rationale from the notion of conceptual engineering as

revisionary projects aimed at fixing our defective concepts. The approach to revision considered in this paper is the functional approach to conceptual engineering. On this approach, a concept is defective if it fails to perform its function well, and the revision is guided by the said function. This approach also provides the rationale for the second condition.

On examining Gendler's notion of Alief against the demarcation condition, we find that, despite attacks from critics like Mandelbaum, Alief fares well and can reasonably be demarcated from other notions like belief. We also find that Alief satisfies its function of explaining the peculiar cases Gendler poses in the beginning. Prima facie, Alief satisfies the function condition too. However, this comes with a caveat. The function that Alief performs is a function that Gendler requires it to perform. But we see that it is not clear whether that is the function that is required of belief. This is important because, for the notion of conceptual engineering is question, it is not only enough for the pre-engineered concept and the post-engineered concept to be sufficiently demarcated from each other in their conception, but also the two concepts should share the same function required of them.

To arrive at the function required of belief, I use the method of vindicatory pragmatic genealogy and find that the function required of the two concepts is not the same. The requirement on our notion of Alief is not the same as that on belief. Therefore, we conclude that the case of Alief cannot be considered a successful project in our traditional notion of conceptual engineering.

This, however, does not make the notion of Alief useless. We maintain that Gendler's notion of Alief performs its function well and is a useful addition to our conceptual repertoire. In my suggestion, this project could better be interpreted as a project in conceptual innovation, which introduces new concepts without the aim of fixing the defects of the older ones. It is also argued that the case of Alief shows that conceptual innovation should be considered as an alternative and as an equally important practice to conceptual repair and revisionary projects for the improvement of our conceptual repertoire.

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