CORA Cork Open Research Archive
Cartlann Taighde Oscailte Chorcaí

Title	Consciousness, belief, and the group mind hypothesis
Authors	Overgaard, Søren;Salice, Alessandro
Publication date	2019-03-01
Original Citation	Overgaard, S. and Salice, A. (2019) 'Consciousness, belief, and the group mind hypothesis', Synthese, In Press, doi: 10.1007/s11229-019-02152-6
Type of publication	Article (peer-reviewed)
Link to publisher's version	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11229-019-02152-6 - 10.1007/s11229-019-02152-6
Rights	© Springer Nature B.V. 2019. This is a pre-print of an article published in Synthese. The final authenticated version is available online at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-019-02152-6
Download date	2026-10-07 16:30:37
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/7814

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

**Preprint version.* Final paper forthcoming in *Synthese*. Please refer to published version.*

Consciousness, Belief, and the Group Mind Hypothesis

Søren Overgaard and Alessandro Salice

Abstract

According to the Group Mind Hypothesis, a group can have beliefs over and above the beliefs of the individual members of the group. Some maintain that there can be group mentality of this kind in the absence of any group-level phenomenal consciousness. We present a challenge to the latter view. First, we argue that a state is not a belief unless the owner of the state is disposed to access the state's content in a corresponding conscious judgment. Thus, if there is no such thing as group consciousness, then we cannot literally ascribe beliefs to groups. Secondly, we respond to an objection that appeals to the distinction between 'access consciousness' and 'phenomenal consciousness'. According to the objection, the notion of consciousness appealed to in our argument must be access consciousness, whereas our argument is only effective if it is about phenomenal consciousness. In response, we question both parts of the objection. Our argument can still be effective provided there are reasons to believe a system or creature cannot have access consciousness if it lacks phenomenal consciousness altogether. Moreover, our argument for the necessary accessibility to consciousness of beliefs does concern phenomenal consciousness.

Keywords: Group Mind, Belief, Phenomenal Consciousness, Access Consciousness

Introduction

According to the Group Mind Hypothesis (GMH), a group or collective can have mental states over and above the mental states of the members of the group.[1] On influential current versions of GMH, groups can have some of the same types of mental states that individuals have, in particular, propositional attitudes such as beliefs and desires. Current defenders of GMH are often less confident that that there is any group *consciousness* over and above the

[1] This hypothesis is far from new. For a concise historical overview, see Tuomela (2013).

consciousness of individual members. Some maintain that there can be group mentality of the familiar propositional-attitude kinds in the absence of any group consciousness. Call the latter view the 'Group Mentality Without Consciousness' view (hereafter: GMWC). This paper presents a challenge to GMWC.

Our argument focusses on beliefs – the kind of propositional attitude that best seems to fit what GMWC needs. First, we argue that a state is not a belief unless the owner of the state is disposed to access the state's content in a corresponding conscious judgment. Roughly, our argument is the following. You do not believe that *p* unless you take *p* to be true – unless you *endorse* that content *p*, as we shall put it. But states whose contents you are not disposed to reactivate in conscious judgements are not states whose contents you endorse, and so they are not beliefs (of yours).

This 'Argument from Endorsement', as we call it, is a less serious challenge to GMWC than one might initially think, however. For the sense in which beliefs must be accessible to consciousness might seem fully captured by what Ned Block dubs 'access consciousness'; whereas what GMWC countenances is group mentality without *phenomenal* consciousness. So, defenders of GMWC can respond that our first argument rests on a fallacy of equivocation: we appeal to access consciousness in our argument, but for that argument to get any purchase on GMWC, we need to draw a conclusion about phenomenal consciousness.

For this reply to work, however, two things must be true (or at least plausible): first, that the notion of consciousness at stake in our argument actually *is* access consciousness ('A-consciousness') rather than phenomenal (or 'P-') consciousness; and second, that a creature or system can have the former while entirely lacking the latter. We argue that it is unlikely that either case can be made.

The paper is structured as follows. In Section 1, the Group Mind Hypothesis is introduced against the background of some general considerations about intentionality and

consciousness, which help us specify the target and strategy of our paper. In Section 2, we make some preliminary points about beliefs and their relation to consciousness. Section 3 contains the Argument from Endorsement, and in Section 4, we discuss various objections to it. Finally, in Section 5, we argue that it is not possible for GMWC defenders to defuse the Argument from Endorsement by appealing to the distinction between A- and P-consciousness.

1. The Group Mind Hypothesis and the Problem of Consciousness

In the growing literature on collective intentionality, many claim that groups may instantiate some of the same types of mental states that individuals instantiate – the so-called 'propositional attitudes,' in particular. Margaret Gilbert has argued that 'a group can in principle believe that *p* even though everyone in it personally believes the opposite' (1987, 201), insisting that talk of collective belief 'picks out an important, real phenomenon' (ibid., 200). In the same vein, Deborah Tollefsen suggests that 'groups really do have attitudes, and our attributions [of attitudes to groups] are getting at real patterns in the world' (2015, 111). Christian List and Philip Pettit argue that 'it is possible, at least in principle, for a group to aggregate the intentional attitudes of its members into a single system of such attitudes held by the group as a whole' (2011, 59). Pettit even agrees with Gilbert that groups can have attitudes that no individual members have (Pettit 2003, 171), so that there is an important sense in which some groups have 'minds of their own' (cf. the title of Pettit 2003). Finally, Bryce Huebner emphasizes that 'collectivities can exhibit intentional states that are distinct from the intentional states of the individuals' (2014, 116). Thus, all these authors defend what we call the 'Group Mind Hypothesis' (GMH). GMH is not a unified view as much as a family of views, and GMH-supporters offer substantively different proposals concerning the conditions that need to be met for groups to be minded. However, since these differences

generally do not affect our argument, we will only note them explicitly when they are important to our discussion.

Notice that something like Tollefsen's and Gilbert's insistence that ascriptions of intentional attitudes to collectives track real phenomena is required if GMH is not supposed to be trivial. Few people would deny that it makes sense to talk 'as if' groups and collectives have intentional states; so, if that is all GMH maintains, then the hypothesis is little more than a triviality. From the point of view of philosophy of mind, GMH only becomes an interesting thesis if such descriptions are taken to be literally true.

The non-trivial reading of GMH itself admits of different interpretations. From the perspective of the philosophy of mind, which is the perspective we adopt on the GMH debate, some of these interpretations are more interesting than others. At the less interesting end of the spectrum, GMH might be understood merely to maintain that groups may (literally) have *some* kind of intentional states – states with representational content, conditions of satisfaction and whatever else might be required.[2] This view may not be entirely uncontroversial, but at least some prominent philosophers of mind seem happy to suppose that intentionality is all around us: in compasses, tree rings, smoke, and so on – wherever some item tracks, or bears information about, another item.[3] If all GMH maintains is that groups can instantiate intentional states understood along these lines, then the thesis ought to be palatable to many (after all, if thermostats can have it, why not sports teams?), and thus not a very radical or interesting thesis.[4]

[2] Velleman (2000a) and Bratman (forthcoming) discuss the possibility of non-mental intentions being instantiated in groups.

[3] See, e.g., Dretske (1994; 1995).

[4] In other contexts, of course, the important issue might not be whether groups can have *beliefs* or *desires*, strictly speaking, but whether they can instantiate intentional states that are to some extent functionally equivalent with the propositional attitudes. For instance, this may be the case in discussions of the extent to

At the other end of the spectrum is the claim that groups can have mental states of the same kinds that individuals are paradigmatically thought to have – that is, states such as desires and beliefs. Whether or not thermostats have intentionality in some sense, it seems a lot less obvious that they literally *believe* or *desire* anything. We will be concerned with the maximally interesting claim that groups can literally believe, desire or intend things every bit as much as individuals can.[5]

In focusing on this strong claim, we are not stacking the cards against defenders of GMH. Many proponents of the view are explicit that the kinds of mental states they believe groups capable of instantiating include such things as *beliefs* (not 'belief-like' states) and *desires* (not 'desire-like' states). List and Pettit (2011, 76), for example, are happy to speak of 'the beliefs and desires of a group agent', which they regard as supervening on the beliefs and desires of individual members 'in a holistic manner that allows the group's attitudes on some propositions to come apart from its members' attitudes to them' (ibid.). Similarly, Huebner (2014, 255), sees 'no obvious reason to deny the status of a maximal mentality' to highly integrated research groups such as the CERN, where maximal mentality involves the ability to 'form fine-grained beliefs and desires about the world' (ibid., 190).[6] Tollefsen suggests that collectives such as organizations, under certain circumstances, can be 'true believers' (to

which groups can be held accountable for their actions. For a recent argument that it is sufficient for collectives to be moral agents that they can have functional equivalents of guilt and other reactive attitudes, see Björnsson and Hess (2016).

[5] A less radical view might affirm that groups can have some sort of mental intentional states – e.g., something analogous to the subdoxastic states discussed in Section 3 – but deny that, or leave it open whether, they can have propositional attitudes such as beliefs and desires. This may be an attractive fall-back option for GMH-defenders, and nothing in our paper calls it into question. See our conclusion (Sect. 6) for a few more thoughts on this.

[6] At the same time, Huebner thinks defenders of GMH would do well to focus on more modest sorts of mentality, emphasizing that 'cases of maximal collective mentality are likely to be incredible rare' (2014, 216).

quote the title of Tollefsen 2002). And Gilbert, as already mentioned, is adamant that collectives can have beliefs over and above the beliefs of their members, insisting that collective belief ascriptions are not a mere '*façon de parler*' (Gilbert and Pilchman 2014, 208). (She does not accept, however, that the concept of 'belief' in 'collective belief' is the same as in 'individual belief'. We shall return to this point in Section 3.)

GMH understood as the maximally interesting thesis that groups can literally have mental states of the familiar propositional-attitude types has attracted its fair share of criticism. A common objection turns on the idea that genuine mentality requires consciousness. Since groups cannot have consciousness, so the objection goes, groups can at best have 'as if' mentality.

Stated this bluntly, the objection begs the question against the view that we call 'Group Mentality Without Consciousness' (GMWC). GMWC affirms the maximally interesting version of GMH, but insists that group mentality in this form does not *require* group consciousness. Pettit seems clearly committed to GMWC:

> There is a type of organization found in certain collectivities that makes them into subjects in their own right, giving them a way of being minded that is starkly discontinuous with the mentality of their members. … [This] claim … is consistent with a denial that our minds are subsumed in a higher form of *Geist* or in any variety of collective consciousness. (Pettit 2003, 167)

Tollefsen concurs: 'I don't intend to argue that groups are phenomenally conscious agents. I don't think a group experiences anything except through its members. But I … think that a subject can be an intentional agent without also being a phenomenally conscious agent' (2015, 53). As Gilbert and Pilchman (2014, 191) write, it seems true that groups cannot have feelings

'if feelings are understood essentially to involve *subjective experiences'*. Yet they insist that this 'does not clinch the case against group belief' (ibid., 192). And List offers a tentative argument against group phenomenal consciousness, but proposes that suitably organized collectives, such as corporations and NGOs, can nevertheless have 'corporate beliefs and desires' (List 2016, 4).

Finally, while Huebner accepts the possibility of collective phenomenal consciousness, he also agrees that 'the kind of collectives most likely to provide empirical support for claims about collective mentality are not likely to have conscious states in the *what it is like* sense of consciousness' (2014, 118). Since Huebner believes some of the same collectives that are unlikely to be conscious may possibly be ascribed 'the status of a maximal mentality' (cf. 2014, 255), he does seem to embrace GMWC.

The task for opponents of GMWC is to show that the sort of mentality GMWC ascribes to groups requires consciousness. There are various ways of attempting to make this case. John Searle, e.g., is adamant that 'there cannot be a group mind or group consciousness. All consciousness is individual minds, in individual brains' (2002, 96). His argument (Searle 1992, Ch. 7) starts from the observation that intentional states have 'aspectual shapes', that is, are of or about their objects under different 'aspects'. (Lois Lane believes Superman can fly. But she does not believe Clark Kent can fly. Lane's belief is about the superhero who, as it happens, is Clark Kent, but under his 'Superman-aspect', not under his 'Clark-Kent-aspect'.) According to Searle, there is no way to explain how intrinsic intentional states acquire such aspectual shapes except by appeal to consciousness. Since aspectual shape is an essential feature of all intentional mental states, and since there is no group consciousness from which group-level aspectual shapes can be derived, it follows that there is no group-level intentional mentality. Albeit not discussing GMH specifically, Uriah Kriegel (2003) has offered an alternative argument for the view that intentionality requires consciousness. Kriegel's

argument centres on the idea that genuine, underived intentionality is always a representation *of* something *for* someone. Since this 'for-someone' entails consciousness, according to Kriegel, there is no (genuine) intentionality without consciousness.

We will not evaluate these arguments.[7] We only sketch them (in coarse outline) to contrast them with the argumentative tack we are pursuing. Kriegel's and Searle's arguments turn on the idea that there is something about genuine intentionality as such that requires consciousness. Our argument neither relies on nor entails that idea. Our strategy is to argue that an intentional state cannot be someone's *belief* unless that someone is disposed to access the state's content in a corresponding conscious judgement.

Our focus on consciousness sets our argument apart from the familiar arguments against group beliefs in the collective epistemology literature. The latter arguments have typically focused on a distinction between belief proper and 'acceptance'.[8] The claim has been that the examples usually adduced in support of the thesis that groups can have beliefs actually support the thesis that groups are capable of instantiating 'acceptance', rather than belief (Wray 2001).[9]

In what follows, we shall say nothing about 'acceptance'. Nor shall we attempt to offer a complete theory of the nature of belief, and of how it might differ from related doxastic phenomena. In fact, we want to stay neutral on the question of the nature of belief (more on this below). In the next section, however, we outline some relatively uncontroversial

[7] See Huebner (2014, 120-23) for a response to Searle.

[8] This distinction goes back to Cohen (1989). Whereas a belief that *p*, for Cohen, is 'a disposition to feel it true that *p*', to accept that *p* 'is to have or adopt a policy of deeming, positing, or postulating that *p*' (ibid., 368). Although there seems to be an obvious connection between Cohen's claim about belief and the argument we will present in Sect. 3, we do not have space to go into this.

[9] See Gilbert (2014a), Hakli (2006), and Tuomela (2000) for further discussion of group belief and acceptance.

points about beliefs, after suggesting that beliefs are the mental states that best seem to fit the GMWC-defender's needs.

2. Beliefs and Consciousness

In the context of the Group Mind Hypothesis – and GMWC specifically – beliefs are particularly interesting for several reasons. First, as already noted, most defenders of GMH seem to think groups can have beliefs. Second, there is broad agreement that belief is one of the building blocks of mentality, which plays a crucial role in most conceptions of intentional agency. In addition to pro-attitudes (wishes, desires, intentions or suitable substitutes), it is sometimes argued, an agent must have beliefs about the world in order to perform intentional actions (cf. Davidson 2001). A desire for beer, e.g., will not lead an agent to do anything in particular unless she has beliefs about the possible locations of beer. Thus, if we take away group beliefs, it seems groups can at best be somewhat impoverished minds or agents. At worst, however, we might be losing our grip on the notion of group mentality altogether. If some version of the 'desire-as-belief' thesis turns out to be correct, one can only desire something to the extent one believes it to be good.[10] On this view, if beliefs go, desires go as well. The thesis is of course controversial, but at least it is not obviously false. It is also worth noting – even if this is *ad hominem* – that some supporters of GMWC have defended the 'desire-as-belief' thesis against Lewis' classical objections (see Hájek and Pettit 2004; Bradley and List 2009). For those GMWC supporters, at any rate, it seems that if the case for group belief collapses, the case for group mentality as such is in jeopardy.

Thirdly, beliefs seem – at least *prima facie* – to constitute the best case for group mentality without consciousness. To illustrate this point, it is instructive to compare beliefs with other mental states and episodes. Sensations are conscious episodes and for this simple

[10] See Lewis (1988) for critical discussion.

reason not the kind of mentality that GMWC is looking for. Desires have a weaker connection with consciousness. For it seems clear *both* that you need not be conscious of them (your desire for a promotion does not go away when you sleep) *and* that you may consciously desire something (think of sexual desire).

In the case of beliefs, the link with consciousness is arguably even weaker than this. Right now, you have a vast number of beliefs none of which are conscious; and most people would think you retain those beliefs during episodes of sleep or unconsciousness. Indeed, it is not clear that there even is such thing as a conscious belief (Crane 2001, 103; Crane 2013). While you may consciously desire that *q*, there may be no such thing as consciously believing that *p*. The idea here is that beliefs are standing states – not conscious events or episodes. There are episodes of occurrent thought, Crane maintains, but no episodes of occurrent belief. Consequently, 'there is nothing it is like to believe something' (Crane 2001, 106).

We wish to stay neutral on the question of the nature of belief, and so we do not suggest that Crane is right about these matters.[11] But the mere availability of a position such as Crane's shows that beliefs have a minimal link with consciousness, and to this extent beliefs seem to constitute a particularly promising case for group mentality along the lines of GMWC.

Having established the importance of belief in the context of GMWC, let us note that we accept four fairly (if not entirely) uncontroversial assumptions about beliefs. The first is some form of *realism* about beliefs, and contentful states more generally, in individual persons (and some animals). In other words, we take it as a given that human adults really

[11] On a more orthodox view, belief comes in both occurrent and 'dispositional' or standing-state varieties (note: one can accept 'dispositional' belief in this sense without endorsing a dispositional account of the *nature* of belief; cf. footnote 12). Chalmers (1996, 20), for example, is happy to speak of occurrent beliefs, and he grants phenomenality to beliefs – albeit a 'relatively faint' phenomenality.

have beliefs – whatever beliefs turn out to be, exactly. Of course, not all philosophers accept realism about belief (see e.g. Churchland 1981), but it ought to be an unproblematic assumption in the present context. What makes GMH an interesting hypothesis (from the point of view of the philosophy of mind) is precisely its ambition to *extend* common-or-garden realism about mentality to groups.

The second assumption we make is that beliefs are *intentional states*. It is important not to misunderstand this assumption, however. First, although we will speak of 'states' throughout the paper, this is merely a convenient placeholder. We remain neutral on the question of whether some beliefs are, strictly speaking, episodes or events rather than states, for example. Moreover, we do not assume that beliefs are *internal* 'states' in any substantial sense. That is, we do not assume that the beliefs of human persons are 'in the head' in either the content or vehicle sense of that phrase. But beliefs, whatever (and wherever) they are, have intentional or representational *content*, we assume. Your belief that grass is green represents grass as being green. Again, however, this is supposed to be trivial, and should not be read as entailing any specific assumptions about the nature of mental representation.[12]

[12] Note that defenders of GMWC seem to accept such a minimally representational take on belief. For List and Pettit, e.g., a belief is an intentional state that represents a certain proposition as being true (2011, 21). For Huebner, 'every type of genuine cognition', including such high-level cognitive phenomena as beliefs, 'requires internal states and processes, which can represent the world as being a particular way, and which have the function of conveying salient information in a manner that can guide behavior' (2014, 190). Gilbert thinks of beliefs as 'cognitive states', which are 'states whose specification requires reference to a proposition' (2014a, 134). Tollefsen (2002), despite ostensibly endorsing Dennett's (1981/1997) interpretationist approach, repeatedly states that 'organizations *really do* have intentional states' (2002, 397, her emphasis; cf. 396, 406). If we take such claims at face value, Tollefsen seems to accept (some kind of) realism about beliefs, and she seems to accept that beliefs are intentional states that organizations (and individuals) may instantiate.

Thirdly, we accept that beliefs have what Searle has dubbed the 'mind-to-world direction of fit' (Searle 1983, Ch. 1).[13] Roughly, a contentful state (or episode) has the mind-to-world direction of fit, if and only if the state *itself* is somehow erroneous if its *content* is false or erroneous, and accurate if its content is true (or error-free). Compare the desire that one wins the lottery with the belief that one does. These two states have the same propositional content (that one wins the lottery), and that content is false if one does not win the lottery. But the desire *itself* is not thereby incorrect or erroneous, whereas the belief is.[14] It is natural to think this is because beliefs represent it as *being the case* that *p* whereas desires perhaps represent *p* as *to be made the case*.

The mind-to-world direction of fit is essential to belief; but – and this is our fourth claim – it is not exclusive to belief. Assumptions, hypotheses and suppositions, too, have this direction of fit. Assuming that *p* is representing it as being the case that *p*, and if not-*p*, one's assumption is false. Perceptual experiences, too, at least on most views,[15] represent a portion of the environment as *being* this or that way, and thus they are erroneous (or 'falsidical') if the environment is not that way. Call psychological states with the mind-to-world direction of fit 'Representational states' (with a capital 'R').

With these preliminary points in place, we will argue in the next section that a Representational state cannot be a belief of a subject unless that subject is disposed to access the state's content in conscious judgment.

3. The Argument from Endorsement

[13] For discussion of various ways of cashing out this metaphor, see Humberstone (1994) and Zangwill (1998).

[14] Our way of presenting mind-to-world direction of fit owes much to Siegel (2010, Ch. 2).

[15] The orthodox views we are assuming here have recently come under fire from so-called 'naïve realists' (e.g. Travis 2004).

Many philosophers have suggested that beliefs are special (vis-à-vis other Representational states) in that they 'aim at the truth' or are 'regulated for truth'. Sometimes the same point, or a closely related one, is elaborated in terms of beliefs' being subject to a 'truth norm'. It is not entirely clear how these claims are to be unpacked,[16] and there is a live philosophical debate about whether it is true that beliefs are essentially subject to a 'truth norm', and whether they in some sense 'aim at truth' (see Chan 2013a). It has been suggested, however, that the metaphor of 'aiming at the truth' can be cashed out in terms of a feature that is indisputably essential to belief (Huddleston 2012, 213). We call this feature '*Endorsement*'. That beliefs must be characterized by Endorsement is well-nigh trivial – about as analytic as the familiar statement about bachelors being unmarried men. Still, hardly any truths are so trivial that philosophers deem them unworthy of mention, and Endorsement is no exception. Peter Railton, for example, expresses what we have in mind when he refers to 'the fact that believing something is holding it true' (1994, 75). Andrew Huddleston voices the same thought when he states that '[i]t is constitutive of being a belief that such a state models what the believer takes the world to be like' (2012, 213; see also Crane 2013). Paraphrasing Huddleston, a state is not a belief of some subject or system *S*, unless *S* takes the world to be

[16] The idea that 'belief aims at truth' was introduced by Bernard Williams (1973). But it seems there is no consensus on how the metaphor of 'aiming' is to be cashed out. The idea that 'beliefs aim at truth' is sometimes taken to amount to the same as the idea that beliefs have a 'mind-to-world' direction of fit (Chan 2013b, 2; Glüer and Wikforss 2013, 80). Others take the 'aims' metaphor to highlight a putative self-reflexive feature of belief: 'getting things right is what a belief *presents itself* as doing' ((Railton 1994, 74; our emphasis). For Velleman (2000b), belief is distinguished from other Representational states by a literal aim on the part of the believ*er* – viz. 'the aim of getting the truth-value of [a] proposition right' (2000b, 252). Yet others, including later incarnations of Velleman (Wedgwood 2002; Boghossian 2003; Shah and Velleman 2005), think the "aims" vocabulary should be interpreted as involving a normative claim, such as the claim that 'for every proposition *p* that one actually considers, one *should* believe that *p* if and only if *p* is true' (Wedgwood 2002, 291; our emphasis).

as represented by that state. As we shall gloss this, *S* must *endorse* the state's content. If the state represents it as being the case that *p*, then *S* must take it that *p*. If *S* does not take it (hold it true) that *p*¸ whatever the Representational state in question is, it is not a belief of *S*'.

Endorsement of a content *p*, we maintain, entails the disposition to access that content in a corresponding, conscious judgement (we will refer to this as 'reactivating' the content in question).[17] Before presenting our argument for this claim, let us attempt to unpack the claim itself. To judge that *p* is to consciously think that *p* coupled with conscious accept of, or assent to, *p*. Thus, the sentence 'The capital of France is Paris' (or some mentalese equivalent) being tokened in your stream of consciousness is neither necessary nor sufficient for judging that the French capital is Paris. It is not necessary because a tokening of the name 'Paris!' might do as well,[18] and it is not sufficient because such a sentence could be tokened without being accepted or assented to. Conscious accept of (or assent to) *p*, is a matter of it *seeming* to you that *p*, or it seeming to you that the proposition '*p*' is true. In a conscious episode of judging that *p*, then, it seems to you that *p*, or that '*p*' captures the way things are. 'Seeming (true)', here, expresses the *conscious* character of the assent. Not all conscious judgments are reactivations of the contents of dormant beliefs. Sometimes the judgment is (or causes) the formation of a new belief, rather than being the accessing of the content of an

[17] On an orthodox view, judgments will count as conscious, occurrent beliefs, whereas on the view defended by Crane they are a different sort of thing altogether. We do not (to repeat) take a stand in this debate. Note, by the way, that although there is an ongoing debate about whether or not cognitive episodes have phenomenal character, the majority view is that there *is* something it is like to consciously think that *p* (see Bayne and Montague 2011). The main bone of contention is whether the phenomenology of conscious thought is a phenomenology proper to the thought process as such, as opposed to one that belongs to accompanying sensory activity (imagery, subvocal speech, etc.).

[18] We also think it highly plausible –although we do not have space to argue for this claim – that animals and pre-linguistic infants may think wordless thoughts. For discussion, see Bermudez (2003).

already held one. Moreover, sometimes one's judgments fail to reflect the (standing) beliefs one actually has. You may judge that your flight leaves at noon while later realizing that you knew all along (hence believed) that the flight was at 12.45.[19] So, consciously judging that *p* is not sufficient for endorsing (hence believing) that *p*. Nor is it necessary: we have countless dormant beliefs whose contents are rarely if ever accessed in conscious judgements.

However, to endorse that *p* entails being *disposed* to access that content in a conscious judgment. If you are not disposed, under the right circumstances, to consciously judge that *p*, or have '*p*' seem to you to capture how things are, then it is false to say of you that you endorse *p*, and by extension that you believe that *p*. How are the 'right circumstances' to be specified? In other words, what are 'stimulus conditions' in which the disposition is manifested? Specifying these in a way not open to counterexamples – i.e., cases where the stimulus conditions obtain but the disposition is not manifested – would be a tricky matter, and we shall not attempt any such specification. But obviously the conditions would include such things as being awake, considering whether or not *p*, and the absence of confusion and self-deception.

Let us now present our argument to the conclusion that Endorsement of *p* entails having a disposition to access the content *p* in conscious judgement – which we call 'the Argument from Endorsement'. The argument has two parts. First, we examine ways in which one might attempt to capture Endorsement without any sort of appeal to a disposition to reactivate in conscious judgment. Then, we question the coherence of the idea that someone may believe (hence endorse) that *p* although that person is not disposed to reactivate the relevant Representational state's content in conscious judgement.

First, how might one attempt to explain Endorsement without appealing to the possibility of conscious reactivation in judgement? Obviously, the observation that a state is

[19] See Shah and Velleman (2005); and Silins (2012), from whom the example is taken.

Representational – has the mind-to-world direction of fit – is beside the point. A subject can be in Representational states without endorsing their contents.[20] Consider assumptions. If you assume that *p* for the sake of the argument, or perhaps in order to provide a *reductio* of the thesis that *p*, then you are in some Representational state with the content *p*. But it would be absurd to say you believe that *p*, precisely because you do not endorse that thesis. Known illusions provide striking illustrations of the same point. Perhaps it makes sense to say your visual system takes the Müller-Lyer lines to be unequal in length; but *you*, knowing full well that they are the same in length, do not.

Similarly hopeless is the suggestion that Endorsement be explained in terms of dispositions to infer propositions entailed by propositions believed. Suppose *p* entails *q* and *r*. The suggestion would then be that the Endorsement of *p* can be explained by such things as dispositions to infer *q* and *r*. But someone who is trying to work out the implications of *p* will be disposed (assuming a modicum of rationality) to infer *q* and *r*, regardless of whether or not he or she endorses *p*. So, having those dispositions cannot explain Endorsement.

Yet another option is to attempt to make sense of Endorsement entirely in terms of behavioural dispositions. Unfortunately, this does not work either. Someone who assumes or supposes that *p* may behave, or be disposed to behave, for an extended stretch of time, as if

[20] Mandelbaum (2014) apparently thinks one cannot entertain a proposition without believing it. In fact, if someone reads a sentence out loud to you, you will believe it, even if you have been expressly told that it is false: 'If I tell you that I am about to read a list of sentences, all of which are false, and then I read the sentences, it seems plausible that you would not automatically believe these sentences…. In what follows I argue that this plausible assumption is false' (2014, 55-56). We do not have space to defend philosophical orthodoxy here, but we will say this: Sadly, in our experience, most journal referees, at any rate, are perfectly able to read and understand sentences without believing the propositions asserted. (For resistance to what we go on to say about known illusions, see Quilty-Dunn (2015).)

they took *p* to be true.[21] Consider William Alston's (1988, 265, 267) example of a military commander who has to make decisions about where to move his troops in the absence of reliable information about the location of enemy forces. The commander assumes the enemy has taken a nearby hill, and he issues whatever orders make the most sense given that scenario. The commander's behaviour and behavioural dispositions may be indistinguishable from those of someone who, given an obvious desire to win the imminent battle, believes the enemy has taken the hill. But the commander may have no such belief. The situation simply calls for action, and so the commander acts. He does not act randomly, but chooses as his basis for action one plausible hypothesis about the location of the enemy. Yet for all that, he may have no settled view on the enemy's position. Thus, a given set of behavioural dispositions is not sufficient for Endorsement, and hence not sufficient for belief. (Obviously, they are not necessary either. Someone determined to conceal their belief that *p* may be disposed to act consistently as though *p* were false.)

As far as we can see, the only remaining option is to hold that Endorsement is some sort of *sui generis* attitude or stance, which defies explanation. Now, this move seems, as the saying goes, to have all the advantages of theft over honest toil. In our view, postulating a *sui generis* attitude should be a last resort. Thus, we ought to reject this move in the present case, since a plausible explanation of Endorsement is readily available: Endorsement of *p* consists, at least in part, in a disposition to consciously judge that *p*.

[21] Strictly speaking, there is no 'behaving as if one believes that *p*' independently of one's desires. There is no limit to the ways someone who thinks there is beer in the fridge might be inclined to behave. Only given a desire (e.g. to drink beer) do we narrow down the field somewhat. But only somewhat. For someone who believes that there is beer in the fridge and desires a beer may still not be inclined to behave in any way that would disclose his belief (or desire), say if his religious beliefs prohibit the consumption of alcohol. This is a familiar lesson from the demise of logical behaviourism (see Putnam 1975).

In fact – and this is the second part of our argument – there is more than a whiff of incoherence about the idea that someone might endorse that *p* even though they are not disposed to consciously judge that *p*. Consider what we are being asked to swallow here. A person may take it that *p* – may endorse *p* – even though the following is true: Make the person awake and alert, ensure that they ponder whether or not *p*, ensure their memory and other relevant cognitive faculties are in good working order, and so forth; still the person will *not* judge that *p* – *p* will not seem true to her. This cannot be right. If there just are no circumstances in which *p* will seem true to *S*, no matter how carefully she considers the matter, and no matter how well we imagine her cognitive faculties to be working, surely she does not take p to be true, and so she does not believe that *p*.[22] Suggesting otherwise is a bit like claiming that a person likes the taste of chili – say, because when she tastes chili there is activation in some hedonic hotspot in her brain – although she is not disposed to find the tasting of chili pleasurable. If she does not have that disposition, she simply does not like that taste. Similarly, if a person does not have the disposition to judge *p* true, then that person simply does not take *p* to be true.[23]

[22] Note that the argument has nothing to do with reportability, let alone the willingness to report. We accept that locked-in syndrome patients may have beliefs they are not able to report, and that some of us may have silly or prejudiced beliefs we would be loath to report. All we insist is that for these to be cases of *belief*, their subjects must be disposed to reactivate the contents of those states.

[23] A critic might, however, question the scope of this entailment. Perhaps Endorsement can take other forms in the case of systems that are incapable of making conscious judgements, such as, e.g., collectives. (Thanks to an anonymous referee for raising this issue.) Yet, first of all, if Endorsement is not thought of in terms of dispositions to consciously judge, then the question is what it is then supposed to be. And as we show in the first part of the Argument from Endorsement, it is hard to see what might constitute a plausible reply to this question. More seriously, as we will show in Section 4, the suggestion under discussion is essentially a more specific version of a general line of argument raised by Gilbert, which runs into a dilemma (see footnote 32 below).

Before moving on, consider some plausible real-life candidates for belief-like states whose contents subjects are *not* disposed to reactivate in judgment. Stephen Stich (1978) discusses a heterogeneous class of Representational states that he labels 'subdoxastic states'. These 'play a role in the proximate causal history of beliefs, though they are not beliefs themselves' (Stich 1978, 502).[24] One example Stich gives of subdoxastic states are states in the native speaker of English that contain information about English grammar. A native speaker may easily detect that (1) is grammatical while (2) is not:

(1) Many times have I told him

(2) My phone is cheaper than the one have you

Naïve native speakers are not able to say how they know it – they just know. By contrast, grammarians are able to say something general about when inversion of verb and subject is permitted in English, and when not. Presumably, there are psychological states in both the grammarian and the naïve speaker that contain information about English grammar and play an important causal role in their coming to believe that (1) is grammatical and (2) is not. Perhaps there are even states that represent the grammatical rules involving inversion.[25] So

[24] There is plausibly some degree of overlap between Stich's notion of a subdoxastic state and Tamar Gendler's (2008a, 2008b) notion of 'alief', although many of Gendler's examples of alief include a phenomenal dimension. Also, while aliefs are paradigmatically affective, there is nothing particularly affective about subdoxastic states. But since Gendler is open to the possibility of aliefs without 'an obvious affective component' (Gendler 2008b, 644), it is possible that subdoxastic states form a subclass of (inaccessible) aliefs. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to attempt to sort out the exact relation between aliefs and Stich's class of subdoxastic states.

[25] Stich (1978, 502) claims that this specific suggestion is empirically implausible. But clearly he accepts that subdoxastic states with such content are possible.

there might be states representing the following sort of content: 'Inversion is only permitted in cases *x*, *y* and *z*' (call this content '*q*').

Such 'subdoxastic' states are not beliefs. For consider the naïve native speaker vis-à-vis the 'subdoxastic' state with the content *q*. Ask her whether she believes that *q*, and she is likely to profess her ignorance and consequent lack of a view on the matter. Alternatively, perhaps she will start to deliberate about whether *to believe* that *q* – whether believing that inversion is permitted in all and only *x*, *y*, and *z* cases is the thing to do. But such deliberation – aimed at *forming* a belief – differs from trying to ascertain whether one *already* believes that *q* (Shah and Velleman 2005). As to the latter, the naïve speaker will simply draw a blank. Without trying to work out the general principles governing the use of inversion in English, based on her beliefs about individual cases – without, i.e., using inference in an attempt to *form* a belief – it simply will not seem *true* to her that *q* (or false, for that matter). She is, then, not disposed to judge *q* true.[26] Thus, although by hypothesis she has a subdoxastic state with that content, she does not take *q* to be true. Hence, she does not *believe* that *q*. By contrast, when the grammarian considers the matter of inversion, *q* seems true to her – it seems to capture the way things are, inversion-wise. She has a belief the naïve speaker lacks – the belief that *q*. Subdoxastic states, then, are not beliefs. They do not meet the Endorsement requirement.[27]

[26] There are of course circumstances under which she will judge that *p*, but they will involve learning – and thus coming to believe – things she does not already believe, and so coming to have new dispositions.

[27] Stich suggests what appears to be an additional reason why subdoxastic states cannot be beliefs. The subdoxastic state that represents *q* is largely isolated from the naïve person's beliefs in a way those beliefs are not isolated from each other. Beliefs, Stich says, are 'inferentially integrated' – that is, 'embedded in an elaborate network of potential inferential connections to other beliefs' (Stich 1978, 507). However, it is doubtful whether this really amounts to an *additional* reason for denying that subdoxastic states are beliefs. It is hard to see any reason in principle why subpersonal states of the sort highlighted by Stich could not be embedded in more or less

4. Objections

Before concluding that a belief requires a subject capable of conscious judgement, however, we need to address a number of objections to our argument.

In the first place, perhaps one might dispute whether Endorsement is essential to belief. Perhaps it is possible to have beliefs one does *not* endorse (cf. Mandelbaum 2014; Quilty-Dunn 2015). If so, our argument does not get off the ground. Our reply is that the objection is gesturing at an important truth, but not one that threatens our argument. Perhaps you can believe that *p* even though, on balance, when you reflect carefully on the matter, you firmly believe that not-*p*. This may be irrational, but not obviously impossible.[28] Moreover, a person who thinks, all things considered, that not-*p*, and yet continues to believe that *p*, may deplore their recalcitrant belief that *p*, and take steps to eradicate it. So, in *one* sense of the term 'endorsement', they obviously do not endorse *p*. But as we understand Endorsement,

---

elaborate networks of potential inferential connections. If, as most cognitive scientists believe, there are unconscious inferential processes, it seems natural to think 'subdoxastic states' may partake in them. Obviously, all *conscious* inferential paths will be closed, but this observation simply leads us back to the fact that subdoxastic states are not the sorts of states whose contents subjects will be disposed to reactivate in conscious judgement.

[28] Huddleston (2012) calls such beliefs retained against our better judgment 'epistemically naughty'. Some of Tamar Gendler's alleged cases of alief might also turn out to fit this pattern. Certainly, the anxious Grand Canyon Skywalk visitor believes, all things considered, that the platform is safe. If she did not, she would not set foot on it in the first place. But perhaps she also takes the situation to be unsafe, not merely in the sense that there is a Representational state in her that represents the situation as being unsafe, but in the sense that *she herself* endorses that representation.

they do. Endorsement is not restricted to your reflective, all-things-considered views.[29] If you believe, against your better judgement, that *p*, you take *p* to be true, even as you reflectively believe that not-*p*. And you can take it that *p* (i.e. endorse that content) even though you do not *want* to take it that *p*. All Endorsement rules out is that you may believe that *p* without in any way holding *p* true, taking it to be the case.

Secondly, one might attempt to offer a counterexample to our claim that believing that *p* entails being disposed to judge that *p*. Perhaps there is good evidence that some beliefs are not accessible to consciousness. For example, if we are to believe psychoanalytic theory, so-called 'repressed' beliefs are not accessible to the person whose beliefs they are, and thus they are hardly states whose contents the person is disposed to access in conscious judgment. But if this is true, our conclusion is false.

Unfortunately, it is far from obvious that the case of repressed belief is a counterexample to our argument. First, it is possible that the subject of a repressed belief *is* disposed to reactivate the content of that state in judgement. One possibility is that repression works as a 'masker'. To see the point, consider that philosophers' favourite: the fragile glass. A glass has the disposition to shatter when struck, even if cleverly designed internal packing protects it against breaking upon impact. As long as the packing is in place, the glass will not break when struck. But it still has the disposition to do so. The packing 'masks' the disposition, but does not make it go away (see Johnston 1992, 233). The situation with repressed belief could be similar. Some masking device is in place that prevents the disposition from manifesting itself the way it otherwise would. This story about repressed

[29] Relatedly, it is worth noting that Endorsement is not an all-or-nothing affair. Endorsement comes in degrees. Perhaps you are absolutely certain that Paris is the largest metropolis in France, and rather less confident that Marseille is the second largest. Such different degrees of Endorsement may be reflected in your betting behavior.

belief is perfectly compatible with our main claim and so does not constitute a counterexample.

Secondly, repression could work as a 'fink'. A fink is something (a person, machine, divine agent, etc.) that makes a disposition go away precisely when the stimulus conditions obtain (Martin 1994). Perhaps when you start to reflect on matters in the vicinity of what your repressed belief is about, your 'superego' steps in and makes sure you have no disposition to reactivate the content of that belief in conscious judgement. If *this* is what the story of repressed belief amounts to, we dig in our heels: for those (brief?) moments when your disposition to judge that *p* goes away, you have no belief – repressed or otherwise – that *p*; for you do not then endorse that content. So, on this account, 'repressed belief' is actually a misnomer. What mechanisms of 'repression' do is temporarily make a belief go away in a manner not wholly unlike what happens in ordinary cases of belief eradication: you stop endorsing the state's content. Again, then, we have no counterexample to the claim made in Section 3.

Two final objections specifically target the effectiveness of our argument in the context of the group minds debate. The third objection starts from the observation that our topic in this paper is not belief in humans, but belief *as such*. At best, however, what our argument shows (our opponent may continue) is merely that beliefs in humans require subjects disposed to reactivate belief content in conscious judgment. And it would be 'suspiciously anthropocentric' (cf. Theiner 2014, 309) to demand that the conditions a state must meet to be a belief in the human case are the same conditions that apply in the case of other systems or organisms. As foreshadowed in Section 1, Gilbert objects to other arguments against group belief along these lines (cf. Tollefsen 2002, 407). As Gilbert and Pilchman (2014, 208) write, 'groups are not individuals, and it is unclear why we would expect concepts and distinctions designed to characterize the cognitive states of the latter to apply

cleanly to the former'. They consequently propose to distinguish between *individual* beliefs ('beliefs$_i$') and *collective* beliefs ('beliefs$_c$') and claim that groups can literally have the latter (but not the former). In other words, Gilbert and Pilchman deny that the proposition:

(i) Groups can literally believe that *p*

entails:

(ii) Groups can believe that *p* in precisely the same sense as individuals can believe that *p*

Since the Argument from Endorsement relies on considerations about belief in humans, the most it can show is that (ii) is false. But since (i) does not entail (ii), the argument fails to establish that (i) is false. GMWC, then, stands, it would seem.

This objection creates a dilemma for the defender of GMWC; but to see this requires a bit of unpacking. We have presented an argument for the conclusion that (in Gilbert and Pilchman's terms) a state is not a belief$_i$ unless the owner of the state is disposed to access the state's content in a corresponding conscious judgment. According to the objection under discussion, beliefs$_i$ are only a subset of beliefs. There are other types of belief ('beliefs$_c$') to which the requirements on belief$_i$ may not all apply. The trouble with this is that it seems plausible that there will be Representational states in individual persons whose contents those persons are not disposed to reactivate in judgment, states which nevertheless *meet conditions sufficient for being beliefs*$_c$. Thus, for example, subdoxastic states are Representational, causally efficacious in a belief-like way, and may exhibit inferential connections with other

Representational states. But if states with such features are genuine beliefs in the group case, then the GMWC-proponent cannot simply deny that they are in the human-individual case.

To see this, note a compelling style of reasoning that often implicitly underpins arguments for group minds. Often GMH-proponents suggest that if having a certain set of features is sufficient for mentality of a certain sort in one kind of system or organism (say a human individual), then we should also be prepared to count the possession of those features sufficient for mentality of that sort in another kind of system (such as a collective).[30] In effect, this type of argument relies on a more general parity principle: If meeting $c_1 \ldots c_n$ is sufficient for mentality *M* in system O, then (defeasibly) meeting $c_1 \ldots c_n$ is also sufficient for mentality *M* in system O* (where O* can be either another token system or the same system at another point in time). The principle must be construed as defeasible since it is not to be ruled out a priori that there might be specific circumstances that prevent $c_1 \ldots c_n$ from being sufficient in system O*. But importantly, not just any difference between O and O* is a defeater. In particular, we cannot defeat the principle merely by observing that, say, O is an individual person while O* is a collective. It is not enough to establish that there are these differences. We need to demonstrate that they *matter* to the kind of mentality under discussion. Failing to do so, while refusing to grant mentality of the relevant sort to O*, will typically – and justifiably – result in charges of chauvinism or 'anthropocentrism'.

Given such parity considerations, the GMWC defender now faces a dilemma. On the one hand, we cannot allow that the subdoxastic states in individuals that meet conditions for being beliefs$_c$ *are* beliefs. Doing so would contradict the conclusion of the

[30] List and Pettit (2011) explicitly reason in this fashion in their initial argument for the possibility of group agents, when they identify conditions for agency (2011, 20) and then proceed to argue that, because some groups may meet these conditions, they thus qualify as agents (ibid., 32). Huebner (2014, 14), Theiner et al. (2010), and Velleman (2000a) argue in a similar fashion, and Gilbert (2014a) and Tollefsen (2002) highlight analogies between individual and collective beliefs in their arguments for realism about the latter.

Argument from Endorsement. But, on the other hand, it seems we cannot *deny* that those human-individual states are beliefs either, on pain of violating the principle of parity – and thus, ironically, incurring charges of chauvinism! To repeat, if meeting certain conditions is sufficient for being a belief in the case of a collective, then (defeasibly) those conditions should be sufficient in the case of human individuals as well. We cannot lower the bar in the case of systems that are not human individuals and then simply raise it again in the human-individual case. Such differential treatment must be justified, and to do so it certainly is not enough merely to point out that individuals are not collectives or that individuals are conscious and collectives are not. For, just as before, it must be demonstrated that these things *matter*.[31] And, as GMH-defenders have impressed on us time and again, they matter less than we may be inclined to think.[32]

Let us briefly consider a final attempt to defuse our argument. GMWC defenders might suggest that all we have shown is that beliefs require dispositions to

[31] Gilbert offers the following response to objections to GMH that 'bring up some feature alleged to be essential to belief and … argue that, since so-called collective beliefs lack that feature they are not beliefs': 'One who wishes to maintain that collective belief is indeed belief can argue that, on the contrary, if collective beliefs lack the allegedly essential feature of belief, that throws doubt on the claim that this feature is indeed essential to belief' (Gilbert 2014b, 178). But if we are right, what we have here is not a simple standoff between the critic's *modus ponens* and Gilbert's *modus tollens*. Maintaining that collective beliefs really are beliefs has serious repercussions for the human-individual case.

[32] The dilemma sketched here also arises for the more specific version of Gilbert's line of argument that we touched on in Section 3. Suppose Endorsement in a group case is a matter, not of dispositions to judge, but of dispositions to act in particular ways (for instance, issue statements, take legal action, and the like). Then, given the parity considerations broached above, having those dispositions is (*ceteris paribus*) sufficient for Endorsement in the case of an individual person. Then the military commander discussed in Sect. 3, whose actions and dispositions to act were, by hypothesis, based on a supposition, not a belief, should count as endorsing the content of that supposition, and hence believing it.

reactivate in conscious judgement. And, they might continue, group beliefs may meet this requirement since individual group members may be disposed to reactivate the relevant belief content in judgements. First, however, this reply will obviously not work for supposed cases of collective beliefs not endorsed by any individual member. Secondly, and more importantly, the reply is completely ineffective against our argument. Suppose that Jack consists in part of homunculi, some of whom are disposed to reactivate the content of some subdoxastic state in him in their (the homunculi's) conscious judgements. The state being a subdoxastic state, Jack himself has no such disposition. But then, by the Argument from Endorsement, the state is not a belief *of Jack's*. The same line of thought applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the group case. It is the subject or the owner of a belief who must be disposed to access the state's content in a corresponding conscious judgment.

Prima facie, we have now mounted a serious challenge to GMWC. For it seems that the type of mental state that best fits what GMWC needs cannot be instantiated in collectives as such, unless they can be conscious. But, as we see in the next section, the game is not yet up for GMWC. For the crucial notion of 'consciousness' turns out to be ambiguous between two different notions of consciousness, one of which may, or so some philosophers think, be instantiated in groups as such.

5. A-Consciousness and P-Consciousness in Groups

According to Block and Chalmers, we need to distinguish between (at least) two concepts of 'consciousness'. On the one hand, there is the familiar notion of P-consciousness: a state is phenomenally conscious if there is something it is like to be in that state. P-conscious states are *experiential* states, states with experiential (or phenomenal) properties. On the other hand, there is the information-processing notion of A-consciousness: a state is A-conscious if it (or

its content) is 'globally broadcast' or 'poised' for free use in reasoning and action control.[33] Armed with this distinction, as we explain in this section, GMWC defenders can accuse our argument of resting on a fallacy of equivocation: what we establish is at most that a system or creature needs A-consciousness to have beliefs; but in order to turn this into an objection to GMWC, we need to draw a conclusion about P-consciousness. After spelling out this objection to our argument, we argue in the remainder of the section that it is unlikely that GMWC advocates can pry apart A and P in the way required to block our argument.

First of all, it is important to see just how the distinction between A and P potentially undermines our case against GMWC. Up until this point we have pretended that there was only *one* relevant notion of 'consciousness', and hence that our argument rules out (in the case of belief) precisely what GMWC affirms. But some GMWC advocates are careful to spell out that the kind of consciousness groups can do without is P, not A. We have seen Tollefsen emphasizing that groups are not *phenomenally* conscious, but she also goes on to say (though in a non-committal register): 'Access consciousness seems required for intentional agency' (2015, 52). Since she also maintains that groups *are* intentional agents, it seems fair to read her as implying that groups can have A-consciousness. List is more assertive: 'group agents can certainly have consciousness as awareness [A-consciousness]' (2016, 7). Although Huebner is mindful of the challenges facing the notion of group consciousness, he is fairly optimistic when it comes to A-consciousness. He writes:

[33] Chalmers distinguishes between '(phenomenal) consciousness' and 'awareness' (1996, Ch. 6), but suggests that 'access consciousness corresponds roughly to … awareness, although my definition gives less of a role to rationality' (1996, 228). Since nothing in our argument turns on the role of rationality in A-consciousness, we can treat the two distinctions as equivalent.

> It is an open and empirical question whether there are collectivities with mechanisms of a sort that would allow them to access their representational states and processes. (2014, 117)

We can now articulate a powerful reply to our argument: The sort of capacity for conscious judgement that is required for belief possession, according to the Argument from Endorsement, is captured by the notion of A-consciousness, and that renders the argument entirely ineffective against GMWC. For defenders of GMWC are open to the idea that all groups capable of having beliefs may have A-conscious states. What they maintain is that groups can be believers without being *phenomenally* conscious, but our argument is not about P-consciousness.[34]

This only constitutes an effective reply to our argument, however, on condition that defenders of GMWC are right on two key points. First, it must be at least plausible that the notion of consciousness at stake in our argument is exclusively A, not P. The distinction between A and P is of no use to GMWC if the notion of consciousness relevant to our argument is P. Second, it must be at least plausible that a creature or system can have A while lacking P altogether. Showing that our argument involves A but not P is of no help to GMWC if it turns out that, say, A conceptually entails P, or that the two invariably go together. So, both points need to be made. And on both counts our opponent faces serious obstacles.

To begin with, we will consider whether a creature without P-consciousness might have A-consciousness. Let us accept Block and Chalmers' conceptual distinction

[34] See Huebner (2014, 117) for a reply (to Searle) along these lines.

between A and P.[35] This as yet leaves it entirely open what the relation between them might be. We briefly canvass a few options that will not help GMWC-supporters.

First, A and P could be strictly identical, despite being conceptually distinct. (The concept of water and the concept of H_2O are distinct, but water = H_2O.) Indeed, since A-consciousness is a functional notion, philosophers hoping to provide functional characterizations of P-conscious states might consider A-consciousness a promising candidate for what P-consciousness ultimately is. But obviously, if P = A, a system cannot have A without P.

The same conclusion follows if A is somehow grounded on P. For example, suppose A-consciousness is dispositional, as talk of a state's being 'poised' or 'available' for use naturally suggests,[36] and suppose further that dispositional properties require intrinsic properties as their basis (a glass has the dispositional property of fragility in virtue of some occurrent properties). These suppositions naturally raise the question of what the occurrent basis for A might be. Some have argued that the most obvious candidate is P (Davies 1999; Kriegel 2006). If so, it again follows that you cannot have A without P.

In contrast to the views considered so far, Block believes there are actual cases of states that are A-conscious without being P-conscious.[37] He cites a case of so-called 'Reverse Anton's Syndrome', in which the patient regards himself as blind despite being able

[35] Not everyone accepts the distinction (e.g. Searle 1992, 84, 121-2), and some have argued that there are at least some cases in which A-consciousness implies P-consciousness (see Clark 2000).

[36] Chalmers (1997, 421) explicitly construes A-consciousness as dispositional. Block (2007, 279) suggests, however, that it was a 'category mistake' to define A-consciousness in dispositional terms, and he instead proposes to define it in terms of a state (or its content) being 'globally broadcast'.

[37] Unlike Chalmers (1997; cf. 1996, 28) who thinks that P and (a suitably modified) A are 'perfect correlates' that always go together.

to read words in a limited part of his visual field (2007, 301). The patient apparently 'just knows' which word is presented there; he has no experience of seeing anything.[38]

Suppose Block is right about this. What follows? Again, nothing that is of any real help to GMWC. For even if there are A-conscious *states* that are not P-conscious, this gives us no good reason to suppose that a system (e.g. a group) that lacks P-consciousness altogether could have A-conscious states. But the latter is what GMWC needs.

Block, for one, rejects the idea that creatures without P-consciousness can have A-consciousness (Block 2007, 219-20, 282). He suggests, following Burge (1997), that P is the 'core notion' of consciousness, and that A is 'parasitic' upon P the way a parquet floor is parasitic on another floor beneath it. A-consciousness is not just access: it is supposed to be an intuitive notion of consciousness – one that 'plays a deep role in our ordinary "consciousness" talk and thought' (Block 2007, 169). And arguably, we are not inclined to ascribe consciousness *in any sense* to systems or creatures that lack P-consciousness altogether.

Admittedly, these claims rest on intuitions. Intuitions are defeasible and subject to revision in light of counter-evidence, whether of an empirical or a conceptual kind. But absent any obvious defeaters, intuitions carry considerable weight. The onus is on the GMWC-defender to show what is wrong with our intuitions and how we ought to revise them. Even if our intuitions on this point are mistaken, however, our argument still presents a challenge to GMWC. For even if we accepted that a creature or system can have A without P, the defender of GMWC faces the further and, as we shall see, formidable, challenge of

[38] On Crane's view (cf. section 2), reactivated beliefs would be another example of states that are A-conscious but not P-conscious. Dormant beliefs, of course, are neither A, nor P.

making it plausible that the Argument from Endorsement at best only establishes a conclusion about A-consciousness.[39]

According to the Argument from Endorsement, a believer must be disposed to consciously access (or reactivate) the content of their beliefs in corresponding judgements. And that conscious accessing or reactivating cannot, as we will now argue, be made intelligible in terms of A-consciousness alone.[40]

To set the stage, consider Block's first case of A without P: the 'super-blindsighter'.[41] There is a visual state in the super-blindsighter that represents an X in the person's blind field. The subject is not aware of *seeing* anything in the blind field, but 'just knows' that there is an X there, and she will rely on this knowledge in reasoning and controlling her actions. The visual state – or its content – is thus available for use in reasoning and acting, and for verbal reporting. It is natural to take this to mean that the content is poised

[39] Someone might think we have already implicitly conceded this point, since we remain neutral on Crane's view that there is no consciously believing that *p* and nothing it is like to believe that *p*. Someone might conclude from this that when we argue that beliefs must be accessible to consciousness, the relevant notion of consciousness must be A, rather than P. For if P consciousness were required, it might seem as if we should be committed to rejecting Crane's view. But this is too quick. We suggested that consciously accessing a belief was paradigmatically a matter of reactivating it in conscious judgement. And, as explained, on most views, episodes of occurrent judgment are phenomenally (as well as access) conscious (see Bayne and Montague 2011).

[40] See Crane (2013) for some thoughts pointing in the same direction.

[41] This is a fictional case. In real blindsight, the content of the relevant visual states is not globally broadcast in the sense required for A consciousness, though it is of course of some limited use to the patient (e.g. in visual forced-choice tasks).

for use in the person's *conscious* thinking, *conscious* acting, etc., where 'conscious' (also) means *phenomenally* conscious.[42]

But suppose those thoughts were *themselves* only A-conscious, not P. That is, they or their content – that there is an X over there – would be poised for free use in thinking and acting, but the subject would not have an experience of thinking that there was an X there. It seems to us that, unless the content could be reactivated in states that were access *and phenomenally* conscious, the content could not be said to be consciously accessed or reactivated at all.[43]

To see the problem, consider an analogous case. Some of our beliefs are 'conscious' – at least in the sense that we can be conscious *of* them, or of what we believe – and some are not conscious, but dormant. D. H. Mellor once proposed that one's belief that *p* is conscious if one believes that one believes that *p* (Mellor 1977-78). An immediate worry about this proposal is that the second-order belief, like any other belief, can be conscious or unconscious. Hence, it seems second-order beliefs are not sufficient to ensure that first-order beliefs are conscious. If this is not immediately obvious, consider the following example. Jack has the (first-order) belief that the South Pole is the natural habitat of penguins. He also believes (second-order) that he has that belief about the habitat of penguins. Now, when Jack's first-order belief is non-conscious, he usually is not in any way conscious of penguins, the South Pole, or the relation between them. The same would obviously go for the second-order belief: when Jack is looking for beer in the fridge, he is typically not in any way

[42] In fact, this is not quite right. Not only must the state's *content* be accessible, its 'mode' must be accessible too. You cannot use the content of a state – say, that there is beer in the fridge – in reasoning, acting etc. unless you have some grasp of whether this is the content of, say, a desire, a fear, or a belief.

[43] Note that we are not claiming that P-consciousness is sufficient. If some state *T* with the content *p* is phenomenally conscious, it is like something for a person to be in that state. But in itself, that may not constitute conscious access to the content *p* (cf. Block 2007, 174-5).

conscious of his belief about the natural habitat of penguins. So, the second-order belief, in and of itself, does not make the first-order belief conscious.[44]

A similar problem affects the suggestion that conscious reactivation of one's belief content is exclusively a matter of A-consciousness. When a state is A-conscious, it (or its content) is 'globally broadcast' and 'poised' for use in reasoning and action control. But the state is not necessarily *accessed* or *used*. (Nor – *pace* Crane 2013 – is it merely 'available'; it is, as Block [2007, 171] makes clear, something in between availability and occurrent use.) Now suppose, as before, that the state we are interested in is Jack's belief that the South Pole is the natural habitat of penguins. Suppose this state is A-conscious. This means that something like the following is globally broadcast or poised for direct use:

Bel (The South Pole is the natural habitat of penguins)[45]

Now suppose this state is 'consciously reactivated', but that such 'reactivation' is exclusively a matter of A-consciousness. It is hard to see what this might mean except that some other state inherits the content (and perhaps mode) of the original state, or perhaps represents that state as a whole. Thus, either

X (The South Pole is the natural habitat of penguins)

or

[44] Nathan (1982) criticizes Mellor along these lines.

[45] Using Searle's (1983, Ch. 1) notation. Bel = Belief. We suggested (in footnote 42) that it was not enough that the content of a state was broadcast: the intentional mode also needed to be in the picture somehow. But nothing in our argument hangs on this claim.

X (Bel [The South Pole is the natural habitat of penguins])[46]

is globally broadcast. But if the former, then we have simply restated the original problem: since being broadcast or poised for use is not being consciously accessed or reactivated, what we have described is not a case in which the original belief content is reactivated. If the latter, a more complex state is now globally broadcast – one that represents the original belief – but since that more complex state is (again) merely A-conscious, the added complexity does not help with the original problem: Jack's belief content is still not being consciously accessed. Why not? Because the global broadcasting of the belief about penguins does not yet give us conscious accessing of any information about penguins, although such information is *ready* to be accessed. Global broadcasting of *another* state that represents that belief about penguins similarly will not mean consciously accessing penguin-related content, and for precisely the same reason: the content is poised for accessing, but not, for all that, *accessed*.

The lesson is that one cannot explain what it is to consciously reactivate or access a belief content in terms of A-consciousness alone. The obvious diagnosis is that what is lacking is precisely P-consciousness. Jack consciously reactivates his belief content about the natural habitat of penguins when he rehearses it in P- and A-conscious judgment. Granted, we have not positively demonstrated that our diagnosis is the only remaining option. But here again the onus is on GMWC-supporters to show how they can account for consciously accessing one's belief contents without appealing to P-consciousness. A-consciousness alone will not do the trick.

6. Conclusion

[46] We write 'X' instead of 'Bel' since there is no need to assume that the relevant intentional mode is belief.

Let us take stock. First of all, we have argued that a Representational state is not a belief unless the subject or owner of the state is disposed to access the state's content in a corresponding conscious judgment. Secondly, we have argued that the relevant notion of 'consciousness' is not restricted to A-consciousness, but involves P-consciousness too. And finally, we have tentatively suggested that a creature cannot have A unless it has P.

Against this background, the challenge to GMWC is this: Either GMWC-advocates must show that there is a flaw in our Argument from Endorsement. Or else they must do both of the following: first, show that our argument is really about A-consciousness only, or at any rate is not about P-consciousness. Second, they must show that a creature can have A while lacking P altogether. Neither route looks promising.

We want to end by briefly considering where *failing* to meet our challenge would leave the Group Mind Hypothesis. Several options remain open. First, the GMWC-defender might contend that our argument only applies to the case of belief: there is no similar case to be made against, say, group desires or intentions. This line might be worth pursuing, but as we have seen it comes at a cost: the resultant notion of mentality available to collectives could turn out to fall significantly short of the maximal mentality advocates of GMH usually aim for. Secondly, and relatedly, supporters of GMWC might retreat to a less ambitious hypothesis altogether – for example, by abandoning the attempt to show that groups can instantiate mentality of the familiar propositional attitude-kinds. The resultant thesis would be considerably less 'juicy' from the point of view of the philosophy of mind than the maximal versions of GMH most theorists seem to advertise. But then it is far from obvious that theorists mainly concerned to explain and predict forms of co-ordinated group behaviour would need to worry about the extent to which their hypotheses were interesting to philosophers of mind. Thirdly, and perhaps most interestingly, fans of GMH might simply abandon GMWC and instead seek to show that groups can be phenomenally conscious (see

Schwitzgebel 2015). This view may well fly in the face of deep-seated intuitions. But nothing in this paper provides a challenge to the idea of group P-consciousness. And if our arguments are sound, friends of the Group Mind Hypothesis might be better advised to accept that idea than to attempt to defend the seemingly hopeless views discussed in this paper.

References

Alston, W. P. (1988) 'The Deontological Conception of Epistemic Justification'. *Philosophical Perspectives* 2: 257-299.

Bayne, T. and Montague, M. (eds.) (2011), *Cognitive Phenomenology*. Oxford: OUP.

Bermudez, J. L. (2003) *Thinking without Words*. Oxford: OUP.

Björnsson, G. and Hess, K. (2016). 'Corporate Crocodile Tears? On the Reactive Attitudes of Corporate Agents'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research.* DOI: 10.1111/phpr.12260

Block, N. (2007) *Consciousness, Function, and Representation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Boghossian, P. (2003) 'The Normativity of Content'. *Philosophical Issues* 13: 31-45.

Bradley, R. and List, C. (2009) 'Desire-as-Belief Revisited'. *Analysis* 69: 31-37.

Bratman, M. E. (forthcoming) 'The Intentions of a Group'. In E. Orts and C. Smith (eds.), *The Moral Responsibility of Firms*. Oxford: OUP.

Burge, T. (1997) 'Two Kinds of Consciousness' In N. Block, O. Flanagan, and G. Güzeldere (eds.), *The Nature of Consciousness: Philosophical Debates*, pp.427-433. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Chalmers, D. (1996) *The Conscious Mind*. Oxford: OUP.

Chalmers, D. (1997) 'Availability: The Cognitive Basis of Experience?' In N. Block, O. Flanagan, and G. Güzeldere (eds.), *The Nature of Consciousness: Philosophical Debates*, pp. 421-424. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Chan, T. (ed.) (2013a) *The Aim of Belief*. Oxford: OUP.

Chan, T. (2013b) 'Introduction'. In Chan (2013a), pp. 1-16.

Churchland, P. M. (1981) 'Eliminativism and the Propositional Attitudes'. *The Journal of Philosophy* 78: 67-90.

Clark, A. (2000) 'A Case where Access Implies Qualia?' *Analysis* 60: 30-38.

Cohen, L. J. (1989) 'Belief and Acceptance'. *Mind* 98: 367-389.

Crane, T. (2001) *Elements of Mind*. Oxford: OUP.

Crane, T. (2013) 'Unconscious Belief and Conscious Thought'. In U. Kriegel (ed.), *Phenomenal Intentionality*, pp. 156-173. Oxford: OUP.

Davidson, D. (2001) 'Actions, Reasons, and Causes'. In his *Essays on Action and Events*, pp. 3-20. Oxford: Clarendon.

Davies, M. (1999) 'Phenomenal Consciousness, Access Consciousness, and Information-Processing Psychology'. In C. Taddei-Feretti and C. Musio (eds), *Neuronal Bases and Psychological Aspects of Consciousness*, pp. 300-314. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing.

Dennett, D. C. (1981/1997) 'True Believers: The Intentional Strategy and Why It Works'. Reprinted in J. Haugeland (ed.), *Mind Design II*, pp. 57-79. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Dretske, F. (1994) 'If You Can't Make One, You Don't Know How It Works'. In P. French, T. Uehling, and H. Wettstein (eds.), *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 19, pp. 468-482.

Dretske, F. (1995) *Naturalizing the Mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Finkelstein, D. H. (2003) *Expression and the Inner*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gilbert, M. (1987) 'Modelling Collective Belief'. *Synthese* 73: 185-204.

Gilbert, M. (1989) *On Social Facts*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Gilbert, M. (2014a) 'Belief and Acceptance as Features of Groups', reprinted in her *Joint Commitment: How We Make the Social World*, pp. 131-162. Oxford: OUP.

Gilbert, M. (2014b) 'Collective Epistemology', reprinted in her *Joint Commitment: How We Make the Social World*, pp. 163-180. Oxford: OUP.

Gilbert, M. and Pilchman, D. (2014) 'Belief, Acceptance, and What Happens in Groups'. In J. Lackey (ed.), *Essays in Collective Epistemology*, pp. 189-212. Oxford: OUP.

Glüer, K. and Wikforss, Å (2013) 'Against Belief Normativity'. In Chan (2013a), pp. 80-99.

Hájek, A. and Pettit, P. (2004) 'Desire Beyond Belief'. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 82: 77-92.

Hakli, R. (2006) 'Group Beliefs and the Distinction between Belief and Acceptance'. *Cognitive Systems Research* 7: 286-297.

Huddleston, A. (2012) 'Naughty Beliefs'. *Philosophical Studies* 160: 209-222.

Huebner, B. (2014) *Macrocognition: A Theory of Distributed Minds and Collective Intentionality*. Oxford: OUP.

Humberstone, L. (1992) 'Direction of Fit'. *Mind* 101: 59-83.

Johnston, M. (1992) 'How to Speak of the Colors'. *Philosophical Studies* 68: 221-263.

Kriegel, U. (2003) 'Is Intentionality Dependent upon Consciousness?' *Philosophical Studies* 116: 271-307.

Kriegel, U. (2006) 'Consciousness: Phenomenal Consciousness, Access Consciousness, and Scientific Practice'. In P. Thagard (ed.), *Handbook of Philosophy of Psychology and Cognitive Science*, pp. 195-217. Amsterdam: North-Holland.

Lewis, D. (1988) 'Desire as Belief'. *Mind* 97: 323-332.

List, C. (2016) 'What is it like to be a group agent?' *Noûs*. DOI: 10.1111/nous.12162

List, C. and Pettit, P. (2011) *Group Agency: The Possibility, Design, and Status of Corporate Agents*. New York: OUP.

Mandelbaum, E. (2014) 'Thinking is Believing'. *Inquiry* 57: 55-96.

Martin, C. B. (1994) 'Dispositions and Conditionals'. *The Philosophical Quarterly* 44: 1-8.

Mellor, D. H. (1977-78) 'Conscious Belief'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 78: 87-101.

Nathan, N. M. L. (1982) 'Conscious Belief'. *Analysis* 42: 90-93.

Putnam, H. (1975) 'Brans and Behavior'. In his *Mind, Language, and Reality*, pp. 325-341. Cambridge: CUP.

Quilty-Dunn, J. (2015) 'Believing in Perceiving: Known Illusions and the Classical Dual-Component Theory'. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 96: 550-575.

Railton, P. (1994) 'Truth, Reason, and the Regulation of Belief'. *Philosophical Issues* 5: 71-93.

Schwitzgebel, E. (2015) 'If materialism is true, the United States is probably conscious'. *Philosophical Studies* 172: 1697-1721.

Searle, J. R. (1983) *Intentionality*. Cambridge: CUP.

Searle, J. R. (1992) *The Rediscovery of the Mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Searle, J. R. (2002) 'Collective Intentions and Actions'. In his *Consciousness and Language*, pp. 90-105. Cambridge: CUP.

Shah, N. and Velleman, J. D. 'Doxastic Deliberation'. *Philosophical Review* 114: 497-534.

Siegel, S. (2010) *The Contents of Visual Experience*. Oxford: OUP.

Silins, N. (2012) 'Judgment as a Guide to Belief'. In D. Smithies and D. Stoljar (eds.), *Introspection and Consciousness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stich, S. (1978) 'Beliefs and Subdoxastic States'. *Philosophy of Science* 45: 499-518.

Stich, S. (1983) *From Folk Psychology to Cognitive Science: The Case Against Belief*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Theiner, G. (2014) 'A Beginner's Guide to Group Minds'. In M. Sprevak and J. Kallestrup (eds.), *New Waves in Philosophy of Mind*, pp. 301-322. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Theiner, G., Allen, C. and Goldstone, R. L. (2010) 'Recognizing Group Cognition'. *Cognitive Systems Research* 11: 378-395.

Tollefsen, D. (2002) 'Organizations as True Believers'. *Journal of Social Philosophy* 33: 395–410.

Tollefsen, D. (2015) *Groups as Agents*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Travis, C. (2004) 'The Silence of the Senses'. *Mind* 113: 57-94.

Tuomela, R. (2000) 'Belief versus Acceptance'. *Philosophical Explorations* 3: 122-137.

Tuomela, R. (2013) 'Who Is Afraid of Group Agents and Group Minds?' In M. Schmitz, B. Kobow, and H. B. Schmid (eds.), *The Background of Social Reality*, pp. 13-35. Dordrecht: Springer.

Velleman, J. D. (2000a) 'How to Share an Intention', in his *The Possibility of Practical Reason*, pp. 200-220. Oxford: OUP.

Velleman, J. D. (2000b) 'On the Aim of Belief', in his *The Possibility of Practical Reason*, pp. 244-281. Oxford: OUP.

Wedgwood, R. (2002) 'The Aim of Belief'. *Philosophical Perspectives* 16: 267-297.

Williams, B. (1973) 'Deciding to Believe', in his *Problems of the Self*, pp. 136-151. Cambridge: CUP.

Wray, K. B. (2001) 'Collective Belief and Acceptance'. *Synthese* 129: 319-333.

Zangwill, N. (1998) 'Direction of Fit and Normative Functionalism'. *Philosophical Studies* 91: 173-203.