

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

An argument for the perspectival account of faith

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Abstract

Faith, I argue, is a value-oriented perspective, where the subject has a pro-attitude towards the object of the perspective. After summarizing the perspectival account of faith and its upshots that are relevant to the proceeding argument, I give an extended explanatory, cumulative case argument for the account by showing that the perspectival account of faith explains the data that alternative accounts of faith seek to explain, including why faith is present in paradigmatic cases of faith and the truth, or perceived truth, of various statements about faith. In addition, I argue that the perspectival account of faith explains the plausibility of alternative accounts of faith; each of the alternative accounts of faith focuses on a feature or consequence of faith, according to the perspectival account, which we would expect if other faith theorists seek but incorrectly identify the correct account of faith.

Keywords: faith; perspective; construal; doxastic theories of faith; non-doxastic theories of faith

According to the perspectival account of faith, faith is a value-oriented perspective, where the subject has a pro-attitude towards the object of the perspective.¹ Thus far, the faith literature does not contain an argument for the perspectival account. In this article, I fill that gap by giving an extended explanatory argument for the account. Whereas alternative accounts of faith seek to explain why faith is present in a few paradigmatic cases of faith and/or why some statements about faith are true, I argue that the perspectival account of faith explains why faith is present in multiple paradigmatic cases of faith given by many faith theorists across disparate accounts of faith. Further, I argue that the perspectival account explains why statements about faith provided by proponents of multiple, varied accounts of faith are true, and where the statements are inconsistent, I show that the perspectival account explains why faith theorists might think some of the inconsistent statements are true. Not only does the perspectival account explain the aforementioned data that alternative accounts of faith purport to explain; it also explains why alternative accounts of faith seem plausible – each of the alternative accounts of faith focuses on a feature or consequence of the perspectival account of faith, which we would expect if the perspectival account is correct and other faith theorists seek but incorrectly identify the correct account of faith. In what follows, then, I present this extended, cumulative-case explanatory argument for the perspectival account of faith.

In the first section, ‘The perspectival account of faith’, I summarize the perspectival account of faith, highlighting the features of the account that are relevant to the

argument in subsequent sections. In the second section, ‘The perspectival account of faith explains why faith is present in paradigmatic cases of faith’, I list paradigmatic cases of faith that are prominent in the contemporary literature on faith and show that the perspectival account explains why faith is present in each of the cases. In the third section, ‘The perspectival account of faith explains why statements about faith are true or thought to be true’, I provide an itemized list of statements about faith that faith theorists seek to show are true. I show that the perspectival account of faith either explains why the statement is true or, in the case of inconsistent statements, explains why different faith theorists would think each of the statements are true if the perspectival account is true. Finally, in the last section, ‘The perspectival account of faith explains why alternative accounts of faith seem plausible’, I organize and describe prominent accounts of faith and show that these alternative accounts of faith focus on a feature or consequence of faith, according to the perspectival account, in a way that explains the plausibility of those alternative accounts of faith.

The perspectival account of faith

The perspectival account of faith is an account of faith that spans across religious and non-religious contexts. According to the perspectival account, faith is a perspective, where a perspective is a way of construing.² Construing is a way of perceiving that results in ‘seeing-as’ or ‘aspect seeing’. When one looks at Wittgenstein’s duck-rabbit image, for example, one can construe the image as – see the image as – a duck, or one can construe the image as – see the image as – a rabbit. A perspective is not just any kind of construing; it is a kind of construing in which the object of the construal, construed in a way it is by the perspective, is not merely perceived via the subject’s sense perception.³ I cannot, for example, have a perspective that is entirely described as the perspective according to which my sunglasses are on the table, because that situation is entirely perceived via my sense perception. However, one can have a perspective according to which the world is entirely material, since one does not merely perceive via one’s sense perception that the world is entirely material.⁴ Alternatively, one can have a perspective according to which the universe is providentially guided by God, since one does not perceive via one’s sense perception that God providentially guides the universe. Similarly, someone might have a perspective according to which she gets her dream job by construing the world as one in which she eventually gets her dream job, and, of course, one cannot see the future with one’s physical senses. Faith is thus a way of perceiving things, a vision of sorts that affects how things appear to us, though not merely via our sense perception. One’s perspective can affect whether it appears to us that the world is wholly material or is providentially guided by God, for example. One can see by faith what one does not see by sight alone.

Perspectives are not beliefs, assumptions, or acceptances. This is because perspectives do not have propositions as their objects; they have objects or situations as their objects. The world, not a proposition about the world, is the object of the perspectives given in the examples in the preceding paragraph. Further, perspectives, but not beliefs, assumptions, or acceptances, are ways of construing or perceiving. The perspectival account, however, is compatible with the thesis that beliefs, assumptions, acceptances, or some other propositional attitude (or a combination thereof) constitutes, determines, or results from one’s perspective.

Not every perspective is a faith perspective. In order for a perspective to be a faith perspective, two more criteria must be met. First, the perspective needs to be value-oriented; that is, it needs to indicate to the subject that there is significant value in the object of the perspective.⁵ If, for example, I were to construe a politician’s statement as intentionally

self-serving but I do not take there to be significant value in the intentions behind the politician's statement, I would have a perspective on that situation, but that perspective would not be a faith perspective. Alternatively, if I have a perspective according to which my spouse supports me or God cares for me, those perspectives would meet the value requirement for faith, because I take there to be significant value to having spousal support and a caring God.

Second, faith perspectives require that the subject has a pro-attitude towards the object of the perspective. To have a pro-attitude towards something is just to be for that thing or to be in favour of that thing. One cannot, for example, have faith that the world involves frequent acts of terrorism even if one has a perspective according to which the world involves frequent acts of terrorism (assuming that the subject does not have a pro-attitude towards terrorism and so is not for it or in favour of it).⁶ Similarly, one cannot have faith in God if one does not have a pro-attitude towards God (and so is not for, or in favour of, God), even if one has a perspective according to which God exists.⁷

For some examples of perspectives that are typically faith perspectives (and alternative perspectives that are not typically faith perspectives), one could have faith perspective according to which one's life is significant (or insignificant), heading towards greatness (or heading towards ruin), worth having (or not worth having), or divinely provided for (or uncared for). One could have a faith perspective according to which the world is divinely ordained (or the result of solely physical forces), as operating as it should (or broken), as improving (or wasting away), or as part of a larger purpose (or all there is).⁸

Now that the perspectival account has been summarized, in the remainder of this section I highlight the features of the account that are relevant to the cumulative case argument given in the rest of this article. First, the perspectival account of faith is primarily a cognitive account of faith, since faith perspectives are construals, which are cognitive.⁹ However, faith, according to the perspectival account, also has an affective component – the subject must have a pro-attitude towards the faith perspective. Also, faith, according to the perspectival account, has a volitional component: faith either motivates subjects to act or directs subjects' motivation to act in particular ways. Faith motivates subjects if a subject's perception of something as significantly valuable is (in the absence of overriding factors) sufficient to motivate the subject to act. This is because one's faith perspective is a way of perceiving certain things as significantly valuable. Faith also motivates subjects if the pro-attitude that accompanies faith is sufficient to motivate the subject to act. If, however, one's perception of something as significantly valuable and having a pro-attitude towards something are insufficient to motivate the subject, then insofar as a subject is motivated to act, one's faith perspective directs that motivation to act in particular ways. This is because insofar as a subject is motivated to act, the subject is motivated to act for what the subject perceives to be valuable, and a subject's faith perspective is a way of perceiving certain things to be significantly valuable. For example, someone who has a faith perspective according to which the world is providentially directed by God and in which God cares about individual creatures might be more motivated to ask God for help than would someone who does not have such a perspective.

Second, the perspectival account of faith is compatible with faith coming in degrees; one's faith can be stronger or weaker. 'Strength' and 'weakness', however, are ambiguous, referring to a quality of faith measured on either of two scales. The first scale measures the *centrality* or *peripherality* of one's perspective – how impactful the perspective is to the subject. The second scale measures the *resistance* or *susceptibility* to the overtaking or dissolution of one's perspective. Someone might have central faith that is susceptible, so easily overtaken, as when one temporarily goes all-in on a religious perspective for

a time, until something else more appealing comes along. Alternatively, one might have a peripheral perspective that is resistant, so sticks around, as when one stubbornly sticks with a view one does not really care about or think about much, such as a perspective according to which the world's financial system is controlled by a few wealthy bankers.

Finally, according to the perspectival account of faith, one's faith provides subjects with reasons for beliefs by affecting their evidence. As mentioned above, faith perspectives are ways of perceiving. Perspectives make it so that things appear in certain ways to the subject, and how something appears to a subject affects the subject's evidence. Just as an object's appearing round to a subject provides the subject with a reason to believe the object is round, so the world's appearing as if it is providentially guided to the subject provides the subject with a reason to believe the world is providentially guided. Although the appearance via faith is not delivered merely via sense perception, the subject is appeared to nonetheless via the faith perspective. Further, appearances can provide indirect evidence for other propositions. Just as an object's appearing round can provide the subject with a reason to believe that the sound the subject hears is the sound of the object rolling on the ground, so the world's appearing providentially directed by God can provide the subject with a reason to believe that a very unlikely event is the work of God's providence. For example, if someone who has a faith perspective according to which God guides the universe were to see someone come to life after appearing to be dead, that subject might have strong reasons to believe that a miracle had occurred. Someone without such faith, however, might not have strong reasons to believe that a miracle had occurred. That person might, instead, have reasons to believe that a hallucination occurred.¹⁰

It is worth noting that even if one's perspective provides a subject with reasons to believe a proposition p , one might have additional reasons against p , or one might have reasons to doubt whether one's perspective is accurate. One might even have conflicting faith perspectives. One's perspective, then, does not provide the subject with *ultima facie* justification for beliefs on the basis of the reasons provided by that perspective.

I have thus far described what faith is according to the perspectival account: faith is a value-oriented perspective, where the subject has a pro-attitude towards the object of the perspective. I have also described three features of faith, according to the perspectival account, that are relevant to the cumulative case argument in future sections: (1) faith has cognitive, affective, and volitional components; (2) faith can be more or less strong, either by being more or less central or more or less resilient; and (3) faith can affect subjects' evidence for p , either by affecting whether it appears to the subject that p or whether p can be inferred from what appears to the subject. What remains is to give an argument for the perspectival account of faith. I begin that argument in the next section, where I show that the perspectival account explains why faith is present in paradigmatic cases of faith.

The perspectival account of faith explains why faith is present in paradigmatic cases of faith

Almost all contemporary arguments for accounts of faith are explanatory. The accounts, it is argued, identify an essential faith-relevant feature in paradigmatic cases of faith (and in that way explain why faith is present in those cases) and/or they explain why certain statements about faith are true.¹¹ In this section and the next, I argue that the perspectival account fares just as well or better than other accounts of faith in those respects. In this section, I show that the perspectival account of faith identifies an essential faith-relevant feature in the most commonly used cases of paradigmatic faith in the

contemporary literature, and in that way it explains why faith is present in those cases. Then, in the next section, I show that the perspectival account explains why a wide range of statements about faith are either true or perceived to be true.¹²

In what follows, I list six paradigmatic examples of faith in the literature, then I argue that the perspectival account explains why faith is present in each case.

Case 1: Mary has faith in her colleague, John, who is under investigation for fraud. Mary expresses this faith by selecting John to be her partner before the conclusion of the investigation. (Buchak 2017, 115)

Case 2: Spouses have faith in one another even when there is evidence that one has been unfaithful. (Alston 1996; Buchak 2012; Byerly 2012, 124)

Case 3: When a team is behind in a game, the team mates and fans have faith that their team will win. (Howard-Snyder 2013, 357)

Case 4: Martin Luther King, Jr., Victor Frankl, and Gandhi have faith in people's decency by insisting that their oppressors could learn to respect or treat people how they ought to be treated. (Preston-Roedder 2013, 664)

Case 5: Abraham's faith is expressed by his faithfully leaving Mesopotamia at God's command (Genesis 12) and by his obedience to God's command by attempting to sacrifice his promised son Isaac. (Genesis 22; Hebrews 11; Kierkegaard 1983; Kvanvig 2013, 124; 2018, 28–29; Pace and McKaughan 2022)

Case 6: A little leaguer gives up a game-winning home run and displays faith by resolving to become a better pitcher so that it doesn't happen again. The little leaguer is thus faithful to the goal of not giving up another game-winning home run.¹³ (Kvanvig 2013, 112–113; 2018, 18–19)

In *Case 1*, Mary has faith in her colleague not to defraud her (or faith that he will not defraud her) even if she has reason to think others might acquire evidence that he has defrauded others. Mary has this faith either by having a perspective on John according to which he will not defraud her (even if he is found to have defrauded others) or by having a perspective on John according to which he is not a defrauder to anyone.¹⁴ That John is not a defrauder (to her or anyone) indicates a valuable feature of John, and Mary's construal of John this way reasonably elicits a pro-attitude from Mary towards that feature of John. Such a perspective makes it appear to Mary that John will not defraud her and so gives Mary evidence that John will not defraud her.¹⁵ The perspective might make it so that the results of the investigation are inconsequential to Mary – either they pertain to John's defrauding of others (and not Mary), or the results are outweighed by the evidence the appearance provides Mary, as one's first-person evidence (e.g. memory) that one did not commit a crime can swamp third-person evidence to the contrary.

Case 2 is very similar to *Case 1* except that in *Case 1* Mary does not have evidence that she in particular has been (or will be) defrauded, whereas in *Case 2* one spouse has evidence that he or she has been betrayed by the other spouse. Despite this difference, the presence of faith in *Case 2* is explained similarly: one spouse has a perspective according to which the possibly unfaithful spouse has been and is, in fact, faithful. This faith perspective might provide appearances as of the faithfulness of one's spouse strong enough that one spouse is justified in overlooking what would otherwise be damning counterevidence¹⁶ or, alternatively, to seek ways in which the allegedly damning evidence can be explained away in ways that one would, without such a perspective, not seek to explain away.

Case 3 does not involve any evidence of wrongdoing and is instead a future-looking attempt at recovery from unfavourable circumstances – being behind in a game, in this example. The explanation of the presence of faith in this case is that the fans or team

mates have a shared, similar perspective according to which their team wins the game. Winning is valuable, and those who want the team to win are likely to have a pro-attitude towards the team's winning and will be motivated to act so as to win. All of this is compatible with the team having the odds against them and their loss being statistically likely. In fact, one might have a strong pro-attitude towards winning a game in which the odds are unfavourable and might be even more motivated to act so as to win the game.

Case 4, faith in human decency, involves subjects having faith in people in general apart from their particular relationship to the subjects. The explanation of the presence of faith in *Case 4* is the same as the explanation of the presence of faith in previous cases: one who has faith in human decency has a perspective according to which each person is decent. A subject who has such a perspective even when the subject is oppressed shows that such faith is strong in the resilient sense. Due to the resiliency of the perspective, although people have acted indecently, the subject might be justified, in virtue of the subject's faith perspective, in believing that people can recover by learning to love humans as they ought.

The presence of Abraham's faith in *Case 5* is explained by his having a perspective according to which God will successfully fulfil his promises and will in some way reward Abraham for his allegiance. Since Abraham values, and has a pro-attitude towards, God's promises being fulfilled, such a perspective would motivate Abraham (or direct Abraham's motivation) to obey God's command to leave Mesopotamia, seeing himself as part of the successful fulfilment of God's promise. When God commands Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham, who has resilient faith that God will fulfil his promises, sees God as finding a way to keep his promise that Isaac will have many children. (Abraham thus reasons that God will raise Isaac from the dead as a way of maintaining the perspective, according to Hebrews 11:19.)

Case 6 does not involve any relationships. Instead, the little leaguer has faith relative to a goal or an ideal. The presence of faith in this case is also explained by the little leaguer's perspective: the little leaguer has a resilient perspective according to which he does not give up another game-winning home run. Since the little leaguer values not giving up another game-winning home run, the little leaguer is motivated to act in appropriate ways, including practising and continuing on despite obstacles to achieving the goal.

The perspectival account of faith thus explains why faith is present in the paradigmatic cases of faith above. Of course, even if some of the above cases are not paradigmatic, it does not count against an account of faith that it explains why faith is present in non-paradigmatic cases. Nevertheless, it seems to be a virtue of an account of faith to be able to explain the presence of faith in the same cases as do prominent accounts of faith.

The perspectival account of faith explains why statements about faith are true or thought to be true

The perspectival account of faith, in addition to explaining why faith is present in cases of paradigmatic faith, also explains why statements about faith, which diverse accounts of faith aim to show are true, are true or thought to be true. In this way, the perspectival account of faith fares just as well or better than do other accounts of faith, which are argued to be plausible at least in part because those accounts explain why these statements about faith are true. Unfortunately, there is no agreed-upon set of statements, and the statements whose truth one faith theorist attempts to explain sometimes contradict the statements whose truth another faith theorist attempts to explain. I show below that the perspectival account can explain why there is such a diverse, even inconsistent, set of statements about faith.

The perspectival account does not explain diverse sets of statements by being so general that it can satisfy even inconsistent statements. Instead, the perspectival account is a

specific account of faith, and, as shown below, the inconsistency of the statements is the result of disagreements about other issues – for example, what having evidence requires or what one’s faith perspective does for the subject who has it. The disagreement about which statements are true, then, is not due to the perspectival account itself but to disagreements about other issues. The perspectival account of faith, then, both explains why some common statements about faith are true and contributes to an explanation for why there would be such a diverse set of statements, including inconsistent statements.

In what follows, I list several sets of statements appealed to in the faith literature, topically organized, and after each group of statements I describe, for each statement, either how the perspectival account of faith explains why the statement is true or how the perspectival account contributes to an explanation of why one would think the statement is true.

Faith and belief

Statement 1: Faith that p is incompatible with disbelieving or not accepting p . (Audi 2008, 92; Howard-Snyder and McKaughan 2022, 307, 321)¹⁷

Statement 2: Faith that p does not require belief that p . (Howard-Snyder 2013, 2016, 2018; Audi 2019)

Statement 3: Faith explains why one has certain beliefs. ‘I believe (appropriately) because I have faith.’ (Byerly 2012, 112–114)

Statement 4: Faith can intensify belief. (Page 2017, 235)

The truth, or perceived truth, of *Statement 1* can be explained by the perspectival account if we assume that the subject’s perspective according to which p entails that the subject has some propositional attitude towards p that is incompatible with disbelieving or not accepting p .¹⁸ For example, supposing someone has a perspective on the world according to which it is providentially guided by God, we might think the subject with such a faith perspective believes, accepts, or assumes that the world is providentially guided by God, and perhaps that belief, acceptance, or assumption is incompatible with disbelieving or not accepting that the world is providentially guided by God. The inference from having a perspective according to which p to believing, accepting, or assuming p is debatable, but given that one (even implicitly) endorses that inference and the incompatibility between the two propositional attitudes thus described, the perspectival account of faith explains the truth, or perceived truth, of *Statement 1*.

Statement 2 can also be explained by the perspectival account. From what was said above, a subject’s perspective according to which p provides the subject with *prima facie* justification, but not necessarily *ultima facie* justification, for believing p . This can occur when, for example, the subject has conflicting faith perspectives, reasons to doubt whether one’s perspective is accurate, or additional reasons against p . Suppose a subject has a faith perspective according to which p but does not have *ultima facie* justification for believing p . If the subject can respond to this justification by not believing p , then faith that p does not require belief that p , and *Statement 2* is thus explained by the perspectival account.

Statement 3 is true by virtue of the fact that one’s faith perspective affects the subject’s evidence, providing subjects with reasons for beliefs. As mentioned above, a faith perspective makes it so that things appear to the subject in a certain way, and these appearances provide the subject with reasons to believe on the basis of those appearances. By providing reasons for beliefs, a subject’s perspective (at least partially) explains why the subject has beliefs – the subject has beliefs because of those reasons. The perspectival account of faith thus explains why *Statement 3* is true.¹⁹

Concerning *Statement 4*, perspectival faith can intensify belief insofar as one’s faith perspective affects one’s reasons for one’s beliefs by making it so that certain features of the

world appear to the subject with more force or clarity than if the subject were not to have such faith. The force or clarity of one's appearances arguably affects the intensity of one's reasons and thus influences the intensity of one's beliefs on the basis of those reasons. For example, if one has a perspective according to which God providentially guides the universe, it might appear more forcefully or clearly to the subject that an extremely unlikely event is an act of God, and the force/clarity of that appearance thus affects the intensity of the subject's resultant belief. Given these assumptions about how the force/clarity of one's appearances contributes to the intensity of one's beliefs, the perspectival account of faith thus explains the truth of Statement 4.

Faith and evidence

Statement 5: Faith is reasonable, supported by the available evidence. (Swinburne 2005)

Statement 6: Faith is evidence of things unseen. (Hebrews 11:1)

Statement 7: Faith implies the absence of evidence, as when one says, 'I believe the tenets of my religion on faith; it isn't a matter of arguments.' (Audi 2008, 94)

Statement 8: Faith goes beyond the evidence. (Hick 1989; Bishop 2002, 2007, 2022; Buchak 2012)

Statement 9: Faith involves resilience in the face of counterevidence. (Buchak 2018, 117; Audi 2019; Jackson 2019, 2021; Malcolm and Scott 2021, 2022)

The truth of *Statement 5* is explained by the perspectival account in virtue of the fact that one's perspective and the propositions one believes on the basis of the evidence provided by one's perspective are mutually supporting. Suppose one's faith perspective provides a subject with evidence (via appearances) for certain propositions p , q , and r . p , q , and r then provide evidence for the subject's faith perspective.²⁰ For example, if I have a perspective according to which God providentially directs the universe, it might appear to me as if God has been directing specific events x , y , and z . As a result, I might come to believe that God has directed x , y , and z . If I then reflect on whether my faith that God providentially directs the universe is supported by the available evidence, I could cite as evidence for that claim that God has directed x , y , and z . The justification here is circular, but this circular justification is just as benign as in cases in which I attempt to support the reliability of my sense perception – my reliable sense perception supports my belief that perceptions t , u , and v are accurate, and that t , u , and v are accurate supports the proposition that my sense perception is reliable.²¹ The truth of *Statement 5* is thus explained by the perspectival account of faith.

Statement 6 states not that faith is supported by evidence but that faith is evidence of things unseen. 'Unseen' in *Statement 6* probably means not being seen via one's sense perception. Further, it is widely held among faith theorists that the 'is' in Hebrews 11:1 is intended in a way other than identity. One way to understand Hebrews 11:1 is to take the 'is' to be an 'is' of provision, as when I say, 'My child is my joy.' Combining the understanding of 'unseen' in this paragraph and the provision reading of 'is', the perspectival account of faith can explain why *Statement 6* is true: faith, according to the perspectival account, provides evidence of certain propositions that are not evidenced merely via one's sense perception. Faith provides this evidence by making it so that certain things in the world appear to the subject that would not appear merely via one's sense perception. For example, one does not see solely with one's sense perception that God providentially directs the universe, yet a certain faith perspective provides the subject with evidence that God providentially directs the universe by making it appear to the subject as if God providentially directs the universe.

Statement 7 is false, given what was said in the first section, 'The perspectival account of faith'. One's faith perspective provides one with evidence; faith does not imply the

absence of evidence. Regardless, the perspectival account of faith can at least partially explain why someone would think Statement 7 is true. Faith does imply the absence of evidence *if* the perspectival account is combined with the (false) view that having evidence for a proposition requires that the subject be able either (1) to make an argument for the proposition or (2) to make an inference from that evidence to the target proposition. A faith perspective involves a construal of the world that makes it so that certain features appear a certain way to the subject. When something appears to a subject a certain way, the subject thereby acquires non-inferential (*prima facie*) justification for a proposition *p* (that the thing is that way), or non-propositional evidence for *p*, or reasons for *p* that the subject might not be able to articulate. If one maintains (the false view) that having evidence requires that the subject be able to make an argument or inference from that evidence or that one be able to articulate that evidence, then one can conclude that the appearances provided by a faith perspective do not provide the subject with what is required for something to be counted as evidence. If that is the case, faith implies the absence of evidence. Those who think Statement 7 is true might have experienced cases in which people of faith were unable to provide an argument when asked for evidence for propositions they hold by faith. Someone with such faith might respond to requests for evidence by saying, 'I believe the tenets of my religion because I just see the world that way; it isn't a matter of arguments.' So, there is an explanation provided by both the perspectival account and a (false) view of what evidence requires for why one would think Statement 7 is true.

The view that faith 'goes beyond' the evidence in *Statement 8* means, according to Bishop, that the subject takes certain propositions to be true even when the subject is not rationally required take those propositions to be true on the basis of the publicly available evidence (Bishop 2022, 399–400, 402). Given this meaning of the statement, the perspectival account is compatible with *Statement 8*. The appearances provided by a perspective are not publicly available in the sense that many subjects can empirically perceive the same piece of public evidence and those subjects might be appeared to differently on the basis of their faith perspectives. Someone rising from the dead might appear to one subject as a miracle and to another as a hallucination. The subject's appearances, and so evidence, go beyond the publicly available evidence due to one's faith perspectives, according to the perspectival account of faith.²²

Statement 9 is about resilience in the face of counterevidence. As described in the paragraph on Case 2 above, according to the perspectival account, one's faith in one's spouse persists despite evidence to the contrary. Perspectival faith can provide strong evidence via appearances, intensifying belief on the basis of that evidence, such that counterevidence might be outweighed or swamped by the evidence provided by the perspective. So, the perspectival account provides an explanation of why *Statement 9* is true.

Faith and doubt

Statement 10: Faith is incompatible with doubt. (James 1:6–7)

Statement 11: Faith is compatible with doubt. (Howard-Snyder 2013; McKaughan 2013; Jackson 2022; Malcolm and Scott 2022)

Statement 12: Faith is incompatible with 'a pervasive or dominating doubt'. (Audi 2008, 93)

'Doubt' is notoriously ambiguous, and the ambiguity of the term can explain why there are seemingly incompatible statements about the relationship between doubt and faith. One of the meanings of the term, which explains *Statement 10*, is that doubt is the sufficient diminishment, or perhaps dissolution, of one's perspective.²³ If one's faith

perspective is diminished to a small extent, such a diminishment might not be worth attributing doubt to the subject, but if such a diminishment results in a failure to construe the world in a particular way, one's faith does not remain, and one's doubt is thus incompatible with faith. One's theistic doubt would, on this understanding, be the failure to construe events in the world as divinely guided or the failure to construe objects as divine creations. In this sense of 'doubt', faith is incompatible with doubt.

Another meaning of 'doubt' is that doubt is the lack of belief.²⁴ When paired with the view that faith does not require that one have a particular accompanying belief, this lack-of-belief meaning explains why one would think *Statement 11* is true. Suppose one construes the world in a particular way but also lacks what would be the accompanying belief. For example, suppose someone has a perspective according to which the world is created by God while also maintaining a view that undercuts the support that the accompanying appearances would otherwise provide, leading the subject to suspend belief about whether the world is created by God. A subject might, for example, maintain that his perspective is entirely due to his cultural upbringing, thus undercutting the support that the appearances provide for the target proposition (which the subject now 'doubts', in the lack-of-belief sense). The result is that the subject has faith – the perspective that provides the appearances – but lacks the belief that the appearances would support.²⁵ There is, then, a way of explaining why one would think *Statement 11* is true.

Even if faith is compatible with a failure to believe certain propositions on the basis of that faith, and even if faith is compatible with the slight dissolution of one's perspective, it makes sense to think that faith is incompatible with a pervasive or dominating doubt, as indicated by *Statement 12*. As mentioned in the paragraph on *Statement 10*, if the diminishment of one's perspective is pervasive or dominating, one might thereby lack faith. In fact, even if 'doubt' means the lack of belief, as it does in *Statement 11*, and faith does not require a specific belief, a pervasive or dominating lack of beliefs (so doubt) might imply a lack of, or dead, faith. If, for example, a subject's undercutting views are pervasive to the extent that the subject does not believe most of the propositions that would accompany the subject's faith, one has reason to doubt whether the subject has a faith perspective at all. Insofar as the subject has a faith perspective, that subject's faith perspective is not demonstrated by the subject's doxastic attitudes and presumably would not motivate the subject (or direct the subject's motivation) to act in ways characteristic of that faith perspective. Such a faith perspective, if present at all, is 'dead'; it is as if the subject did not have the faith at all.²⁶ Even if doubt is the lack of certain beliefs, then, as it is in *Statement 11*, at least *living* faith is incompatible with pervasive or dominating doubts, as indicated in *Statement 12*.

Faith and trust/commitment

Statement 13: Faith 'implies certain attitudes, such as reverence and trust'. (Audi 2008, 93)

Statement 14: Faith involves a commitment to act prior to searching for more evidence (Buchak 2012, 2017, 2018)

Perspectival faith often implies certain attitudes such as reverence and trust, as indicated in *Statement 13*. As described in Cases 1 and 2 above, a subject's faith perspective can lead that subject to perceive another as trustworthy and so trust the other person even though there is evidence that the other person might eventually wrong, be wronging, or have wronged, the subject. In Case 1, Mary has a perspective on John according to which he will not defraud her (even if he is found to have defrauded others) or according to which he is not a defrauder to anyone. In Case 2, one spouse has a perspective according to which it appears as if the possibly unfaithful spouse has been and is, in fact, faithful, to

such an extent that it swamps what would otherwise be damning counterevidence. These perspectives, then, imply trust or reverence towards others and motivate subjects (or direct subjects' motivation) to act accordingly. According to some specific versions of the perspectival account, trust is built into the perspective that one must have in order to have a faith perspective: a faith perspective requires that the subject be disposed to see the object as trustworthy.²⁷

Regarding *Statement 14*, if one is appeared to as if an action is worth pursuing, one thereby has a strong reason to act on the basis of that appearance, perhaps so strong that one does not thereby have reasons to search for more evidence. If one is appeared to strongly enough, searching for more evidence would be futile. Since one's faith perspective provides such appearances, one's faith perspective explains why faith involves a commitment to act prior to searching for more evidence.

Faith and volition

Statement 15: Faith involves a volitional component, a leap that is up to the subject. (Evans 1998; Bishop 2022, 111, n. 19)

Statement 16: Faith is a gift from God, infused by an external source, and the subject does not acquire it by virtue of any of his or her own merits. (*Westminster Confession of Faith* LXXI, Westminster Assembly (1646); Aquinas 1966, 96)

Statement 17: If we have faith that p , we have indirect reflective control over p by focusing on evidence for p or on the normative outcomes of having faith that p . (Rettler 2018)

The debate about whether one's faith is under our direct control, indirect control, or not at all within our control is explained by virtue of the fact that there is a parallel debate about subjects' perspectives. One might argue that subjects' value-oriented perspectives on the world are up to those subjects, just as one can affect a gestalt shift while looking at Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit. Such a position would make it so that *Statement 15* is true.

Alternatively, one might argue that subjects' perspectives are not within their control. One might hold that the right kind of religious perspective cannot be formed in subjects via the subject's control and, if one has such a perspective at all, one has the perspective as a gift from God. Such a position would make *Statement 16* true.

Finally, one might hold that subjects can affect their perspectives indirectly, by, for example, focusing differently, as when one might create a gestalt shift by focusing on one part of the duck-rabbit picture instead of another. Such a position would make it so that *Statement 17* is true. Thus, although the three statements about faith conflict, the conflict can be explained by a parallel debate about perspectives.

Faith and emotions

Statement 18: Faith diminishes or eliminates fear and other negative emotions, such as anxiety, depression, and anger. (Audi 2008, 98)²⁸

Statement 19: Faith makes us vulnerable. (Preston-Roedder 2013, 669; Page 2017, 235)

Statement 18 is true if we adopt a certain view of emotions, such as Robert Roberts's view (2003, 2007). According to Roberts's view, emotions are concern-based construals. As one's construal changes, so one's emotions change. For example, to fear is to construe a situation as dangerous and to be concerned about avoiding danger. If one were to construe oneself as protected by God or construe the danger in one's situation as insignificant relative to some larger purpose, one would thereby not construe the situation as dangerous,

so one's fear would be diminished or eliminated (*mutatis mutandis* for other negative emotions). Of course, one could maintain that Roberts's view of emotions is incorrect, in which case one might contest Statement 18, but there is at least one prominent view of emotions that makes sense of Statement 18.²⁹

Concerning *Statement 19*, faith makes us vulnerable because having a faith perspective always involves a cost if the faith is inaccurate.³⁰ Stronger (central, resilient) faith involves greater costs. When a subject's perspective is resilient, the subject might persistently hold on to certain evidence and thus maintain beliefs on the basis of that evidence, all the while knowing that were the subject's evidence misleading, the subject might be persistently incorrect, resistant to correction. Further, to the degree to which the subject's perspective is central, having the perspective exposes the subject to massive cognitive disruption were the subject to learn the perspective is incorrect. For example, if I have a central perspective according to which God is the being to whom I should direct my life and I end up adopting a contrary perspective, I will have misoriented my life thus far. Perspectives thus create liabilities, which makes us vulnerable, which makes sense of Statement 19.

Faith and motivation/care

Statement 20: Faith motivates behaviour (Howard-Snyder 2013, 363; Howard-Snyder and McKaughan 2022, 304) and can motivate us to act against our desires. (Page 2017, 235)

Statement 21: Faith is incompatible with not caring. (Buchak 2012, 226; Howard-Snyder and McKaughan 2022, 302–303)

As described in the first section, 'The perspectival account of faith', faith motivates subjects (or at least directs subjects' motivation). More difficult is the second part of *Statement 20*. The second part of Statement 20 can be explained by the perspectival account if one's perspective involves construing oneself as a person who does not act on certain desires or if one construes oneself as acting for a purpose which involves acting against one's desires combined with one's care that one act according to that construal. For example, if I have a perspective according to which I am responsible to God and I care about acting according to my duties to God, that perspective might motivate me (or direct my motivation) to act according to those duties even if doing so requires acting against desires that conflict with my duty to God.

Statement 21 is explained by the perspectival account's requirement that for a subject to have faith, that subject must take there to be significant value in the object of one's faith and have a pro-attitude towards that object. Insofar as a subject takes a pro-attitude towards an object that the subject takes to be of value – so it matters to the subject – the subject values and is for, so cares about, that object. Having faith with respect to an object, according to the perspectival account, is thus incompatible with not caring about that object.

I have thus described how the perspectival account of faith either explains why statements about faith appealed to in the current faith literature are true, or, in cases in which they are not true, I have described how the perspectival account of faith explains why one would think those statements are true. In this way, the perspectival account of faith fares just as well or better than other accounts of faith. When paired with the previous section, I hope to have shown that the perspectival account of faith explains the data that alternative views of faith seek to explain. In the following section, I contribute even further to the explanatory argument by showing that the perspectival account also explains why alternative accounts of faith seem plausible.

The perspectival account of faith explains why alternative accounts of faith seem plausible

The argument in this section contributes to the cumulative case argument for the perspectival account by showing that the perspectival account explains why disparate alternative accounts of faith seem plausible. They seem plausible because they grasp some aspect of faith (according to the perspectival account), and an account seems plausible insofar as it approximates the truth (or so one would hope). Another way to describe the argument below is that the perspectival account has predictive power: if we assume the perspectival account is true, one would expect alternative accounts to seem plausible in part because they focus on a feature or consequence of the perspectival account of faith and take that feature or consequence to be faith itself. If alternative accounts were to identify features irrelevant to the perspectival account, that would be evidence against the perspectival account. So, the fact that very different, alternative accounts get something correct about faith (and thus seem plausible for that reason) gives us some evidence for the truth of the perspectival account.

In what follows, then, I group accounts according to their emphasis and briefly explain why those emphases make the accounts seem plausible, according to the perspectival account. To reiterate, I do not argue that the accounts summarized below are incorrect or incomplete; I assume they are, and I show how the plausibility of each of those accounts is explained by the perspectival account if the perspectival account is true. Those accounts' plausibility is explained by virtue of their grasping some aspect of faith, though incompletely, according to the perspectival account. It is thus understandable why they would be mistaken for faith itself if the perspectival account is true. I begin with cognitive accounts.

Cognitive accounts

Many faith theorists argue that faith is a cognitive state. The view that faith is a belief is held by John Locke (1975), C. S. Lewis (1952, 138), L. J. Cohen (1989, 387), and Joseph Runzo (1990, 44). Alvin Plantinga (2000, 245) identifies faith with a belief formed via the *sensus divinitatis*. John Bishop (2002) holds that faith is a 'doxastic venture'. Other faith theorists have argued that belief is too strong of a cognitive state to be required by faith (e.g. Howard-Snyder 2013, 2016, 2018) and have argued that faith requires a weaker cognitive state such as acceptance (Alston 1996) or assumption (Buckareff 2005; Howard-Snyder 2013; McKaughan 2013, 2016). Ryan Byerly (2012) argues that religious faith is a disposition to believe.

As described above, according to the perspectival account of faith, faith is primarily cognitive, and it is debatable which other cognitive states result from having a faith perspective. It might be that when one has exemplary, central faith, one also 'believes by faith' by having fitting beliefs that accompany the subject's faith perspective. Further, beliefs by faith in paradigmatic cases might all be of a certain kind. They might, for example, be beliefs for which the subject cannot provide an argument, in which case those beliefs are properly basic, perhaps the result of a special faculty, the *sensus divinitatis*. If, however, the perspectival account is correct and current faith theorists are making progress towards (but incorrectly identifying) faith, we would expect faith theorists to move away from doxastic accounts of faith towards accounts involving weaker cognitive states while maintaining that faith is primarily cognitive. And that is what is occurring in the debate over cognitive accounts of faith, as faith theorists are identifying faith with cognitive states weaker than belief. Neither construals, acceptances, nor assumptions are as strong as belief – to have a belief requires states of affairs that are required by

neither perspectives, acceptances, nor assumptions.³¹ It is debatable which propositional attitudes are required by perspectival faith, but the movement described in the preceding paragraph shows that faith theorists are moving in the direction of the perspectival account, though not grasping it completely, and those accounts are plausible to the extent to which they are moving in the direction of the perspectival account.

Affective and volitional accounts

Some faith theorists have proposed that faith is an affective state, a certain kind of orientation, and/or a kind of volition aimed at a goal. Jonathan Kvanvig (2013, 2018) holds that faith is ‘an orientation of a person toward a longer-term goal, an orientation or disposition toward the retaining of the goal or plan or project in the face of difficulties in achieving it’ (Kvanvig 2013, 111). Jonathan Matheson (2018) argues that faith is grit – passionate perseverance to obtain long-term goals. Malcolm and Scott (2021), (2022) argue that faith is true grit – an attitude that aligns with the content of the faith and in which the subject is disposed to resist ceasing to have that attitude. Louis Pojman (1986) argues that faith is profound hope, a weaker affective state towards the object of one’s faith.

Affective and volitional accounts capture a valuable feature of faith, according to the perspectival account: faith orients subjects to what is valuable, motivating subjects (or directing subjects’ motivation) to act accordingly. Kvanvig’s account identifies the orientation and motivational feature of one’s faith perspective. Matheson describes central, resilient faith, which directs subjects to steadfastly pursue long-term goals. Malcolm and Scott describe resilient faith that resists dissolution, and Pojman identifies an affective state – hope – that accompanies weaker, that is, less central and less resilient, faith.

Ryan West (2013) maintains that faith is a disposition to have certain proper emotional responses to certain situations. This dispositional view aligns with Robert Roberts’s view of emotions and fits with the perspectival account of faith. (See also the paragraph on Statement 18.) On Roberts’s view, one is disposed to have certain kinds of emotions because of one’s construal of a situation. Likewise, then, one’s faith perspective would dispose one to experience certain kinds of emotions in response to certain situations. West’s view, then, identifies a feature of the perspectival view of faith – that it disposes one to experience certain emotional responses to certain situations – rather than the perspective itself that disposes the subject to experience those emotions.

Relationship accounts

Another approach to developing an account of faith is to hold that faith principally involves a kind of reliance, trust, or commitment. According to reliance accounts, when I have faith in someone to do something for me, I rely on them to do something for me, and in this way I am vulnerable to them.³² According to trust accounts, one person’s having faith in another to *x* is to trust the other person to *x*. According to these accounts, ‘I have faith in’ and ‘I trust’ can be used interchangeably in a sentence without an obviously discernible change in meaning – for example, ‘I have faith in God to save me’, and ‘I trust God to save me’, have the same meaning.³³ Lara Buchak (2017, 2018) argues for a commitment view of faith: a subject has faith that *p* when he or she commits to act on *p* without searching for more evidence and commits to acting even when counterevidence arises.³⁴ Meghan Page argues that faith is a posture of leaning in, where leaning in is a kind of others-directedness: ‘attuning our lives, decisions and routines around the persons or states of affairs in which we place faith’ (Page 2017, 239). Finally, Ryan Preston-Roedder (2013) maintains that person-to-person faith involves a cognitive component – the tendency to give people the benefit of the doubt when evaluating their actions, motives, or

character – and a volitional component – to be ‘invested in the possibility of people’s living morally decent lives and in their realizing that possibility’ (Preston-Roedder 2013, 668).

These relationship accounts focus on particular applications of faith that involve interpersonal relationships, often explicitly, and so some of these accounts do not seem to fit well with other faith applications. For example, if I have faith that my team will win a particular game, I do not thereby rely on my team – my team could win, and my faith be vindicated, by virtue of my team’s opponent’s complete failure even if my team flounders and so proves themselves unreliable. I could also have this faith without trusting my team – my team’s failure to win does not betray or violate my trust. By having faith that my team will win, I am not thereby committed to act as if the team will win – to place a bet on my team if offered, for example – without searching for more evidence. Nor does the faith that my team will win involve being vulnerable to my team or attuning my life and routine around the team or its win.

Reliance, trust, and commitment accounts do, however, identify attitudes and behaviours that typically accompany strong faith perspectives in the context of personal relationships. Reliance accounts capture instances in which a subject has a resilient faith perspective according to which another will come through for the subject. Trust accounts identify instances in which a subject has a faith perspective according to which another person does what the subject trusts the other person to do, and commitment accounts capture instances in which a subject’s resilient faith perspective leads the subject to act in committed ways, such as not searching for counterevidence, as indicated in Statement 14. Page’s account focuses on a central faith perspective that orients the subject around other persons or states of affairs that the subject takes to be so valuable that the subject attunes the subject’s life, decisions, and routines around them. Finally, Preston-Roedder’s account highlights cases in which a subject has a resilient perspective according to which (and in which the subject values that) people are morally decent. Such a perspective motivates the subject (or directs the subject’s motivation) to give people the benefit of the doubt and to encourage others to behave well, both of which are, according to Preston-Roedder, expressions of faith in humanity. The perspectival account of faith thus explains the plausibility of relationship accounts – they grasp what strong faith perspectives do for us in the context of personal relationships.

Howard-Snyder’s account

Daniel Howard-Snyder advocates for a resilient reliance account of faith, which has been addressed above, but in the last decade or so, Howard-Snyder has also maintained that faith must meet four requirements.³⁵ Howard-Snyder argues that his account satisfies these requirements;³⁶ I here describe how the perspectival account also satisfies these requirements and so fares just as well as Howard-Snyder’s – and others’ – accounts in this respect. Howard-Snyder holds that faith must involve four components:

1. a positive evaluation,
2. a positive conative stance,
3. a positive cognitive stance, and
4. resilience to new counterevidence. (Howard-Snyder 2013, 370)

Howard-Snyder’s account captures four important features of faith, according to the perspectival account. First, the positive evaluation component captures the fact that the subject takes the object of the faith perspective to be valuable and that the subject has a pro-attitude towards the object of the faith perspective. Second, the positive conative stance component captures the fact that a subject’s faith perspective motivates subjects

(or directs the subject's motivation) to act. Third, the positive cognitive stance component captures the fact that one's faith perspective is cognitive (it has a mind-to-world direction of fit), is sensitive to evidence (as indicated in the paragraph on Statement 5), and provides one with reasons (as indicated in the paragraph on Statement 6). Although one's perspective according to which p might not result in belief that p (Howard-Snyder thinks it need not either), it is nevertheless a positive cognitive stance towards p . Finally, resilience to new counterevidence is captured by the perspectival account as it was in Case 2 and Statement 9 above: counterevidence cannot easily outweigh the strong evidence that one's faith perspective provides via appearances, and the subject might look for ways to explain the counterevidence away even when the subject would not do so without the faith perspective. Although Howard-Snyder's account does not capture the fundamental aspect of faith – that it is a kind of perspective – it nevertheless laudably identifies important features of faith, which one would expect if the perspectival account were true.

Alternative accounts, then, all capture what seems like plausible features or consequences of faith according to the perspectival account, at least in particular paradigmatic contexts. Cognitive accounts capture, and over time have honed in on, the cognitive aspect of perspectival faith. Affective and volitional accounts capture the value-directedness and motivational aspects of perspectival faith. Relationship accounts capture the kinds of attitudes and behaviours that typically accompany strong faith perspectives in the context of personal relationships. And Howard-Snyder's requirements capture many key features of perspectival faith. The perspectival account, then, explains the plausibility of these alternative accounts – they focus on a feature or consequence of the true (perspectival) account of faith and take that feature or consequence to be faith itself. That is what we would expect were the perspectival account true.

Conclusion

I have offered a cumulative case explanatory argument for the perspectival account of faith. The account explains the data that alternative accounts of faith seek to explain, including why faith is present in paradigmatic cases of faith and the truth of statements about faith appealed to in the current faith literature. (In cases in which the statements conflict, the perspectival account explains why one would think the conflicting statements are true.) In addition, the perspectival account of faith explains the plausibility of alternative accounts of faith; alternative accounts grasp a feature or consequence of perspectival faith. That is what one would expect if the perspectival account were true. As with all cumulative case arguments, the support for the conclusion does not rely on any one point, so if the reader holds that the above argument falls short in a few cases, I hope the reader will consider what support the other cases contribute in favour of the perspectival account of faith.

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Competing interests. None.

Notes

1. The perspectival account, as articulated in this article, most closely aligns with the account of faith I presented in Tweedt (2023), because that account is more general than other accounts of perspectival faith, such as that found in McAllister (2018). Many of the explanations and examples of the account in the introduction

and the first section ('The perspectival account of faith') are taken from Tweedt (2023), though with some modifications, which are noted when the modifications are made.

2. This description of the perspectival account is a slight modification of my account in Tweedt (2023) in that it removes 'on the world' in order to make clear that one can have perspectival faith towards a single object, such as oneself.

3. I do not articulate this requirement on perspectives in Tweedt (2023), but it is a requirement on perspectives in the literature. For example, Camp (2019), (2020) describes perspective in a way that requires that the object of the perspective is not presented to the subject merely via the subject's sense perception. Camp describes a perspective as an open-ended disposition to characterize things in ways that matter, which includes taking the object of one's perspective to be prominent or central or diagnosing the object of one's perspective into a classification, and to determine how the object fits with other experiences of the subject. None of these characteristics of a perspective are immediately presented to the subject via the subject's sense perception.

4. Of course, it might be that everything the subject observes via the subject's sense perception is entirely material, but that is different from seeing that the world is entirely material.

5. This does not require that there is, in fact, significant value in the object of the perspective; the value here is subjective, not objective. If the subjective value indicated by the perspective fits or accurately represents the objective value in the world, the subject's faith is aptly called 'true faith'.

6. Daniel Howard-Snyder (2016, 9) uses this example. Buchak (2012; 2014) uses a similar example. Note that even though the faith at issue is propositional (it is faith that the world involves frequent acts of terrorism), the object of the faith perspective is not the proposition itself but something involved in the proposition (namely, terrorism). The object of propositional faith, according to the perspectival account, is not the proposition but is instead the situation described by the proposition, and a con-attitude toward something involved in that situation can constitute the lack of a pro-attitude toward the situation as a whole.

7. The value requirement does not entail the pro-attitude requirement, nor vice versa. I can take there to be significant value to a world without God but not have a pro-attitude towards there being such a world. Alternatively, I can have a pro-attitude toward a life that is free of responsibility but not take there to be significant value to such a life. Regardless, even if, *per impossibile*, they were to entail each other, the requirements seem to indicate distinct states in the subject.

It should be added that the requirement that the subject has a pro-attitude towards the *object* of the perspective holds even if the subject does not have a pro-attitude toward the *perspective* itself. A begrudging religious adherent could, for example, have a pro-attitude toward one's religious rituals but have a negative attitude toward perceiving religious rituals that way. The distinction and specification is a modification of my account in Tweedt (2023). Thank you to Lindsay Rettler for the example.

8. These examples come from Tweedt (2023).

9. Construals are cognitive because they are a kind of perception or interpretation, and perceptions and interpretations are cognitive. One might wonder whether the perspectival account is just as affective as it is cognitive, since the perspectival account requires that the subject have certain affective states toward the object of faith. On the perspectival account, however, one's affective states are, in a way, consequent upon the cognitive element; one's affective states are had towards objects as construed in a certain way. Similarly, Robert Roberts' concern-based construal account of emotions is widely regarded as primarily a cognitive account of emotions (Solomon 2004, 79; Reizenzein 2020, 723) even though Roberts' account requires that the subject is concerned (an affective element) about the objects of one's construal (Roberts 2013, chs 3–5). On Roberts' account, also, subjects' concerns are dependent upon one's construal of those objects; the concerns are directed toward objects as construed in a certain way. See, for example, Roberts (2003).

10. This example comes from Tweedt (2023), 239.

11. Exceptions might include accounts of specifically religious faith, where that faith is described by Scripture and/or other divinely authoritative texts. However, one might take those texts' descriptions of faith to be statements explained by an account of faith. Nevertheless, the perspectival account of faith is an account of faith that spans across religious and non-religious contexts. Although I believe the perspectival account is accurately described in biblical accounts of faith, I do not pursue that argumentation in this article, except for the Abrahamic case of paradigmatic faith given below.

12. One objection to the methodology in this article is that faith theorists, when arguing for an account of faith, select particular cases and statements to use in their explanatory account, whereas my approach is more ecumenical – I use all of what I believe to be the main paradigmatic cases of faith in the current literature, and I use a plethora of statements accepted in the philosophical literature on faith without giving privileged status to any of them. In reply, this ecumenical approach is due to the fact that philosophers rarely object to another philosopher's argument by asserting that faith is not really displayed in what the other philosopher takes to be a paradigmatic case of faith. Instead, philosophers argue that their account better explains why faith is present in

other philosophers' cases. I here employ the same strategy. Similarly, with respect to statements explained in the faith literature, philosophers rarely state that other philosophers' statements are not worth explaining. Instead, they either (1) ignore certain statements, (2) describe how faith on their account shows why one would think the statements are true, or (3) state that their view of faith is narrower and so need not explain why the statement is true. I am here employing strategy 2.

13. Kvanvig explicitly identifies faith with faithfulness, so I have used the identification here. Even if the identification is incorrect (as McKaughan and Howard-Snyder 2022a argue), one could omit the last sentence of this case.

14. McAllister (2018) likewise states that a subject's having a certain perspective on a person disposes the subject to trust that person.

15. The appearances *prima facie* justify Mary's believing that John will not defraud her. The *ultima facie* justificatory power of the appearances provided by a perspective might depend in part on whether the perspective is itself justified. Regardless, the perspectival account of faith can explain why faith is present in Case 2 even if the perspective is itself unjustified. Thank you to Lindsay Rettler for drawing my attention to this.

16. The considerations from the previous note apply here, *mutatis mutandis* for the spouses instead of Mary and John.

17. Here are the quotes: 'Faith is incompatible with disbelief' (Howard-Snyder and McKaughan 2022, 307, 321) 'If I have faith that God loves me, it would be at best misleading to say that I do not accept that proposition' (Audi 2008, 92).

18. Statement 1 uses the 'faith that' locution. I here assume that according to the perspectival account of faith, for S to have faith that p is for S to have a certain perspective in which S construes the world (or part thereof) as one in which p. This interpretation of the 'faith that' locution is described in Tweedt (2023), 243.

19. Ryan Byerly, who articulates Statement 3, holds that (religious) faith is an epistemic disposition to believe. Arguably, however, one's perspective provides a deeper explanation of why one has a belief than does one's disposition to believe: one's perspective makes it so that one is disposed to believe certain propositions. It is one's perspective, rather than one's disposition to believe, that does the primary explanatory work in explaining why one believes certain propositions.

20. Or, more precisely, for the propositions that describe one's faith perspective.

21. The view that there is benign epistemic circularity is argued for in Moon (2021, 792), Alston (1989, 319–349), Van Cleve (1984), Markie (2005, 414–415), and Plantinga (2000, 125), among other places. Jackson (2020) argues that some instances of faith create evidence for themselves, which is similar to what I have argued for here.

22. According to Buchak (2012), the view that faith 'goes beyond' the evidence means that subjects commit not to search for further evidence. This position is addressed in Statement 14.

23. This is David Holley's understanding of 'doubt'. Holley (2011) argues that there are some cases in which belief in God (having a 'theistic perspective' on Holley's view) is compatible with doubt and some cases in which it is not, especially when the doubt is pervasive.

24. Matthew Lee (2018), for example, argues that doubt entails lacking belief but 'slight doubt' does not.

25. Alternatively, one might hold that the subject's maintenance of the view (that his perspective is entirely due to his cultural upbringing), rather than the subject's lack of belief, is the doubt itself. In the example, one might hold that the subject's doubt is just the subject's maintenance of the undercutting view that his perspective (according to which the world is created by God) is entirely due to his cultural upbringing rather than the subject's doxastic state – namely, lack of belief – towards the proposition that the world is created by God. This alternative likewise explains why one would think Statement 11 is true.

26. Kvanvig (2018, 37) describes dead faith, in which

The disposition [to follow God] alone, undisplayed, perhaps may be counted as the weakest of faith, and the general defeasibility may require us to categorize some persons as people of faith in spite of lack of faithfulness . . . leaving open the barest possibility of faith without faithfulness, where the disposition to the relevant behavior is present but always and everywhere masked and finked.

27. See McAllister (2018). There might be some cases of faith that do not require trust, however, so long as trust requires that some actions or inaction on the part of the object of one's trust constitutes a violation or betrayal of the subject's trust. One instance involves faith in an impersonal object, where it seems the subject does not trust the impersonal object. By having faith in a storm to clear, for example, the subject has a perspective according to which the storm clears, takes the clearing to be valuable, and has a pro-attitude towards the clearing even if storm's failure to clear would not constitute a betrayal or violation of trust. If the storm's failure to clear doesn't meet this violation/betrayal requirement for trust to be placed in the object, then it seems that the subject's faith in the storm to clear does not require trust.

28. Here's Audi's quote: 'Even outside religious contexts, faith tends to eliminate or diminish fear and other negative emotions concerning the same object, such as anxiety, depression, and anger' (Audi 2008, 98). The idea expressed in Statement 18 is also implied in New Testament passages such as Mark 4:40, where Jesus

says to his disciples, who are fearing a storm, ‘Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?’ The implication is that if his disciples were to have faith, they would not be afraid.

29. In fact, Ryan West (2013) uses Robert Robert’s view of emotions to argue that faith is a disposition to have certain proper emotional responses to certain situations.

30. Buchak (2017, 114) makes this point.

31. Beliefs, for example, require that the subject tends to assert p upon being asked whether p , whereas perspectives, acceptances, and assumptions do not. (See Howard-Snyder 2016 for this point.)

32. See McKaughan and Howard-Snyder (2022b), McKaughan (2016), and Alston (1996) for this kind of view.

33. Kvanvig (2016, 2018) characterizes trust accounts this way and then argues against the identification of faith with trust by stating that trust is too passive to be faith, which is active. This argument, however, is not an objection to the requirement that faith involves trust.

34. Buchak (2012) argues for a weaker thesis: having faith that p consists in terminating the search for further evidence and acting on p .

35. Howard-Snyder articulates the components listed below as requirements on propositional faith (faith that p , where p is a proposition) but later Howard-Snyder shows how his account of relational faith (faith in someone or something) also satisfies the requirements. See, for example, McKaughan and Howard-Snyder (2022b).

36. Other accounts, such as Bishop (2022), also contain cognitive, conative, and evaluative features, but I mention Howard-Snyder’s here since he developed these components. See McKaughan and Howard-Snyder (2023) for how Bishop’s account contains these components.

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