

AN ENQUIRY CONCERNING THE NATURE OF BEING

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Volume One: Certainty, Awareness, Will, and Mind

Part 1: Validating Fallibilism

CHAPTER 1



First Principles: Certainty, Uncertainty, and Doubt

This work will heavily rely upon incrementally accumulated certainties of optimal strength to substantiate its conclusions. This is done in order to best circumvent the following dilemma: Epistemology (the study and understanding of epistemic criteria, such as that of knowledge) is required for appraisals of ontology (the study and understanding of what holds presence, of what is real). Yet, whenever truth is an essential element of epistemic criteria, the supposition of ontological givens—and, hence, of some ontology—will be required prior to any investigation of ontology is begun; this due to truth being a relation between sentience and reality, both of which are ontological givens assumed to be by the criterion of truth. More succinctly expressed, epistemic givens are required for appraisals of ontology, but truth-contingent epistemic givens already make presumptions of what is ontological prior to any enquiry into ontology is commenced. This chicken and egg conundrum between epistemology and ontology can, however, be satisfactorily resolved were the epistemic criteria used to not be contingent upon the notion of truth. The criterion of

certainty, then, will within this work serve as a first epistemic principle—thereby, it is believed, successfully circumventing the philosophical dilemma just specified.

To adequately define the properties of various certainty types, three working taxonomies will be presented: one defining certainty, another uncertainty, and the third contrasting doubt with doubt-devoid uncertainties.

These shall be addressed through the absence or presence of two types of alternatives. So doing will allow psychological and epistemic certainties to be defined using the same approach and to be placed on the same spectrum. This method will furthermore present clear boundaries for two distinct types of epistemic certainty—that of *unfalsified certainty*, which will be tentative, and that of *infallible certainty*, which will be absolute. Via use of this method, the not yet resolved philosophical problems of defining epistemic certainty via indubitability, justifiability to the highest degree, and the property of truth^[1] will likewise be successfully circumvented within this work.

It is worth mentioning that a circular reasoning would be required to establish any category of epistemic certainty to itself be of epistemic certainty—for the validity of the category must first be accepted prior to attempting to demonstrate its validity to be of epistemic certainty. Due to this insurmountable impediment, rather than engaging in in-depth justifications for each category, effort was instead given to providing as concise a report of all pertinent categories as was feasible. The holistic understanding of the subject matter may then facilitate a better understanding of its individual parts—such that possible mistakes might become subsequently discerned via, for example, discord to first-hand experience or an incoherency in subject matter.

1.1. Utilized Definitions and Concepts

1. psychological certainty: a consciously held certainty that holds the potential to be validly contested by anyone other or, else, by the bearer at some future point in time.
2. epistemic certainty: a consciously held certainty that can neither be validly contested by anyone other or by the bearer at some future time, this for as long as it so validly remains an epistemic certainty
3. verdict: an either implicitly held or else expressed judgment
4. ontic: addressing what held, holds, or will hold the property of presence in the broadest sense possible; hence, contingent on ontological perspectives, that which is ontic can be inclusive of everything that factually was, is, or will be, and of what is factually time-invariant. The term *ontic* thus understood will minimally encapsulate what is subjective, what is objective, what is real, what is possible, what is fictional, what is false, what is good, or any other qualifier for the concept of presence as expressed through the

phrases *what was [...]*, *what is [...]*, and *what will be [...]*. It is noted that the sole discernable exception—this contingent upon utilized ontology—will be the metaphysically oriented phrase of *what was, is, or will be nothingness* (such as when affirming that nothingness once was; hence, in this example, that nothingness once held presence); whether or not the metaphysical notion of nothingness can be validly upheld to be, to have been, or to shall be ontic will for the purposes of this chapter be left open-ended.

5. subjective: addressing anything whose presence is contingent upon sentience—i.e., as here intended, upon any being endowed with any type or degree of awareness. Examples of subjective givens include thoughts, beliefs, intentions, emotions, and percepts.
6. inferential: addressing subjective givens obtained or held through conscious reasoning regardless of the reasoning's degree and quality, by which is here included its properties of validity or fallacy. Therefore, that which is inferential shall here encapsulate all arguments made, and conclusions obtained, through valid reasoning as well as all arguments made, and conclusions obtained, through fallacious reasoning. This is so because the latter will nevertheless constitute subjective givens performed or obtained through some variant of conscious reasoning rather than, for example, through immediate experience.
7. noninferential: addressing subjective givens obtained or held through means other than that of conscious reasoning. Examples can include subjective givens obtained or held within conscious awareness a) through unconscious reasoning; e.g. #1, an adult's tacit knowledge of how to walk; e.g. #2, tacit knowledge of how to remember context-specific memories at proper times; b) through emotions; e.g., a cognized affinity held for some newly encountered person one is not yet significantly familiar with; c) through perception; e.g., the cognized smell of a particular fruit; and d) through intuition; e.g., information obtained via an eureka moment.
8. alternative: one of two or more mutually exclusive possibilities regarding the same ontic given that, as an alternative, holds the potential to compete with its other alternatives for what was, is, or will be—if not so actively competing.
9. ontic alternative: a subjectivity-indifferent alternative regarding what factually was, is, or will be. Ontic alternatives can, for example, be applicable to indeterministic systems, were such systems to be real. As one example of this, a system of causal indeterminism might hold two or more awareness-indifferent alternatives as pertains to the not yet materialized effects resulting from some particular cause or set of causes. Unless otherwise specified as ontic, let all alternatives be understood to be subjective.
10. subjective alternative: an alternative that holds presence within, and is

resultant of, a sentient being—and which, thereby, is contingent upon the presence of awareness. This definition shall hold irrespective of whether the awareness addressed pertains to consciousness or, else, is theorized as pertaining to the unconscious mind.

11. justifiable alternative: an alternative which is justifiable via experience, valid reasoning, or a combination of both. The following scenario serves as an example of justifiable alternatives: A person initially appraises that an object is yellow upon seeing it at night under manmade lighting; the person's experience and reasoning justifies that, contingent on the manmade lighting used, what is perceived to be a shade of yellow under manmade lighting could be perceived to be a shade of orange when it is lit by sunlight during the day; consequently, the person finds the following justifiable alternative to the appraisal of the object being yellow: the object might be orange instead. The person, in so doing, here inferentially transforms the otherwise upheld noninferential verdict of the object being yellow into one of two mutually exclusive possibilities which, furthermore, now either compete within the person's mind for what is or, else, hold the potential to so compete.
12. unjustifiable alternative: an alternative which is not justifiable via experience, valid reasoning, or a combination of both. The following scenario serves as an example of an unjustifiable alternative: To the proposition, *an object personally seen to be yellow can only be personally seen to be yellow at the same time and in the same way*, is offered the alternative that, *maybe an object personally seen to be yellow can be personally seen to be purple at the same time and in the same way*. Because this offered alternative cannot be justified either through experience or through valid reasoning (here assuming the law of noncontradiction—to be further addressed in Chapter 2), this offered alternative is deemed unjustifiable. In consequence, the initial verdict provided in this example is not transformed into one of two mutually exclusive possibilities that either compete or hold the potential to compete for what in fact is.
13. credible alternative: an alternative that is to some degree credible to those in question in addition to being justifiable; e.g., the alternative that the weather will be sunny at some point within the upcoming year (in relation to the alternative that it will not be) shall likely be deemed credible by most individuals.
14. noncredible alternative: an alternative that is not credible to those in question even though it is justifiable; e.g., the alternative that the weather will not be sunny at any point within the upcoming year (in relation to the alternative that it will be) shall likely not be deemed credible by most individuals. This will be so even though one could justify as a logical possibility—however unlikely the possibility might be—that it will not be

sunny at any point within the upcoming year; for example, this due to the possibility of some cataclysmic occurrence on Earth resulting in the blockage of all sunlight.

1.2. A Taxonomy of Certainty

In the broadest sense applicable to all proposed categories, certainty will be defined as *the state, or an instance, of givens that do not compete with alternative givens and thereby hold determinate presence.*

Each proposed category of certainty will address this definition in different ways. Figure 1-1 provides a summation of the categories which will be specified.

1.2.1. First Distinction: Ontic & Subjective Certainties

Certainty is first categorized as being either ontic or subjective—thereby addressing a distinction between a) that which factually was, is, or will be and b) that which is appraised by awareness to have factually been, to currently be, or to be in the future.

If a given holds presence in manners devoid of ontic alternatives to its so being, its presence will then be ontically certain and, hence, an ontic certainty. This entails that ontic certainties shall consist of determinate states of affairs for the period of time they so remain ontic certainties—for their ontic presence could take no other ontic form during this timespan. More simply expressed, the property of ontic certainty shall be fully equivalent to the property of factual presence. Hence, whatever factually is, was, or will be—i.e., whatever is in fact ontic—shall within this taxonomy be more formally addressed as that which is ontically certain.

As an example, in the expression, “It is certain that the Earth revolves around the sun,” what the term *certain* here intends to specify is an ontic certainty—and not the subjective certainty of those who hold this conviction. In its being an ontic certainty, there shall be no ontic alternatives to this given state of affairs—for example, it will not be the case that this state of affairs could ontically take the alternative form of the sun revolving around Earth. This addressed state of affairs shall thereby be determinate. Within the given statement, the otherwise redundant term *certain* has nevertheless been used as a means of emphasizing that the addressed state of affairs holds factual presence or, more simply, that it factually is.

means. Otherwise expressed, an awareness can only uphold an ontic certainty via some form of subjective certainty specifying the regarded given to be ontically certain.

All subjective certainties will in all instances be synonymous to awareness-dependent certitudes—regardless of whether these certainties are psychological or, else, epistemic.

Subjective certainties will be broadly defined as consisting of a verdict which remains the sole credible possibility for the timespan of the respective certainty. Therefore, regardless of whether or not justifiable alternatives for a given verdict are discerned, the given verdict shall not hold any credible alternative. Because of this, the subjective certainty will be cognitively determined as the singular, credible verdict regarding what is ontically certain for the duration that the given subjective certainty is maintained.

As an example, to the verdict that “my flight will place me at destination X on day N” can be found a number of justifiable alternatives—including that of possible delays due to unexpected weather conditions. However, if none of these justifiable alternatives are deemed credible, the given verdict will in no way compete within the respective mind with any alternative for what will in fact be. A lack of credible alternatives then results in the subjective certainty that “my flight will place me at destination X on day N”.

All subjective certainties will be found to hold as referent some ontic certainty that is presumed to be by the respective parties. When one is certain, one is certain of something, and this something will be appraised to factually be. The deemed factual presence of that addressed will, in turn, entail that it is deemed to be an ontic certainty.

For example, were an individual to hold the certitude that no ontic certainties exist, the certitude here held would be addressing an ontically determinate state of affairs and would thereby be referencing a believed to be ontic certainty—namely, the ontic certainty that ontic certainties do not exist (this, furthermore, would result in an instance of contradictory reasoning).

As concerns certainty of what should be or of what one should do, this will be deemed the same as certainty regarding what factually is the best future state of affairs or of what factually is the best course of future action. Subjective certainties regarding what should be or what should be done shall then likewise be deemed to reference ontic certainties.

It is reasonable to conclude that the factual presence of subjective certainties will of itself be ontic—and, hence, that it will constitute instances of ontic certainty. However, because the ontological relation between ontic certainties and subjective certainties might vary based on presupposed ontologies, this ontological relation will currently be left open-ended. The delimitations of subjective certainties that follow shall not be contingent upon such an ontological relation being here established.

Appendix 1-1 shall use definitions of subjective certainty to explain the term

certain when it is used to address indefinite and, hence, indeterminate givens—such as in the expression, “Certain readers might find this specious discrepancy in denotations of interest.”

1.2.2. Second Distinction: Unconscious & Conscious Subjective Certainties

Subjective certainty will next be categorized into either unconscious or conscious certainties.

For this dichotomy, let the term *unconscious* be presently understood to encapsulate both a) that which is peripheral to conscious awareness such that it is neither directly entertained consciously nor is it completely beyond the scope of consciousness and b) aspects of mind that reside completely beyond the scope of consciousness at any given time.

Unconscious certainties, then, will consist of all subjective certainties that, though not consciously appraised at the time held, nevertheless serve as a required cognitive foundation to all consciously held certainties. This property thereby makes unconscious certainties a requisite attribute of most, if not all, conscious certainties.

Conversely, conscious certainties will consist of all subjective certainties one is consciously aware of at the time addressed.

Once any unconscious certainty is brought into the focus of conscious attention, if it persists in remaining a certainty, it will then be a conscious certainty. When a conscious certainty is no longer consciously entertained while becoming stored within tacit memory, it shall then be reclassified an unconscious certainty.

As a basic example, in walking toward a familiar location, one will most likely typically hold the following certainties in manners that are not consciously contemplated: that one is capable of walking for the given duration required, that the intended location will be where one expects it to be, and that no aberrant event will occur which will prevent one from arriving at the location in the anticipated duration of time (such as a haphazard fall or receiving a call that requires immediate attention). These un contemplated certitudes—which would be upheld certainties were they to be consciously entertained—will nevertheless be held in manners not consciously entertained and, therefore, will be classified as unconscious certainties. It is reasonable to conclude that no consciously entertained conviction regarding, for example, what will be soon obtained at this familiar location could be maintained in the absence of these just specified unconscious certainties.

Following is an example concerning the interplay between unconscious and conscious certainties as regards conscious thoughts. When questioning why something that looks like, acts like, and sounds like a duck must be a duck—instead of, for example, possibly being a robotic decoy—one will likely hold

the following as an unconscious certainty: ducks are a type of bird native to planet Earth and not, for example, an extraterrestrial species of feathered plants. Were the same person to later on consciously contemplate that ducks are in truth a type of bird native to planet Earth—here, for example, so as to better describe to an imaginative young child what ducks are—the formerly held unconscious certainty that ducks are birds native to planet Earth shall now likely be a consciously held certainty (rather than an unconscious certainty). This conscious certainty will, in turn, likely now hold as foundation the unconscious certainty that all ducks are to be recognized as in fact being ducks precisely because they look like, act like, and sound like ducks.

As an example of this interplay that addresses visual perception rather than cognition, one typically holds conscious certainty that what one is visually focusing on is as one interprets it to be. What lies at the extremes of one's visual periphery shall typically not be consciously entertained; the interpreted presence of these items that dwell at the extremes of one's visual periphery shall instead then typically consist of unconscious certainties. The instant one turns one's gaze from what was previously focused on toward what dwelt at the edge of one's visual periphery, what was previously a conscious certainty now becomes an unconscious certainty while, at the same time, what was then an unconscious certainty now becomes a conscious certainty.

It is reasonable to conclude that the vast majority of certainties held at any given moment by a total being shall consist of unconscious certainties. Because unconscious certainties will not be consciously discerned when maintained, they will not be consciously comparable. Because no unconscious certainty will be maintained via conscious reasoning, all unconscious certainties will be deemed noninferential.

Conversely, because conscious certainties will by definition be consciously discerned, they will then be comparable to other conscious certainties. Contingent on certainty types, conscious certainties can be held to be less or more certain by comparison to some other conscious certainty, as well as least and most certain within a given set of conscious certainties. Because they are comparable, and are thereby endowed with degrees of comparative strength, alternative-endowed conscious certainties (i.e., psychological certainties; see below) can then be qualified by terms such as *slightly*, *moderately*, and *very*. Degrees of comparative strength, however, shall not apply to alternative-devoid certainties of the same type (i.e., to epistemic certainties of the same type; see below)—although the strength of epistemic certainties can yet be compared to psychological certainties as well as to different types of epistemic certainty. Please see Appendix 1-2 for more information regarding gradations of psychological certainty.

1.2.3. Third Distinction: Alternative-Endowed and Alternative-Devoid Conscious Certainties

Conscious certainty will next be subcategorized into alternative-endowed and alternative-devoid certainties.

Alternative-endowed certainties will be those conscious certainties a) for which justifiable alternatives are discernable and b) for which all such alternatives are deemed noncredible.

A noncredible but justifiable alternative can, for example, include that of finding out within the upcoming week that the lottery ticket a complete stranger will hand you on the streets as a gift will make you an instant millionaire (this in relation to the alternative that no such event will occur). This alternative is justifiable in that, given most systems of reasoning, it is a logically possible occurrence; however, because the likelihood of this possibility becoming manifest is exceedingly miniscule, this addressed possibility will likely be deemed noncredible by most individuals.

Because there will occur no credible alternative to any certainty of this category, no alternative-endowed certainty will in any way compete with any justifiable alternative it may be consciously acknowledged to hold—thereby remaining a singular, cognitively determined, credible verdict concerning what is ontically certain.

Because alternative-endowed certainties hold justifiable alternatives, they shall be contestable—and are thereby synonymous to psychological certainties as these have been defined in §1.1.1.

Alternative-endowed certainties can be further categorized into at least the following four subsets: intuitive psychological certainty, attributive psychological certainty, implicational psychological certainty, and axiomatic psychological certainty. Description of these four types of alternative-endowed certainty will be provided in §1.2.4.

In contrast, alternative-devoid certainties shall consist of those conscious certainties for which no justifiable alternative can be discerned. This category will be further dichotomized into either infallible certainty, whose form will be absolute, or unfalsified certainty, whose form will be tentative. Further description of both these types will be provided in §1.2.5.

Because alternative-devoid certainties do not hold any discerned justifiable alternatives, they shall be incontestable for as long as they remain validly classified as alternative-devoid certainties—and are thereby synonymous to epistemic certainties as these have been defined in §1.1.2.

As with psychological certainties, epistemic certainties may be discerned via intuition, attribution, implicational arguments, and may be upheld to be axiomatic. Notwithstanding, unlike psychological certainties, all infallible certainties and unfalsified certainties shall be uncomparable in strength of

certainty when contrasted to certainties of a like type. Expressed otherwise, infallible certainty A and infallible certainty B shall be of equal strength of certainty regardless of means by which each was obtained or of what they each specify; the same likewise applies to different instances of valid unfalsified certainty.

1.2.4. Four Examples of Alternative-Endowed Certainty: Intuitive, Attributive, Implicational, and Axiomatic

Intuitive psychological certainty shall consist of alternative-endowed certainties for which one does not hold conscious justifications at the time they manifest. The gut-feeling of sureness regarding a consciously apprehended, ontic certainty shall serve as one example of intuitive certainty. One here intuitively apprehends that which is while one likewise acknowledges that there can occur justifiable, though noncredible, alternatives to the certitude one consciously maintains. As a common example, that what one perceives is as one perceives it to be will, when not consciously justified but instead immediately experienced, be an intuitive psychological certainty. Arguably, the majority of all conscious certainties typically held at any particular time will be intuitive psychological certainties. Because intuitive psychological certainties shall occur without conscious reasoning, they shall be classified as noninferential.

Attributive psychological certainties shall consist of alternative-endowed certainties held subsequent to some degree of conscious deliberation between justifiable alternatives regarding a given topic. This deliberation will involve the comparison of two or more alternatives momentarily deemed to some extent credible during the deliberation's timespan. The deliberation will consequently grant, or attribute, one former alternative at the expense of all others with the property of sole credibility in depicting that which is ontically certain. In so doing, the deliberation will transform this one previously maintained alternative into a now upheld certainty regarding what is. An example of this is as follows: Upon having seen a movement at a distance in a dark corner, one deliberates whether the motion was produced by wind-blown leaves, some animal, or something other. If one were to subsequently arrive at the certainty that the movement resulted from wind-blown leaves due to a given set of reasons A, such that set of reasons A nevertheless does not demonstrate all other possibilities to be unjustifiable, one would then come to hold an attributive psychological certainty. Because attributive psychological certainties are a product of conscious reasoning, they shall be classified as inferential.

Implicational psychological certainties shall consist of those alternative-endowed certainties in which a conclusion is logically necessitated by a given set of upheld premises. Otherwise expressed, for all implicational certainties, if set of premises p were to in fact depict ontic certainties—as is deemed to be the

only credible verdict by the parties concerned—then the resulting conclusion q would necessarily also be ontically certain—this despite there being justifiable, though here deemed noncredible, alternatives to the given set of premises p . As one example where the concluding proposition will likely be understood erroneous due to the likely understood fallacy of upheld premises: If the premise that *no sailor has ever been deceived by his eyes* is upheld as certain together with that of *some sailors saw mermaids waving at them from afar*, then the following implicational psychological certainty results: *some sailors interacted to some extent with nonimaginary mermaids*. Implicational psychological certainties shall be classified as inferential due to being a product of conscious reasoning.

For the purposes of this taxonomy, let an axiom be here understood to be a proposition or principle that is deemed essential to some system of thought. Then, let axiomatic psychological certainties be here understood to consist of consciously discerned axioms for which justifiable alternatives, though deemed noncredible, can nevertheless be discerned. An example of axiomatic psychological certainty is as follows:

As an initial background to this example, systems of geometry may be presumed purely speculative; they may also be believed to accurately represent the ontic certainties of physical space. In the latter case, they will then be conscious certainties regarding physical space. Any system of geometry that a) is upheld as a conscious certainty regarding physical space and that b) invariably relies upon geometric points as one of its axioms will, in turn, uphold the certainty that the axiom of geometric points accurately represents an aspect of physical space. With this background having been given, the certainty that geometric points represent an aspect of physical space can be evidenced to hold justifiable alternatives by, among other means, systems of geometry which do not make use of geometric points—with one such example being that of point-free topology. Therefore, the conscious certainty that the axiom of geometric points accurately depicts an essential aspect of physical space will be here categorized as an axiomatic psychological certainty—for justifiable alternatives to it can be discerned, this though the alternatives are deemed noncredible by those who so uphold the just mentioned axiomatic psychological certainty of geometric points.

Axiomatic psychological certainties shall be classified as inferential due to being established by means of conscious reasoning.

1.2.5. Fourth Distinction: Infallible & Unfalsified Alternative-Devoid Certainties

Alternative-devoid, aka epistemic, certainties shall consist of those conscious certainties for which no justifiable alternative can be discerned.

All alternative-devoid certainties will be inferential on account of being so evidenced via conscious reasoning.

These certainties can take two theoretically obtainable forms, both of which shall be defined via the assistance of a third, purely conceptual type of certainty.

First will be addressed the purely conceptual category, here termed *unassailable certainty*. Let it be initially understood that the presence of a justifiable alternative to that verdict maintained introduces some likelihood of error for the maintained verdict—regardless of how miniscule this likelihood might be—this due to the justifiable alternative, irrespective of its deemed credibility, holding some potential to correctly depict that which is ontically certain rather than the maintained verdict. Unassailable certainties, then, consist of verdicts whose lack of justifiable alternatives will be ontically certain. If no justifiable alternative exists in practice or in principle for that which is affirmed, then that which is affirmed will be the sole justifiable position possible—and, therefore, the sole credible verdict by default. This factual and absolute lack of justifiable alternatives will furthermore entail that a) these verdicts are perfectly secure from all possible error and, therefore, that b), unlike all other subjective certainties which might or might not accurately depict ontic certainties, these verdicts will always be guaranteed to accurately depict ontic certainties.

The easiest to define epistemic certainty that is theoretically obtainable, here termed *infallible certainty*, will be specified as follows: a verdict which has been proven in practice to be an unassailable certainty. Reexpressed, an infallible certainty will consist of a verdict whose status of being perfectly secure from all possible error has been demonstrated in manners that are themselves perfectly secure from all possible error—this, namely, via definitive demonstration that the verdict lacks justifiable alternatives not only in practice but also in principle. Their property of being proven to be perfectly secure from all possible error then entails that infallible certainties are always guaranteed to accurately depict ontic certainties; thereby making them absolute conscious certainties.

The second category of epistemic certainty that is theoretically obtainable, here termed *unfalsified certainty*, will be specified as follows: a verdict which can neither be proven to be unassailable certainty nor evidenced to not be unassailable certainty. At the time unfalsified certainties are validly upheld, they will not have been evidenced to be endowed with justifiable alternatives, and will thereby lack justifiable alternatives in practice; however, they will not have been proven to lack justifiable alternatives in principle, thereby making it unknown (else, here, not possible to validly appraise in practice) whether or not they are in fact unassailable certainties. Furthermore, their evidence-substantiated status of being alternative-devoid in practice can be at any time falsified via the discovery of a justifiable alternative to that which they affirm; were this to happen, they would then be proven to at best be psychological certainties and not epistemic certainties.

Yet differently expressed, due to the lack of discerned justifiable alternatives in practice, a hypothesis shall be held for all unfalsified certainties specifying that they are in fact unassailable certainties; this hypothesis can be disproven at any time via the discovery of just one justifiable alternative for what the particular unfalsified certainty upholds; the greater the unsuccessful effort to disprove the hypothesis, the greater the evidence in support of the particular unfalsified certainty in fact being an unassailable certainty; nevertheless, no proof that the unfalsified certainty is an unassailable certainty can ever be had for as long as it validly remains so classified—for, if such proof were to be obtained, the certainty would then be reclassified as infallible.

False negatives can obtain in respect to unfalsified certainties. Were a discovered alternative to be erroneously deemed justifiable when it, in fact, is rationally unjustifiable, an unfalsified certainty would then be excluded from so being, thereby resulting in a false negative. False negatives can also obtain in cases where means of demonstrating a proposition to be an unfalsified certainty are possible though not yet discovered.

As regards false negatives, until a certainty found to be alternative-endowed becomes demonstrated to be alternative-devoid, it shall remain classified a psychological certainty—for, to the awareness of all those concerned, this shall be the only valid verdict.

The converse of false positives cannot obtain for unfalsified certainties. By the very definition of unfalsified certainties, the possibility of there being justifiable alternatives in principle will forever remain an intrinsic characteristic of all unfalsified certainties—this for as long as they so remain validly classified.

For example, were an individual to never encounter anyone else who can inform the individual of alternatives to belief X and, furthermore, were the given individual to never personally discover alternatives to belief X, belief X would then remain a personal unfalsified certainty to the given individual for the remainder of the individual's life. This will be so even if justifiable alternatives are evidenced for belief X by some other person whom the first individual never encounters. Hence, belief X will be validly classified by the initial individual an epistemic certainty—this even though the belief will have been evidenced to instead be a psychological certainty by someone other. Likewise, a belief X that remains devoid of discerned alternatives within a given cohort will remain an interpersonal unfalsified certainty to the given cohort, this until the time the cohort discovers justifiable alternatives for belief X—if such time were to ever occur. Again, until evidence of justifiable alternatives is obtained by the given individual or cohort, the given individual or cohort will have no justification by which to conclude belief X to be an alternative-endowed certainty (for it could just as readily be an unassailable certainty). Hence, because neither can belief X be evidenced an infallible certainty nor can it be demonstrated endowed with alternatives by the respective

parties, to the respective parties belief X shall validly remain a certainty whose status of being alternative-devoid has not yet been falsified.

In review, the presence of just one justifiable alternative to that maintained introduces some likelihood of error for that maintained. Unfalsified certainties will be devoid of discovered justifiable alternatives in practice though these certainties might, just as readily as they might not, hold justifiable alternatives yet to be discovered in principle. This signifies that whether or not they are in fact unassailable certainty will be perpetually unsolvable while they so remain validly classified as unfalsified certainty—this though the hypothesis that they are unassailable certainty nevertheless holds the potential to be falsified to the awareness of all those concerned.

An unfalsified certainty could then be wrong on two counts. Firstly, its hypothesized status of being an unassailable certainty in ways not possible to yet prove could in fact be erroneous, this owing to as of yet undiscovered justifiable alternatives that might exist for it in principle. Secondly, were such as of yet undiscovered justifiable alternatives to factually be, their very being then introduces some likelihood that what the verdict affirms could itself be erroneous. Because whether or not an unfalsified certainty is in fact an unassailable certainty is unsolvable, to the awareness of all those concerned the unfalsified certainty can then only remain fallible in what it affirms for as long as it remains unfalsified.

Then, because unfalsified certainties might in principle hold potential errors—though none can be found in practice—unfalsified certainties shall hold a lesser likelihood of accurately depicting ontic certainty than infallible certainties (the latter being guaranteed to so depict). Nevertheless, in the absence of any established infallible certainty, unfalsified certainties shall in practice retain a superlative likelihood of depicting that which is ontically certain—for, if they indeed were to be instances of unassailable certainty that as of yet are not possible to prove, they then would be perfectly secure from all possible error; though, again, this status would remain not possible to prove for as long as they remain unfalsified certainties and not infallible certainties.

Unfalsified certainties can use other unfalsified certainties as premises. Were foundational unfalsified certainties to become falsified in being alternative-devoid, all unfalsified certainties they serve as an essential foundation to would then likewise be falsified in being alternative-devoid.

Contradiction between valid unfalsified certainties cannot logically obtain. Were contradiction between so deemed unfalsified certainties to occur, the addressed certainties would then hold the competing, mutually exclusive certainties as justifiable alternatives. This, then, will falsify the once upheld status of alternative-devoid certainty for either all certainties concerned or, at best, for all but one such certainty that, via further justification, will remain unfalsified at the expense of falsifying all others that contradict it.

Were there to be a contradiction between an unfalsified certainty and any

alternative-endowed certainty, the unfalsified certainty—if indeed valid—would demonstrate the alternative-endowed certainty erroneous. Were such contradiction to occur, the alternative-endowed certainty would hold the unfalsified certainty as a noncredible, though justifiable, alternative. Conversely, from the vantage of the unfalsified certainty, the alternative-endowed certainty would be demonstrated to be unjustifiable. This, then, will result in the only justifiable position being that of the unfalsified certainty concerned.

The extent to which doubts are required for substantiating the status of unfalsified certainties shall be addressed at the end of this chapter, this after a distinction is made between affective and inferential doubts.

1.2.6. Fifth Distinction: Infallible & Fallible Certainties

The only category of subjective certainty that is guaranteed to accurately depict ontic certainty will be that of infallible certainty—and this certainty's presence can only be established when, or if, unassailable certainties are proven to be.

All other subjective certainties—due to not being proven to be perfectly secure from all possible error—will in some way and to some measure hold the potential of being wrong in their interpretation of what is ontically certain. In so being, while in no way being necessarily wrong in what they affirm, they will nevertheless be fallible.

Because of this, all subjective certainties which have not been demonstrated to be infallible will furthermore be collectively classified as *fallible certainties*—here fully including all epistemic certainties classified as unfalsified.

1.3. A Taxonomy of Uncertainty

In the broadest sense applicable to all proposed categories, uncertainty will be defined as *the state, or an instance, of givens that compete with alternative givens and thereby hold some measure of indeterminate presence in respect to what was, is, or will be.*

Each proposed category of uncertainty shall address this definition in different ways. Figure 1-2 provides a summation of the categories that shall be specified.

1.3.1. First Distinction: Ontic & Subjective Uncertainties

At its most general, uncertainty will first be differentiated into ontic and subjective uncertainty.

Ontic uncertainty will be specified as consisting of—potentially unknown or unknowable—ontic alternatives to what manifested, manifests, or will manifest. Ontic uncertainty shall thereby be synonymous to ontic indeterminacy. For

future. Otherwise, one could not maintain the facticity implied by the given proposition.

All subsets of subjective uncertainty shall be classified as consisting of cognitive indeterminacy regarding what was, is, or will be. This cognitive indeterminacy shall itself consist of subjective alternatives that a) are each deemed to some extent credible for the duration of the respective uncertainty and which b) to some extent compete within the respective mind(s) for the status of what is ontically certain.

Because subjective uncertainty consists of competing alternatives for what is, one must first hold some subjective certainty—be it conscious or unconscious—that something in fact is in order to engage in subjective uncertainty. Dependent on the subjective uncertainty addressed, this something could, for example, be the presence of existence in general or could consist of any specific aspect of existence. This attribute of subjective uncertainty shall hold equal validity for instances of uncertainty regarding what should be or what should be done.

All forms of subjective uncertainty shall thereby be necessarily contingent on the presence of some subjective certainty that upholds some generalized ontic certainty.

In review, both ontic uncertainties and subjective uncertainties will at all times be subordinate to the presence of some ontic certainty and subjective certainty, respectively.

Unless otherwise specified as ontic, let all instances of the term *uncertainty* be understood to reference some type of subjective uncertainty.

It is reasonable to conclude that the factual presence of subjective uncertainties will of itself be ontically certain and, thereby, shall in some way likewise be an instance of ontically manifesting indeterminacy, hence an instance of ontic uncertainty. However, because the ontological relation between ontic certainties, ontic uncertainties, and subjective uncertainties might vary based on presupposed ontologies, and because in-depth enquiry into this matter shall be beyond the scope of this chapter, this ontological relation will currently be left open-ended. Furthermore, the delimitations of subjective uncertainties which follow will not be contingent upon such an ontological relation being here established.

1.3.2. Second Distinction: Unconscious and Conscious Uncertainties

Subjective uncertainty can next be categorized into unconscious and conscious uncertainties.

Unconscious uncertainty will be the counterpart to unconscious certainty. As with unconscious certainty remaining beyond the field of conscious awareness, unconscious uncertainty will not take the form of consciously

apprehended alternatives—but will by definition instead consist of competing subjective alternatives that are in practice indiscernible by the respective consciousness. If one's unconscious mind can at times hold conflicting interpretations or intentions, it then likewise becomes feasible that one's unconscious mind can at times hold competing alternatives as concerns that which is or should be. Though an in-depth enquiry into the justifications and possibilities of unconscious uncertainty shall be tangential to the interests of this chapter, the consciously discernible results are here hypothesized to include a) psychosomatic effects, such as clumsiness, nausea, or tongue-tied speech, b) generalized anxiety whose reasons for being are not consciously discerned, and c) emotions of wonder or of curiosity regarding some particular. Because unconscious uncertainty shall occur in the absence of consciously discernable reasons for its being, it shall be classified as noninferential.

Conscious uncertainty shall consist of competing alternatives that are discernible by the respective consciousness.

Because conscious uncertainties will by definition be consciously discerned, they will then be comparable to other conscious uncertainties. Contingent on uncertainty types, conscious uncertainties can then be held to be less or more uncertain by comparison to some other conscious uncertainty, as well as least and most uncertain within a given set of conscious uncertainties. Hence, because they are comparable, conscious uncertainties can be appraised to be endowed with degrees of strength. This thereby facilitates the capacity for conscious uncertainties to be qualified by terms such as *slightly*, *moderately*, and *very*. Please see Appendix 1-2 for more information regarding gradations of conscious uncertainties.

1.3.3. Third Distinction: Intuitive and Attributive Conscious Uncertainties

Two forms of conscious uncertainty shall be distinguished: intuitive and attributive.

Intuitive uncertainty shall consist of conscious uncertainty in which alternatives are momentarily deemed credible in manners devoid of consciously discerned justifications for why this is so. As an example, where one to gain an apprehension that one might have forgotten some item at home without any justifications for so feeling, one would then have an intuitive uncertainty—for the competing alternatives of having forgotten the item and of not having forgotten the item would both be consciously discerned and deemed credible, though no justification would be cognized as to why both alternatives are upheld by oneself as momentarily credible. Because intuitive uncertainty shall not be a product of conscious reasoning but of intuition, it shall be classified as noninferential.

Attributive uncertainty shall consist of conscious uncertainty that is main-

tained through deliberation—therefore, of conscious uncertainty that holds presence due to the conscious attribution of credible alternatives. As one example, a reasoned questioning of whether or not plants respire can equate to an attributive uncertainty via the following set of justifications: plants do not have lungs with which to breathe—so it is a credible alternative that plants do not respire; but many of their cells do engage in photosynthesis—which is a process by which gases are exchanged with those of the environment in order to produce chemical energy—and, because this cellular process of gas exchange is that of respiration (this applicable to plants just as much as it is to animals), it stands as a credible alternative that plants (and not just their individual cells) do in fact respire. Because attributive uncertainty will be a product of reasoning, it shall be classified as inferential.

1.3.4. Five Examples of Conscious Uncertainty

Five subsets of conscious uncertainty shall be further mentioned. Each can pertain to either intuitive uncertainty or to attributive uncertainty. The five examples of conscious uncertainty are here termed *tranquil uncertainty*, *disinterested uncertainty*, *anxious uncertainty*, *aversive uncertainty*, and *near-nonbelief (aka skeptical) uncertainty*.

Tranquil uncertainty will consist of comfortable conscious uncertainty converged with interest in attaining some form of conscious certainty. The emotive states of wonder and curiosity can be entwined, in whole or in part, with tranquil uncertainty—for each can readily be a product of cognitive indeterminacy, or variance, regarding what factually is and a desire to be acquainted with what factually is. Likewise can be argued for all states of mind in which tranquil conscious reasoning occurs via any form of questioning; here, different alternatives which are momentarily deemed credible will be comfortably analyzed with the intention of arriving at a conclusion one can be consciously certain of. States of tranquil uncertainty may also at times be otherwise expressed as open-mindedness toward that addressed—such as when one is comfortably uncertain of which of two or more alternatives regarding some subject matter is most preferable or accurate; is willing to enquire into this as time allows; and, furthermore, is impartial to the potential outcomes of obtained certainty.

Disinterested uncertainty will consist of comfortable conscious uncertainty converged with disinterest in attaining a form of conscious certainty. A relatively commonplace example of disinterested uncertainty can be the propositional attitude which can accompany the declaration of, “who cares”—this when declared by someone who is aware of their own ignorance regarding the subject matter concerned such that, while consciously apprehended competing alternatives are present within the respective mind, there momentari-

ly is no interest in finding out what the reality of the matter might be.

Anxious uncertainty will consist of uncomfortable conscious uncertainty converged with interest in attaining a form of conscious certainty. Contingent on its intensity, it at times can be accompanied by varying degrees of disquiet or fear. Uncertainty regarding whether or not dangers are present in proceeding as one would otherwise desire can serve as an example of anxious uncertainty.

Aversive uncertainty will consist of uncomfortable conscious uncertainty converged with an aversion to gaining conscious certainty. As an example, were one to receive a letter from a university to which one has applied, and that one greatly wants to attend, in which is specified whether or not one has been accepted or rejected, and were the recipient of this letter to not want to open the letter out of fear of the possible rejection, the individual in this scenario would then be experiencing a variant of aversive uncertainty regarding the letter's contents. Arguably, this form of uncertainty can often also manifest in response to at least some forms of cognitive shock. News that someone close to oneself which one fully trusts did a terrible act can, for example, result in a state of mind wherein one is uncertain of what factually occurred while being simultaneously averse to finding out.

Lastly addressed will be *near-nonbelief uncertainty, aka near-certainty disbelief, aka skeptical uncertainty*. Here, let *nonbelief* be first understood as the rejection of belief in X, such that X's not being an ontic certainty will be an actively maintained conscious certainty (as here used, the term will thereby not be solely associated with lack of religious conviction but, more generally, with a conviction that some belief X is erroneous). Near-nonbelief will then address a state of mind in which one is close to holding a conscious certainty that belief X is erroneous but is not yet consciously certain of this. Hence, near-nonbelief uncertainty will consist of a typically comfortable near-certainty that something is not the case. It entails that one's disbelief, while being the preferred credible alternative, nevertheless does compete to some degree within one's mind with the credible (and not merely justifiable) alternative that what one largely disbelieves is, in fact, ontically certain. Where this competition of alternatives to not be present, what would then manifest would be conscious certainty that belief X is not the case—rather than a conscious uncertainty. The following serves as an extravagant example of near-nonbelief uncertainty: Sam affirms that he is skeptical of—hence, dubious of; hence uncertain about—five-legged, telepathic, ghost-unicorns capable of telekinesis which have been teleported by means of advanced science to planet Earth from off of artificially intelligent UFOs that have traveled back in time from distant parallel universes wherein all planets are square-shaped. In this extravagant hypothetical, were Sam's honest outlook to indeed be that of near-nonbelief uncertainty, Sam would then earnestly uphold that, while his currently favored position is that the described being is not possible, it is however somehow yet credible to him that the described being might nevertheless be possible. It may be important to

reemphasize that this outlook will be found contradictory to disbelief in the form of nonbelief—which will instead be a type of certainty, and not a type of uncertainty.

1.4. A Taxonomy of Doubt and Doubt-Devoid Uncertainty

In the broadest sense applicable to all proposed categories, doubt will be here defined as *conscious uncertainty about the validity of preestablished conscious certainties, including preestablished beliefs, be the latter one's own or others.* In contrast, doubt-devoid uncertainties will consist of all subjective uncertainties which do not consist of doubts thus defined.

Figure 1-3 provides a summation of the categories that shall be addressed.

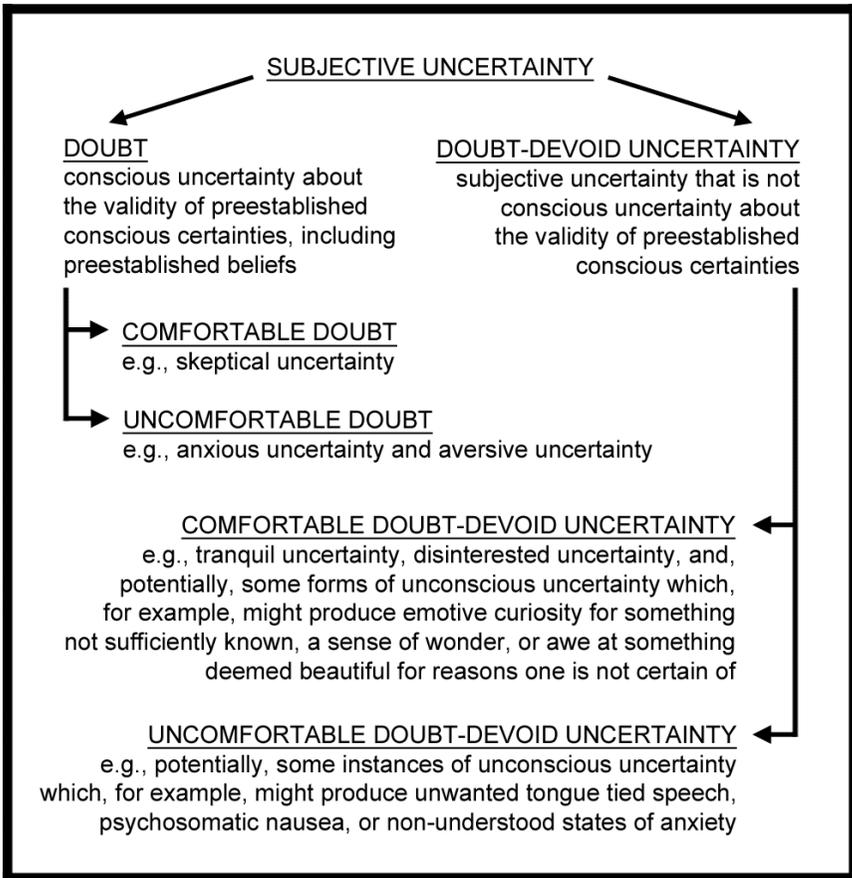


Figure 1-3. A taxonomy of doubt and doubt-devoid uncertainty.

1.4.1. Doubt as a Particular Type of Uncertainty

Doubt can be defined by some as unconditionally equivalent to, and hence fully synonymous with, uncertainty. However, in examples such as the one that follows this definition will be found invalid: When Ted is interested to learn more about some given *X* strictly due to an emotive curiosity, Ted cannot be validly stated to doubt the properties of *X*—this though the as of yet unknown properties of *X* will be uncertain to Ted till they become discovered by him. Here, then, Ted holds uncertainties about the properties of *X* when contemplating them while in no way doubting the properties of *X*.

In review, doubt will be here strictly defined as *uncertainty about the validity of preestablished certainties*, which are to include preestablished beliefs.

Hence, in the just provided example, because Ted does not hold uncertainties about the validity of preestablished certainties concerning properties of *X*, Ted does not hold doubts about *X*'s properties while seeking to discover them—though he is nevertheless uncertain of what these properties in fact are.

However, in an alternate scenario where Ted's motivation is not strictly that of curiosity but is instead in part spurred by an uncertainty concerning what someone else claims to be certain, Ted would then be interested in discovering the properties of *X* due to doubts. For instance, were someone to have once informed Ted that *X* was the color blue, and were Ted to be uncertain that this is in fact the case, Ted then would here hold doubts that *X* is blue—i.e., that *X* is as it has been believed to be by the person who so informed him—and, instead, would here be researching *X*'s properties on account of wanting to settle the issue of whether or not *X* is in fact of the color blue as it has been believed to be.

Doubts, then, necessarily consist of the taking down of preestablished constructs, be these one's own or others—whereas uncertainties in general do not hold this entailment.

More specifically, doubts necessitate the eradication of some certainty's presence by means of transforming it into uncertainty. For clarity, the preestablished belief is not here abolished by means of proving its contents to be erroneous; rather, it is abolished by means of transforming the sole credible verdict which is maintained into one of multiple, mutually exclusive, credible possibilities that then compete for what factually is.

Because doubts will in all instances be a subset of conscious uncertainties, doubts will be comparable and can be qualified by terms such as *slight*, *moderate*, and *strong*.

Mentioned for the sake of accuracy, doubts as herein defined can be held in relation to beliefs about propositions as well as in relation to beliefs concerning other particular humans. In the latter case, a person can be at times cogently

stated to doubt another person's character, integrity, or self-assurance, for example. Because this issue is unessential to the core topics of this chapter, a more in-depth analysis of doubt oriented toward other humans will be provided within Appendix 1-3.

The discussions of doubts and, subsequently, of doubt-devoid uncertainties which follow shall often be contingent upon psychological properties of mind that have yet to be formally established within this work. Attempts have been made to keep the illustrative examples optimally uncontroversial. Nevertheless, it bares saying that so doing at this point in the work will lead to less than incontestable appraisals. Notwithstanding, though discussion has been engaged in for the sake of greater overall clarity and consistency within the chapter, the following subsections of §1.4 will not be considered essential to this work's first principles.

1.4.1.1. Comfortable Doubts

Doubts can either be comfortable or, more commonly, uncomfortable.

Near-nonbelief uncertainty will typically, if not always, serve as an example of comfortable doubt. In review as concerns near-nonbelief uncertainty, one is here nearly certain (but not certain) that a preestablished belief is wrong—and typically comfortable in so being. Because this uncertainty type addresses preestablished certainties, near-nonbelief uncertainty will consist of doubts that, again, are typically comfortable. Examples can include a materialist's skepticism (with *skepticism* here strictly meaning *dubiousness*) that anything spiritual is true and a young-Earth creationist's skepticism (here again strictly meaning *dubiousness*) that biological evolution is true.

On account of the common, but potentially problematic, association of philosophical skepticism with active states of doubt, Appendix 1-4 will address how, within philosophical contexts, one form of skepticism is independent of doubt while another form of skepticism is dependent upon doubt's presence. Appendix 1-5 will then further address the semantics of skepticism within modern culture, as well as provide an alternative means of specifying those types of philosophical skepticism that are both global and not contingent upon doubt.

1.4.1.2 Uncomfortable Doubts

In contrast to comfortable doubts, anxious uncertainties and aversive uncertainties will most often be examples of uncomfortable doubt.

Generally addressed, there will be a preestablished certainty (be it conscious or unconscious) which one in some way cherishes, favors, or else simply feels comfortable with whose validity will here become uncertain. This hitherto

maintained personal certainty will in these cases become prohibited from remaining a personal certainty—and will thereby be abolished as a maintained belief—on account of now competing within cognition with other, mutually exclusive, credible verdicts. In sharp contrast to doubt in the form of near-nonbelief uncertainty, something cherished is here taken away by means of the now present doubt—which will thereby typically make this state of affairs unpleasant. Moreover, these other credible verdicts will often be undesirable possibilities of what in fact is the case—thereby often making this state of affairs as undesired as are its most undesirable yet credible alternative verdicts.

As an example of uncomfortable doubt taking the form of anxious uncertainty, one can hypothetically start doubting that a loved one is in fact safe. The either tacitly or explicitly held belief that one has so far implicitly maintained—namely, that the loved one is not in danger—now competes with other credible possibilities—namely, various cases where the loved one is in some type of danger—thereby resulting in a newly maintained uncertainty about the validity of the previously maintained personal certainty. A preestablished, comfortable, and likely tacit certainty has now been eradicated by means of doubt—of itself making the doubt unpleasant. This unpleasantness can be made all the worse by some of these entertained, credible possibilities of what in fact was, is, or will be being very painful to oneself, for each such credible possibility points to a now credible scenario that, were it to be ontically certain, would be direly unwanted.

Doubts taking the form of aversive uncertainties will typically be identical to those taking the form of anxious uncertainty in all respects but one: namely, that the individual to whom the aversive uncertainty pertains will here be averse to pursuing discovery of what in fact is the case.

1.4.2. Doubt-Devoid Uncertainties

In strong contrast to all instances of doubt will be those uncertainties that are doubt-devoid. Most, if not all, instances of tranquil uncertainty and disinterested uncertainty can serve as examples of doubt-devoid uncertainties. Such doubt-devoid uncertainties will, again, not hold uncertainties regarding preestablished certainties.

1.4.2.1 Comfortable Doubt-Devoid Uncertainties

In review, that which is a subjective certainty is a cognitively determinate appraisal of what is ontically certain. Conversely, that which is a subjective uncertainty is a cognitively indeterminate appraisal of what is ontically certain.

The very act of honestly questioning, investigating, enquiring, or researching (to the extent these are differentiable) will then entail some degree of

cognitive indeterminacy in relation to that questioned, investigated, enquired into, or researched. Otherwise stated, these four activities will be contingent upon the preexistence of conscious uncertainty that, in review, is itself always subordinate to some conscious certainty which, broadly speaking, concerns the ontically certain presence of that whose particulars one is uncertain about.

Neither questioning, investigating, enquiring, nor researching entail the presence of doubt for that addressed. One could, for example, question what a proton is due to one's ignorance regarding the topic without needing to doubt some other's ready held conviction about the topic. Furthermore, the very acts of questioning, investigating, enquiring into, and researching do not entail that these activities are to any degree uncomfortable. Arguably, most instances of these activities will be comfortable for the agent and, at least sometimes, will be accompanied by significant degrees of pleasure.

Hence, these addressed four activities will often—though not always—be spurred by comfortable doubt-devoid uncertainties.

Revisiting a different example of comfortable doubt-devoid uncertainties, in simple states of curiosity, one merely intends to discover something which, as far as one is aware of during these states, could take any number of possible forms. In most states of simple curiosity, the uncertainty as to what will be discovered shall range from mild comfort to being pleasantly exhilarating (such a child's curiosity to discover what presents she will receive for her birthday). Typically, if there were to be certainty that the anticipated discovery would be unpleasant, then our emotive states of curiosity would be lacking—despite our yet being uncertain as to the particulars concerned (here overlooking more complex states of curiosity; for example, such as instances of curiosity for the morbid or grotesque wherein there is a mixture of both pleasure and displeasure in anticipation of what is to be discovered). Hence, in cases of simple curiosity such as those here specified, there will necessarily be tranquil uncertainties in respect to what is to be discovered—ranging from mildly comfortable to exceedingly pleasant in their mood—and these, furthermore, will typically be devoid of manifesting doubts (this unless the curiosity is complicated by, for example, doubts that what one hopes or anticipates to be will in fact not be discovered to so be). In short, simple curiosity will typically be in part comprised of comfortable doubt-devoid uncertainties regarding what is.

Also here exemplified will be the sentiment of wonder. The sentiment may at times consist of consciously entertained speculations and conjectures of what might in fact be; at other times the sentiment will be fully emotive, spurred by the unconscious mind, so that one maybe only senses amazement, maybe with some degree of pleasure, and, possibly, with some measure of beauty. Regardless of particulars, however, wonder will be an emotive product of imperfect comprehension regarding all significant aspects of that addressed. In so being, it is always a product of uncertainty regarding the particulars of that addressed. Wonder, however, will not be necessarily produced by any

uncertainty concerning the validity of preestablished certainties. Hence, in cases where wonder is not produced by doubts, the emotion of wonder will be likely brought about by comfortable doubt-devoid uncertainties.

Disinterested uncertainties will by definition always be uninterested in the mutually exclusive credible possibilities—i.e., the alternatives—that are found to actively compete within the respective mind. Where the disinterest in mutually exclusive credible possibilities does not incorporate doubts, the disinterested uncertainty will itself typically be a manifestation of comfortable doubt-devoid uncertainty. For example, one may be uncertain of how many hairs are present on one's pet cat—this without needing to doubt someone else's best guess—and, if one holds no interest in finding out, one then will hold a disinterested uncertainty about how many individual hairs one's cat has—again, in manners that are devoid of doubt as well as comfortable.

The comfortable doubt-devoid uncertainties just illustrated can either consist of conscious uncertainties (for example, such as that held for what will be) or unconscious uncertainties (for example, such as those which spur on feelings of aesthetic awe in something newly witnessed).

1.4.2.2. Uncomfortable Doubt-Devoid Uncertainties

In contrast to comfortable doubt-devoid uncertainties, it stands to reason that uncomfortable doubt-devoid uncertainties will typically, if not always, consist of unconscious uncertainties.

To the extent that—for example—unwanted tongue-tied speech, states of anxiety whose reason for being is unknown, and indeterminacy in one's willed bodily action that results in clumsiness are products of the unconscious mind, these outcomes can then likewise be argued to be products of competing, alternative, unconsciously maintained beliefs or intentions. Where this is so, these uncomfortable outcomes will be brought about by unconsciously manifesting uncertainties. Because these uncertainties are unconscious, no doubt on the part of the conscious self shall manifest during the occurrence of these unconscious uncertainties. These uncertainties will thereby be both uncomfortable to experience as well as doubt-devoid.

1.5. Affective Certainties and Uncertainties

As concerns both subjective certainties and uncertainties—including the latter's subcategory of doubts—those that are noninferential, because they do not rely upon conscious reasoning, will be here further classified as affective, i.e. relating to any aspect of emotions, moods, or feelings.

Unconscious certainties and uncertainties can be argued to perpetually affect the conscious individual. For example, unconscious certainties might bring

about affective states such as those of confidence and enthusiasm, or else those of apathy and depression; whereas unconscious uncertainties might bring about affective states such as those of fear and mistrust, or else those of curiosity, wonder, and aesthetic awe.

Intuitive certainties and uncertainties can be argued to emerge into consciousness from out of unconscious certainties and uncertainties, respectively. Intuitive certainties and uncertainties shall, again, always consist of feelings of certainty and feelings of uncertainty that hold no consciously discerned, rational explanation at the moment they first manifest and can be so categorized. In so being, these too will be classified as affective.

All subjective certainties and uncertainties—including the latter's subcategory of doubts—mentioned in this chapter that are neither unconscious nor intuitive shall be inferential, and shall not be here classified as affective (even though they can be argued to at least in part be governed by those certainties and uncertainties that are affective).

1.6. Doubts in Relation to Unfalsified Certainties

Given at least a preliminary acceptance of the basic description applicable to categories previously mentioned in this chapter, any number of further investigations can ensue—such as those that may expand the just offered taxonomies or those that may improve upon the taxonomies as here presented via alterations wherever these are deemed warranted. Nevertheless, of leading concern to the subsequent arguments of this work shall be the difference between inferential doubt and affective doubt in relation to affirmed unfalsified certainties.

In review, even though an unfalsified certainty might hold justifiable alternatives in principle (this just are readily as possibly not so holding), these alternatives cannot ever be demonstrated to be in practice for as long as the certainty remains unfalsified. Furthermore, the possibility that an unfalsified certainty might at a future time be falsified cannot of itself serve as justifiable alternative to the given unfalsified certainty so being—for this possibility is by definition one intrinsic characteristic of all unfalsified certainties.

Likewise in review, inferential uncertainty will only occur when the credible alternatives consciously maintained are also consciously justified via inference. Hence, inferential doubt—or, inferential uncertainty regarding a preestablished certainty—can only be held when the consciously discerned, credible alternatives to that affirmed are themselves consciously justified (for emphasis, this rather than merely being intuitively credible in manners devoid of conscious justification for so being).

Then, because inferential doubt requires the presence of consciously justified alternatives, and because no justifiable alternative shall in practice be

discernable for any unfalsified certainty, no inferential doubt can be in practice maintained for a validly maintained unfalsified certainty. In other words, all valid unfalsified certainties shall be inferentially indubitable by the very definition of what unfalsified certainties are.

This having been mentioned, unfalsified certainties not only can be but must be affectively doubted—in some way and to some extent—if their status is to be considered to any extent corroborated.

Because unfalsified certainties are fallible by definition—even though they will hold no discerned justifiable alternatives in practice and could well be instances of unassailable certainty which is not yet possible to demonstrate—they can be affectively doubted due to no unfalsified certainty having been proven to in fact be unassailable. Differently expressed, though their verdicts cannot be inferentially doubted due to lack of discerned justified alternative by which to so doubt, and though no inferential substantiation can be provided to their in fact holding justifiable alternatives, their status of being fallible facilitates that all unfalsified certainties can at any time be emotively doubted—this strictly due to the possibility that they in fact do hold justifiable alternatives that have yet to be discerned.

Though the following example will be more precisely demonstrated in later portions of this work, this subsequent to the provision of some more complex unfalsified certainties, it can nevertheless be here used to illustrate the aforementioned discrepancy between inferential and affective doubt as regards unfalsified certainties: It is an (experientially evidenced) unfalsified certainty that the first-person point of view (that which most often addresses itself as “I” among English speaking humans: i.e., me to me, you to you, someone else in reference to themselves) will (minimally) hold presence as a point of view (will exist in this sense) whenever it is in any way and to any extent aware of percepts, sensations, or understandings. More succinctly expressed: “It is an unfalsified certainty that I hold presence as a point of view whenever I am aware” To inferentially doubt this, one will first need to justify an alternative to this verdict. As will be later evidenced in detail, however, no such justifiable alternative can be discerned—for example, the moment one so attempts to discover, one will hold presence as point of view which is aware of the issue at hand, via, minimally, the faculty of understanding. Nevertheless, because this unfalsified certainty cannot be proven to be an unassailable certainty (due to one’s incapacity to as of yet prove that no currently inconceivable, yet justifiable, alternative for this verdict exists in principle), one can yet emotively doubt its being perfectly devoid of justifiable alternatives—thereby proceeding to search for possible alternatives that are justifiable.

As partly illustrated by the example, the greater the affective doubt placed on any affirmed unfalsified certainty, the greater its subsequent substantiation will be—this granting that no justifiable alternative is subsequently discovered for it. However, without any questioning of, and consequent enquiry into,

whether or not an upheld unfalsified certainty holds justifiable alternatives, the given certainty's status as unfalsified will remain in due measure unsubstantiated. For emphasis, such questionings will, in turn, be themselves contingent upon the presence of some form of affective uncertainty regarding a preestablished certainty—hence, upon the presence of affective doubt.

In conclusion, all validly upheld unfalsified certainties will be inferentially indubitable while simultaneously remaining affectively dubitable for as long as they remain validly classified unfalsified certainties—thereby yet specifying all unfalsified certainties as being in some ways questionable and, hence, dubitable.

Appendix 1-1: The Term *Certain* when Referencing Indefinite Givens

As it has been defined, certainty will in all instances reference that which is either ontically or cognitively determinate. However, the term *certain* can, in some situations, address indefinite givens and, in this means, address givens whose properties are in some way indeterminate.

It is proposed that in such uses of the term *certain*, what will be addressed is a meta-certainty—else, meta-determinate state of affairs—whose specifics alone are indeterminate.

As an example, in saying, “A certain person went to a gym,” rather than, “A person went to a gym,”—while the specifics of which person went to a gym will here be left indefinite in both cases—the term *certain* changes the meaning of, “A person went to a gym,” by adding a meta-certainty concerning the unnamed, hence indeterminate, person. While the nature of this meta-certainty can vary, it can include the implicitly made propositions a) of the person in question being known (hence, that her identity as an individual is nevertheless cognitively determinate) to the speaker and, maybe, to some of the speaker's interlocutors, b) that the category or type of the person's identity is known to the speaker and, maybe, to some of the speakers interlocutors (e.g., the specific social class, race, or social standing of the person addressed), or c) that the given scenario regards determinate facts that have transpired and not hypotheticals of what could have been.

Again, is it proposed that the use of *certain* to specify indefinite givens will specify an implicit meta-certainty governing the addressed indefinite given. In this manner, this use of the term *certain* will address a determinate state of affairs (i.e., a certainty) whose explicitly mentioned particulars yet remain indefinite and, hence, indeterminate (i.e., uncertain).

Appendix 1-2: Concerning Gradations of Psychological Certainty and Conscious Uncertainty

There can be found a comparative gradation between psychological certainties

and conscious uncertainties—one that nevertheless obtains a quantum leap between the two just specified categories.

For example, one could be extremely certain that she slept eight hours yesterday, mildly certain that she shall sleep at least eight hours tonight, mildly uncertain of whether she shall have sufficient sleep every night in the upcoming week, and extremely uncertain of her sleeping patterns decades from now.

That which is extremely certain shall hold only one credible verdict and all its justifiable but noncredible alternatives shall be deemed of an exceedingly insignificant likelihood of being correct.

That which is mildly certain shall likewise hold only one credible verdict yet its justifiable but noncredible alternatives shall here be deemed of a relatively significant likelihood of being correct—this by comparison to the justifiable but noncredible alternatives pertaining to an extremely strong certainty.

Unlike psychological certainties of any strength, that which is mildly uncertain shall now hold multiple credible verdicts that are mutually exclusive and which now compete within the respective mind for what is; this though one of these justifiable alternatives will seem far more likely to be correct by comparison to the rest.

Lastly, that which is extremely uncertain shall also hold multiple credible alternatives that compete within the respective mind for what is; but, here, the probabilities of being correct pertaining to all justifiable alternatives that compete are now sensed to be of an equal likelihood, or strength.

It is noteworthy that gradations can only apply to psychological certainties and to conscious uncertainties; only these shall hold consciously discerned justifiable alternatives—be they deemed noncredible or credible—via whose deemed likelihood of being correct can be established comparable strengths of either certainty or uncertainty. Gradations of strength cannot apply to epistemic certainties because these are in all cases devoid of known justifiable alternatives. Neither can it apply to unconscious certainties and unconscious uncertainties because these will occur without any conscious apprehension of the verdicts and respective alternatives involved.

Appendix 1-3: Doubt Oriented Toward Humans

In keeping with the definition of doubt previously provided, to doubt a human will be concluded to consist of uncertainties about the validity of pre-established beliefs concerning the human.

A simple means of addressing such doubt is to address uncertainties in the validity of the belief that the person in question is trustworthy. Hence, when one doubts another person one can typically be stated to hold uncertainty in a preexistent belief that the person is trustworthy. This doubt of trustworthiness can then apply to a person's character in general or, else, to the person's

character in relation to particulars, such as a particular set of statements the person makes or a particular set of behaviors the person is expected to enact.

The preexistent belief of the person's trustworthiness can be one which was upheld by oneself prior to the moment of doubt. The belief of the person's trustworthiness could also be upheld by third parties, such that one now comes to doubt what others believe about the respective person. Lastly, and more complexly, the person that is doubted could initially hold the belief that others with whom he interacts should believe him to be trustworthy—and it can be this preexistent belief upheld by the regarded individual which is doubted. For example, a person affirms "I can do activity X" and another then doubts the person, here doubting that the person in question is trustworthy in his self-appraisals.

The last scenario might deserve further attention: Our default state is that of presuming at least most we initially encounter to be trustworthy in at least most of what they express. In like manner, a person's belief that *others should believe me to be trustworthy* is a default state of affairs generally applicable to all persons at all times. However, this latter belief can nevertheless be fully independent of the respective person's believing themselves to be trustworthy. This will typically be true in instances where the given individual is lying. When lying, the liar presumes that the statements he tells will be believed to be truths by those listening—for successful lies can only hold this characteristic—this though the liar, due to knowing himself to be lying, will typically not personally believe himself to be trustworthy in respect to what he is saying while lying. Nevertheless, despite this, the liar will yet hold the belief that others should believe him trustworthy in what he is saying—this including when he knows himself to be lying.

In terse summary of the aforementioned, it is then proposed that to doubt someone will be equivalent to believing that the person in question might be a liar, a charlatan, or, otherwise, might simply be ignorant of their own ignorance (such as in reference to what they express)—this subsequent to an initial belief that they are not—while some uncertainty concerning the matter nevertheless prevails, for otherwise one would hold certainty of the person so being.

Regardless, the doubt involved will consist of present uncertainties about the validity of some preexistent beliefs, and hence certainties, concerning the person.

Appendix 1-4: Relations between Doubt and Global Skepticism within Fields of Philosophy

The relations between doubt and philosophical applications of global skepticism will be here appraised. In so doing, a broad distinction between two types of global skepticism utilized within philosophy will be outlined.

As initial background to philosophical topics of skepticism, much of skepticism within philosophy has historically been contemplated in terms of either truth or knowledge. To better evaluate this, the category of infallible certainty will be addressed. In review, infallible certainties are verdicts that are demonstrated to be perfectly secure from all possible error in their depiction of what is ontically certain, this via means that are themselves perfectly secure from all possible error. Then, by extension, infallible certainties will logically always be infallibly true and, therefore, hold no possibility of being to any measure a mistaken opinion of what is true. Likewise, because infallible certainties will be infallibly justifiable in so being, and because they are also infallibly true, infallible certainties will also always be infallibly justifiable and infallibly true beliefs whenever they are believed—i.e., they will also always be infallible declarative knowledge when upheld—and, thereby, will likewise hold no possibility of being to any measure a mistaken opinion regarding what is a justifiable and true belief.

Not barring varying semantics to *truth* and *knowledge* in both ancient and modern cultures (semantics which, sometimes, are only implicitly addressed), it will be here upheld that the only forms of truth and knowledge that have been of immediate concern within contexts of skepticism have been those forms that are either explicitly or implicitly deemed to be of an infallible certainty. Because all other forms are less than perfectly secure from all possible error, all other forms of truth and knowledge hold some potential (regardless of the potential's credibility) of being erroneous and, strictly on account of this property, could then easily become argued to possibly be erroneous opinions of what is true and of what is knowledge. Then, because they could be easily argued to possibly be erroneous opinions, they would neither qualify as that which one form of skepticism denies nor qualify as that which one form of skepticism pursues.

Because all instances of infallible truths and knowledge will be either synonymous with or else contingent upon infallible certainties, and in order to simplify the following analysis, here skepticism will then be primarily addressed in terms of infallible certainties.

Likewise mentioned due to its pertinence to the following discussion: Regardless of its modern-day semantics, the term *skeptical* etymologically traces its meaning to the Ancient Greek *σκεπτικός* (*skeptikós*), whose meanings are limited to “thoughtful; enquiring”, and, roughly, “a person pertaining to the school of thought founded by Pyrrho of Elis”—but in no way denotes either doubts or a doubting disposition.

With this background in mind, it is proposed that within realms of philosophy the following two discrete and antagonistic types of skepticism can be appraised in reference to infallible certainties.

One type of global skepticism will always minimally uphold the following position: *any affirmation that infallible certainties are possible to demonstrate*

is in fact baseless. This stated position will be upheld in one of three ways: a) by maintaining that the demonstration of infallible certainties cannot be had in practice, if not also in principle, b) by maintaining that no conclusion can be substantiated regarding whether or not infallible certainties can be demonstrated, thereby making beliefs which affirm that they can be demonstrated groundless and, hence, untenable, or c) by maintaining some hybridization of (a) and (b)—such as by maintaining that no infallible certainty has so far been demonstrated in practice to anyone’s awareness though the issue of whether or not they can ever be demonstrated in principle can only remain inconclusive due to lack of proper justifications by which to arrive at any verdict concerning the matter. Regardless of approach taken, however, this one type of skepticism will always maintain fallible certainties—rather than uncertainties—that any belief in infallible certainties being demonstrable will be baseless and, thereby, untenable. Then, by extension, wherever truths and knowledge are either implicitly or explicitly understood to consist of infallible certainties, this form of skepticism will uphold the following: *any affirmation that either (infallible) truths or (infallible) knowledge can be had will be baseless*. Because these affirmations are deemed to not hold any exception, this form of skepticism will, again, be globally applicable.

Conversely, the second type of global skepticism will always minimally uphold the following position: *infallible certainties are possible to demonstrate in practice by distinguishing them from beliefs that are fallible*. In this one pivotal regard, this second type of skepticism will be wholly contradictory to the first type of skepticism. This second type of skepticism, then, will engage in a methodic application of doubt in attempts to distinguish infallible truths from claims of truth that hold the possibility of being wrong—or, alternatively, to discern infallible knowledge from beliefs of held knowledge that cannot be evidenced infallible. This application of methodic doubt is then anticipated to terminate in the demonstration of infallible certainties in the form of infallible truths or infallible knowledge via a demonstration of indubitability. Until infallible certainties are thus discerned, however, this form of skepticism too will, again, be globally applicable.

The first addressed type of global skepticism is commonly known by the name of *philosophical skepticism*—though other names for it can be found, including that of *Agrippan skepticism*, after Agrippa the skeptic. The second type of global skepticism addressed has itself come to be known my many names, including those of *methodological skepticism*, *methodic doubt*, *Cartesian doubt*, and *Cartesian skepticism*. The latter type’s association to Cartesian philosophy is due to Descartes’ by now famous application of this methodic doubt in his arriving at the proposition of “I think, therefore I am” (this being a verdict which Descartes held to be indubitably true but which has since then been evidenced to in fact be questionable^[2]—and which, due to its holding justifiable alternatives, cannot be validly deemed an epistemic certainty

as epistemic certainty has been here defined).

While Cartesian skepticism will pertain to domains of philosophy at large—and can thereby be appraised as philosophical—it will nevertheless be of an utterly different type of skepticism than that which commonly holds the name of *philosophical skepticism*. Again, while Cartesian skepticism affirms, at least implicitly, that infallible certainties are demonstrable, philosophical skepticism affirms that such conviction is baseless and, thereby, untenable.

It likewise bares saying that while those who engage in Cartesian skepticism lack a commonly acknowledged, proper name, those that uphold philosophical skepticism can be cogently termed philosophical skeptics. To alleviate this ambiguity, here a distinction will be made between non-philosophical-skeptics—i.e. those who are not philosophical skeptics, including those who engage in Cartesian skepticism—and philosophical skeptics, i.e. those who uphold the position of philosophical skepticism.

In review, doubt will strictly consist of conscious uncertainty about the validity of preestablished beliefs. And again, the presence of doubts is thereby in no way equivalent with the presence of tranquil or disinterested uncertainties. So, for example, while tranquil uncertainty will be requisite for the manifestation of a learning disposition, one does not need to be in any way doubtful of anything in order to hold a desire to further learn about it.

Skepticism's relation to doubt can then be appraised through each of the two, aforementioned, foundationally conflicting types of skepticism.

The easiest to address, that of Cartesian skepticism, will always entail the presence of doubts. This is because Cartesian skepticism entails enquiries by means of systematically doubting all beliefs encountered till infallible truths or knowledge—i.e., till infallible certainties—are arrived at.

This relation between skepticism and doubt in Cartesian skepticism having been presented, it is nevertheless emphasized that, here, the addressed methodic doubt is only a means of arriving at the anticipated end of infallible certainties being demonstrated, i.e. is a means of arriving at truths and knowledge that are proven perfectly secure from all possible error. Hence, while the skepticism of Cartesian skepticism will be tantamount to manifesting doubts, this same type of skepticism will in one important sense always be specious, for it always subsists upon an underlying conviction that these same doubts can somehow become alleviated, if not abolished, through the demonstration of infallible certainties.

The position of philosophical skeptics is more complicated to address in part because of its distinct, previously mentioned, three means of being upheld and, in part, because its consequent worldviews can at times strongly differ—this depending on how the particular philosophical skeptic interprets the underlying affirmation common to all forms of philosophical skepticism. Nevertheless, it is to be understood that the position of philosophical skepticism is not defined by the resulting worldview(s) upheld but, instead, by the universally applicable,

foundational, often well justified, fallible certainty specifying that it is untenable to hold convictions of infallible certainties being demonstrable.

This having been said, philosophical skepticism will entail the presence of a thoughtful inquisitiveness by which convictions that infallible certainties are demonstrable become (not doubted, but) confidently refuted by means of fallible certainties. In so being, philosophical skepticism will always entail fallible certainties about matters of fact—minimally, about the groundlessness of convictions which maintain that infallible certainties are demonstrable.

It is emphasized that the position of philosophical skepticism will not in any way be contingent upon manifestations of doubt—i.e., upon uncertainties (rather than certainties) concerning the validity or fallacy of preexisting beliefs—though it will be contingent upon thoughtful enquiry and, thus, upon the general presence of tranquil uncertainties which, by definition, seek some form of subjective, here always fallible, certainty. Nor will any manifestation of doubt be necessary in the consequences of this position—although the philosophical skeptic, by means of maintaining a disposition of thoughtful enquiry, will always retain some measure of tranquil uncertainty respective of that which they thoughtfully investigate.

Hence, one here is in no way uncertain about the validity of beliefs claiming that infallible certainties are demonstrable—i.e., one here is not in doubt concerning these beliefs—but, instead, holds an often justified fallible certainty that all such beliefs are baseless if not outright erroneous. Therefore, the position of philosophical skepticism, in and of itself, holds no compulsory relation to the presence of doubts.

The matter at hand can become easily complicated by topics such as a) Cartesian skepticism itself being a form of thoughtful enquiry, b) the historical lack of universal and precise semantics to terms such as those of *certainty*, *truth*, and *knowledge* then easily leading to obfuscations between i) philosophical skeptics themselves and ii) philosophical skeptics and non-philosophical-skeptics, regardless of whether or not the latter engage in Cartesian skepticism, c) the plausibility that what philosophical skeptics uphold can result in doubts maintained by those who are not philosophical skeptics who, at times, might further project their own doubts back onto the philosophical skeptics in question so as to erroneously presume the philosophical skeptics to be in doubt, d) potential obfuscations between fallible certainties that something is not the case (these being certainties) and near-nonbelief uncertainties that something is the case (these being doubts), e) the difficulty in definitively evidencing that all philosophical skeptics throughout history held persistent fallible certainties (hence certainties) that the demonstration of infallible certainties is baseless, this rather than holding persistent near-nonbelief uncertainties (hence doubts) regarding the demonstrability of infallible certainties, f) the reality that by virtue of being human all philosophical skeptics can occasionally hold doubts of matters other than the foundational conclusion which defines such people as

philosophical skeptics, and g) the modern-day semantics of skepticism most often equating skepticism to doubt, such that “to be skeptical of” is by default interpreted as “to be dubious of” rather than “to be thoughtfully inquisitive about”.

However, rather than here engaging in expansive discussions to better address each of these factors, it will here be merely reemphasized that there will nevertheless occur a universally applicable contradiction between a) those forms of skepticism that maintain a foundational belief in the demonstrability of infallible certainties on grounds of faith or trust in what is and b) those forms of skepticism that, via thoughtful investigations into the matter, sustain the often well justified, fallible certainty (hence doubt-devoid verdict) that any affirmation specifying infallible certainties to be demonstrable shall be groundless and, hence, untenable.

For reasons just specified, the common modern-day understanding of skepticism being equivalent to doubt cannot be correctly deemed representative of philosophical skepticism—regardless of the particular worldview which different philosophical skeptics might have come to hold—for philosophical skepticism will neither necessitate the presence of doubt for its being postulated nor will it necessitate the presence of doubt as a result of its so being postulated. To this end, even Pyrrhonism—a form of philosophical skepticism which concludes by prescribing a suspension of judgment on all matters—upholds doubt-devoid convictions, aka fallible certainties, that its prescriptions are thoroughly warranted as well as being favorable due to their outcome of eudemonia. Hence, regardless of whether or not we might in any way find value in Pyrrhonism, it yet remains valid that even in such (some might argue aberrant) conclusions derived from the basic stance of philosophical skepticism there will yet be found an absence of doubts. Instead, there will be present resolute fallible certainties in that which is maintained.

It is thereby proposed that the modern-day semantics of skepticism being equivalent to dubiousness can instead be traced to reactive interpretations held by non-philosophical-skeptics (a category to which Descartes unequivocally pertains) toward the positions maintained by philosophical skeptics.

To restate one example, the philosophical skeptic might be erroneously interpreted by the non-philosophical-skeptic as being uncertain of whether or not the conviction of infallible certainties being indemonstrable in practice is valid—and, maybe, here the philosophical skeptic is then even further erroneously interpreted as being dubious of everything, thereby furthermore being mistakenly interpreted as holding a position of global doubt. It bares note that Descartes’ popularization—if not formal origination—of what is now poignantly known as Cartesian skepticism has played a major historical role in the mischaracterization of philosophical skeptics as people who doubt everything which is not of a demonstrated infallible certainty. While this portrayal may accurately reflect some who are proponents of Cartesian

skepticism, the portrayal applies to neither Pyrrho, nor Socrates and Plato, nor those of the Platonic Academy, nor Sextus Empiricus, nor Agrippa, nor Cicero, nor David Hume, among others—for all these were in no way dubious of, at the very least, the positions which they each respectively affirmed.

It is thereby concluded that whenever skepticism with realms of philosophy entails the presence of doubts, it will either be a form of Cartesian skepticism or, else, a derivative, mitigated and non-global form of Cartesian skepticism. Furthermore, the individuals who so engage in doubts while in pursuit of infallible certainties will not hold the valid title of philosophical skeptics. However, whenever a global skepticism within realms of philosophy does not entail the presence of doubts on the part of those who engage in it, the global skepticism shall then be a particular form of what is properly termed philosophical skepticism. Lastly, these two forms of skepticism—that of Cartesian skepticism and its non-global derivatives as contrasted to that of philosophical skepticism—will be in direct contradiction as to the ontic nature of epistemology.

Appendix 1-5: Concerning Modern Semantics of Skepticism and of the Position of Fallibilism

The term skepticism has come to be known within the modern English-speaking community by means of progressive cultural evolutions of meaning invariably stemming from Ancient Greek—where it meant “thoughtful” and “inquisitive”. Today, “skepticism toward” has come to be equated to “dubiousness toward”—and in no way signifies “thoughtful inquisitiveness about”. Hence, when colloquially appraised, a (non-philosophical-skeptic) skeptic can today at times mean anyone who makes a habit of being dubious about some particular subject matter—and to be “skeptical of” is often merely a more polite way of saying that one doubts the given beliefs someone else holds (if not at times also being a knowingly dishonest means of expressing that one is certain that the addressed belief is factually wrong).

In parallel to this disparity between what a term originally meant and what it now means, the term *cynicism* traces back to the Cynics of Ancient Greece, people who believed that life should be lived in virtue, and that to accomplish this one should live life in accordance with nature. Their at times consequent disparaging of what some others took value in (from their disparaging of societal greed to their purported occasional disparaging of shame in burps and farts) made those of later cultures who took issue with their views consider cynics to be just as we now interpret the term: people who are in some way derisive, pessimistic, and contemptuous toward what others hold value for.

Then—in light of the conclusions presented in Appendix 1-4, and when considering how the terms *cynicism* and *skepticism* are most commonly

connoted today—the following can also be safely concluded: Just as it would be inaccurate to state that the original Cynics were people who engaged in a global cynicism (here meaning pessimism and contemptuousness), so too would it be inaccurate to state that the original Skeptics were people who engaged in a global skepticism (this when skepticism strictly signifies a dubiousness toward—rather than thoughtful enquiries about all topics in general which then result in a fallible certainty peculiar to philosophical skeptics, one which states that any affirmation that infallible certainties are in practice demonstrable will be baseless and, thus, untenable).

Maybe needless to say, in these observations there is no implicit intention to change the modern usages of either *cynicism* or *skepticism*. To this effect, as pertains to the semantics of skepticism, it can here be further observed (it is hoped without producing too great a confusion) that a philosophical skeptic who thoughtfully investigates some preexistent assertion deemed to be certain will, during such instances, be validly claimed to hold some measure of doubt as regards the verdict investigated. This, however, in no way precludes the philosophical skeptic from confidently holding onto any number of fallible certainties while thoughtfully investigating the validity of ready upheld convictions; i.e., it in no way implies the philosophical skeptic to be one who maintains a global, or radical, doubt (this characteristic instead being indicative of Cartesian skepticism). For the philosophical skeptic, the primary fallible certainty confidently maintained will always be that all claims of infallible certainty are baseless—otherwise, devoid of this upheld fallible certainty, the person would not be a philosophical skeptic. Therefore, when skepticism is understood in the sense of thoughtful inquiry, the philosophical skeptic will hold the disposition of thoughtful enquiry radically opened toward all givens which he or she is not fallibly certain of at any particular time (irrespective of whether so doing incorporates some measure of doubt or not). In other words, his or her skepticism—i.e., disposition of thoughtful enquiry—will be radical in manners that stand in direct opposition to a global, or radical, doubt. Such mindset is well illustrated, for example, in Plato’s writings concerning Socrates. These same general attributes of philosophical skepticism can, at least at times, then serve as a bridge between the philosophical skeptic’s position and the modern semantics of “being skeptical about”; for whenever a preestablished certainty is being thoughtfully investigated to discern its validity, some measure of uncertainty shall be maintained relative to the preestablished certainty. In other words, a localized—but never global—doubt will during such instances be momentarily maintained.

Notwithstanding, just as any modern proponent of what the Ancient Greek Cynics upheld can hardly find a more suitable and plain term to specify her position than that of *cynicism*, this while simultaneously finding the term

lacking within modern culture, so too will modern proponents of philosophical skepticism be in want for some plain term that adequately presents the commonly held stance of philosophical skepticism in ways which avoid the typical modern meanings of skepticism—this so as to not cause unwanted and otherwise unwarranted confusion of what is in fact specified (such as by being thought to uphold a disposition of global, and hence radical, doubt).

In attempts to ameliorate this problem of semantics, the philosophical skepticism based epistemology which this work shall expound will be addressed by the more newly developed philosophical term of *fallibilism*, a position here understood to affirm that the only types of truth and knowledge which can be had in current practice will be perpetually liable to being wrong without exception—this without necessitating that they so be. This position thereby entails that infallible truths and knowledge are, at least currently, unobtainable—thereby, for the reasons aforementioned, fully equating to the foundational position of philosophical skepticism.

Having addressed the general relations between skepticism and doubt, further attention to the issue of skepticism within philosophy can be obtained. Here briefly summarized as prelude to what shall be further address in latter portions of the work, three distinct and conflicting forms of global skepticism within philosophy can be discerned: that of a *negating infallibilism*, wherein all fallible beliefs are doubted for the purpose of discovering infallible truths and knowledge (exemplified by Cartesian skepticism); that of a *negating fallibilism*, wherein all beliefs are rejected without doubt due to their evidenced fallibility (exemplified by at least our modern understandings of Pyrrhonism); and that of a *positing fallibilism*, wherein fallible certainties are postulated and confidently maintained till the time they become falsified by further evidence (exemplified by Cicero and David Hume, among potential others).

This work, then, shall make exclusive use of a positing fallibilism—one that shall, for instance, incorporate the notion of intuitive knowledge just as much as it will that of unfalsified knowledge. To best substantiate this fallibilist epistemology, optimal use shall be made of incrementally accumulated unfalsified certainties.

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