

## HOW IS EPISTEMIC REASONING POSSIBLE?

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In his "Philosophical Explanations", Robert Nozick introduces a way of thinking about 'How Possible?–questions' or HPQs. He claims that what sparks this kind of questions are obstacles to the very thing the possibility of which is put under scrutiny. Naturally, what he takes to be an eminent task of the philosopher dealing with such a HPQ is to cope in one of several different ways with that obstacle.

Quassim Cassam extends that approach to HPQs in epistemology<sup>6</sup>, but broadens and slightly modifies it. On the one hand, Cassam claims to give us the meaning of those questions. On the other hand, he produces an account of what a good answer to those questions would have to look like. To this extent, Cassam broadens Nozick's account. He modifies it by adding an emphasis on means, sources or pathways to knowledge as an integral part of an answer to a HPQ; and he opposes Nozick in arguing for what he calls moderate anti-minimalism, a position that will be introduced shortly.

The main objectives of his book, as I understand it, are then to show (i) that his account of HPQs, their answers, and his position of a moderate anti-minimalist are correct – I will call this and the theses related to it the 3-levels-model or 3LM; (ii) to argue for these claims with a view to Kantian themes, especially transcendental arguments and their relation to HPQs; and finally (iii) to "put the three levels approach to HPQs to work in dealing with specific HPQs"(p.vi)<sup>7</sup>.

In what follows I will ignore objective (ii) and instead concentrate on (i) and (iii) in the context of Cassam's discussion of a priori knowledge. I will try to show in what sense I don't find Cassam's discussion of reasoning as a source of a priori knowledge very satisfying. It will turn out that this has to do with several difficulties that I have trying to understand Cassam's account of HPQs. I will conclude by pointing out how I think this might jeopardize the value of the 3LM.

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<sup>6</sup> I will henceforth mean HPQs in epistemology when talking about HPQs without qualification.

<sup>7</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, citations are from Cassam (2007).

## 1.

Let me start with a short presentation of the main tenets of Cassam's 3LM. HPQs are of the form: "How is x possible?" Popular HPQs are questions about the possibility of knowledge of the external world, of other minds, or a priori knowledge. All these questions, as Cassam understands them, presuppose the possibility of x, but wonder how the possibility of x can be accounted for or explained in the light of some specific obstacle to the possibility of x (p.2).

An answer to a HPQ, accordingly, has to explain the possibility of x in the light of some obstacle. A good answer, however, has to obey the 3LM. The latter posits three different levels such an answer should or can proceed at. On Level 1, it is required of the answer that a means, route, source or pathway (p.5, 9) to the suspicious kind of knowledge be "identified (p.8)." Level 2 deals with the alleged obstacle by either dissipating it or overcoming it (p.2). Finally, on level 3 a further explanatory question can be asked with respect to the means identified on level 1: what makes the acquisition of knowledge by the proposed means possible? This question, says Cassam, asks for a "positive explanation (p.9)" of a certain kind of knowledge, i.e. the identification of enabling conditions for knowing by the proposed means (p.10). Enabling conditions can be identified in an a priori or a posteriori way. I will come back to this later. Cassam's moderate anti-minimalism consists in the claim that giving a level 3-answer to a HPQ on a priori grounds is possible, but not necessary if we want to produce a good or satisfactory answer to the HPQ (p.10, 35ff.). Note that Nozick, for one, seems to be convinced that some kind of positive explanation is not only possible but mandatory<sup>8</sup>.

As far as I can see, Cassam nowhere specifies what counts as a means, route, source or pathway to knowledge. Nor does he explicate what the identification of such a means etc. would come down to. The same holds for the notions of an obstacle or an enabling condition, as we will see later. This is disappointing, as putting the focus on means to knowledge seems to be a *prima facie* interesting move.

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<sup>8</sup> He writes: "The task of explaining how p is possible *is not exhausted* by the *rearguard* action of meeting arguments from its apparent excluders. There remains the question of what facts or principles might give rise to p. Here the philosopher searches for deeper explanatory principles ... To produce this possible explanation of p is, by seeing one way p is given rise to, to see how it can be true. "How is it possible that p?" This way: such and such facts are possible and they constitute an explanatory route to p" (Nozick, 1981. p.11. My emphasis).

A similar ambiguity can be found with regard to the purpose of the 3LM. Cassam is very eager to point out that talking about different levels of an answer to a HPQ "shouldn't be taken too literally (p.vi)". This can be easily understood. For think of the following scenario (or something similar). We ask, how is knowledge possible? The alleged obstacle to knowledge may be the possibility of a *génie malin*, the possibility of error or merely the fact that we are feeble characters that are prone to failure. An answer to that challenge might consist in a proof of the possibility of knowledge from some theological premise. If this is an intelligible example of a HPQ, then I find it hard to identify the respective levels, especially the role that is to be played by the means that leads to knowledge.

But doesn't it then remain unclear what status the 3LM is supposed to have? For if there are HPQs that can be understood and answered without obeying the 3LM, that discredits its status as the only correct way of dealing with those questions. And if both the central notions and the assignment of different levels in dealing with a HPQ are vague, then we have to find a way to make sure that the proposed method does not collapse into the platitudinous. How then are we to understand the claims connected with Cassam's 3LM? Bearing in mind both that the claims should not be too universal and that the notions should not be too stretchable, I want to suggest the following: The 3LM is a good heuristic means to make progress in the scrutiny of HPQs. If we stick to that model, we stand pretty good chances of answering a HPQ to our (and possibly, the opponent's) satisfaction.

## 2.

It is now time to turn to Cassam's application of his model to a priori knowledge, and especially, a priori knowledge from reasoning. The purpose of this application is to "cast at least as much light on the question "How is a priori knowledge possible?" as on other epistemological how-possible-questions" (p.188). The obstacle to that possibility is, according to Cassam, the combination of the claim that any knowledge is knowledge of facts that are independent of the knower, and the claim that any knowledge of matters of fact has experience as its ultimate source (pp.191-5). A priori knowledge has been defined as "knowledge that has its source in an a priori way of coming to know"

(p.191). Accordingly, it should be impossible for there to be such a thing as a priori knowledge.

Having put the obstacle in place, Cassam names *reflection*, *calculation* and *reasoning* as non-experiential sources of knowledge, hence, as possible means to a priori knowledge. The bulk of the chapter (pp.195-210) is then concerned with dealing with the obstacle by answering whether these means are really means to *knowing* anything, to knowing about *matters of fact*, and whether they are indeed *non-experiential*.

I am mainly interested in reasoning as a source of a priori knowledge. But it is only fair to point out that Cassam says very little about what others have thought of as one of the most important means to knowledge<sup>9</sup>, and especially a priori knowledge. All we get as an "identification" of this means to knowledge on level 1 of the 3LM is an example: inferring that Blair lives in Downing Street from the facts that he is Prime Minister and that Prime Ministers live in Downing Street (pp.197-8).

We get nothing on level 2. Here Cassam almost<sup>10</sup> exclusively deals with calculation as a source of knowledge. The main obstacle to calculation's being a way of acquiring knowledge he discusses is Stewart Cohen's principle KR: "A potential knowledge source K can yield knowledge for S only if S knows that K is reliable" (p.201). Cassam overcomes this obstacle to calculation by pointing out that we can check the reliability of our mental calculations by using a calculator (p.203). I am not sure what to make of that response. Nor am I convinced that this is the only difficulty one might encounter when trying to argue for the possibility of a priori knowledge by calculation (or reasoning or reflection, for that matter – I will discuss what one might think of as another difficulty shortly). At any rate, there seems to be no simple way to deal with that obstacle in the case of reasoning. Cassam seems to accept KR as a valid challenge (p.203). He argues that it is furthermore crucial that the reliability of our means to knowledge K be established without relying on K itself (p.201). But how could this be done in the case of reasoning, given its ubiquity? No matter which way we choose to establish the reliability of K, we have to infer from some number of cases of

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Boghossian (2002): "Reasoning of some sort will be involved in any putative knowledge that we might have of any high-level epistemic claim"(p.24).

<sup>10</sup> There is a short passage on reflection on page 204, dealing with the same objection Cassam discusses with regard to calculation. Here we are told that "if my reflection has stood the test of time and the scrutiny of others then I can know on this basis that they are reliable."

successful reasoning the reliability of the source. But then we do not only need an argument to establish what amount and types of cases we are allowed to use as a basis for inferring K's reliability. We also need reasoning (in particular, *modus ponens*), to get from a number of matches between our results and the facts to the reliability of our reasoning in general. And that seems to involve just the kind of circularity Cassam has precluded from any viable answer to the challenge<sup>11</sup>. Unfortunately, Cassam concludes his discussion of calculation and reflection by telling us "this is as much as I propose to say in this chapter about the worry that reflection, reasoning, and calculation can't be sources of knowledge" (p.205). He goes on to briefly consider the logical empiricist's worry that a priori knowledge is vacuous, and the Quinean view that there is no genuine a priori knowledge, as any knowledge is empirically defeasible. Cassam rightly rebuts these worries by merely pointing out their implausibility (pp.206-7), and I will not go into them.

I want to save the discussion of level 3 for the next section. For now, let's put ourselves in the shoes of Boghossian. Note that I don't mean to endorse his theses. All I need for now is that we agree that his investigation is perfectly intelligible and respectable<sup>12</sup>. He, too, deals with the question "How is epistemic reasoning possible?"<sup>13</sup> And there seems to be no reason to regard the way he deals with that question as illegitimate. So what's the obstacle? For Boghossian, the obstacle to the possibility of epistemic reasoning seems to be that on the most popular theories of justification, trying to account for warrant in inference leads into trouble almost immediately. There is, then, no particular obstacle in an intuitive sense that speaks against the possibility of epistemic reasoning. Rather, the obstacle is the absence of an account of warrant-transmission in reasoning. Is this, then, a variation of the problem of sources? I don't think so. For that kind of problem is to be countered by establishing a new source of knowledge. And Boghossian doesn't do that. Instead, he uses known resources – the possession of concepts – to give an account as to how they may yield the required warrant. Thus, either Boghossian doesn't deal with a genuine obstacle to epistemic reasoning, or the absence of an account does count as an obstacle. We should keep this

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<sup>11</sup> This is of course reminiscent of Boghossian (2003), pp.233ff.

<sup>12</sup> For criticism of Boghossian (2003), see Williamson (2003).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Boghossian (2003), abstract: "the paper explores the suggestion that an inferentialist account of the logical constants can help *explain how such reasoning is possible*" (my emphasis). Similarly, in Boghossian (2002): "The correct project in epistemology is to show how knowledge is possible" (60).

in mind, for it means that the notion of an obstacle has to be broadened in a way that will affect an evaluation of the general value of the 3LM.

What form does Boghossian's answer to the alleged obstacle take? It seems that his answer is the attempt at a more satisfactory and more integral account of epistemic reasoning. In what sense is it more satisfactory? In the simple sense that it accounts for the transmission of warrant and a subject's entitlement to transitions from premises to conclusions in inferences without heading towards the quick dead-ends that have been diagnosed for the other accounts. In what sense is it more integral? It gives the core of an account for epistemic reasoning both from the point of view of the philosophy of psychology – transitions from thoughts as premises to thoughts as conclusions on the basis of the possession and application of logical concepts like *conditional* – and from the epistemological perspective – transmission of warrant from justified premises to conclusions via employment of non-defective concepts, which renders the transmission blameless and hence entitles the reasoner to it<sup>14</sup>.

If this description of what Boghossian does has something to it, then it would seem that it supports one of the general emphases that Cassam makes: an emphasis on the means to knowledge. Giving a good and satisfactory answer to a HPQ would then at least in some cases have more to do with identifying a means to knowledge than shows even in Cassam's own discussion. For here, we lack even the preliminary attempt at producing an integral account of epistemic reasoning that we encountered in his discussion of epistemic perception<sup>15</sup>. Boghossian answers the HPQ by giving an (allegedly) more satisfactory and integral answer to the how-question that Cassam introduced as level 1 of his 3LM (p.5ff.). If this is what Cassam has in mind when he writes about the "identification" of a means, then it can rightly be asked why he spends so little time giving such an account of epistemic reasoning. If this is not what Cassam has in mind, then this casts doubt on the usefulness of the 3LM. For do we not here have a case where an integral account of the means to knowledge is central to the endeavour? And should not this case be captured by the 3LM?

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<sup>14</sup> I'm inclined to go even farther. I think the most fascinating project in epistemology and the philosophy of psychology with respect to epistemic reasoning is giving an integrated account of epistemic reasoning which would cover such different things as the role reliable or rational processes, understanding, active control and mental agency, subjective and objective rationality play. It's the absence of such an integrated account that seems to inspire the respective questions. Cf. Burge (2005), p.21 for the case of perception.

<sup>15</sup> Where Cassam relied on Dretske's account of epistemic perception, cf. p.27.

More generally, applying the 3LM to some HPQ seems to make sense only if we have a grip on the means that is supposed to play a central role in the discussion. That presupposes an understanding of the means. I think that this understanding should include having an idea of the cognitive activity that's going on. But it should surely imply having some understanding of the epistemological aspects of the means to knowledge, that is, having some understanding of how the subject is warranted in using that means. This seems not only the minimum we need in order to make sure that we know what we're talking about. It also seems essential in order to find obstacles to the possibility of knowledge by the proposed means. For how could we find an obstacle to x without having some understanding of x?

### 3.

Finally, I would like to discuss Cassam's conception of level 3 of his 3LM in the context of epistemic reasoning. I think that a similar vagueness can be found here.

I think we can detect a certain tension in even the few remarks on level 3 explanations that we get. There are several aspects to a level 3 explanation. Thus we are told that (a) what is being answered on level 3 is a "*what-makes-it-possible* question rather than a how-possible question. How-possible questions are obstacle-dependent but what-makes-it-possible questions are *explanation-seeking*. What they seek is not a way round some specific obstacle but, as it were, a positive explanation of the possibility of acquiring a certain kind of knowledge by certain specified means" (p.16). Next (b) we are told that two different things may be involved in a level 3 explanation. The explanation may be a type A explanation, an explanation "that seeks to explain the possible *occurrence* of a certain cognitive activity" (ibid). Or it may be a type B explanation: what makes an explanation a type B explanation is "that it seeks to explain the *epistemological significance* of a certain cognitive activity" (ibid). The nature of type A explanations is further specified (c) as giving enabling conditions of the cognitive activity M (for means) in question. Those are held to be a subclass of necessary conditions for M. They are hence not just any necessary conditions for M, but are "more specific" (p.17), and they are background conditions. Cassam doesn't further explicate what distinguishes background enabling conditions from other necessary conditions for M. He refers to Burge's usage of that terminology, but doesn't give an

interpretation of the passage he refers to (pp.17-8). The nature of type B explanations (d) isn't really specified at all – and it seems that we find different formulations of their purpose. We have already encountered one in (b). Later we read that it consists in giving enabling conditions for the acquisition of knowledge by some means, where it's not clear whether that's the same thing (p.18, 44ff.).

Before getting back to exegesis, let me note the tension I have been talking about. It is the tension between requiring a positive explanation of how some means to knowledge may yield knowledge and giving necessary conditions for that means as an answer. Cassam himself is eager in his discussion of transcendental arguments to point out that giving necessary conditions for something doesn't by itself yield an explanation; worse, it is not to be expected that some positive explanation for x could consist (unless by incident) in giving necessary conditions for x<sup>16</sup>. A positive explanation of x could, for example, consist in giving sufficient conditions for x. Suppose it was right that knowledge is true justified belief. Giving these sufficient conditions for a belief's being an instance of knowledge might be a more adequate explanation of what knowledge is than giving some necessary condition like a belief's being a belief, or its being of some subject matter. So, at least, the claim that a positive explanation of x should be given in terms of enabling conditions is in need of elaboration.

Is this at all important to Cassam's endeavour? Can't he just claim that we have an intuitive grasp of the concept of an enabling condition and that's that? Yes and no. The issue is important, for it plays a crucial role for Cassam's main tenets. The notion of an enabling condition is an integral part of the 3LM; it is at the heart of Cassam's moderate AM, which in turn gives the main philosophical bite to his methodological claims, and it plays an important role, or so one might think, in his discussion of specific problems. And it's just because of this important role that we need a more explicit grasp of that concept, for how should we otherwise assess Cassam's claims?

But doesn't the reference to Burge do the work we're asking for? I don't think so. First of all, Burge doesn't need a very explicit notion of enabling conditions for his argument in *Content Preservation* to work; for him, it's rather a matter of making a distinction between something's being a part of the justification for p, and something's being necessary for that justification to obtain, but not being part of the justification.

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. Cassam, Chapter. 2

And he succeeds in making that distinction plausible. Second, it seems to me that Cassam misreads Burge's proposal. For the latter writes that in the case of reasoning, "memory's preserving the results of previous reasoning ... does not add to the justificational force of the reasoning. It is rather a background condition for the reasoning's success" (p.463). So the distinction is between what is part of the account of some warrant as opposed to background conditions that are not part of that account, but belong to the conditions that make the success of some cognitive activity possible. But isn't that just what Cassam required of type B explanations under (b)? There he said he wanted a positive explanation of the epistemological significance of some cognitive activity. But that just seems to be explaining what makes it possible for some cognitive activity to be a source of knowledge, and, on some conceptions of knowledge, to explain the warrant that derives from that activity. If this is right, then Cassam counts among enabling conditions precisely what Burge excludes from them. This would, then, obscure the notion of a level 3 explanation even more.

It seems a good idea to have a look at some examples. For the case of epistemic seeing we are told that certain physiological or environmental conditions can be thought of as type A enabling conditions<sup>17</sup>. Furthermore, the perception of space and the possession of empirical concepts are adduced as type A explanations which can be established by a priori reflection (p.39). Now, if these claims were true, then all that would follow, or so it seems, is that these are necessary conditions for epistemic seeing. It is not obvious in what sense they have a special explanatory status, i.e. constitute a positive explanation of epistemic seeing.

As to type B conditions on epistemic seeing, we are told that the task is to explain the transition (p.44) from

(1) S sees that b is P.

to

(2) S knows that b is P.

Now that explanation goes as follows: We suppose that it is right that the perception of space is an a priori enabling condition for the perception of objects, hence a type A

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<sup>17</sup> On p.38 Cassam claims that since they are causal they cannot be established by armchair reflection – I do not see how that follows.

enabling condition for epistemic seeing. "But anything that is an enabling condition for the perception of objects is also going to be a type B enabling condition for epistemic seeing, given that object perception is involved in the acquisition of knowledge by primary epistemic seeing. What we now have, therefore, is the possibility that the perception of space is both a type A and a type B enabling condition for epistemic seeing" (p.46).

This seems confused. First of all, intuitively there seems to be an in principle distinction between explaining the possibility of some psychological activity and explaining the normative force of it, where I take it that "normative force" is a natural reading of "epistemological significance". Second, how can it be that something that is an explanation of (1) can eo ipso be an explanation of our entitlement to the transition from (1) to (2)? Granted, if something is a necessary condition on seeing that b is P, and if we want to give necessary conditions for knowing that b is P via seeing b, then it seems plausible that necessary conditions for seeing that b is P have to be necessary conditions for knowing that b is P. But that seems to be an entirely different question. There is, then, a further tension between (b) and (d). If a type B explanation is just a matter of producing necessary conditions for knowing p via M, then it's unclear what that has to do with producing a positive explanation of M's being a source of knowledge and explaining its epistemological significance. If it is not, then it seems that the characterization and examples that Cassam gives for type B explanations are suspicious.

Something similar can be said for Cassam's level 3 explanation of epistemic reasoning. We should expect the request for such an explanation to have something like the form: give the explanation of the transition from

(3) S reasons from  $p_1 \dots p_n$  to c.

to

(4) S knows that c.

But this question, unfortunately, is never posed. Rather, Cassam focusses on reflection: "what are the background enabling conditions for reflection to be a source of a priori knowledge?" (p.215).

His answer goes as follows. "Understanding, or having a grasp of the relevant concepts, is both a type A and a type B enabling condition for the acquisition of a priori knowledge by reflection or calculation" (p.216)<sup>18</sup>. In response to that information, Cassam acknowledges, it has to be asked how concept possession can allow that the understanding ground the acquisition of a priori knowledge (p.217). The answer he gives to that question is that this "is only because the concept red is tied to the individuation of the colour red, and the concept green is tied to the individuation of the colour green, that reflection can yield the understanding-based a priori knowledge that nothing can be red all over and green all over at the same time" (p.217). Cassam hence thinks that some version of externalism about concepts is the answer to the above question on level 3 (p.218).

I don't understand how this can be a level 3 answer in the stronger sense. If externalism about concepts is correct, then in some sense it may a necessary condition on having concepts. But this doesn't constitute a positive explanation of how reflection on some proposition p can yield knowledge that p (if it's just because there are so many cases where reflection doesn't yield the knowledge we strive after).

And it certainly isn't a satisfactory answer in the case of epistemic reasoning. Here, too, it is utterly unclear how the information that externalism about concepts is in some sense a necessary condition on concept-possession might possibly constitute an explanation of the entitlement involved in transitions from (3) to (4). That some view about the nature of contents cannot just like that be an answer to our epistemological questions about warrant in inference seems to be one of the points agreed upon in the debate between Boghossian and Williamson about the transmission of warrant in epistemic reasoning<sup>19</sup>. Neither the cognitive activity of epistemic reasoning, nor our entitlement stemming from it, are explained by merely pointing out that concepts should be conceived of externalistically.

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<sup>18</sup> Is having a grasp of some concept the same as having the concept? Cassam could then reason that the cognitive activity we want to give type A necessary conditions for *just is* having the relevant concept(s). I find that implausible (on the basis of (Burge (1979))). But wouldn't that disqualify as an enabling condition, just as being a bachelor disqualifies as an enabling condition for being an unmarried man? And if it's something additional, doesn't the picture Cassam earlier endorses of concept possession – where he seems to allow that we can induce concept possession by manipulation of a subject's brain states (pp.147-8) – invalidate this argument?

Note that, once more, Cassam here ignores the possibility of epistemic reasoning as an explanandum.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Boghossian, Williamson (2003). Williamson seems to go even farther in doubting that a "question in theory of knowledge can be reduced to questions in the theory of thought and meaning" (p.47).

I think Cassam's account of level 3 of his 3LM therefore faces the following difficulty. Either he chooses to be content with type B explanations as merely giving necessary conditions. Then his distinction between type A and type B conditions collapses, and it is not clear what explanatory role or value level 3 explanations have. Or he endorses the stronger reading of type B explanations. That would yield an interesting project, but make it difficult to see how what Cassam himself presents as level 3 explanations can be satisfactory.

#### 4.

I find the latter option more appealing. But to my eyes, it would put the whole 3LM in jeopardy. For it seems that an account of the epistemological significance of some cognitive activity just belongs to any account of that cognitive activity, epistemologically conceived. Or how else are we to spell out Cassam's emphasis on pathways to knowledge? If this is right, then either the distinction between level 1 and 3 collapses, because we couldn't give an account of a means to knowledge on level 1 without also giving an account of its epistemological significance, which is alleged to be a level 3 explanation; or a type B level 3 explanation is necessary in any case for a 3LM answer to be satisfying. It would thus not have to be seen as part of identifying the means, but nevertheless be an inevitable ingredient in any attempt to answer a HPQ. That, however, would invalidate moderate anti-minimalism.

Let me therefore sum up my worries: (I) Is chapter 6 intended to constitute an attempt at a fully satisfactory answer to the HPQs concerning a priori knowledge? If so, why does it lack a discussion of epistemic reasoning? Why does it ignore what others seem to conceive of as the need to give an *account* of epistemic reasoning qua means to a priori knowledge? (II) Where does Cassam's discussion leave the notions of a level 3 answer and type A/B explanations? Are we to think of them as mere necessary conditions for some means or does Cassam indeed endorse the more demanding view, according to which a level 3 explanation aims at explaining the epistemological significance of some activity? Wouldn't it be wrong to leave their explication and assessment to intuition? How does the discussion on level 3 relate to identifying a means to knowledge? (III) Where does all this leave the 3LM? The crucial notions that define that model are ambiguous: level 3 type B explanations are either demanding and

thus threaten both the value of Cassam's discussion of specific HPQs and his conception of moderate anti-minimalism (on this reading they would rather suggest adapting an extremely anti-minimalist position); or they consist in giving necessary conditions and are thus explanatorily unrevealing. Level 2 obstacles and their removals allow either for obstacles as broadly conceived as the lack of an account – then we can safely claim that the 3LM applies to a vast range of questions and problems, and it's not obvious how it can be of special heuristic help; or Cassam has a precise notion of what counts as obstacles, and the lack of an account of some means isn't among them – then, what is that notion? And, if it doesn't capture endeavours like Boghossian's, how can it be positively assessed when it comes down to heuristics? It remains unclear what it takes to identify a means to knowledge on level 1.

Therefore it seems, in the end, dubitable whether Cassam manages to attain his goals (i) and (iii) from the introduction. I find his discussion of epistemic reasoning as a specific epistemological HPQ deeply unsatisfying and have given reasons for this. That jeopardizes his claim (iii). I have furthermore argued that his conception of a 3LM is either too broad to be of any special heuristic help, or it is too narrow. In any case, it is too vague. So, even on the charitable reading from section I, this jeopardizes Cassam's claim (i)<sup>20</sup>.

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## References

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<sup>20</sup> Many thanks to David Luethi.

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