

## EPISTEMIC GOODNESS CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

### THREE INDEPENDENT FACTORS IN EPISTEMOLOGY

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**Overview of our project.** In this co-authored paper we apply John Dewey’s 1930 essay, “Three Independent Factors in Morals,” as a framework for understanding epistemic goodness, and other aspects of epistemological axiology. Following the conference’s announced prompts, we argue that there are multiple sources of epistemic goodness or value. We also maintain that each of these sources is a good internal to inquiry. In a “zetetic” or inquiry-focused epistemology (*zetetic* virtue responsibilism), inquiry can function as the unifying consideration in a study of a plurality of epistemic goods. Our epistemological axiology is not *only* pluralist, but of a sort that claims to support the thesis Pritchard terms the “final value of achievements thesis,” the philosophically-advantageous thesis of cognitive achievements as, in Pritchard’s terminology, “finally valuable.” More specifically, we describe this distinctively responsibilist form of anti-luck virtue epistemology as allowing us to acknowledge as independent sources of epistemic value:

- a) agent reliability (or truth-linkedness) in the sense of one or more externalist anti-luck condition on knowledge, something that one must anyway acknowledge if as Becker (and Pritchard et. al) argue, “environmental” luck is potentially knowledge-precluding but is not of the ‘intervening’ kind that characterizes Gettier cases and “veritic” luck and requires *modal*.
- b) the contribution to epistemic value by what internalist evidentialists (like E. Conee and R. Feldman) term an agent’s *synchronic* or ‘own lights’ epistemic rationality; and
- c) the contribution to epistemic value by what we define as an agent’s *diachronic* epistemic rationality, which concerns achievements-through-inquiry, and the manner in which they can be shown to be *finally valuable*.

While the three independent factors as we here propose them are not claimed to be especially Deweyan, we are nevertheless here undertaking a project that is the epistemological analogue of the project Dewey sets for himself, “to see what factors of permanent value each group contributes to the clarification and direction of reflective morality” (1930, 183). Our inquiry-focused virtue responsibilism is therefore in Pritchard’s terms a virtue epistemology of a “moderate” rather than a “robust” description; it is anti-luck virtue epistemology where the responsibilist focus on diachronic traits—what Dewey’s called habits and dispositions—prevails over the standard internalist focus on a kind of volitional act of basing beliefs on whatever evidence one has for a particular proposition at a particular moment (what C. Hookway calls the ‘doxastic paradigm’).

We will aim to show, more specifically, that diachronic epistemic rationality (responsibility in inquiry) is closely related to the value of achievements, and of that level of meta-cognitive control over our beliefs of which we are capable. Secondly, we explain why we think that an inquiry-focused account of epistemological axiology is the best way to support the epistemological centrality of evaluations of agents in terms of their diachronic rationality, and their responsibility in inquiry. Thirdly, acknowledging diachronic rationality not only as a contributor to

epistemic goodness, but as the one of the three factors most *directly* pertinent to cognitive *achievement*, our account might in turn provide strongly support the thesis that *cognitive achievements are finally valuable* (the anti-skeptical implications of the view will have to be considered at another time, though we'd agree with Pritchard et. al. that there are strong implications or advantages it maintaining that thesis).

What follows is a more detailed outline of the paper's two main sections.

**Section 1: Introduction: Dewey's 'Three Factors Paper.'** This introductory section asks what advantages might accrue from applying Dewey's non-reductive, "independent factors" approach to the axiological standpoint on knowledge and other cognitive states and standings. We re-introduce Dewey's "Three Independent Factors in Morals" (1930), and explain how it proved pivotal in the development of his mature theory of reflective inquiry in *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938), and reflected a highlight of the interests in axiology that flourished during the first few decades of the Twentieth century in American philosophy. We discuss not only Dewey's critique of consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics as "one-sided" accounts, but also how this critique informs his constructive account of the relationship between moral and intellectual flourishing.

**Section 2: Three Independent Sources of Epistemic Value.** If Dewey's "independent factors" approach provides the useful resource that we are proposing it does, we need an account of what kinds of things contribute to epistemic value. What are the master intuitions we need to acknowledge, and how does their "independence" as sources of epistemic value provide assurance that the advantages of a pluralistic epistemological axiology cannot be undermined by the reductionistic ploys of epistemological versions of 'consequentialism,' 'deontologism,' or 'virtue theory'?

**2A. Reliabilism, Environmental Luck, and the Value of a Non-Luckily True Belief**  
Our approach allows us to accept the basic insight, along the lines of what Pritchard calls the *anti-luck intuition* and the need for an independent anti-luck condition in one's theory of knowledge in order to account for this intuition. We utilize the best recent anti-luck epistemology to make this case, including Becker (2008) and Pritchard et. al. *The Value of Knowledge* (draft). We discuss how this makes our account "moderate" virtue epistemology, and we develop the view that one can account for the value of knowledge independently of any account of the value of reflection, and that one can also account for the value of reflection independently of one's account of the value of knowledge. The latter point leads to two the other two sources of epistemic value, which we describe as coming from "internalist" and from "responsibilist" concerns, respectively.

**2B. Internalist Evidentialism and the Epistemic Value of Synchronic Rationality**  
Feldman and Conee contend that synchronic epistemic rationality is the *only* source of properly epistemic value. This view denies that factors external to the cognitive agent's ken (i.e., bearers of reliability and factors relevant to the etiology of beliefs) can be sources of epistemic value. This view also denies epistemic import to considerations external to the present time-slice at which S evaluates the available evidence for some proposition that stands as a candidate for belief (or disbelief). As such, it also denies that diachronic epistemic rationality can be a source of properly epistemic value. It is our view that diachronic epistemic rationality is an important source of epistemic value. While we reject Feldman and Conee's internalism and subject it to criticism, we also allow acknowledge that properly reformulated, synchronic epistemic rationality can and does serve as a source of epistemic value with respect to some distinctively human and higher epistemic standings, like theoretical understanding, etc.

**2C. Zetetic Responsibilism and the Epistemic Value of Diachronic Rationality.** From the evidentialist standpoint advocated by Feldman and Conee, it is solely the relationship, at a

given time, between one's evidence and a proposition considered a candidate for belief (or disbelief) that is of epistemic importance. Although evidentialist epistemic normativity is recognized as valuable from the point of view of inquiry, inquiry allows us to recognize the unique value of diachronic epistemic rationality as well. The idea that virtues facilitate *growth* clearly reveals the sort of diachronic epistemic rationality that makes a unique contribution to our epistemic axiology. Inquiry, when conducted well, is a self-correcting process, one that subjects the methods, evidences, and outcomes of past inquiries to scrutiny. The reflective habits that govern inquiry certainly play an important role in the production of particular beliefs; and the responsible weighing of evidence is among those reflective habits. But the reflective virtues that facilitate successful inquiry also serve in the critical evaluation of past inquiries, and in the improvement of future inquiries.

The demands of motivation and effort in inquiry cannot be treated, as some internalists and externalists would claim, as 'merely' moral and pragmatic concerns. Attempts to do so are premised upon a fact/value dichotomy that the pragmatists rightly reject; and it is only when that dichotomy is rejected that we have the resources we need to make better progress in our thinking about epistemic goodness. Those who deny that diachronic considerations contribute to properly epistemic value presuppose a sharp distinction between fact and value, and wind up with a nearly unbridgeable gap between theory and practice. We argue that theory and practice are no more ultimately divisible than are epistemology and axiology.

### **3. Summary and Conclusions: Epistemology and Axiology in Pragmatist Perspective.**

We have addressed the nature and sources of epistemic goodness, and developed the proper role of goodness in the epistemological approach we describe as *zetetic* virtue responsibilism. The approach that Dewey took in rejecting the reductionistic theories of moral reasoning in his day, is not unconnected with the substantial unity that he and other pragmatists, by classical and contemporary, claim to offer to an account of intellectual virtue, if not indeed to all virtue, by identifying them through the roles they play in inquiry. We discuss the broader prospects from the epistemic proposal we have made, for axiology in its primary sense as "general theory of value."

## **GOODNESS IN EPISTEMOLOGY**

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**ABSTRACT.** When epistemologists ask about the goodness of an epistemic agent, they are asking, of course, about her epistemic goodness (as opposed to, say, her moral goodness). It may seem a truism that the only kind of goodness that is of interest to epistemologists, the only kind of goodness that matters, epistemically, is *epistemic* goodness. I would like to challenge this apparent truism. I shall argue that there is an important role in epistemology for at least two other kinds of goodness: goodness as a human being, and goodness for a human being. There is also, I shall argue, an important role *for* epistemology in the study of these kinds of goodness.

### **I. Good as a human being, and good for a human being**

According to Aristotle, the good *for* a human is eudaimonia: thriving, living well, in a particularly human way. Being good *as* a human is a matter of having a certain character traits, among them (Aristotle thinks) justice, honesty, courage, temperance, and others. Aristotle's emphasis on the moral virtues can lead the reader to think the account of goodness he is offering is an account of

distinctively moral goodness, but other remarks he makes have led many to see this as too narrow a reading. What he is offering is an account of the good human being, qua human being, and while being a good human being has a moral dimension, it also has epistemic, prudential, and many other dimensions. (In fact, if any dimension has priority in Aristotle's account, it is the epistemic, since he thinks the good life, for a human being, consists in 'activity of the soul in accordance with the highest virtue', which he takes to be contemplation.)

A central part of Aristotle's view is his claim that being a good human being *is* good for a human being. I do not wish to discuss this claim. I wish merely to investigate these two kinds of goodness, as they have been developed by neo-Aristotelians, since I think they bear on some important problems in epistemology.

Consider first the idea of a good human being, as such. This is the idea of a human who is exemplary, who is good in a way that is characteristic of the kind of beings we humans are, who carries out well (i.e. admirably) the activities characteristic of human beings. Since human beings are social beings, the good human being will act (and think, and feel) 'well' with respect to other beings, and society. (This is why Aristotle thought that the good human being would be just.) Since human beings are reasoning beings, the good human being will reason well—in the kind of way appropriate for a human, of course (as opposed to a computer, for example). More would have to be said to establish that there *is* such a thing as goodness qua human being, or that such an idea should, or is even able to, guide our behavior. (The burden is no lighter for those who wish to make these points about moral goodness.) But my interest here is just to get the idea across of this kind of goodness: goodness as a human being (rather than as a moral agent, epistemic agent, etc.).

Consider now the idea of goodness *for* a human being. Here the Aristotelian idea, as developed by neo-Aristotelians, is that of doing well, of thriving in a characteristically human way, over a complete life. Just as each kind of living being—cactus, fish, wolf, and so on—has its own unique way of flourishing (due to the way it, uniquely, is), so do human beings have their own unique way of flourishing (due to the way we, uniquely, are). While the flourishing of a plant may involve strong roots, and the flourishing of an animal may involve a robust constitution and glossy coat, the flourishing of a person will be not simply a matter of physical health, but also of mental health, and (as rational and emotional creatures) of our recognition of any genuine norms (if such there be) that may rightly govern our thought or behavior. The flourishing human can be rightly said to have a happy—in the sense of 'full', or 'complete'—life.

## II. The role of epistemology in the study of 'goodness'

If there is an ideal of a good human being, it stands to reason that the good human being will be, to some extent, a good epistemic agent. The good human being, on any plausible conception, is a reasoning being, one who is curious about her world and pursues important truths. Thus she will need, to some extent, those traits which make her a good epistemic agent. (Likewise, if there is an ideal of a good human life, it stands to reason that it will include some amount of epistemic goods.) If that is the case, epistemology will play a central role in articulating these senses of goodness.

## III. The role of 'goodness' in epistemology

But is it the other way around as well? Can these senses of goodness—the notion of being a good human being, and the notion of the good human life—play a role in epistemology? I suggest that they can, as they may be able to offer plausible solutions to some stubborn problems in epistemology. I offer two examples here.

*The problem of an account of deep truths.* One problem in epistemology that has resisted solution is the problem of explaining the apparent fact that some truths are ‘deeper’ than others. I cannot argue, in this paper, against the many attempts to address this problem, only explain how the notion of what is good for a person (in the Aristotelian sense) can form the basis of a plausible solution. In this case, it seems that, at least in some cases, what explains the ‘depth’ of beliefs, or what makes someone wise rather than merely knowledgeable, has to do with truths that are important for a good human life. Paradigm examples of deep truths are diverse, and include truths about the fundamental workings of our world, and about human nature. What makes these truths ‘deeper’ than truths about the number of grains of sand on a beach is that these knowing (or perhaps learning) these truths is necessary for, and perhaps even partly constitutive of, living the full human life Aristotle has in mind. Our lives fall short of good human lives when our knowledge is restricted to knowledge of numbers of grains of sand, or, for that matter, the kind of trivia that game show contestants are quizzed on. By contrast, coming to understand how the world works, or the features of the human social animal, is part of what it is to live a full life. It is this connection to the good human life, rather than any purely epistemic notion, that distinguishes deep truths from their shallow counterparts.

*The problem of reasonable disagreement.* A second problem in epistemology that has resisted solution is the problem of explaining what we ought to believe in light of disagreement from an epistemic peer: persist in my belief, or withhold judgment? Without arguing against the many attempts at resolving this problem, let me explain how the notion of a good human being can form the basis of a plausible solution.

It seems plausible to me that the solution to this problem is determined not by standards of good epistemic agency, but by standards of what it is to be a good (as in exemplary, admirable) human being. Is persisting in one’s belief appropriately confident, or is it stubborn or willful? Does it demonstrate a proper firmness in one’s beliefs, or an inappropriate inflexibility? On the other hand, would choosing to withhold judgment in light of reasonable disagreement indicate proper deference and humility, proper respect for others, or a degrading subjection of one’s will and judgment to another’s? The answers to these questions, it seems, will come from the standards of what it is to live a human life well. What makes it the case that one should persist in one’s belief (or withhold judgment, as the case may be) are facts about what it is to be a good or admirable *human being*, rather than a good epistemic agent.

Thus we see that the notions of a good human being, and the good for human beings, are potentially fruitful for epistemology (as is epistemology helpful in our study of what it is to be a good human being, and to live a good human life). No doubt these notions require more robust normative commitments than epistemologists are in the habit of making, but, if the potential gains are great, then it is worth taking a cue from ethics and thinking of the ideal human epistemic agent not just as an ideal epistemic agent with unfortunate human limitations, but as a full-fledged human being with a good that extends beyond the narrow realm of the subject matter we are investigating.

## **INVERTING THE VALUE PROBLEM**

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**ABSTRACT.** This paper identifies a problem for any view that overcomes or “solves” the so-

called value problem in epistemology.

On the standard view of value problem, any plausible account of knowledge must satisfy a certain constraint: it must entail that knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief. This amounts to the claim that, for any plausible set of conditions for knowledge, a belief which satisfies all of these conditions must be valuable in a way that it would not be if it had satisfied only the true belief condition for knowledge.

Many epistemologists accept the further claim that not all true beliefs are valuable, and more specifically, that relative to certain matters (e.g. the number of names in the phone book, blades of grass on one's lawn, etc.), the possession of true beliefs is cognitively worthless.

It is plausible to think that if having a true belief that *p* is cognitively worthless, then knowing that *p* will not amount to a more valuable cognitive state. (And if having a true belief that *p* were cognitively *dis*valuable, then knowing that *p* might even be a *less* valuable cognitive state.)

This presents a problem for any account of knowledge that satisfies the constraint noted above. For, on any such account, knowing that *p* is *always* more valuable than having a mere true belief that *p*.

It appears, then, that any account of knowledge which "overcomes" the so-called value problem is immediately confronted with a different problem: namely, that it entails, in cases of the sort just mentioned, that knowledge has a certain value which in fact it lacks.

In addition to developing the foregoing line of reasoning in considerably more detail, I shall examine whether an account of knowledge can overcome this problem while still "solving" or overcoming the value problem.

## INTEREST AND EPISTEMIC GOODNESS

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**ABSTRACT.** A number of philosophers have maintained that truth is valuable because (and only because) it answers our inquiries. According to this position, true beliefs are not *intrinsically* valuable. Instead, the value of true beliefs is *relative to interests*. This does not imply that the value of truth is always instrumental, however, since some of our inquiries are generated by an 'intellectual interest' in finding out the truth. Sometimes we want to know the truth on some issue simply because we are naturally curious about that issue, or find it interesting for its own sake.

Now I think that this position is mistaken. (See Brady, 'Curiosity and the Value of Truth', *forthcoming*.) However, a weaker position maintains that interest or curiosity provides at least a *reason* for thinking that some truth is valuable. In support, we might think that emotions in general provide reasons for evaluative beliefs: thus, my fear gives me a reason to think that I'm in danger, my guilt gives me a reason to think that I've done something wrong. If we think of curiosity and interest as emotional or affective responses, then we might also think that they give us reasons to believe that the truth on some topic has final value. On this view, final epistemic value isn't grounded in intellectual interest; but intellectual interest nevertheless gives us epistemic access to such value.

In this paper I argue that even this weaker position is mistaken, given a particular understanding of what it is for a true belief to be *interesting*. For on a 'fitting-attitude' account of this evaluative concept, the fact that I am interested in some truth is not a reason for thinking that the truth is interesting, and hence not a reason for thinking that the truth has final value. In making

this argument I give some reasons for preferring a fitting-attitude account of the concept to a ‘dispositionalist’ account.

## TWO MISTAKES ABOUT EPISTEMIC PROPRIETY

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**ABSTRACT.** Here are two claims that underwrite important recent work in epistemology:

**Mistake 1 (M1):** If an “epistemically evaluable” item (e.g., a belief, an assertion) is somehow inappropriate because it lacks a certain epistemic feature, **then** the item is epistemically inappropriate. Slogan: *Harmful epistemic deficiency entails epistemic impropriety.*

**Mistake 2 (M2):** If you have justification to believe a proposition, **then** you have warrant to assert the proposition. Slogan: *Permission to believe entails permission to assert.*

As the labels indicate, I aim to expose the above claims as significant mistakes about epistemic propriety. I begin (§2) by identifying recent work that depends on one or the other of M1 and M2. Such work includes [a] the main counterexamples to the view that knowledge suffices for warrant to assert<sup>1</sup>; [b] a main argument that epistemically justified belief suffices for knowledge<sup>2</sup>; [c] a prima facie promising defense of the **Credit Requirement** on knowledge<sup>3</sup>; and [d] any view dependent on the so called **Belief/Assertion Parallel**.<sup>4</sup> For each of [a]-[d], I argue that you can accept it *only if* you accept at least one of M1 and M2.

I then present multiple arguments against M1 and M2 (§3). That is, I present multiple arguments for the following two theses:

(~M1) Even if a given “epistemically evaluable” item is somehow inappropriate because it lacks a certain epistemic feature, the item might still be epistemically appropriate.

(~M2) Even if you lack warrant to assert a proposition, you might still have justification to believe the proposition.

I develop two arguments against M1. The first is an argument from analogy whose key premise is that analogues of M1 for other kinds of propriety are false. I focus on analogues of M1 for moral and prudential propriety:

**Moral Analogue of Mistake 1 (MAM1):** If a “morally evaluable” item is somehow

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<sup>1</sup> See Levin (2008) and Brown (forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> See Sutton (2005, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> See Riggs (forthcoming).

<sup>4</sup> According to which “belief is a species of assertion, to wit, subvocalized assertion or... ‘assertion to oneself’” (Douven [2006: 453]). Proponents include Dummett (1981), Williamson (2000), Adler (2002), and Douven (2006).

inappropriate because it lacks a certain moral feature, **then** the item is morally inappropriate.

**Prudential Analogue of Mistake 1 (PAM1):** If a “prudentially evaluable” item is somehow inappropriate because it lacks a certain prudential feature, **then** the item is prudentially inappropriate.

I describe clear counterexamples to MAM1 and PAM1. Since epistemic propriety is similar in many respects to moral and prudential propriety, the failure of MAM1 and PAM1 constitutes some reason to think M1 false as well.

But there are obvious and important differences between epistemic propriety, on the one hand, and moral and prudential propriety, on the other. So I present a second argument against M1. I describe a case involving a subject, S, who has the following two features: [1] S holds an epistemically justified belief that P, but doesn’t know P. [2] Though S’s justified belief is in fact both morally *and* prudentially inappropriate, the belief would be morally and prudentially appropriate were it to become *knowledge*. Since such a case is possible, it’s possible that there be an epistemically appropriate belief that’s morally and prudentially inappropriate because it lacks a certain epistemic feature (here, *being knowledge*). That’s my second, more conclusive argument against M1.

I then turn my attention to M2. I make this concession at the outset: even if we can justifiably reject M2 in light of some or other of my anti-M2 arguments, my arguments fail to undermine a certain interesting prima facie case for M2. In the paper’s final section (§4), I present and defuse the indicated pro-M2 case.

My first argument against M2 starts with the generally accepted claim that you can’t have warrant to assert so called **Moorean Propositions**—propositions of such forms as [P & I don’t believe P], [P & I don’t know P], and [P & I lack adequate evidence that P]. But we can, I argue, have justification to believe such propositions. For the following is possible: you have justification to believe P, yet are also justified in endorsing requirements on *believing* P and *having adequate evidence for* P that are in fact too restrictive. Provided that this is possible, you could have justification to believe P while also having justification to believe that you neither believe nor have adequate evidence for P. And if *that’s* possible, then you could have justification to believe a Moorean Proposition. So, it’s possible that you have justification to believe a proposition you lack warrant to assert.

My second argument against M2 stems from another generally accepted claim—viz., that I can’t have warrant to assert that I’ll lose the (large, fair) lottery I’ve entered. While I can’t have warrant to assert that I’ll lose, it’s quite plausible that I can have justification to believe I’ll lose. For denying that I can have justification to believe I’ll lose leads quickly (via modest epistemic closure principles) to implausible skeptical positions—e.g., that I’m not justified in thinking my house won’t be paid off by tomorrow morning. Assuming I *am* justified in believing my house won’t be paid off by tomorrow morning, I’m justified in believing I’ll lose tonight’s lottery. So, I could have justification to believe a proposition I lack warrant to assert.

I close §3 by presenting a third, more “theory-driven” argument against M2. It’s generally accepted (by “justification internalists” and “justification externalists” alike) that you can have justification to believe P even if you’re not reliable on the question whether P. (E.g.: You can have justification to believe certain ordinary empirical propositions even if you’re a massively deceived brain in a vat.) Further, it’s plausible that if you can’t be counted on to get it right as to whether P, you lack the epistemic authority to assert P. That is, it’s plausible that warrant to assert

P requires reliability on the question whether P. (In addition to its intuitive plausibility, there are promising arguments for this **Reliability Requirement** on warranted assertability. I present one in the course of developing the argument against M2 now under discussion.) So, warrant to assert requires something unnecessary for justification to believe. That's my third argument against M2.

I expect that most of my audience will be comfortable with rejecting M1. But there's a nagging worry about rejecting M2 lurking in the nearby bushes. In the paper's final section (§4), I raise and then mitigate this worry about rejecting M2. Here's the problem with rejecting M2: M2 is (I argue) entailed by a thesis that is itself initially plausible—viz., that justification to believe P suffices for warrant to assert P *to oneself*. I call this initially plausible thesis the **Beguiling Sufficiency Thesis (BS)**.

Plausible as it may sound initially, BS should be rejected. I do so via reflection on the *function* of assertion. I suggest that BS gets its initial plausibility from certain similarities between belief and assertion—e.g., both “aim” (in some sense) to accurately depict the way things are. But there are deep differences between belief and assertion. One difference that's important for present purposes is this: assertion is (typically) an action, whereas believing (typically) isn't. This simple point yields a plausible story on which warrant to assert—even to oneself—requires something unnecessary for justification to believe. Roughly: When you *assert* P (even if just to yourself), you *do something* with P—which includes representing yourself as *knowing* P—whose (epistemic) propriety requires (epistemic) authority relative to P that's unnecessary for justified belief in P.

One way to see *why* BS is false, then, is to see that in asserting P you do something with P whose propriety requires authority relative to P that's unnecessary for simply having justification to believe P. The basic thought here—viz., that you could have sufficient authority to bear only *some* of a group of similar relations to a given proposition—shouldn't strike us as odd. Indeed, this is a common phenomenon. Consider an analogous case. Unlike some of those who legitimately attend departmental meetings (e.g., student representatives), I have the authority to *move* that the meeting be adjourned, and also to *vote* that the meeting be adjourned. Unfortunately, I don't now have the authority to adjourn departmental meetings—i.e., to directly bring it about that a departmental meeting is adjourned. So, I have the departmental authority to bear *some but not all* of a group of similar relations (*moving that, voting that, directly bringing it about that*) to [The departmental meeting is adjourned]. Similarly, even if you meet all the conditions required to hold an epistemically appropriate *belief* in P, you may nevertheless lack the epistemic authority to bear (in an epistemically proper way) certain other relevantly “belief-like” relations to P—e.g., assertion. This is one way to see *why* both BS and M2 are false.

M1 and M2 are, I conclude, two significant mistakes about epistemic propriety, mistakes whose influence in all probability extends well beyond [a]-[d] above.

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## **THE EPISTEMIC GOODNESS OF BELIEVING ACCORDING TO THE EVIDENCE**

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ABSTRACT. Evidentialism in epistemology is—broadly construed—a deontological position: it asserts that you are epistemically justified only if you have done your epistemic duty, where the primary duty is to (at least try to) believe in accordance with your evidence. I'm an evidentialist. On the other hand, I believe in the priority of the good to the right (in all domains I can think of), a view usually described as teleological. It is typically thought that deontological views and teleological views are inconsistent with one another. So what's an evidentialist to do if—as I do—she wants to fit these two commitments together into a coherent and natural whole? In this essay I will defend not either of these commitments of mine, but rather the proposition that they fit into a coherent and natural whole. An application of the results will be that there is reason to think that value monism about knowledge is false.

## **AN EXAMINATION OF AN ARGUMENT AGAINST THE AUTONOMY OF EPISTEMIC EVALUATION**

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**ABSTRACT.** Much epistemological theorizing in the 20<sup>th</sup> century assumed that there is something distinctive to *epistemic* evaluation of beliefs and agents that distinguishes it from other forms in which beliefs and agents may be evaluated. It is usual to express the distinctiveness of epistemic evaluation in terms of the ultimate cognitive goal of getting the truth. This is understood as imposing some constraints on the features of believers and beliefs that are relevant for their epistemic assessment; traditionally, such constraints exclude, among many other things, moral aspects of believers. The distinctiveness of epistemic evaluation makes it *autonomous* from moral values and motivations that cognizers may have. In recent years, however, the autonomy of epistemic evaluation has been challenged in various ways; this paper examines one argument against the autonomy of epistemic evaluation, it is due to Linda Zagzebski.

Zagzebski argues that the moral motives of an agent can affect the epistemic value of the agent's states of belief. Her argument has two parts. The first part of her argument notes a crucial difference between the basic metaphysical structure that underlies moral evaluation and the structure that underlies epistemic evaluation. Both structures can sensibly be represented as consisting of three nodes:

#### Basic Structure of Moral Evaluation (BSME)

Agent (motives)	-	Act (act of compassion)	-	Intended outcome (Relief of suffering)
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#### Basic Structure of Epistemic Evaluation (BSEE)

Agent (motives)	-	Cognitive act (act of belief)	-	Intended outcome (State of true belief)
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With respect to BSME Zagzebski holds that when the agent acts on good motives, for example the motive of compassion, her act is better, has more value, than if it had different motivational origins. So the value of the agent's motives affect the value of the agent's acts. But she points out that the goodness of the intended outcome of the good act, for example the relief of someone's suffering, is *not* affected by the goodness of the agent's motives; if the intended outcome of the agent's act is good, it is good independently of the goodness of the agent's motives.

Zagzebski holds that things are different with respect to BSEE, for not only the value of a cognitive act is affected by the value of the agent's motives, the value of the intended outcome of the act, i.e. a state of true belief, is affected by the value of the agent's motives too. She argues that this normative difference between BSME and BSEE is a consequence of a metaphysical difference between the structures: whereas the intended outcome of an act in BSME is a mere 'external' or 'separate' consequence of the act, the intended outcome of an act in BSEE is a *property* of the act.

It's true that a good outcome such as relief of suffering cannot be made better by the act that produced it, much less by the motive of the act that produced it, but that's because the

outcome is a state of affairs separate from the act. In the case of acts of belief the intended outcome *is a property of* the act itself.<sup>5</sup>

The second part of her argument against the autonomy of epistemic evaluation consist in trying to show that specifically *moral* motives, that are constitutive of a good life, figure prominently among the agent's motives that can affect the goodness of his states of belief.

In the paper I criticize the two parts of Zagzebski's argument, beginning with the second. First, I argue that her theory makes wrong predictions concerning standard evaluative practice, it predicts that one would assign different epistemic value to belief states of various agents, when one actually wouldn't make such differential assessments. This would seem to force her to be revisionist with respect to well-entrenched aspects of standard practice; but such a revisionist position is hard to defend, specially given that the entrenched intuitions that militate against her theory seem to operate even in her own description of some aspects of the theory itself. Secondly, the theory aims to explain the superiority of knowing over mere true believing using as explanans the idea that the motive of love of truth is valuable not only because true belief is intrinsically valuable, but also because of the relational place that such a motive occupies in a constellation of motives that are constitutive of a good life, most of which motives have nothing to do with *epistemic* value, as Zagzebski herself recognizes. I argue that this admitted mismatch between the *kind* of value present in the posited explanans and the *kind* of value present in the explanandum, makes the resulting explanation unintelligible.

Finally, I examine the first part of Zagzebski's argument. I present two interpretations of the mereological claim that a state that results from an act (process) is a property of it: a restrictive interpretation that imposes some constraints on the spatial location of a property relative to its possessor, and a liberal one that imposes no such restrictions. I argue that neither of those interpretations validates Zagzebski's metaphysical claim that a state of belief is a property of the cognitive act (process) that produced it, whereas the outcome of a moral act (process) is merely an external or separate consequence of the act. Given that this claim is essential to her further normative claim that the (moral) motives of the agent can affect the goodness of his states of belief, we should not accept this alleged implication of the metaphysical claim until we are given a proper way to understand it that has exactly the normative consequences that Zagzebski thinks it has.

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## THE VALUE PROBLEM REVISITED

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<sup>5</sup> Zagzebski 2003a: 151. My emphasis.

ABSTRACT. Part One of the paper reviews “the value problem”, and how our understanding of that problem has advanced in the recent literature. Specifically, the problem has tended to divide and multiply, with some versions of the problem emerging as more compelling than others. Part Two of the paper reviews a virtue-theoretic solution to the most compelling of the “value problems.” Part Three addresses some objections that have been raised against the virtue-theoretic solution, and considers some alternative approaches.

## ON UNDERSTANDING

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ABSTRACT. Like wisdom, understanding is naturally thought of as a kind of “higher” epistemic good. It is also often said that understanding is one of the few epistemic goods that we desire simply “for its own sake.” But what does it mean to understand? More exactly, how should we think of the epistemic accomplishment that we associate with understanding? In this paper I approach the nature of understanding in three main steps. First I ask about the *object* of understanding, second about the *psychology* of understanding, and third about the sort of *normativity* that is constitutive of understanding.

## GOODS AND AIMS

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ABSTRACT. Some philosophers have proposed a necessary connection between belief and epistemic evaluation, based on the claim that truth is the aim of belief. They maintain:

**Uniqueness of the Epistemic (UE):** Epistemic evaluation is the uniquely appropriate way to evaluate beliefs.

Is this true?

1. The normative conception of truth as the aim of belief

Philosophers who defend UE appeal to the thesis that truth is the aim of belief, and adopt a **normative conception** of this. On their view, to say that beliefs aim at truth is to say that beliefs have a constitutive standard of correctness (i.e. a standard which applies to them in virtue of their being the kind of things that they are, i.e. in virtue of their essential nature). And this standard is their being true. This is more than the trivial claim that true beliefs are true; on the normative conception, false beliefs are wrong in something like the sense that it is wrong to move pawns diagonally, save when capturing another piece.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See in particular Wedgewood, “The Aim of Belief,” but also Shah and Velleman, “Doxastic Deliberation.”

Why think that truth is the aim of belief, in this or in any other sense? Two related arguments are offered, and both, if cogent, support the idea that truth is not only *an* aim of belief, but the *unique* aim of belief.

- B1. It is incoherent to think, of a particular belief of yours, that it is not true.<sup>7</sup> This does not hold of other positive features beliefs might have – such as being prudent, or having beautiful content.
- B2. Necessarily, any believer must “regulate” her beliefs for truth, in the sense that she must be disposed to believe what she takes to be true, and to give up beliefs that she takes to be false.<sup>8</sup> This does not hold of other positive features beliefs might have.

The following argument shows that *if* the normative conception is correct, *then* so is UE:

1. Truth is the unique aim of belief, in the sense provided by the normative conception.
2. Truth is an epistemic good.
3. Epistemic evaluation is evaluation vis-à-vis epistemic goods.
4. Therefore, epistemic evaluation of beliefs is evaluation vis-à-vis their unique aim.
5. Therefore, epistemic evaluation is the uniquely appropriate way to evaluate beliefs.

I think (1) is the only controversial premise. Is it true?

## 2. The aims of belief and desire, and “direction of fit”

The idea that truth is the aim of belief was first proposed in connection with the project of explaining the difference between belief and desire. It is now nearly a truism that belief and desire differ with respect of the “direction of fit” between these states and the world that provides their content. In very metaphorical language, beliefs are supposed to fit the world, and the world is supposed to fit desires. Thus a man taking an inventory of items at a supermarket has made a mistake if there is an item on the list that is not in the store. But a man with a shopping list has not made a mistake if there is an item on the list that is not in the store.<sup>9</sup> Thus the idea that beliefs, like an inventory, aim at truth, at “fitting” the world.

But this “direction of fit” idea does not support the normative conception of truth as the aim of belief, for this idea does not support a normative conception of the aims of belief and desire. For according to this idea, belief and desire have *opposite directions* of fit. If we articulate this idea with:

- (a) Beliefs are mistaken when they do not fit the world (i.e. when they are not true).

Then we should also accept

- (b) The world is mistaken when it does not fit my (our?) desires, i.e. when it fails to satisfy my

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<sup>7</sup> See Williams, “Deciding to Believe,” p. 148. Williams suggests that it is impossible to have a belief which you know to be false, but which you cannot rid yourself. I think this is possible: just as there can be “obsessive” or “alien” desires, there can be “obsessive” beliefs, e.g. a superstition, or a difficult-to-eliminate racism.

<sup>8</sup> See Railton, “Truth, Reason, and the Regulation of Belief,” Velleman, “On the Aim of Belief,” and Shah and Velleman, *op. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> The example is from Anscombe, *Intention*, §32

(our?) desires.

This may be what some people mean when they say that desires aim at satisfaction. But in as much as we can make sense of what (b) could mean, it seems false. There is nothing wrong with the world if it fails to fit my desires – for example, if I desire that the world contain more (undeserved) suffering.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. The good as the aim of desire

We can speak of the way the world is (i.e. of the truth), and we can speak of the way the world should be (i.e. of what should be true). I will call the way the world should be, or what should be true, *the good*. There is an obvious sense, then, in which the world is wrong unless it is good, namely, the trivial sense in which the world should be the way the world should be. In a normative sense, the world aims at the good.<sup>11</sup>

We can keep the idea of “fit,” appealed to above, and modify our account of belief and desire. On this proposal, belief and desire are distinguished not by their *direction* of fit, but by the *object* at which they are directed, i.e. by what they are supposed to “fit.” Beliefs aim at truth, and desires aim at the good, in the sense just described. A belief that *p* is true iff *p* is true, and a desire that *p* is good iff *p* is what should be true.

The tenability of this conception of the aims of belief and desire (setting aside whether we adopt a normative conception of them) depends on whether the following claims about desire are plausible:

- D1. It is incoherent to think, of a particular desire of yours, that it is not good.
- D2. Necessarily, any being with desires must “regulate” her desires for goodness, in the sense that she must be disposed to desire what she takes to be good, and to give up desires that she takes to be bad.

I maintain these are true, and can be defended by appeal to the thesis of **motivational internalism**, according to which, necessarily, to think that *p* should be true required being motivated (to some degree) to make *p* true. From this, I shall argue that it is impossible to think that a particular desire of yours (say a desire that *p*) is not good without having a conflicting desire (a desire that  $\sim p$ ). In this sense, therefore, it is incoherent to think, of a particular desire of yours, that it is not good. That’s D1. Furthermore, if motivational internalism is true, then I must be disposed to desire what I take to be good, and to give up desires that I take to be bad (at least to the extent that I am disposed to eliminate inconsistencies in my desires). That’s D2.

This point can be summed up as follows: To believe that your own belief that *p* is false is to contradict yourself in belief. To believe that your own desire that *p* is not good, given motivational internalism, is to contradict yourself in desire.

Given all this, I maintain that *if* we should adopt a normative conception of the aim of belief, on which beliefs are mistaken when their contents are not true, *then* we should accept a

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<sup>10</sup> The following is closer to the truth: that there is something wrong with the world, according to me, if it fails to fit my desires. See §4, below.

<sup>11</sup> I have in mind something like what people mean when they speak of what is good “all things considered.” But I mean to appeal to ordinary language here: we speak of the world being better or worse, and we speak of a way the world should be, i.e. a way which it would be best for the world to be. That is what I mean by ‘the good’.

normative conception of the aim of desire, on which desires are mistaken when their contents are not what should be true.

#### 4. The expressive conception of the aims of belief and desire

A normative conception of the good as the aim of desire may be unacceptable to many. Many people are Humeans about the passions, and think that the idea of a mistaken desire makes no sense.

There is an alternative conception of the aims of beliefs and desires. On this conception, to say that beliefs aim at truth is to say that a person's beliefs express what she thinks is true. And to say that desires aim at the good is to say that a person's desires express what she thinks should be true. Our beliefs express our conception of the way the world is, of the truth, and our desires express our conception of the way the world should be, of the good. Truth, according to me, is expressed in my beliefs, and the good, according to be, is expressed in my desires. Call this the **expressive conception** of the aims of belief and desire.<sup>12</sup>

The expressive conception does not support UE. Just because my beliefs express what I take to be true, it does not follow that epistemic evaluation is uniquely appropriate when it comes to evaluating them.<sup>13</sup>

If we adopt a normative conception of the aims of belief and desire, than UE is defensible, but so is an analogous claim about the evaluation of desires. My conclusion is therefore disjunctive:

- (i) Either we adopt a normative conception of the aims of belief and desire, and therefore embrace both a necessary connection between belief and epistemic evaluation and between desire and evaluation vis-à-vis the good, *or*
- (ii) We adopt an expressive conception of the aims of belief and desire, and say that there is no such necessary connection between belief and truth, nor between desire and the good.

I am inclined to the latter position.

**TBC**

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ABSTRACT. To follow.

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<sup>12</sup> Note that this conception of the aims of belief and desire can explain why B1, B2, D1, and D2 are true. For since my beliefs express what I think the world is like, I cannot think that the world is other than how my beliefs represent it as being, and since my desires express what I think the world should be like, I cannot think that the world should be other than how my desires propose that it should be.

<sup>13</sup> Consider a painted picture. Just because the picture is a picture of a horse (say), it doesn't follow that evaluation in terms of good horse-representation is uniquely appropriate for this picture. It may have other virtues, such as its composition, or it may involve elements of abstraction, or it may make some comment on the history of painting, or it may make some comment on animal rights, etc.

## THE RIGHT AND THE GOOD IN EPISTEMOLOGY

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**ABSTRACT.** Why is knowledge better than mere true belief? Most participants in the debate about this problem—the Meno problem—accept the claim on which this problem is based, namely that knowledge is indeed better than mere true belief. Their problem is to explain *why* knowledge is better than mere true belief, not *that* this is so. In this paper I opt for a revisionary response to the Meno problem: If we distinguish between the right and the good or between deontic and evaluative questions in epistemology, it will turn out that knowledge is not better than mere true belief. There is no *evaluative* difference between justified true belief and unjustified true belief. This does not imply, however, that there is no normative difference at all. The difference has to be spelled out in *deontic* terms. Truth belongs to the evaluative realm, whereas justification belongs to the deontic realm.

The structure of my paper will be as follows: After some preliminary remarks (§1) I will explain what distinction I have in mind when talking about the right and the good (§2). I will then argue that knowing is not *better* than believing truly and that one *ought* to believe according to the standards of justification (§3).

### 1 Preliminary Remarks

Throughout this paper I assume that truth is an epistemic value. I will not try to explain why this is so. Maybe truth is an intrinsic value, maybe truth is a constitutive goal of beliefs, maybe the value of truth has to be explained with reference to a brute, non-reducible but universal human desire (e.g. curiosity) or maybe the value of truth has to be explained by its pragmatic usefulness. The questions of why truth is a value lies outside the scope of this paper. What lies within the scope of this paper is only the question of how to understand the normative difference between knowledge and mere true belief.

Another assumption I make is merely terminological. I suppose that justification is whatever distinguishes mere true belief from knowledge. Since I am not concerned with analyzing knowledge, this is not a dangerous assumption.

### 2 The Right and the Good

There are (at least) two kinds of normative truths, evaluative and deontic truths. Evaluative judgments are about what is good or about what has value. Deontic judgments are about what is right or about what is to be done. Although there are important connections between the good and the right, the two must be distinguished sharply. I will introduce the distinction both by description and by examples. The most important reason for distinguishing the right and the good is this: The right is closely connected to praise and blame, whereas the good is not. Although it is good to be healthy, the unhealthy are not to be blamed for not being healthy. One is to blame if one does not care about one's health. Another reason for distinguishing the right and the good is that one can do what is right without achieving what is good.

### 3 Dissolving the Meno Problem

After arguing that there is an important distinction between the right and the good, I will apply this distinction to knowledge and mere true belief. In the first part of this section I will argue that

justified true belief is not better than mere true belief. In the second part I will argue that (on the assumption that it is good to have true beliefs) one ought to pursue justification.

### 3.1 A Trilemma

Suppose knowledge is better than mere true belief. Then, either the value of justification is derived from the value of truth or the value of justification is independent of the value of truth or justified true belief is (to use Moore's term) an organic unity.

If it is derived from the value of truth, the so-called swamping problem ensues. This problem was first presented as a problem for reliabilism. When evaluating a cup of coffee, what counts are the qualities of the coffee, not the reliability of the coffee machine. The same holds for evaluating a belief. What counts is the truth of the belief, not the reliability of the belief-forming process. At least, the reliability cannot increase the value of true belief. This argument can easily be generalized. Every conception of justification that explains the value of justification by reference to its truth-conduciveness runs into this problem. Suppose X is good and Y is good because it makes X more likely or is instrumental to attaining X. Then X + Y is not better than X.

If the value of justification is independent of the value of truth, a counterintuitive consequence follows. Contrary to what this view implies, a justified false belief is not better than a mere false belief. Usually it is even worse.

Is there a third option? Some authors think so. According to them, justified true belief forms an organic unity and has a value of its own. It is, they argue, not incoherent to value something only if it is achieved in a particular way. For example, the goal of mountaineering is not to reach the summit but to reach it in a particular way (not by taking a cable-car, for example). The same might be true in the case of justified true belief. Neither true belief nor justified belief is valuable, but justified true belief is. But mountaineering and believing are disanalogous in an important respect. Why is consulting a horoscope in order to find out whether one's home will be hit by a hurricane bad epistemic practice? Because this way of forming beliefs is not conducive to achieving true beliefs. Why should a mountaineer not take the cable-car? The answer is not that this is a bad means to reach the summit. When evaluating belief-forming processes or practices, this is done with reference to the goal of achieving true beliefs. Whereas mountaineers aim at reaching the summit in one among many possible ways, justification is not just one among many possible ways of attaining true beliefs. Therefore, the goal of truth cannot be replaced by the goal of knowledge.

### 3.2 Justification and What One Ought to Believe

Many authors in the debate about the Meno problem have tried to explain the alleged extra-value of knowledge by arguing that

- if someone knows that p, she deserves credit for believing that p (e.g. Greco, Riggs),
- the appropriate evaluative attitude to justified true belief is active, while one's attitude to mere true belief can only be passive (Brady),
- if someone knows that p, not only the belief, but also the believer or the belief-forming process is good (e.g. Hofmann).

Although there is some truth in all these proposals, they commit a common mistake. It simply does not follow from these claims that knowledge is better than mere true belief. All these proposals point to a difference between knowledge and mere true belief. However, there are many such differences and what needs to be shown is that these differences account for a difference in value. This problem, I will argue, can be avoided by viewing true belief as what one ought to care about.

This leads quite naturally to the idea that one only believes as one ought to believe if one is justified in having that belief. In general, values lead to oughts. Usually, if X is good for S, S ought to do what brings X about. (Some qualifications are needed here, e.g. the “ought” is only a pro tanto ought.)

### 3.3 Gettier Cases and the Meno Problem

An answer to the Meno problem should also explain why knowledge is better than being gettiered. How does my account deal with this question? Again, my answer is revisionary. Knowledge is not better than being gettiered. The victim of a Gettier case believes as she ought to believe. She also achieves the epistemic goal, namely truth. But she does so by chance. We should not be puzzled by this. Once the right and the good are separated, both the possibility of achieving the good without doing what is right and the possibility of doing what is right and achieving the good only by chance arise. Many people expect the right and the good to be in harmony. The only thing that is bad about being gettiered is that this expectation of harmony is violated. The victim of a Gettier case misses a second order goal, namely the goal of achieving the epistemic good *by* believing as one ought to believe.

## **VIRTUES, ROBUSTNESS, AND TRUTH-CONDUCTIVENESS**

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**ABSTRACT.** Intellectual virtues are, roughly, creditworthy or excellent cognitive dispositions. This general rubric appears to cover two very different types of dispositions. Some are inquiry-regulating intellectual character traits like open-mindedness, charity, and originality; they are integral to our evaluations of cognitive agents. Other are reliable belief-forming capacities like perception and memory; they appear to be centrally involved in knowledge. We can call these “high-level” and “low-level” virtues, respectively. As of yet, we do not have a single account of intellectual virtues that does an adequate job of handling both types of virtue. The extant accounts tend to do a good job with one sort, but only awkwardly extend over the other.

The value of a cognitive disposition is determined by more than just its reliability. One important factor is power, or the range of true beliefs a disposition generates. Another is portability, or the range of environments in which a disposition can operate reliably. Since we are not just interested in having any old true beliefs, but beliefs that are useful or that contribute to particularly valuable states (such as understanding, wisdom, or explanatory coherence), a third contributing factor is the significance of the beliefs produced.

When we appraise beliefs, we are primarily concerned with how reliable the belief is. When we appraise cognitive agents, however, it seems that these other factors are as important or more important than reliability. I thus argue that the value of the high-level virtues arises chiefly from their contributions to the power, portability, and importance of a subject’s belief-formation. High-level virtues are additionally valuable when they are robust; that is, when they are themselves powerful and portable dispositions. I argue that this approach accounts for both levels of intellectual virtue, and that this framework suggests that there should be a wide range of virtues between the low and high levels that have not yet been examined.

## EVIDENTIALISM, EPISTEMIC ENCROACHMENT, AND EPISTEMIC GOODNESS

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**ABSTRACT.** It is wrong everywhere, always, and for anyone to believe anything on insufficient evidence. Let's just take that as given. Is it wrong anywhere, ever, for anyone to believe anything on sufficient evidence? Not if the evidentialists are right. Are they right? I shall argue that they are not.

The discussion focuses on an argument for an evidentialist account of epistemic justification and permissibility. In order to explain why it is right everywhere, always, and for anyone to believe on sufficient evidence, the evidentialist can argue that the evidentialist account of the epistemic 'ought' follows from some independent observations about epistemic value or goodness. Feldman pursues this strategy saying that it cannot be wrong to follow our evidence even if the result is a false belief because following the evidence is the proper way to promote something of epistemic value.

It seems we ought to concede two things to the evidentialist. The first is that in the absence of the sort of value distinctive or rationally held belief it is improper to believe. In other words, whatever other value attaches to the unreasonably held belief, such a belief oughtn't be held. The second is that there is a kind of epistemic value that attaches to an individual's rationally believing a claim. Regardless of whether the rationally held belief is true, constitutes knowledge, or what have you, there is something epistemically good about such beliefs. I don't think these points can establish what they must to establish the evidentialist view that there is nothing more to believing what you ought than following the evidence to your beliefs. The promotion of the value the evidentialist tells us to promote does not ensure that there is a permission to believe the relevant proposition. The kind of value they focus on is not the mark of justification.

The paper will begin with a discussion of the problem of epistemic encroachment in §1. The problem of epistemic encroachment is that of keeping epistemic matters from encroaching into practical matters in ways they should not (e.g., by preventing us from drawing distinctions in morality it seems we have good reason to draw or by forcing us to revise our moral judgments in ways it seems we have good reason not to). The problem can be generated by means of two following assumptions. The first is that it is possible for two subjects with the same subjective motivational set (e.g., beliefs, desires, experiences, etc...) to judge that they ought to  $\Phi$  and act accordingly where one but only one subject acts permissibly. The second is that there is a necessary, albeit defeasible, connection between judgment and motivation. If someone judges that they should  $\Phi$ , they will either be motivated to  $\Phi$  or suffer from a kind of practical irrationality that prevents them from conforming to the demands of normative reasons. It turns out that these two assumptions cannot be squared with the evidentialist claim that the kind of value that attaches to the rationally held belief justifies believing the relevant proposition.

If the evidentialists are right, the value that 'calls for' believing and justifies belief supervenes on (a subset of) the subject's subjective motivational states. If that value called for this response, given our assumptions above, this value would have to, *inter alia*, justify acting on the relevant belief. This follows from our second assumption. But, the action that follows in the wake of the judgment cannot be justified. This follows from our first assumption. Hence, the evidentialist faces the problem of epistemic encroachment. They are committed to denying independently plausible claims about non-epistemic matters.

In §2, I shall consider some possible evidentialist solutions. The first response relies on

what I'll call the 'factoring strategy'. It denies that there's any logical connection between epistemic and moral permissibility. It asserts that it is sometimes right to act against your own judgment. It is *morally* right to act against the judgments that *epistemically* you ought to be making. I shall argue that the factoring strategy is hopeless.

The second is an attempt to live with epistemic encroachment. Rather than say that it is possible for two individuals with the same subjective mental states to perform actions that differ in deontic status, we say instead that the deontic status of our actions is determined wholly by facts about our subjective mental states. The resulting view is not dissimilar from Kant's view insofar as it denies the possibility of wrongdoing that cannot be attributed to a defect in an agent's will. I shall explain why this response is inadequate. We should distinguish moral goodness and moral permissibility as Kant did, but we must go further than Kant would and admit that it is possible for S's  $\Phi$ -ing to be both morally good and impermissible. This possibility rules out the second response and also explains the mistake underlying the argument for evidentialism. There is a value that attaches to certain kinds of moral failures, but the value that attaches to those failures does not merit the sort of response Feldman suggests.

It may well be that every value calls for or merits a kind of response. However, not every value calls for or merits promotion. Some values call for a different mode of response, such as honoring or respecting. Epistemic goodness, like moral goodness, merits a response, but it does not call for promotion. This is why epistemic goodness is not going to be what justifies belief. The evidentialist view must be mistaken because it cannot deal with the problem of epistemic encroachment. We know why someone might adopt the mistaken view. They are right about what epistemic goodness amounts to, but wrong to think that it merits the kind of response it must to justify the evidentialist's account of the epistemic 'ought'.

## KNOWLEDGE AS ACHIEVEMENT, MORE OR LESS

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**ABSTRACT.** This paper helps develop the resources of a distinctive approach in epistemology, what we might call "performance-based epistemology." Leading advocates of this approach contend that knowledge is an intellectual achievement. I consider two objections to this view and demonstrate that, although modifications might be in order, the essential idea behind performance-based epistemology remains intact and retains its appeal. Simple variations on a basic theme produce versions of performance-based epistemology able to meet a range of objections. This is noteworthy partly because performance-based epistemology provides a powerful and satisfying account of the value of knowledge. Section 1 introduces a framework for analyzing and evaluating performances, and characterizes achievement. Section 2 explains the relationship between achievement and safety. Section 3 presents the view that defines knowledge as an intellectual achievement, including its distinctive account of the value of knowledge. Section 4 considers an objection to that view, namely, that it is too weak. Section 5 considers a different objection, namely, that it is too strong.

### 1. Performance and Achievement

This section argues that performances generally have a quadruple-A evaluative structure of accuracy, **adroitness**, **aptness**, and **adeptness**.<sup>14</sup> Accurate performances achieve their aim, adroit performances manifest competence, apt performances are accurate because adroit, and adept performances yield accuracy manifesting competence. Each of these statuses comes in degrees. Call an adept performance's outcome an **achievement**. Every achievement is a success, but not vice versa.<sup>15</sup> An outcome is *your* achievement when it manifests your competence.

## 2. Safety and Achievement

A performance is **safe** just in case it (i) succeeds and (ii) not easily would have failed.<sup>16</sup> We can relativize safety to the manner of performance. A performance is **manner-relative safe** just in case it (i) succeeds, (ii) is conducted in manner M, and (iii) would not easily have failed when conducted in manner M. The remainder of this section presents cases demonstrating that achievements need be neither safe nor manner-relative safe.

## 3. Knowledge and Achievement

On one influential contemporary view, we best understand knowledge as a cognitive achievement.<sup>17</sup> On this view we treat belief-formation as a cognitive performance whose aim is truth. Accurate beliefs are true beliefs. Adroit beliefs are produced by cognitive competence, including discriminating perception, cogent reasoning and good memory. Apt beliefs are true because competent. Finally, your belief that Q is adept just in case *your truly believing Q* manifests your cognitive competence. Adept beliefs are cognitive achievements, and are identified with knowledge. Call this **the achievement account of knowledge**, or **AA** for short (pronounced {double A}).

Three attractive features of this view stand out. First, it helps explain the added value of knowledge over true belief: we value achievement over mere success (at least when the relevant outcome is unobjectionable or better).<sup>18</sup> Second, it promises to solve the Gettier problem: a Gettier subject lacks adept belief—that her belief is true does not manifest her intellectual competence.<sup>19</sup> Third, it places epistemic value and evaluation in a familiar pattern. As John Greco puts it, “the sort of credit and valuing associated with success through ability (or excellence, or virtue) [in our terminology, adept performance] is ubiquitous in human life,” appearing in the moral, athletic, and artistic domains, among others, so “the present account makes knowledge and epistemic evaluation another instance of that more general, familiar sort of normativity.”<sup>20</sup>

## 4. Safety and Knowledge

Duncan Pritchard rejects AA, arguing that cognitive achievement does not suffice for knowledge.

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<sup>14</sup> Sosa 2007: chapters 2 and 5 teaches us the triple-A structure of accuracy, adroitness, and aptness. To that I add adeptness (which may ultimately be what Sosa intends by ‘aptness’, though the official explanation of that term falls short of it, and we might anyway want a label for the status designated ‘aptness’ in the main text).

<sup>15</sup> I follow Pritchard forthcoming in these (somewhat technical) uses of ‘success’ and ‘achievement’. Riggs 2002: 95 ff. and Neta and Rohrbaugh 2004: 404 similarly use ‘achievement’. Where I use ‘achievement’ Sosa 2007: 41 sometimes uses ‘attainment’.

<sup>16</sup> Sosa 1999: 152 n. 17; 2007: 28 – 29. Also Williamson 2000: chapter 5.3.

<sup>17</sup> Sosa 1991, 2007; Greco 2000, 2003, 2007. See also Zagzebski 1996. [[Citation omitted]] argues for this reading of Greco, Zagzebski and Sosa. Arguably Aristotle, Descartes and Reid all held some version of this view.

<sup>18</sup> See e.g. Sosa 2003, 2007: chapter 4; Greco 2003: 133 – 4; Riggs 2002: 92 – 4.

<sup>19</sup> [[Citation omitted]]

<sup>20</sup> Greco 2007: 57 – 8.

Achievements can be unsafe, but knowledge cannot be unsafe, therefore knowledge is not (essentially) an achievement.<sup>21</sup> This section defends performance-based epistemology from Pritchard's critique. We identify non-cognitive achievements that likewise must be safe, and claim that knowledge patterns with these. This involves positing a quintuple-A evaluative structure for performances. To the four previously mentioned I add **amplitude**. A performance is ample just in case its *safety* manifests the agent's competence. Your belief is ample just in case its safety manifests your intellectual competence. Ample performances form a proper subset of adept performances. Call the outcome of an ample performance an **ample achievement**. Call the view that knowledge is ample belief **the ample achievement account of knowledge** or **AA+** for short (pronounced {double-A plus}). Another example of an ample achievement: *overwhelming* an opponent in adversarial competition. AA+ theorists might liken knowledge to *overwhelming a fact*.

## 5. Reliability and Achievement

Whereas Pritchard basically argued that AA is too weak (i.e. counts some non-knowledge as knowledge), this section presents evidence that it might be too strong (i.e. counts some knowledge as non-knowledge).

AA's proponents claim that knowledge is an achievement that proceeds from *select* intellectual dispositions. For example Ernest Sosa says knowledge must be produced by a competence, which is a disposition "that would in appropriately normal conditions ensure (or make highly likely) the success of any relevant performance issued by it."<sup>22</sup> Greco identifies knowledge as true belief manifesting "reliable cognitive abilities or powers."<sup>23</sup> Linda Zagzebski identifies knowledge as true belief manifesting intellectual virtue, where a virtue is an entrenched character trait enabling "reliable success."<sup>24</sup>

To settle on convenient terminology, I'll say these theorists claim that knowledge-producing dispositions must be **normally successful**. As I use the term here, 'disposition' denotes the genus that includes as species abilities, from the maximally reliable down to the extremely weak.<sup>25</sup> In turn competences (and powers, excellences, etc.) are species of ability. Weak abilities are unreliable but not completely useless.

Here we encounter a potential problem. Achievement does not generally require normally successful dispositions. Ted Williams is the best baseball hitter ever. At least often when he got a hit, he performed adeptly. But he normally failed to get a hit: the relevant ability could at best be counted on to produce a hit about 4 in ten times (his best yearly average ever was .407). And many lesser hitters sometimes perform adeptly too, despite normally failing seventy-five percent of the time or more. No disposition that normally fails is normally successful.

Achievements populate the road to proficiency in many spheres. A child's first grammatical sentence manifests her incipient linguistic ability; a rookie golfer's first par manifests his incipient putting skill; a pleasing chord manifests a novice musician's incipient musical ability; an undergraduate's essay might even manifest incipient composition skill. Even though their

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<sup>21</sup> Pritchard : 445 – 6. Says Pritchard 2008: 445, "knowledge seems to be intolerant to luck in a way [that] achievements are not..." Pritchard also argues, following Lackey 2007, that achievement is not necessary for knowledge. But I think that worry has been adequately addressed elsewhere; see [[citation omitted]].

<sup>22</sup> Sosa 2007: 29.

<sup>23</sup> 2002: 308; see also Greco 2000, 2003

<sup>24</sup> Zagzebski 1996: II.4.1.2 and III.2.

<sup>25</sup> To make unambiguous contact with Zagzebski's theory, I might add that character traits are also species of disposition. But I will not here work out the necessary details, leaving that task instead to the interested reader.

authors could not reliably produce such results, that first sentence, first par, first pleasing chord and first thoroughly grammatical essay are achievements (the last of which is unfortunately far too rare).

Reflection shows that this result is expected. Outcomes often manifest unreliable dispositions. A car's starting might manifest an unreliable starter's power; a room's being illuminated might manifest an unreliable flashlight's power; a candle's burning might manifest an unreliable lighter's power; a door's opening might manifest an unreliable sensor's power. Such outcomes are possible *even if unexpected* from unreliable items.

This raises a question for AA theorists. If achievements do not generally require normally successful dispositions, then why insist that knowledge must proceed from normally successful dispositions? Does not that restriction threaten to rule out too much?

But wait. We've seen that success can manifest unreliable ability. I called those outcomes "achievements," said that achievements populate the road to proficiency in many spheres, and cast my question for AA theorists in terms of achievements. Yet given the way we earlier characterized 'achievement' they might object. Earlier we said you perform adeptly just in case the successful outcome manifests your *competence*. Competence requires more than weak, unreliable ability. (The same goes for other categories AA theorists tend to favor, such as *excellence* and *virtue*.) This fair point forces me to reformulate the question.

We first need a term for performances whose success manifests reliable *or unreliable* abilities. Call such a performance **adequate**. All adept performances are adequate, but not vice versa. We also associated 'achievement' with the outcome of adept performance. We need a term for the outcome of adequate performance. Call them **attainments**. All achievements are attainments, but not vice versa. Call attainment that is not also an achievement a **mere attainment**. Finally, call the view that identifies knowledge with intellectual attainment **the attainment account of knowledge** or **AA-** for short (pronounced {double-A minus}).

Now let's reformulate our question: why identify knowledge with intellectual achievement rather than attainment? That is, why prefer AA over AA-? Why exclude mere intellectual attainments? What's wrong with an intellectual performance as adequate as a Ted-Williams double?

Notice that AA- can plausibly claim all the advantages we noted at the end of section 3. First, it can help explain the added value of knowledge over true belief: we value attainment over mere success (at least when the relevant outcome is unobjectionable or better). Second, it promises to solve the Gettier problem: a Gettier subject lacks adequate belief—that his belief is true does not manifest his intellectual ability.<sup>26</sup> Third, it places epistemic value and evaluation in a familiar pattern, namely, that of attainment.

The remainder of this section considers potential objections and replies.

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<sup>26</sup> Both AA and AA- theorists will say that Gettiered beliefs fail to manifest the subject's relevant dispositions. See [[citation omitted]].

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## **THE *TELOS* AND *SKOPOS* OF THE INTELLECTUALLY VIRTUOUS**

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**ABSTRACT.** What is the relationship between the intellectual virtues and the good of truth? This is a question raised by the recent development of a number of different theories of virtue epistemology. I argue that this relationship is a nuanced one that can not be exhausted simply through the idea that the exercise of the intellectual virtues will often lead us to the truth. I take as my model versions of virtue epistemology (like the one advanced by Linda Zagzebski) which look for parallels between the moral and intellectual virtues.

It is a common claim that beliefs aim at truth. In what sense do intellectually virtuous people aim at truth? To answer this question we need to differentiate between two types of aims. Taking a distinction from the Stoic moral virtues, we may distinguish between the *telos* and the *skopos* of a virtuous individual. The *telos* of an individual is her overall aim; her overall aim on a virtue conception will be living well or achieving *eudaimonia*. As a virtuous individual lives her life, she will decide to take on many projects and short-term goals. These goals are the immediate targets of her actions – her *skopoi*. *Skopoi* will depend on the circumstances and interests of the virtuous individual. For example, a virtuous person might be moved to by her virtue of generosity to take on the goal of helping a beggar she passes on the way to school. She thus makes aiding the beggar a *skopos* of hers, and she aims at that goal in her subsequent attempts to find food and housing for the beggar. Though she is conscientious in working towards that aim, her attempts might fail. The beggar might refuse assistance. Her failure to reach her given *skopos*, though frustrating to her, does not stop the virtuous person from achieving her *telos* of living well, nor does it stop her from developing her virtue of generosity.

We can apply the distinction between *telos* and *skopos* to intellectual virtues as well. The particular acts that one is motivated to perform by an intellectual virtue will be acts of believing or withholding belief. Our goal with each individual belief is to believe only truths and to avoid falsehoods. Since this is the goal of our individual acts of belief, truth is a *skopos*, not a *telos*. The *telos* of our epistemic lives is to believe well (or rationally), just as the *telos* of our moral lives is to live well (or morally). This *telos* is achieved by the possession and practice of intellectual virtues, such as intellectual courage, intellectual carefulness, and open-mindedness. Our virtue of intellectual courage may lead us to hold onto our own beliefs even though others disagree with us. Our immediate target, or *skopos*, in doing this is not simply to hold our own belief come what may, but rather to hold that belief only if it is true. We can compare this to the virtuous person who is moved by her generosity to help a beggar, but who will not to force assistance come what may. If the beggar refuses assistance, the generous person may fail to achieve her *skopos*, but she can still achieve her *telos* of living a good life. This is similar for the intellectual virtues. Sometimes what we believe, even as the result of exercising our intellectual virtues, turns out to be false. In these instances we fail to achieve our *skopos*, but we still possess intellectual virtues, and we are still acting in accordance with them. Thus we can see that the connection between intellectual virtues and the truth is a subtle one, and it is far less straightforward than simply requiring reliability in reaching the truth. Truth still plays a special role in intellectual virtues by being the *skopos* in each particular instance of belief. But the goodness of the intellectual virtues primarily derives from the role the virtues play in the activity of believing well – part of the overall human end of living well.