

Below is a draft of mine from 2013 shared with Jason Stanley's edition of the Rutgers dissertation seminar, containing some ideas which eventually made it into 'Veritism Unswamped' and 'An Epistemic Non-Consequentialism'. See the Appendix at the end for the email of mine which shared the draft, archived via a forwarding address (kvalerydietrich@gmail.com) I created when, inspired by Marlene Dietrich, I briefly thought I might change my name to 'Kurt Valery Dietrich'!

Internalist Values and the Fundamental Epistemic Value

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Abstract

Externalists about justification often concede that there is *some* positive epistemic property that internalists get right. They just give it a less lofty title—say, ‘rationality’. Whatever we call the property, it seems to have real epistemic value. There is something epistemically good about it, even in demon worlds where it is inversely correlated with reliability. But how, if truth is the fundamental epistemic value? I answer this question by showing that its force rests on a flawed model of how non-fundamental epistemic value is grounded in fundamental epistemic value. Following axiologists like Hurka (2001), we should deny that all *non-fundamental* epistemic value is *instrumental* epistemic value. In fact, we *must* do so if we view truth as the fundamental epistemic value: otherwise a generalized version of the swamping problem will render inexplicable the epistemic value of central *externalist* properties. If we adopt a better model that I call *Fittingness Grounding*, we can ground internalist epistemic values just as easily as externalist ones.

1 Introduction

Externalists in epistemology seem to enjoy an advantage in explaining the epistemic value of justification. After all, on popular externalist views, there is an essential objective instrumental link between justification and truth. Standard forms of reliabilism, for example, entail that justified beliefs are essentially likely to be true, in an objective sense of ‘likely’. Such externalists have a simple story to offer: justification is epistemically valuable because it is by its very nature instrumental to the fundamental epistemic good of truth.

While this story can seem neat, it is worth remembering that many externalists concede that there is *some* positive epistemic feature that is internalist in the minimal sense of being shared between epistemic subjects and their non-factive mental duplicates. They won’t call this feature ‘justification’. They

will give it other names, like ‘excusability’ or, as I will call it, ‘rationality’. This concession raises a question that no one has bothered to answer: how, if at all, is this property valuable from the epistemic point of view?

This property certainly seems to have genuine value from the epistemic point of view. Anticipating the externalists who pursue bifurcated views like the ones just mentioned, Stewart Cohen (1984: 283-4) wrote:

If the Reliabilist wants to distinguish ‘justified’ from ‘reasonable’ or ‘rational’ he may do so. But clearly the important epistemic concept [...] is what the Reliabilist would call ‘reasonability’ or ‘rationality’.

Cohen may have been hasty to assume that *the* important epistemic property is the internalist one. But it certainly seems to be *an* epistemically valuable property. And its epistemic value doesn’t seem merely contingent. Even in demon worlds where it is inversely correlated with reliability, there seems to be something epistemically *bad* about irrationality and *good* about rationality.

How could this be so? How could rationality have this kind of epistemic value, if it has at best a weak and contingent instrumental link to the fundamental epistemic good of truth? Obviously, there remains a *subjective* instrumental link between the internalist property and truth: from the believer’s point of view, rational beliefs often *appear* to be true beliefs. But this does not answer our question, which concerns the *real epistemic value* of the internalist property from a third-person point of view. The subjective instrumental link might prove helpful in an error theory,¹ but it will not answer our question.

This paper seeks to answer this question. I refuse to answer it by taking it as a *brute fact* that rationality is necessarily epistemically valuable, though I think it is a fact. Indeed, I not only deny that rationality has *fundamental* epistemic value, but agree with reliabilists about the truth of:

(Veritism) Truth is the sole *fundamental* epistemic value; the epistemic value of everything else is *grounded* somehow in its epistemic value.

But I reject epistemologists’ assumptions about how this axiological claim is to be unpacked. Reliabilists and other contributors to the literature on epistemic value assume without argument that Veritism is trivially equivalent to:

(Instrumentalist Veritism) Truth is the sole *non-instrumental* epistemic value; the epistemic value of everything else is explained by its instrumental conduciveness to this value.

¹Compare Kolodny (2005)’s Transparency Account.

They do so because they presuppose:

(The Instrumentalist Assumption) All *non-fundamental* epistemic value is *instrumental* epistemic value; the only way for X's epistemic value to be *grounded* in Y's is for some instrumental link to connect X and Y.

But this assumption is substantive. Many axiologists reject the generalized version of it that drops the 'epistemic', by drawing a distinction between non-basic and basic non-instrumental goods; this includes axiologists who are otherwise consequentialists about rightness.²

Following these theorists, I think we should make room for ways of grounding non-fundamental epistemic value in fundamental epistemic value that are not instrumental. We should not cast Veritism as Instrumentalist Veritism. As we'll see, there are conclusive reasons not to so that are *independent* of any desire to vindicate the necessary epistemic value of internalist rationality. Once they are appreciated, we can explain how such internalist properties have necessary epistemic value compatibly with Veritism. Or so I will argue.

Here is the plan. In §2, I explain why we must reject the Instrumentalist Assumption if we accept Veritism. This is crucial. The epistemic value of rationality seems dubious *precisely because* of its apparent disconnection from truth. But this appearance rests on a *generally flawed* model of how epistemic properties derive their epistemic value from truth's. I'll use my alternative model in §3 to ground rationality's epistemic value in truth's. In §4, I discuss implications for internalists about epistemic *justification*. Such internalists can succeed only if a Kantian view of truth's epistemic value is defensible. They have not defended this view. So work remains. But it can't be claimed that they flout the truth connection: they can insist that it has been miscast.

2 Understanding the Fundamentality of Truth

Understanding the value of something is not just a matter of knowing how valuable it is, but rather a matter of knowing how to value it—knowing what kinds of actions and attitudes are called for.

—T. M. SCANLON

To undermine the worry that rationality is not necessarily good from the point of view of truth, we must better understand how evaluation from the point of

²Behold consequentialists about rightness like Rashdall (1907), Feldman (2000) and Hurka (2001), non-consequentialists like Korsgaard (1983), Herman (1993) and Dancy (2004), and neutral theorists like Rabinowicz and Ronnow-Rasmussen (2001).

view of truth works. I'll show that if the epistemic value of central properties like justification and knowledge are grounded in truth's epistemic value, the grounding can't proceed along instrumental lines. This will bring us to my alternative model of how the grounding story works ("Fittingness Grounding").

I take this route for two reasons. Firstly, it is important to see that my alternative model is defensible on grounds *independent* of any desire to vindicate internalist values. A naïve objection is that my model would only be plausible to those who antecedently embrace the necessary epistemic value of rationality. On the contrary, Veritists generally need such a model to understand the value of properties like justified belief and knowledge *even if both entail reliably formed belief*. The second reason is more direct. The challenge to the epistemic value of rationality comes from its apparent disconnection from truth. But truth's fundamental epistemic value has been misunderstood. The bite of the challenge turns on this misunderstanding.

2.1 Instrumentalism and Generalized Swamping

Epistemic axiologists have already suggested (in effect) that Instrumentalist Veritism leads to a general version of a problem called *the swamping problem*. I think they are right. Some of the same people claim that this problem confronts Veritism *simpliciter*.³ This is wrong. It rests on the Instrumentalist Assumption. Veritists can reject the Instrumentalist Assumption and avoid generalized swamping by doing so. Putting these observations suggests that if we adopt a truth-oriented epistemic axiology, we should reject the Instrumentalist Assumption—a conclusion that will serve me well.

To bring this out, recall the original swamping problem and why some think it generalizes. In Zagzebski (1999)'s influential presentation, it was first framed as a problem for reliabilists. Here is how it arose. It seems that:

1. Any epistemic value possessed by reliability is merely instrumental, relative to the goals of promoting true belief and demoting false belief.

But as many have argued, the following is defensible given (1):

2. A belief's possessing the property of having been reliably produced does not *as such* add epistemic value to that belief if it is already true.

(2) is supported by an analogy. We value effective coffee makers instrumentally, because they reliably produce good coffee. But the mere fact that some good

³There is an exception: in his masterful early presentation of the problem, Jones (1997) concluded that it was a general problem for epistemic instrumentalists, internalists included.

coffee has the property of having been produced by a reliable maker doesn't by itself seem to make that *coffee* better; the goodness of the coffee *swamps* the goodness of its having been reliably produced. Yet reliably produced true belief seems relevantly analogous to reliably produced good coffee. Hence (2).

Now, some reliabilists question this argument. Goldman (2012) claims that some instrumentally derived value is immune from swamping. As he notes, we do sometimes place greater value on products of reliable processes. The market value of a good watch produced by Rolex is far higher than that of a watch produced by Casio, even if the Casio happens to be unusually good and the two watches are, by peculiar happenstance, intrinsically similar. What could explain this difference in value, if not the greater reliability of Rolex?

This is a moot point. Why *should* one value one watch more than the other, if they are intrinsically so similar? Market value is not necessarily real value. But even if we grant Goldman's data, this would not undermine the case for (2). To see why, it helps to get clear on the more general axiological thesis that the coffee analogy seemed to favor. I take the thesis to be:

(*) Some F's having come from a reliable producer of good F's will not *as such* add value to F, if that F is already a good F.

The 'as such' matters. (*) does not imply that there are no properties that can *accompany* some F's reliable ancestry and add value to an already good F. Once we see this, it is easy to explain Goldman's data consistently with (*).

One of the reasons why someone might rationally prefer having a Rolex watch is that it is a *status symbol*. It is a status symbol in part because Rolex is a great company. But the value of a status symbol doesn't *consist* in this. It is just a property that *accompanies* reliable ancestry.

This enables us to explain Goldman's data while preserving (*) and Zagzebski's analogy. The result seems right. There is, after all, a clear challenge for Goldman: he must explain the intuition about the original coffee case and the multitude of similar cases. We just *don't* treat these cases like we treat the Rolex case. If Goldman is right that reliable ancestry *as such* adds value that isn't swamped, there would be no explanation of the difference.

The only obvious strategy is to point to a property that reliably produced coffee lacks that (e.g.) the Rolex watch possesses. But this strategy *concedes* (*), since it concedes that reliable ancestry *as such* doesn't add unswamped value: it just happens to *come with* value-adding properties in *some* cases.

So, the conclusion from the original swamping literature stands:

3. If knowledge is *just* reliably formed true belief, it is not as such epistemically better than true belief.

Now, I think the original swamping problem ran deeper than this. It isn't at core a problem about knowledge, but about justified belief. Real reliabilists will deny that knowledge = justified true belief because of the Gettier problem. But they will still identify being justified with being reliably formed. But we can use the same Zagzebski reasoning to show that justification cannot by itself add epistemic value to true belief. That by itself is a problem! Justification *does* by itself add epistemic value to true belief!

So there is a deeper structure here that makes the problem not just of limited interest to reliabilists. On any view on which:

being justified : true belief :: being made by a good coffeemaker : good coffee

there is a worry that justification cannot add epistemic value to true belief. So, there is a worry for any view on which being justified consists merely in being the product of something that is only *instrumentally* good relative to truth.⁴ Since reliabilists aren't the only epistemologists who accept this assumption, the problem is broader than Zagzebski (1999) originally suggested.

As I foreshadowed, some have recently made even stronger claims about the scope of the swamping problem. Duncan Pritchard (2011) is a fine example. He insists that it generalizes for all Veritists. Why?

Well, before giving his argument, Pritchard (2011: 245) says he will assume:

(Not Instrumental \rightarrow Fundamental) "A good is fundamental [...] if its value is not instrumental relative to further goods of the same type."

Notice that this is equivalent to:

(Non-Fundamental \rightarrow Instrumental) If a good is not fundamental, then it is instrumental (relative to further goods of the same type).

This restates the Instrumentalist Assumption. The makes it easy. Veritism then entails:

⁴Jones (1997: 427) drew this conclusion when he gave the swamping problem one of its first detailed presentations. He was explicit that it was not just a problem for reliabilists:

Instrumentalism in the theory of knowledge is consistent with internalism...as well as externalism.... The claims of this section apply to any instrumentalist theories of knowledge.... The instrumentalist's resources are all-in-all too sparse to account for why we value knowledge over mere true belief.

Surprisingly, writers in recent literature seem to ignore this aspect of Jones's argument.

(All Else Instrumental to Truth) “The epistemic value conferred on a belief by that belief having an epistemic property is instrumental epistemic value relative to...true belief.” (2011: 245)

And the following is a natural generalization of the points from the coffee case:

(Swamping Premise) If a property F had by X is only instrumentally good relative to a further property G and G is already fully present in X, then simply having F in addition to G doesn’t make X itself better.

But the Swamping Premise plus All Else Instrumental to Truth entail that knowledge is not as such epistemically better than true belief.

Pritchard concludes that there are only three escape routes:

(A: \neg Veritism) By claiming that there are more (or other) fundamental epistemic values than truth.

(B: \neg Knowledge Intuition) By denying that knowledge is epistemically better than true belief.

(C: Non-Epistemic Final Value) By claiming that knowledge has some kind of non-epistemic final value.

I dislike all these options. One could try to reject the Swamping Premise. But I agree with Pritchard that it holds for instrumental value *as such*,⁵ and is established by the usual points about coffee. But it is *only* true about instrumental value as such. There is no general truth about *all non-fundamental value* behind the Swamping Premise. This becomes clear when we appreciate that there are *other kinds* of non-fundamental value than instrumental value.

2.2 Other Kinds of Non-Fundamental Value

Many value theorists recommend distinguishing between fundamental and non-fundamental non-instrumental value. Consider the sort of example that motivates Hurka (2001)’s recursive theory of non-instrumental value. It seems like a good thing to admire intrinsically admirable artistic work. It is implausible that admiring this work is good only because it is conducive to separate, non-instrumental goods. It seems good in itself. Nonetheless, it seems bizarre to think that having fitting responses to value is itself a *fundamental* kind of

⁵Jarvis and Carter (2012) argue that the Swamping Premise fails in the epistemic domain, but their argument crucially presupposes that all derivative value is instrumental; see §2.4.

value. After all, a fitting response to what's valuable seems good *because* it is appropriately directed at something that is independently valuable.

This suggests that there are differences in fundamentality *among* non-instrumental values. This suggests that a generalized analogue of the Instrumentalist Assumption fails:

(Broader Instrumentalist Assumption) All *non-fundamental* epistemic value is *instrumental* epistemic value; the only way for X's epistemic value to be *grounded in* Y's is for X and Y to be instrumentally linked.

If there is non-fundamental value that isn't instrumentally grounded, it becomes natural to ask whether the Swamping Premise generalizes to apply to it. The answer is No. Consider:

(Generalized Swamping Premise) If F has only *non-fundamental* value relative to a further property G and G is fully present in X, then simply having F in addition to G does not make X itself more valuable.

This is false. If a state of affairs X has the property of being one in which there is a fitting response to something valuable, X is better than it would be if it *only* had the property of being one in which that valuable thing is present. But the former property has only *non-fundamental* value relative to the latter, given the earlier points. So the Generalized Swamping Premise fails.

There is, then, a type of value grounding here that is swamping-proof:

(Fittingness Grounding) If X has value (in some domain D) and V(X)-ing is a fitting way of valuing X (in D), then, necessarily, V(X)-ing has non-fundamental value (in D).

This explains why admiring the admirable, desiring the desirable, respecting the respectable, etc., are good *per se* without bloating the stock of fundamental values. This would be hard to explain if instrumental relations were the only value grounding relations. Fittingly responding to fundamental value needn't reliably bring about further instantiations of fundamental value. Yet it is implausible that fitting ways of valuing are themselves *fundamentally* valuable. They are valuable *because* they are fitting responses to value.

2.3 A Fitting Response to Generalized Swamping

Can this idea be extended to the domain of epistemic value in a way that could help Veritism? Yes—and it need not, we'll see, involve overintellectualization.

Veritists can use Fittingness Grounding to support:

(Veritism without Instrumentalism) Truth is the fundamental epistemic value, but its being fundamentally epistemically valuable consists not just in its being the fitting object of instrumental promotion, but also in its being the fitting object of other, non-instrumental kinds of valuing.

Specifically, they can pursue the following strategy:

1. Unpack the claim that truth is epistemically valuable in the claim that the truth norm expressed by “In taking a stance on P, believe P iff P is true” is one that is to be *recognized in certain fitting ways*.
2. Suggest that besides mere *conformity* (by our believing truly), there are other fitting ways to relate to the truth norm, like *respect*.
3. Note that conforming with the standard in a way that manifests such responses is epistemically better than merely conforming, since:
 - (A) Epistemically fitting responses to epistemic value are non-fundamentally epistemically valuable, by Fittingness Grounding.
 - (B) This pattern of value grounding generally avoids swamping.
4. Suggest that justified belief and knowledge both require believing *via* methods fittingly value truth.
5. Conclude that knowing and justifiedly truly believing are epistemically better than merely truly believing (given (A) and (B)).
6. But stress that the epistemic value we hereby derive is non-fundamental, relative to truth. So all of this is consistent with Veritism, and Veritism is not responsible for the swamping problem.

In other words, justification and knowledge constitutively require forming one’s beliefs in ways that fittingly value truth, and these ways go beyond mere instrumental promotion. But this gives justification and knowledge a kind of epistemic value that isn’t swamped by the presence of true belief. Fittingness Grounding is, we’ve seen, swamping-proof.

Notice that this doesn’t simply involve retreating to something like Pritchard’s option (C). We have derived a *properly epistemic* kind of value for justification and knowledge. This leaves it open whether either of these properties is non-instrumentally good *simpliciter* (as I find dubious).

It is crucial to stress that the idea of fittingly valuing truth needn’t be understood in any overintellectualizing way. Recall Sosa on “love of truth”:

What, then, does constitute our advocacy of the ideal of truth? When is our belief-formation virtuously guided by that ideal? [...] Sooner or later we shall need to recognize that our virtuous epistemic conduct must derive at some deep level from our virtuous nature, a nature not itself due entirely to one's free and autonomous choice. If the conduct is really admirable...then the constitution manifest in the evaluated conduct must itself be admirable because it helps the subject get into proper relation to the truth.⁶

Sosa is not denying that it is epistemically fitting to value truth. He is advocating a *sparse model* of what it takes to do so.⁷ If Sosa is to be believed, doing so cannot always consist in consciously following truth-promoting rules *via* practical syllogisms. But it may consist in our having and manifesting certain cognitive abilities. So, the model of Fittingness Grounding to the epistemic domain needn't alienate externalists or involve overintellectualization.

In fact, externalists *need* something like this model to ground justification's epistemic value in truth's. Instrumental value, after all, is subject to swamping by the end from which it derives its value. If justification is epistemically valuable only as an instrumental means to the state of true belief, we will be unable to explain why justified true belief is better than mere true belief.

So the appearance that externalists enjoy an advantage in virtue of being able to tell the instrumentalist story is partly illusory. The instrumentalist story does not fully explain the epistemic value even of externalist properties!

2.4 Taking Stock

We've seen that Veritists should reject the Instrumentalist Assumption to avert the generalized swamping problem. This is no distraction from our target. The epistemic value of rationality seemed puzzling *precisely because* of its apparent disconnection from truth. What I've argued so far will enable me to show that the epistemic value of rationality can be derived from that of truth *via* one more application of a *broader attractive strategy*. Rationality proves no more puzzling from the point of view of truth than other epistemic values.

But I don't want to understate the importance of rejecting the Instrumentalist Assumption, by making it appear of local interest only to Veritists. Even deniers of Veritism should, I believe, reject the Instrumentalist Assumption.

⁶Sosa (2001: 56-7).

⁷Compare Greco (1999: 289). In trying to accommodate some internalist intuitions, Greco in effect suggests that his externalist view just offers a sparser model of fittingly valuing truth.

Here is one reason. As Carter and Jarvis (2012) observe, there is another side to Zagzebski’s analogy. We don’t *merely* think that a good cup of coffee isn’t made better in virtue of having been produced by a reliable coffeemaker. We *also* don’t think that a bad cup of coffee is made better in virtue of having been produced by a reliable coffeemaker. If one takes a sip of tar-laden swill and spits it out in disgust, it is not comforting to be told: “Hey, although it tastes like filth, at least it was produced by a good coffeemaker.” This point suggests that a thesis even more striking than the Swamping Premise is true:

(Swamping+) If some F is produced by a reliable maker of good Fs, this doesn’t *as such* make this F better if it is in other respects a bad F.

Carter and Jarvis find this a *reductio* of Zagzebski’s argument. For they think Swamping+ would establish that “non-factive epistemic properties—most saliently justification—are never epistemically valuable”. But this is wrong. Like Pritchard, Carter and Jarvis simply *presuppose the instrumental model of non-fundamental value in drawing this inference*.

What they really show is that this instrumental model is a bad model of non-fundamental epistemic value *whether we are Veritists or not*. After all, the coffeemaker analogy does seem to show something important about properties whose instantiation is only (fallibly) instrumentally linked to instantiations of further good properties. It is not as if Carter and Jarvis show that a cup of filth is after all better if it comes from an otherwise reliable machine. What they really bring out by drawing attention to Swamping+ is that the instrumental model is generally of little use for the domain of epistemic value. This is *precisely because* (i) the Swamping Premise and Swamping+ are both true, (ii) non-instrumentally grounded non-fundamental value is swamping-proof, and (iii) non-fundamental epistemic value is swamping-proof.

This all holds even if we remain neutral on Veritism. Since Fittingness Grounding provides a swamping-proof alternative, we ought to make room for it in our epistemic axiology even if we aren’t Veritists.

3 How Rationality Can Matter for Veritists

We are now in a position to see how rationality derives its epistemic value from truth’s. The story just involves further applications of Fittingness Grounding, which is a *generally useful* model for grounding the derivative epistemic value of more clearly important properties like justification and knowledge.

Recall that our model had two components. One is the idea that there are more fitting ways of valuing than instrumental ones like *producing*. My

specific model makes this clear. What my strategy from §2.3 took as basic was the *truth norm*, not the state of true belief. A norm cannot be *produced*. It can only be *conformed with* (by our believing truly), *complied with* in an objective sense (by our knowing), *recognitionally respected* (by our believing rationally, I will suggest), etc. The other key aspect of the account was this: fitting responses to value are non-fundamentally but also non-instrumentally valuable. Given these ideas, the way to explain the epistemic value of any interesting property F is simple. We look for a fitting way of recognizing the truth norm that is entailed by F and then apply Fittingness Grounding.

So let's consider rationality. What forms of recognition might the truth norm require, which are *constitutively* required by rationality?

I'll break my answer to this question this into two parts, since I think there are two species of epistemic rationality—the *structural* and the *substantive*.

3.1 Structural Rationality and Commitment

Structural rationality requires complying with norms of coherence such as:

(Suspend) Rationality requires one not to (i) take oneself to lack sufficient evidence for P and for $\neg P$, while (ii) failing to suspend judgment on P.

Violating Suspend seems epistemically bad, and complying with it seems epistemically good. The explanation seems to have *something* to do with truth.

But what? Not necessarily something instrumental. One can violate Suspend while believing only and many truths at the first-order. One's beliefs about the evidence may badly mislead, so that complying with Suspend deprives one of many true first-order beliefs. So, the fitting response to the truth norm manifested by complying with Suspend is not plausibly instrumental. Violating Suspend needn't hinder the project of promoting a high ratio of true to false beliefs. Complying with Suspend needn't advance that project.

To see what the fitting response might be, consider someone who is disposed often enough to violate Suspend. It is natural to think that this person cannot be *fully committed* to treating truth as authoritative in belief-formation. This is, I believe, a general fact about those who are often enough disposed to violate requirements like Suspend. Consider some further coherence requirements:

(Epistemic Enkrasia) Rationality requires that one not: (i) take oneself to have conclusive reasons to believe P and (ii) not believe P while (iii) considering the question whether P and aiming to take a stance on it.⁸

⁸The term 'enkrasia' comes from John Broome. See Broome (1999, forthcoming).

(Weak Consistency) Rationality requires one not to believe P and $\neg P$.

Plausibly, those who are often enough disposed to violate these requirements also cannot be fully committed to the ideal of truth.⁹

Given this, we can ground the epistemic value of structural rationality in the same way we grounded that of justification and knowledge:

1. Complying with requirements of structural rationality constitutes being fully committed to the truth norm.
2. Commitment is a fitting response to truth's fundamental epistemic value.
3. If (2), then such commitment is non-fundamentally epistemically valuable (by Fittingness Grounding), and necessarily so.
4. If A constitutes B and B is non-fundamentally epistemically valuable, A is non-fundamentally epistemically valuable.
5. So, given (1-4), structural rationality is non-fundamentally epistemically valuable, and necessarily so.

Since the epistemic value of structural rationality derives from that of truth *via* Fittingness Grounding, this epistemic value is also swamping-proof.

3.2 Substantive Rationality and Recognition Respect

Rationality isn't all about having one's attitudes hang together. Beyond requiring that *sets* of attitudes have certain features, rationality can require us to have *specific* attitudes. *Substantive* rationality is this side of rationality.

I take substantive rationality to consist in correctly responding to *apparent reasons*, where the 'apparent' isn't a success term—though it is *compatible* with appearances not being misleading. A non-epistemic illustration is given by a famous case from Williams (1981). Bernie orders a gin and tonic at his favorite bar and winds up by accident with a glass of petrol that looks just like a gin and tonic. Here there is no sufficient objective normative reason for Bernie to drink. But given how the glass perceptually appears and what else Bernie knows, it is rational for Bernie to drink. Bernie has an *apparently* sufficient reason to drink, since his case is phenomenally the same as one in which he has an objectively sufficient reason to drink.

⁹Of course, it may be *impossible* for real believers to be disposed to *systematically* violate these sorts of requirements *all the time*. But I'm not imagining cases so extreme: I'm imagining people sloppy enough to be disposed to violate them somewhat often.

Just as there are apparent reasons in the practical domain, so there are apparent reasons in the epistemic domain. I take one's perceptual appearances to provide such reasons. In demon worlds, perceptual appearances provide no *objectively good evidence* to endorse their representational contents. They are radically unreliable indicators of anything external in these worlds. Still, it is rational to heed these experiences. For one has *apparently* sufficient normative reasons to endorse their representational contents. After all, one's case is phenomenally the same as one in which such experiences are veridical.

In such worlds, how could substantive rationality have value from the point of view of truth? Once again, the strategy is to find a fitting response to the truth norm that *constitutes* substantive rationality, and to derive substantive rationality's epistemic value from truth's *via* Fittingness Grounding. The fitting response is not going to be an instrumental one. One would radically fail to promote a high ratio of true to false beliefs if one heeded the call of experience in the demon world. This is what prompted the original worry that epistemic rationality does not necessarily matter.

So what might it be? There is a clear sense in which one can fail to *respect* certain norms even if one truly and coherently believes that one is conforming with them. It is a sense intimately linked with *negligence* of a kind that arises when one has strong but misleading apparent reasons to believe that one is violating a norm. We can imagine "demon world" scenarios outside of epistemology where such negligence would never reliably lead to bad outcomes, and would in fact reliably lead to good ones. Perhaps a demon plants a lot of apparently good evidence that suggests to Bill that it is a law that one not A, but where the demon guarantees that it is always perfectly legally permissible to A anyway, and indeed sets up the world so that Bill will be guaranteed to act legally permissibly no matter what. In such cases, Bill would fail to manifest sufficient respect for legal norms if he ignored this apparent evidence.

It is fitting in a domain-relative sense to respect the norms in a domain. This isn't to say that one must *esteem* these norms. We can follow Darwall (1977: 38-9) in cleaving *recognition respect* from *appraisal respect*:

There is a kind of respect which can have any of a number of different sorts of things as its object and which consists, most generally, in a disposition to weigh appropriately in one's deliberations some feature of the thing in question and to act accordingly. [...] I shall call it *recognition respect*. There is another attitude which differs importantly from recognition respect but which we likewise refer to by the term 'respect'. Unlike recognition respect, its exclusive objects are persons or features which are held to manifest their excellence as persons or as engaged in

some specific pursuit. [...] Such respect consists in an attitude of positive appraisal of that person either as a person or as engaged in some particular pursuit. [...] I shall call it *appraisal respect*.

But I would depart slightly from Darwall's characterization by treating recognition respect for a norm N as being constituted by correctly responding to apparent reasons bearing on whether one would comply with N.

So understood, recognition respect is the fitting response to the standard of truth that we exhibit when we manifest substantive epistemic rationality. If so, we can vindicate its necessary epistemic value with the same kind of argument we used to vindicate the epistemic value of structural rationality:

1. Complying with requirements of substantive rationality constitutes recognitionally respecting the truth norm.
2. Such respect is a fitting response to truth's fundamental epistemic value.
3. If (2), then such respect is non-fundamentally epistemically valuable (by Fittingness Grounding), and necessarily so.
4. If A constitutes B and B is non-fundamentally epistemically valuable, A is non-fundamentally epistemically valuable.
5. So, given (1-4), substantive rationality is non-fundamentally epistemically valuable, and necessarily so.

Since substantive rationality's epistemic value derives from truth's *via* Fittingness Grounding, this epistemic value is also swamping-proof.

3.3 Taking Stock (and the Dialectic)

We can see now that rationality derives its epistemic value from truth's in the same way that properties like justification and knowledge derive theirs. It cannot be claimed that commitment and recognition respect are not fitting responses to truth norm. While it is unclear that these responses are *required*, it is clear that they are *fitting*. That is all we need for the argument.

It matters that I explained the epistemic value of rationality *via* the same model I used for justification and knowledge. If there were no swamping problem and we could use the instrumentalist story to fully handle justification and knowledge, one might have complained that my explanation was cherry-picked for rationality's sake. But this is wrong. What the generalized swamping

problem suggests is that the instrumental story fails even to account for the epistemic value of justification and knowledge.

Other non-error-theoretic responses to the generalized swamping problem involve viewing knowledge a further *fundamental* epistemic value, or attributing to it a kind of *non-epistemic* intrinsic value. The first response is short-sighted. There is also a swamping problem for mere justified true belief. No one wants to claim that it is a fundamental epistemic value. The second response fails to address our sense that knowledge and justification are *properly epistemically* good in ways that are unswamped by the presence of true belief.

4 Implications for Internalists

Our question was how internalist properties could have epistemic value in a truth-oriented epistemic axiology. I started by granting that there is a difference between justification and rationality, and an objective instrumental link between justification and truth. But I noted that many externalists will agree that there is *some* property that supervenes on non-factive mental life—just not *justification*. So the discussion has not been of local interest to internalists.

But the discussion has implications for internalists. It illuminates what must be done to defend internalism if truth is the fundamental epistemic value.

4.1 Internalism and Epistemic Kantianism

If internalists could establish the following thesis, they would have a real argument for collapsing the distinction between justification and rationality:

(Epistemic Kantianism) Fittingly valuing truth from the epistemic point of view consists in respecting (and being committed to) the truth norm.

If Epistemic Kantianism were true, instrumental ways of valuing truth would not be *fundamentally* fitting from the epistemic point of view. This is not to say that instrumental ways of valuing truth would not be fitting *at all* from the epistemic point of view. It is only to say that they would be fitting *only if* achieved through respect or commitment. Compare Kantianism in ethics. Kantians needn't hold that the consequences don't matter at all. But if they take to heart Kant's claim that the good will is the only thing that is "good without qualification", they should view consequences mattering at best *derivatively*, by being appropriately connected to a good will.

Why must internalists accept Epistemic Kantianism? Because it seems to be the only view that justifies collapsing the distinction between justification

and rationality. If truth's epistemic value consists in its being the fitting object of recognition respect and commitment, our duties to truth are fulfilled in the demon world. If not, our duties to truth may be unfulfilled in the demon world. Internalists might *insist* that we focus only on positive epistemic features that we possess iff we respect and commit to the truth norm. But this would be implausible if Epistemic Kantianism were false. Why are such properties the ones to focus on, if Epistemic Kantianism fails? I see no good answer.

4.2 Is Epistemic Kantianism doomed?

Like Kantianism in ethics, Epistemic Kantianism might seem incredible. It implies that it is not good from the epistemic point of view to believe truly if one's true belief is formed by methods that disrespect the truth norm. But isn't it plausible that it is always at least *pro tanto* good from the epistemic point of view to believe truly?

Internalists are not without answers. One thing for internalists to do is to distinguish between being valuable *and epistemic* and being valuable *from the epistemic point of view*. Internalists will not deny that we put a high practical value on having true beliefs. True beliefs about the way to Larissa will enable us to get to Larissa, after all. Since true beliefs are epistemic items in the wide sense, they are valuable and epistemic. But it is fallacious to infer "X is F-ly valuable" from "X is valuable and F". For example, one could imagine some beneficent strategy that will not, in fact, advance the military's aims. Since the military's aims might otherwise be bad, this strategy could in a more absolute sense be good. So it will be good, and it will be a military strategy. But it won't be good *qua* military strategy.

A similar tactic might reduce the implausibility of Epistemic Kantianism's consequences. But problems remain. Remember that there are useless true beliefs (e.g., about the number of grains of sand on a beach). These beliefs are worthless *simpliciter*. But they are partly good *qua* beliefs. This is because they fulfill the *constitutive function of belief*, which is to accurately represent the world. If one is convinced that epistemic value is grounded in constitutive normativity of this kind, it will be hard to accept Epistemic Kantianism.

One might reply by insisting on a distinction between functional normativity and some more robust kind of normativity. There are familiar problems with constitutivist theories of this stripe outside epistemology. Attempts to ground practical normativity in the constitution of agency, for example, face the "schmagency" challenge.¹⁰ But here there is a disanalogy between epis-

¹⁰See Enoch (2006).

temology and the philosophy of practical reason. The intuition that genuine reasons for action matter “from the Point of View of the Universe” lends force to the “schmagency” challenge. There is no comparable intuition about epistemic reasons, especially given reflection on useless beliefs. If Epistemic Kantianism requires a similarly absolute conception of epistemic normativity, that would be an *objection* to the view, not a way to *support* it.

I think this puts into sharp relief what would be needed to defend internalism, once the view that justification and rationality are distinct properties is understood to be the competing view. While these challenges might be answered, I do not think internalists have done much to answer them. Their view has rested too long on collapsing a distinction that there are strong reasons to make across the board in our thinking about normativity. If anything, the case for making this distinction is even stronger in epistemology than in ethics.

5 Why Bother?

In that case, why should externalists bother with vindicating the epistemic value of rationality? There is a straightforward answer, with which I conclude.

5.1 The Need to Explain Defeat by Internalist Factors

Externalists standardly *presuppose* that justification can be defeated by factors that don’t objectively bear on the truth of our beliefs. Indeed, many externalists hold views about how justification can be defeated that differ greatly from their views about how it can be created. The only clear explanation of why they defeat our justification is that they make our beliefs irrational.

To see this divergence, consider some externalists. On Goldman’s classic account, a belief is *prima facie* non-inferentially justified iff it is the product of an unconditionally reliable belief-independent belief-forming process, and a belief is *prima facie* inferentially justified iff (a) it is inferred from justified beliefs, and (b) the inferential process used is conditionally reliable. In spite of holding this demanding account of *prima facie* justification, Goldman has sometimes allowed defeat to occur easily. Discussing a case where someone believes her vision to be seriously impaired, Goldman (1986: 111) said: “What she believes, then, is such that *if* it were true, the beliefs in question (her visually formed beliefs) *would not* be permitted by a right rule system. Satisfaction of this condition, I now propose, is sufficient to undermine permittedness.”

There is no constraint here that the undermining belief itself be justified. Even an unjustified belief can defeat a justified belief, according to this con-

dition. Bergmann (2006) and Plantinga (1993) held a similar view: for them, all believed defeaters are *ipso facto* real defeaters. This is an interesting combination of sentiments. Why should sufficient reasons *for* belief be so difficult to acquire, and sufficient reasons *against* belief be so easy to acquire?

Now, Goldman has not always allowed that unjustified beliefs can be defeaters. Some other externalists reject this view too.¹¹ But a related point remains. Virtually all externalists have wanted to make room for defeat by perceptual experience, even if non-veridical. Consider Goldman (2011: 272) discussing an example involving a certain Sidney who believed that it was going to be sunny this afternoon and

continues to believe an updated version of this proposition—namely, that it is sunny right now (in the middle of the afternoon)—despite the fact that he is walking in the middle of a rainstorm. [...] If we want to say what defeats Sidney’s current justification for his sunniness belief, the obvious candidate is his perceptual experience.

If we just focus on fortunate subjects like you and me, this admission creates no tension. But it is easy enough to imagine subjects some of whose perceptual systems are unreliable (unbeknownst to them). The intuition remains that the analogue of Sidney who acquires his weather belief from nondefective sources—e.g., good testimony—would be just as irrational if he kept the belief while finding himself faced with experiences relevantly similar to Sidney’s.

But the “no defeaters” clause can’t be invoked without further comment to explain this kind of case. If these subjects’ experiences *aren’t* reliable indicators of the facts, it is hard to see how the driving standards of standard externalist theories could coherently deem these *good reasons* for abandoning otherwise reliably formed beliefs, which could *outweigh* and make *less than sufficiently good* the *prima facie* reasons that exist in favor of belief.

Of course, what *is* clear is that there is irrationality in all these cases. There is *structural* irrationality in cases where one has a *prima facie* justified belief B, believes that B is unjustified, and continues to hold B. And there is *substantive* irrationality in cases where one has a *prima facie* justified belief in P, but has a perceptual experience with the content that $\neg P$ even when the experience emerges from a faulty faculty whose unreliability is unknown.

So, most externalists implicitly agree that the absence of rationality is sufficient for all-things-considered unjustifiedness, given their views of defeat. But this belief is not easy to defend if externalists fail to give an account of why internalist rationality necessarily matters from the epistemic point of view.

¹¹Cf. Alston (2002) on Plantinga.

5.2 Rationality and Justification Aren't *Orthogonal*

This points to a more general observation. While some externalists in effect distinguish between justification and rationality, simply making this distinction doesn't amount to claiming that justification and rationality are *orthogonal*. What is typically suggested is merely something like:

(Insufficient) Rationality does not suffice for justification.

As far as I know, no one has recommended anything like:

(Unnecessary) Rationality is unnecessary for justification.

But one craves an explanation, especially given that internalist rationality may do *nothing* to enhance one's reliability. BonJour's famous case of Norman the clairvoyant affords a good illustration:

NORMAN: Norman has a perfectly reliable clairvoyant faculty. He believes that the President is in Manhattan in virtue of this faculty, and has no other evidence concerning the President's whereabouts, or concerning whether or not he has a reliable clairvoyant faculty.

Norman is not rational. But is he justified? Externalists balk at saying "Yes", even if they draw the distinction between justification and rationality for other reasons (e.g., the new evil demon problem). But what is the explanation? By stipulation, Norman's belief is formed by a perfectly reliable process.

We started out by supposing that externalists have a clear explanation of why justification matters from the epistemic point of view. But the instrumentalist mentioned at the outset would predict that Norman's belief is perfectly *good* from the epistemic point of view. After all, it is formed by a process that makes it objectively likely to be true. That was the original externalist explanation of why justification is epistemically good. The story must be more complicated if externalists don't want to bite the bullet on NORMAN.

This illustrates a more general reason why externalists should agree that rationality is necessarily important from the epistemic point of view and be interested in explaining its importance. Justification and rationality are not *orthogonal* on the standard "two properties" view. If not, we need to explain why rationality matters from the epistemic point of view to have a *complete* explanation of why justification matters from the epistemic point of view.

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Hi all,

I have attached my paper for next week along with a short recent publication of mine that you might read as background (iff you have time). To avoid confusion: the file name for the paper is 'InternalistValsandTruth[nf].pdf' and the file name for the publication is 'TruthMonismWithoutTeleologyFinalV.pdf'.

This is a brand new attempt at presenting these ideas in a way that doesn't presuppose the rest of my dissertation. So I'm especially curious about presentational and stylistic advice. Since I want to use some material in this ballpark for a writing sample, it is crucial that I get this straight ASAP.

Also, I spend a fair bit of time reiterating points from the published piece, simply because the success of that piece is crucial to the argument in the new paper. If anyone can think of a simpler way to structure the paper that doesn't involve so much reiteration, I'd be especially interested in hearing about that.

For people not familiar with my project, here is a tiny caption:

The core of my dissertation is about why rationality---which I take to be internalist---matters from the epistemic point of view. I argue in the first part of the dissertation for a novel version of the view that rationality and justification are generally distinct properties (everywhere---epistemology, ethics, etc.). Justification---which I take to be externalist---is of more obvious importance, or so I argue. So, I'm interested in whether rationality matters *at all*---and if so, *why* and *how* it matters. I think rationality's importance in epistemology can be vindicated if (and only if) we reject some widely held *teleological* presuppositions about (i) the nature of epistemic value derivation and (ii) what it means for truth to be the fundamental epistemic value. The second part of my dissertation develops a positive alternative to teleology in epistemology. Notably, that is one of the places where I differ from Selim Berker, since everything he's written so far on epistemic teleology is purely negative. I also think he gets the dialectic wrong in certain ways; my reasons for opposing teleology are quite different from his. If anyone familiar with his stuff would like to talk about this, I'd be happy to do so. (It will probably matter for the job market that I be able to quickly explain how he and I differ.)

Thanks all,

Kurt

2 attachments

 InternalistValsAndTruth[nf].pdf
228K

 TruthMonismWithoutTeleologyFinalV.pdf
488K