RECENT WORK
ON VIRTUE EPISTEMOLOGY

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I. INTRODUCTION

The period of a dozen years since Gregory Pence's *APQ* review article on "Recent Work on Virtues" (1984) has witnessed continued interest in virtue ethics, its relationships with normative ethics and action theory, and the opposition between aretaic, consequentialist, and deontological ethics. It has also witnessed something Pence could hardly have anticipated: the significant development of versions of aretaic or virtue epistemology. An intellectual virtue is a cognitive disposition utilized or exercised in the formation of beliefs. Giving intellectual virtues a central explanatory role in epistemology is not of course entirely a novel idea, since recent work in virtue epistemology (hereafter *VE*) has occurred in concert with renewed interest in the role of intellectual virtue in Aristotle's epistemology. Reliabilist versions of *VE* are its best-known extant versions, and reliabilist *VE* has also dovetailed with renewed interest in Thomas Reid's faculty-centered epistemology (Lehrer, 1989).

Epistemologies today are often characterized by terms such as aretaic, deontological, and consequentialist (specifically, 'epistemic rule-utilitarian').[1] This language has moved into epistemology rather swiftly, given initial impetus by several

influential articles on different aspects of the epistemology/ethics analogy by William Alston (1978), Roderick Firth (1978, 1981), Jonathan Dancy (1982), Richard Feldman (1988) and Matthias Steup (1988). Issues of the voluntariness of belief and of the distinction between belief and acceptance are pertinent here, but it is a mistake to see any of these meta-epistemological accounts as dependent upon doxastic voluntarism.[2] That this objection misses the point is made especially clear on the "pragmatic" accounts of intellectual virtue such as those of Hookway (1994) and Zagzebski (1996), where the focus is on human *inquiry*, a kind of *activity*, and where the primary focus of evaluation is shifted from the act or belief to the agents' character traits. On such accounts the justifiability of beliefs is derivative, and the emphasis is on epistemic evaluations made in the context of inquiry.[3]

Dancy notes that, like the terms already mentioned, "internalism" and "externalism" entered epistemology through analogy with the long-standing use of those terms in ethics.[4] The method for this carry-over is analogical and not reductive. The concern that it not be reductive is evident in reticence over the use of the long-standing term "ethics of belief," which for some brings to mind such connotations (discussed in Firth 1978; Code, 1987). Others

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who do adopt the idea of an ethics of belief in discussions of normative epistemology are at pains to show that their use is not reductionistic of epistemology (Zagzebski 1996). The analogical method has been perceived as greatly expanding the resources of epistemologists by opening up useful channels for comparison and contrast of epistemological theories. Still, its use exhibited initial drawbacks as well, due to overgeneralizations about the relative "maturity" of the two fields, and about what "results" in ethics could be unproblematically assumed (Dancy, 1992; 1993).

Virtues and skills are subtly different traits, but to attribute either of them to a subject requires dispositions that are not fleeting and have a significant degree of character-stability; action instancing or manifesting ethical virtue, and belief manifesting intellectual virtue, are for this reason explanatorily useful. The virtues are also closely related to normative or evaluative questions. Virtues are dispositional states of character or inner nature conceptually bound up with the good, and their attribution to agents as motivations contributing to actions we perform, or contributing to the formation and acceptance of beliefs, may also reflect praise or blame upon us. The virtues thus serve both descriptive/explanatory and normative/evaluative tasks; and it is incumbent upon the naturalistic virtue theorist (as upon any form of 'normative naturalism') to both keep these tasks logically separated and yet to give an account, through the concept of virtue, of their relationship. Making this demand is really to burden the virtue theorist with the daunting task of an account of the place of normativity in a naturalistic world view; but it is surely no *more* daunting than the burdens of explanation that fall on either "eliminative" naturalists or on non-naturalists of different stripes.

The most developed accounts of virtue epistemology are Ernest Sosa's *virtue perspectivism,* developed in articles many of which are collected in his *Knowledge in Perspective* (1991; hereafter *KIP*), and Alvin Goldman's *historical reliabilism,* the *VE* version of which is developed primarily in "Epistemic Folkways and Scientific Epistemology," contained in *Liaisons* (1992; hereafter *LI*). There have also been other book-length treatments and a growing number of articles and reviews. In order to cast attention on the division between "reliabilist" and "responsibilist" versions of *VE,* I will discuss Lorraine Code's *Epistemic Responsibility* (1987), James Montmarquet's *Epistemic Virtue and Doxastic Responsibility* (1993), and articles by John Greco, Christopher Hookway and Hilary Kornblith. Of special interest here is Linda Zagzebski's *Virtues of the Mind* (1996), the most extensive development to date of a unified conception of ethical and intellectual virtue.

Reliabilism and responsibilism were both, of course, options in epistemology before the appearance of their explicitly virtue-centered versions. What I will call *virtue reliabilism* emerged as a development within externalist approaches to knowledge, which themselves developed mainly in response to the "Gettier-type problem" and the challenge it presented to the model of knowledge as "true justified belief." Responsibilism, as an account of justified belief, has also been well-represented in the post-Gettier era. Following Sosa's initial sketch of a virtue-centered epistemology in his influential 1980 article, "The Raft and the Pyramid," epistemic 'virtue-talk' was next picked up in a responsibilist context by Heil (1983) and Kornblith (1983). Code's book, which I will describe as the first explicit version of *virtue responsibilism,* draws, as she clearly acknowledges, both from previous

responsibilist thought in ethics and episte-mology, and from Sosa's articles of the early and mid-1980's (1987, p. 50). Yet already in her work, and even more so in responses to it, the tension between reliabilist and responsibilist conceptions of intellectual virtue is readily apparent (Haack, 1991; BonJour 1990).

Clearly, there is some close connection between responsibilism and internalism, since one objection to externalism rests on the intuition that the main requirement of epistemic justification is that acceptance of a belief is rational or responsible in re-lation to our cognitive goal or goals (BonJour 1992). We here take the pri-mary sense of the internalism/externalism contrast to be over the connection or "bas-ing" relationship between a belief and its adequate grounds; internalism asserts, while externalism denies, that this relation should be available to the agent upon in-trospective reflection (Kim, 1993).[5] As a matter of orientation toward one's own knowledge-seeking self, responsibility re-quires an introspective capacity (Code, 1987). But whether this makes our two extant forms of VE irreconcilable is some-thing we will have to investigate in the context of their specific construals of in-tellectual virtue and epistemic justification.

The contrast of virtue reliabilism and virtue responsibilism (the latter term is suggested by Goldman) is not intended to be exhaustive of possible forms of VE; yet even though there have been few direct exchanges between these groups, it recog-nizes one significant manner in which those doing work *within VE* mark differences among themselves. Zagzebski's distinc-tion between two forms of pure virtue theory, the "good-based" and the "agent-based," drawn in part from Michael Slote's work (1996), significantly overlaps with my own distinction between virtue reliabil-ism and virtue perspectivism, while

bringing in a specific focus on the explana-tory strategies employed in each kind. While there remains disagreement over whether goals or motivations have episte-mic primacy, she emphasizes that "In virtue ethics, the concept of a virtue has almost always combined internally accessible and internally inaccessible criteria for its pos-session" (p. 331). The epistemic correlates of this conception, embodied in her "dual component" account of intellectual virtue, can be compared in section IV with virtue reliabilist strategies for avoiding the ex-tremes of epistemic externalism and internalism. I begin by canvassing the ex-tant forms of VE through the recent work by its leading proponents and the objec-tions of their critics.

II. VIRTUE-RELIABILISM

The association of Alvin Plantinga's *proper functionalism* with VE is tenuous at best, and we begin with it here only in order to pass quickly on to those who ex-plicitly endorse VE. This association is due both to the identification of VE with fac-ulty-based reliabilism, and to the place of *ergon* in Aristotle's account of the virtues. In "Proper Functionalism and Virtue Epis-temology" (1993), in which Sosa outlines his outstanding differences with Plantinga and with the Goldman of "Epistemic Folk-ways," he concludes that the disagreements between the three "seem relatively small, when compared with the large areas of agreement, [and] it seems appropriate to view the three approaches as varieties of a single more fundamental option in episte-mology, one which puts the explicative emphasis on truth-conducive intellectual virtues or faculties, and is properly termed 'virtue epistemology'" (*KIP* p. 64).

I have already sounded a warning about the narrowness of simply identifying VE with its reliabilist versions and will have more to say about this later. The point here

is that while Goldman explicitly endorses Sosa's term "virtue epistemology" (*LI* p. 157), Plantinga refuses the identification. Goldman adopts the term as an alternative description of the view that he develops in "Epistemic Folkways," which modifies his previous views, identified as "historical or genetic reliabilism" (p. 117); his current version of *VE* adds what he thinks are "some distinctive features that improve its [*VE*'s] prospects." Plantinga, however, responds to Sosa's "irenic conclusion" by inverting the suggested relationship between proper functionalism and VE.

The point is not just that the emphasis on truth-conducive faculties is qualified in different ways by the two, to make room for the role of "design" in Plantinga's case and "epistemic perspective" in Sosa's. The notions of design plan and proper function are "correlative" for Plantinga, and proper function can't be separated, as he finds Sosa trying to do, from "functioning in accordance with imposed design." Though his definition of the virtues is functional-teleological, Sosa rejects the need for a theological or even evolutionary account of the notion of "design" is order to understand a properly ordered faculty (compare *KIP* p. 282).

Plantinga uses a well-known example of a brain lesion victim whose lesion happens to reliably produce true beliefs. Proper function tied to design plan gives an explanation of why the lesion produces, accidentally though reliably, true beliefs, and hence saves the intuition that the victim is unjustified in his beliefs. Can these intuitions be saved on a "weaker" account that foregoes the notion of design plan? Intellectual virtues will not provide a fully satisfactory account of the difference between accidentality and non-accidentality if they are simply *defined* through their truth-conduciveness. To supplement, Sosa uses the idea of the agent's lack of

"perspective" on the reliable source of his beliefs, and Goldman uses the lack of match between the causal process and virtues on the typical epistemic evaluators "list" of virtues. Plantinga argues against the satisfactoriness of these alternative accounts and concludes that ". . . insofar as an epistemic virtue is an epistemic faculty, Sosa's virtue epistemology is really a variety of proper functionalism" (1993c, p. 81).

There appear to be still unresolved problems here in how to separate virtue reliabilism from proper functionalism. But given this sharp rebuttal to Sosa on Plantinga's part, together with the obvious fact that Plantinga nowhere makes central use of descriptions of epistemic warrant or epistemic agents in terms of intellectual virtues, I will not pursue his recent development of proper functionalism or his extensive work on warrant (1993a; 1993b).

Sosa's specific form of *VE* is called *virtue perspectivism*. According to Sosa, "the view I defend involves two main elements: the concept of an intellectual virtue, and the concept of an epistemic perspective. Roughly, a cognitive faculty or intellectual virtue is a competence to distinguish the true from the false in some field of propositions F when in certain circumstances C" (1994c). This truth-linked conception of intellectual virtue, where virtues are ingrained dispositions that lead to a preponderance of truths over falsehoods, is strongly analogous to the conception of moral virtues as dispositions that reliably promote the good. Placing beliefs in epistemic perspective means taking note of the sources of one's first-order beliefs and of how reliable these sources are in different kinds of circumstances, say, of lighting and distance for beliefs based on the faculty of visual perception.

Sosa characterizes virtue perspectivism as "a type of generic reliabilism," while recognizing that reliabilism "comes in a

great variety of types most of which are clearly unacceptable."[6] The modifications virtue perspectivism makes to generic reliabilism are set in part by the problem of the "accidental reliability" of belief-producing mechanisms or processes. Here, as a start, the virtue reliabilist tries to rule out random and ad hoc processes by requiring that justified beliefs be generated by a genuine capacity or *competence* to arrive at truth, identifying these with intellectual virtue. But this will hardly suffice to mark differences with other forms of generic reliabilism, and so we must turn to the context of at least three additional problems that Sosa builds his account around. These problems, usually posed by internalists, should be understood as primarily directed against "the *combination* of reliabilism as a theory of justification with a conception of knowledge as justified true belief" (*KIP*, p. 244). Very briefly, they are the following:

1) the "New Evil Demon Problem" poses cases of systematic deception or wholesale falsehood (including brain-in-vat cases). Here it is claimed that the reliabilist's conditions on justification do not fit our intuitions, which seem to side with the subject being justified in her beliefs despite the unreliability (in the demon world) of the process that produced them. The upshot of the argument is to show that reliabilist requirements on epistemic justification are *too strong*, that is, not *necessary* for the justification of belief.

2) the "Meta-Incoherence Problem" poses cases such as that of a person with a reliable belief-producing faculty of clairvoyance, yet unaware of her own faculty. The conditions generic reliabilism places on justification would here seem to be met; yet the reliabilist analysis again does not fit our intuitions, if we agree these tell us that the clairvoyant is *not*

justified in his beliefs. Hence the upshot is that the reliabilists' conditions are *too weak*, that is, not *sufficient* for the justification of belief.

3) the "Generality Problem" alleges a problem for reliabilists in the specification of reliable processes. If taken too narrowly, the argument runs, such processes show themselves not to be necessary for justification; and if taken too broadly, then they may be necessary but are also shown insufficient. This places a specific demand on virtue reliabilists to provide a specification of a faculty or virtue that is neither so specific that *every* true belief is credited to a reliable faculty, nor so broad that a single faculty generates beliefs that seem to have different epistemic statuses (compare Hookway, 1994).

We can use the context of these problems as background for sketching some of the distinctions that Sosa sees as giving virtue perspectivism substantial advantages over other forms of generic reliabilism (see also BonJour 1992):

Virtue perspectivism distinguishes between aptness and justification of belief, where a belief is apt if it derives from a faculty or virtue, but is justified only if it fits coherently within the epistemic perspective of the believer --perhaps by being connected to adequate reasons in the mind of the believer in such a way that the believer follows adequate or even impeccable intellectual procedure . . .

Virtue perspectivism distinguishes between animal and reflective knowledge. For animal knowledge one needs only belief that is apt and derives from an intellectual virtue or faculty. By contrast, reflective knowledge always requires belief that not only is apt but also has a kind of justification, since it must be belief that fits coherently within the epistemic perspective of the believer (*KIP*, p. 145).[7]

Animal knowledge may be treated in more strictly reliabilist fashion. Animal knowledge is exemplified in an agent's direct response to its environment, through perception or memory, for example, with little or no benefit of reflection or understanding. But virtue perspectivism places requirements of justification on reflective knowledge, and these requirements have a clear internalist character to them. "For reflective knowledge one not only must believe out of virtue. One must also be aware of doing so. Of course one need not know with precision and detail the relevant C and F. Some grasp of them is required, however, even if it remains sketchy and generic" (1994c).

Sosa shows in these passages that he is not attempting to "solve" the above problems in favor of a strictly reliabilist account of *both* knowledge and justification. Reliabilism well-begun leads to coherentism, and perspectivism is presented as Sosa's form of coherentism (*KIP* p. 97). "Pure" reliabilism is rejected in favor of an account with mixed reliabilist and coherentist elements, for each contain insights that need to be integrated in an account of justification. Reliabilism is centrally present in justification through its focus on faculties or virtues; but *internal* justification is largely a matter of comprehensive coherence. The basic distinction underlying virtue perspectivism, then, is "my distinction between externalist, reliability-bound aptness and internalist, rationality-bound justification" (1995).

It will be impossible for us to do more here than to indicate in the briefest fashion how Sosa's virtue perspectivism addresses the three problems in *KIP* and more recent articles (see also BonJour 1992 and 1995). The aptness/justification distinction is used in his treatment of the new evil-demon problem. This distinction helps save the intuition that the victim's

beliefs are justified (her beliefs may be as coherent as ours from her epistemic perspective); yet it also shows why she lacks knowledge --her beliefs do not derive from faculties that are apt relative to her demon-world. Her epistemic perspective, though coherent, "is pervaded by falsehood concerning the supposed virtues or faculties by appeal to which [she] explains [her] beliefs (and concerning much else besides)" (*KIP* p. 281).

The related distinction between animal and reflective knowledge is used heavily in connection with the latter two problems, though I reserve comment on the generality problem until the next section. Sosa's reply to the meta-incoherence problem can save the intuition that the clairvoyant is *unjustified*. Despite the reliability of the clairvoyant's special faculty, "he can be seen as subjectively unjustified through lack of an appropriate perspective on his belief: either because he positively takes the belief to be ill-formed, or because he 'ought' to take it to be ill-formed given his total picture of things, and given the cognitive processes available to him" (p. 134).

We have seen that Sosa's virtue perspectivism makes significant concessions to coherentism and incorporates internalist elements in its account of justification. The "argumentative" or agent-reasons conception of justification is well-ensconced in common language, and eliminating the argumentative account altogether, as in a strictly reliabilist account of justification, seems "drastic" to Sosa. To this extent his epistemology is quite irenic. Yet it retains a strongly reliabilist orientation. Cases of animal and human children's knowledge, as externalists have emphasized, show a sense in which justification is not even *necessary* for some kinds of knowledge. Yielding justification and its cognate terms to the argumentative account "requires in turn that justification be demoted from its

position as principal concept of episte-mology" (p. 255). The justification/aptness distinction, or the "split" between two *senses* of justification (subjective and ob-jective) as Sosa sometimes alternatively puts it, makes questions of externalist, reli-ability-bound aptness epistemically primary.

Further clarification of virtue reliabilism can be gained by comparing Sosa's virtue perspectivist account with Alvin Goldman's recent writings. Intellectual borrowing has gone both directions between these two, but Goldman's "Epistemic Folkways" notes a clear debt to Sosa's *KIP* for the virtue-centered approach he now takes in comparison to that of his *Epistemology and Cognition* (1986). Goldman's approach is unique in its focus on the "psychology of the epistemic *evaluator*" (the "folk" as evaluators) rather than on the epistemic *agent*. This also places emphasis on the role of *exemplars* of virtue and vice as op-posed to mere definitions or abstract characterizations, and on the mentally stored set or "list" of cognitive virtues and vices that reflective epistemic evaluators are assumed to hold. The tasks of episte-mology include not just stating abstract conditions of justification but also show-ing what psychological processes are conducive to justification. Goldman's at-tention to a broad range of cognitive and social scientific studies is exceptional, un-derlining the concern of virtue theory that normative ethics and epistemology be based upon the best current theories of ac-tual human motivational capacities (1993a; 1993b). Epistemology for Goldman is di-vided between the descriptive and the prescriptive, and also between individual epistemology, representing philosophy's interaction with cognitive science, and social epistemology, representing its rela-tionship with the social sciences. As with Sosa, the reliabilist orientation of the ac-count of justification is shown by its

"two-tiered" (Goldman) or "stratified" (Sosa) character.[8] Among their many dif-ferences, however, I will focus on three areas that will remain important in rela-tion to our later discussion of objections to virtue reliabilism.

1. *The relativization of justification.* Sosa treats justification and aptness as "indexical" terms and distinguishes same-world and actual-world justification: "*S* is 'same-world justified' in world *W* in be-lieving *P* if *S* believes *P* in *W* in virtue of a faculty that *in W* is truth conducive. *S* is 'actual-world justified' in world *W* in be-lieving *P* if *S* believes *P* in *W* in virtue of a faculty that in *our actual world a* is truth conducive" (1995). Goldman rejects Sosa's relativization of aptness and justi-fication to environment, because "there is no evidence that 'the folk' are inclined to relativize virtues and vices to this or that possible world" (1992, pp. 161). This dif-ference also affects the way that each goes about handling counter-examples given in the "possible worlds" semantics of modal logic. Goldman developed what is known as "normal worlds reliabilism," but later abandoned it partly due to the reasoning above. He now tries to handle such cases without relativizing, mostly by use of the "weak/strong justification" distinction dis-cussed in (3) below.

2. *Doxastic Ascent.* Sosa traces his meta-belief requirements on justification to "the challenge of doxastic ascent," the chal-lenge, incumbent on the reflective knower, to have a certain amount of self-knowledge about his faculties (though not about non-introspectable *mechanisms*). Without this self-knowledge, we could not discriminate in favor of memory and against suddenly endowed clairvoyance. We might come to learn that we can rely on the latter faculty as we normally do on the former, but a kind of doxastic ascent is just what consti-tutes such learning (*KIP*, p. 95). Virtue

perspectivism acknowledges this challenge, but many other forms of generic reliabilism do not. Goldman challenges the idea that epistemic evaluators have or require meta-beliefs about the sources of their own beliefs. This is also said to be based on description of "epistemic folkways." Just as the folk are unlikely to relativize justification to environment, they are unlikely to have (or to hold upon reflection) the kind of metabeliefs that Sosa makes requisite for justification in the case of beliefs that count as reflective knowledge.

3. *The seat of justification.* We have seen that the features Goldman develops to improve the prospects of virtue reliabilism include his psychological starting point with the epistemic evaluator, and his "list" proposal with its connection to an exemplar approach to concept representation. For his part, Sosa distinguishes virtue perspectivism from deontological epistemology, as well as from "truth tracking" (Nozick), from "reliable process" (Goldman), and from "reliable indicator" (Armstrong, Swain) versions of reliabilism. None of these other approaches, he argues, satisfactorily allows the subject her place as the *seat of justification*:

> When we praise a performance as skillful or an action as right, or a judgment as wise or apt . . . we speak not only of the performance or the action or the judgment, but also of the agent or the subject and of the aptitude of character or intelligence that is reflected in what they did or thought. . . . That seems a rather distinctive type of view that one can plausibly hold both in epistemology and in ethics. . . . The virtue epistemology and the virtue ethics suggested here place the emphasis rather on the agent and cognizer (1994c).

III. Objections to Virtue Reliabilism

The broadest contemporary critique of perspectivism is that of Frederick Schmitt (1992; 1993a; 1993b), which assaults a thesis he identifies not only with virtue perspectivism, but indeed with a majority of "iterative" epistemologies today, both internalist and externalist. "There is no role for a status of perspectival belief" in epistemology on his view, which holds perspectivism to present a confusion between a belief's being justified and a believer being justified (1993, p. 27). Proponents of perspectivist epistemologies would disagree with Schmitt's claim that they fail to account for that distinction, and we have also seen Sosa reject a related claim Schmitt makes, that pure reliabilism and pure coherentism are the only viable accounts of justification. We will later touch upon a further contrast of aretaic theory with Schmitt's deontological account.[9]

In a review of *KIP*, Schmitt also argues that Sosa's virtue perspectivism is both too strong and too weak (compare Greco 1993a). It is seen as too weak to the extent that it lacks an account of the appropriate causal connections between the perceptual faculty and the belief (relying instead on the notion of "exercising" the virtue of faculty). It is seen as too strong to the extent that one might think of cases where a belief-forming process is reliable but does not constitute a *stable* disposition in the agent (1993a). Schmitt has in mind here cases similar to what William Alston (1993) calls the case of the "inconstant knower," one who is generally a sloppy reasoner but on occasion atypically reasons impeccably well. Would virtue reliabilism deny him knowledge on this occasion because the disposition to reason in this way is not stable for him? (compare Sosa's *KIP*, Ch.16).

In one recent exchange, Sosa responds to critiques made by Richard Fumerton (1994) and by Richard Foley (1994). Fumerton objects to Sosa's reliance on

coherence in his account of epistemic justification and to his conception of the environment-relative reliability of faculties or virtues. More specifically, he queries Sosa over how he intends to formulate and analyze the truth conditions of the subjunctive conditionals that define the faculties on this account (see *KIP*, p. 284). Fumerton finds the additional problem that, if virtues are defined relative to environment, it becomes exceedingly difficult to resist specifying the virtue in so narrow a way that we are impaled on the first horn of the generality problem, that is, "to insure trivially virtuous belief relative to the environment we pick." Sosa's response is to be found in the condition that one pick one's description of the environment (relative to which one judges the virtue of a belief-forming process) in such a way that the resulting judgements are *useful*. "The likely solution lies in allowing only *F*s and *C*s appropriately usable by us for reasonable generalizations about our intellectual aptitudes" (*KIP*, p. 291). But Fumerton argues we need something closer to a probabilistic connection between the conditions that produce a belief and the resulting belief's being true (see also Fumerton 1995). The subjunctive conditionals defining the truth-conducive faculties or virtues underlying the epistemic virtues "should be made true by probabilistic laws."

Foley questions what he sees as essentially pragmatic reasons — why we care about justification and reliability, or the 'usefulness' thesis mentioned above — being taken as *defining conditions* of knowledge in virtue perspectivism (1994). These result in pragmatic and social constraints on knowledge to which he objects. "Why we generally care about knowledge is one thing; its defining characteristics are something quite different." He also questions whether we

have coherent "meta-beliefs" about the mechanisms giving rise to our beliefs, and the fields and conditions under which those mechanisms are reliable. Sosa's virtue perspectivism "require[s] that one have reason to think one's first order beliefs true, since it requires that first order beliefs be placed in 'epistemic perspective,' where one takes note of the sources of one's beliefs (of the first order ones, at a minimum) and of how reliable these are" (1995). Foley finds it dubious that many of us have the required degree of awareness of the bases of our own reliability. In this Foley disagrees with Sosa over the degree of awareness required, insisting that the logic of the accidental reliability problem must drive Sosa to something more than the "sketchy" awareness or inferential habit that the latter finds sufficient for ordinary reflective knowledge.[10]

Sosa's way of responding is to say that we must not assign stronger perspectival requirements than are likely to be met in ordinary cases (1994c). His discussion of "inferential habits" as implicit beliefs is a provocative one with Aristotelian connections, though we cannot pursue it here. "Sketchy awareness" of the source of first-order beliefs (sight, hearing, smell, etc.) goes together with minimal requirements, where we have attained an awareness of our tendency to be right in a field under certain conditions, and have reasoned that this tendency is not a mere accident. Reflective awareness comes in degrees, but reasoning in such a way is essential to our ability to "bootstrap" ourselves to a higher level of self-conscious awareness. We should avoid making the minimal conditions for reflective knowledge too strict, on pain that little human knowledge will meet it; but normative epistemology retains a legitimate interest in how greater self-awareness contributes to the comprehensiveness and coherence of our total body of beliefs.

There are of course also those who think *any* second-order or meta-belief requirement for justification must be resisted on pain of launching an infinite regress. But *KIP* argues strenuously against that view. I would suggest Sosa's requirement might be regarded as the epistemic correlate of the first of Aristotle's three requirements for actions from virtue (at *NE* 1105a29ff), the requirement of a "recognitional" capacity. This requirement, according to Aristotle, is necessary for the reflective agent's being "in the right state" --properly attuned to his environment or properly affected by it.[11] Audi (1995) and Sherman (1989) provide insightful analyses on Aristotle's conditions on *action from virtue*.

Alston is among those who argue that there is a problem of *epistemic circularity* that is fatal to reliabilism, virtue reliabilism included (1991). Our judgment of the reliability of the faculties cannot itself be justified non-circularly. To claim that *if* a faculty is reliable, it can be shown so empirically, by a track record argument for instance, requires the acceptance of premises which beg the question against the skeptic.[12] But if one abandons justification on empirical grounds in favor of 'the coherence of reliability,' a similar circularity problem emerges. As Paul Moser puts this objection, coherence of mere beliefs appears incapable of providing non-question-begging support for the alleged reliability of the faculties. Vicious epistemic circularity rears its head: "the circle seems swift and unbreakable" (Moser 1991; Sosa 1994a).

Moser's objection seems to strike especially at Sosa's perspectivist form of virtue reliabilism. Assuming that I do at least have meta-beliefs about the sources of my beliefs, what can effectively *justify* these metabeliefs? Questions such as this have been the basis for the single most pervasive objection leveled at Sosa, the objection

that virtue perspectivism is caught in vicious circularity in its attempt to explicate higher-order justification for metabeliefs in terms of the notion of "broad coherence." I will pursue this line of thought through the more recent exchange between Sosa and Laurence BonJour (1995).

Bonjour acknowledges certain advantages in Sosa's treatment of the three aforementioned problems for generic reliabilism but points to continuing difficulties with his responses to them. A fourth problem he develops is one that he acknowledge's Sosa has himself identified and tried to address: how is the reliabilist to identify his reliable sources of belief and justify the claim that they are reliable, without relying on those very sources in a viciously circular way? Here he develops a dilemma for Sosa:

> Either the appeal to internal coherence can somehow, perhaps when coupled with further internal elements of some sort, provide a genuinely cogent reason for thinking that one's perspectival beliefs . . . are likely to be true, or it cannot. On the former alternative, as Sosa himself seems to suggest, the appeal to external reliability is, as it were, absorbed by the appeal to perspectival coherence and seems to have no independent justificatory function. But on the latter alternative, which I believe to be the one that Sosa actually holds, the internal epistemic perspective turns out to be itself unjustified, and hence the reason for thinking that virtue perspectivism is an improvement over crude reliabilism is apparently lost (1995, p. 220).

According to BonJour, none of the alternatives open to the virtue perspectivist yields a clear account of how the perspectival beliefs can be epistemically justified without at the same time threatening to undercut the basic externalist thrust of virtue perspectivism. His own "qualified coherentist" position is considerably closer to the first alternative offered, but he is

correct that Sosa rejects the idea that the internal justification of perspectival beliefs is *entirely* a matter of their internal coherence. Is he also right that no 'mixed' view can possibly provide *reasons* for the agent to think that his perspectival beliefs are true?

We cannot get waylaid long by questions of skepticism or we will not get all of the day's chores completed. But since I have not pursued in any depth Sosa's responses to the objections raised earlier, I will offer a thin sketch of his strategy concerning this skeptical challenge (which is how BonJour himself addresses it). This strategy is akin to that of Thomas Reid, whose approach also combined elements of naturalism, foundationalism, and coherentism. The response to the skeptic is based on a fundamental meta-principle of the trustworthiness of the innate human faculties. Trust in these faculties is theoretically a principle of reasonableness or intelligibility and pragmatically a prerequisite for avoiding skepticism. Sosa has never really denied the presence of epistemic circularity, only its viciousness. The defense of the reliability of any one faculty will depend upon assumption of the reliability of others, and this alone is enough to establish that there is no non-circular guarantee of reliability. But does rationality require such a guarantee?

Certainly not all internalists agree with this, since some agree with reliabilists in seeing this demand as a confusion of the *state* and the *activity* of justification. But Sosa says that BonJour, and in a somewhat different context Alston and Moser as well, labor under assumptions about justification of perspectival beliefs that no epistemology could satisfy. This assumption amounts basically to a demand "for a fully general, legitimating" philosophical account of human knowledge, something that Sosa wants to reject as a misplaced and unfulfillable ideal. His own

work on it has centered around his concept of "broad coherence" and its foundationalist, coherentist, and reliabilist aspects.

The actual aptness of our beliefs lies beyond us. Ultimately, it is the reliability of coherence and not the coherence of reliability that must be taken as fundamental in what is itself the more fundamental question, that of *actual aptness* or successful fit between our faculties and the world. It is a confusion to insist that we "go normative" to find a higher criterion justifying our initial trust; that demand is surely confused and can result only in our then demanding in turn logical or factual support for that criterion, and a vicious circle is assured. We cannot "justify" such reliability a priori, but only look from an a posteriori and inductive position for how well or poorly our beliefs and their pragmatic success support our initial trust in the reliability of our cognitive faculties.

Other connections to Sosa's approach could be brought to bear. Schmitt rightly points out that the kind of skepticism in question is Humean *antecedent* skepticism, which "rests on the assumption, not only that justified belief requires exercising a reliable process, but that it requires a *guarantee* of the reliability of the process" (1992, p. 6). But ironically, where Schmitt sees antecedent skepticism *deriving* from an unholy combination of reliabilism and access internalism, John Greco's articles on *VE* indicate that this same "mixed" approach provides just the right grounds for a non-question-begging *reply* to the skeptic (1992; 1993a;1993b;1994). Greco's "relevant possibilities" approach to antecedent skepticism argues that "a possibility is relevant if it is true in some close possible world, irrelevant if it is not. This proposal explains many of our pre-theoretical intuitions about which possibilities need to be ruled out, and which do not, in order to know, and it

explains why the skeptical possibilities do not need to be ruled out" (1994, p. 63). The skeptic uses evil-demon cases as possibilities *inconsistent* with my knowing, and so implicitly insists that they be ruled out in order for my claims to knowledge to be justified. This is essentially the same "guarantee demand" in other language, and Greco's approach, while it depends on difficult distinctions like that between close and non-close worlds, provides a well-directed approach to undermining it.

Moreover, on Greco's account the "relevant possibility approach to skepticism and virtue epistemology are mutually-supportive":

> If knowledge essentially involves cognitive abilities and if abilities are dispositions to achieve results across close possible worlds, then this explains why possibilities are relevant only when they are true in some close possible world. Specifically, only such possibilities as these can undermine one's cognitive abilities. In an environment where deception by demons is actual or probable, I lack the ability to reliably form true beliefs and avoid false beliefs. But if no such demons exist in this world or similar ones, they do not affect my cognitive abilities (1994, p. 64).

Jonathan Kvanvig's *The Intellectual Virtues and the Life of the Mind* (1992) criticizes what he takes as the attempt to make the virtues serve a "Cartesian" epistemological project, one based on methodological individualism and a "time-slice" orientation for analyzing beliefs. This project attempts to explain the importance of the virtues solely in terms of the roles they are perceived to play in justification and knowledge. Goldman's development of historical reliabilism was meant to contrast "current-time-slice" theories, but he is still a prime target for Kvanvig, who holds that "patching up" a Cartesian perspective in Goldman's way doesn't improve things. Goldman's account in *Epistemology and*

Cognition remains "structural" through its emphasis on the *arrangement* of human knowledge, and not genuinely genetic.

The use of virtue-talk in the service of a Cartesian epistemological project is seen as self-undermining. It would be interesting to see Kvanvig's arguments for this directed specifically to Sosa. For Sosa does describe virtue perspectivism as "structurally Cartesian"; virtue perspectivism depicts epistemic agents as in much the same position as Descartes in respect to our need to use broad coherence to secure our trust in the senses and to defend against skeptical doubts (1995). There remains potential for a central role of the virtues in epistemology, but it is in the alternative epistemological project Kvanvig characterizes as *socially* and *genetically* oriented, in contrast to the individualistic and structural orientation of Cartesian epistemology. Kvanvig's robust "social perspective" illustrates something of the potential of intellectual virtue-centered epistemologies to be developed in diverse ways.

It is worth noting that most proponents of *VE* hold a substantial place for social epistemology and a naturalistic commitment to the continuity of epistemology and the special sciences. Yet Goldman has sometimes come under fire by social epistemologists (Fuller 1992 and 1996) and pyschologists of science (Heyes 1898) for a rigid division of labor sometimes seen as inconsistent with the theme of *Liaisons* that epistemology should fear no intellectual borders.

IV. VIRTUE RESPONSIBILISM

For both reliabilist and responsibilist *VE*, the exercising of intellectual virtues is central to epistemic justification. These two central branches of *VE*, however, display divergent interests in the normative and causal-explanatory use of the intellectual

virtues in epistemology. Reliabilists insist justification qua epistemic responsibility is *not sufficient* for knowledge, while responsibilists insist it is at least *necessary*. The virtue reliabilist says we need an epistemology that does justice to the great diversity of genetic human capacities, as brought out, for instance, by the uniqueness of *savants*; the virtue responsibilist, meanwhile, says that we need an epistemology that does justice to the great diversity of personal *effort* to secure truth (including levels of acquired skills of critical reasoning). While reliabilists worry about evil demons and ignorant clairvoyants, responsibilists worry that if we cannot assign epistemic culpability to a Hitler or a Mussolini for holding certain beliefs, we are on weak theoretic ground for judging him morally culpable for the acts premised on those beliefs.

These and other related interests in the explanatory value of the virtues become immediately evident in the divergent ways that reliabilists and responsibilists define them.[13] To the extent that VE is often simply identified by the broader philosophical community with its faculty-centered, reliabilist form, the important issues raised by this division escape our critical eye. When Sosa speaks of a "virtue or faculty," the phrase is essentially redundant, since the list he uses is a list divided between generation faculties (perception, intuition, introspection) and transmission faculties (deduction, memory). When he speaks of the subject's stable "inner nature," it is construed in terms of these genetically-granted faculties, though many specific "habits" that play a part in our cognitive processes are of course learned.

The virtue responsibilists reject an identification of virtue with either Sosa's broad range of truth-conducive faculties, or with the "natural or native processes" that comprise for Goldman "the domain for

primary individual epistemics" (*LI*, p. 197). For Greco, intellectual virtues are "grounded in conscientious belief formation and maintenance, rather than in an unchanging nature" (1993a, p. 428). "We should . . . amend the basic idea of *VE*, so that the cognitive virtues which are relevant for knowledge have their bases in the epistemic responsibility of the knower" (1993a, p. 432). And Montmarquet wants to restrict the virtues to qualities of *character*, for whose exercise or nonexercise we can plausibly be held *responsible* (praiseworthy or culpable). "I want to treat the epistemic virtues as, more narrowly, the counterparts of the moral virtues--and not just the counterparts of any personal characteristic (e.g. intelligence) that may be thought conducive to morally desirable ends" (1993, p. x; compare 1987a and 1987b).

The motivations for these expressions of virtue responsibilism are similar to those behind Code's *Epistemic Responsibility*, where she argues that "epistemic responsibility is a central virtue from which other virtues radiate" (p. 44). While this book expresses no special affinities with feminism, some of her more recent work, with its continued emphasis on the virtues, underlines the point that feminist epistemology often attempts to understand the cognitive agent in ways informed by the best attempts to understand moral agency (Braaten, 1990; Dancy 1992). Her biggest departure from Sosa's views is in thinking of virtues as "accruing to their possessor rather than to the faculties themselves, particularly for the purpose of deriving attributions of epistemic responsibility from an individual's general, cognitive conduct. Such attributions are more appropriately assigned to persons than to faculties" (1987, p. 57).

Peter Simpson (1992) argues that while contemporary virtue ethics benefits from

study of Aristotle, it is essentially novel in a way that may even make even the description "neo-Aristotelian" problematic. Some may say that this is all the more true of contemporary *VE*. All of our authors look to Aristotle for insight, but whether it is co-opting Aristotle to use him as either the virtue reliabilists or the virtue responsibilists do is another question in itself, too broad to engage in here. What we can say is that each takes leave from Aristotle's account of intellectual virtue, but in different ways. The reliabilists broaden the notion of virtue beyond dispositions associatable with *character*, and if Dancy's criticism is on target (1995), they also make truth a more simple or "unified" aim for the intellect than Aristotle himself intended. The responsibilists, on the other hand, sometimes argue for far more symmetry between the true and the good than Aristotle's own account can bear.

What supplies the degree of unity to the intellectual virtues needed to assure that the use of the term does not pick out a motley crew? Is truth a unified end, by which the claims of various states of inner nature to be virtues are determinable? Virtue reliabilists answer the latter question affirmatively; Sosa identifies this as "a teleological approach" to intellectual virtue, and finds support for this approach in Aristotle's directly truth-linked account. Truth-linkage is then also his answer to the first question. Montmarquet, on the other hand, who rejects this teleological approach, attempts to provide an alternative and more robust kind of unity for intellectual virtues through an epistemic analogue of Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean.[14] The "regulative function" of the intellect "represents a mean between two broadly complementary types of epistemic virtues, those of *impartiality* and those of intellectual *courage*" (1993).

Some interesting objections to virtue reliabilism come to light through the virtue responsibilist's criticism of the "teleological" or "consequential" conception of intellectual virtue. On the one hand, Montmarquet argues, the intellectual virtues are important to goals not limited to the purely epistemic goal of truth. Conforming to a virtue is not a quality derivative only from its quality of being truth conducive. On the other hand, identifying the unit of analysis with faculties given a genetic or biological gloss may be logically arbitrary (1987b; 1993). This latter objection can be related to one also made by Alston in relation to Sosa's terminology, where "virtue" is used interchangeably with "faculty," "power," and "ability." The three latter terms, Alston points out, go together in that they may be possessed by a subject even if infrequently exercised; whereas a virtue is traditionally understood as "of the nature of habit." "It is a matter of what one *would* do under certain conditions rather than of what one is *able* to do" (1993, pp. 202).[15]

Montmarquet asks, "Why introduce the entire notion of an 'epistemic virtue' if this is not to place something like a special normative role in one's epistemology?" (1993, p. x). The teleological account has difficulty doing justice to our intuition that a Newton and an Einstein may be roughly equal in virtue, while far apart in terms of truth. There is a distinction between the progress of knowledge and the improvement of epistemic character, a distinction which seems lost on the teleological account. This sounds vaguely Kuhnian, and responsibilists may tend to see their problematic as that set by Kuhn: their characterizations of intellectual virtues make them akin to "cognitive values." The importance of cognitive values seems lost if we treat them as largely undifferentiated "ampliative aspects" of coherence-seeking

reason; they hold place in questions of *choice* present in the everyday course of our individual and communal lives.

Zagzebski acknowledges the teleological or "good-based" account as one of two forms of "pure virtue theory," the other being the "agent-based" account she herself favors. But "reliabilism is structurally parallel to consequentialism, not virtue theory" (1996, p. 10). Even the explicitly virtue-based reliabilist epistemologies have this fault, because, she says, they have not carefully enough considered the ethical theories from which they borrow. The result is too weak a conception of responsibility, because responsibility is viewed as derivative from overt acts rather than motivations.

> When epistemologists borrow moral concepts, they implicitly borrow the types of ethical theories in which these concepts are embedded. . . . Since contemporary epistemology is belief-based, it is no surprise that the type of moral theory from which these theories borrow is almost always an act-based theory, either deontological or consequentialist. . . . Almost all contemporary epistemic theories take an act-based moral theory as their model, even most of those that use the concept of virtue (pp. 2, 7).

Dancy (1995) and Foley (1994) also both argue that the truth-conducive definition of the intellectual virtues introduces a "consequentialist" element quite at odds with what a genuine aretaic epistemology requires. The point seems underlined by Goldman's and Sosa's favorable reaction to understanding reliabilism as "epistemic rule-utilitarianism." Dancy has long seen this type of question as an example of a conflict between a "monism" and a "pluralism" of aims; a genuinely aretaic epistemology for today requires a pluralistic and *holistic* conception of the goals of our intellectual life. "Praise and blame, for a true virtue theorist, will be mediated by consideration of the sort of life that surrounds this failure or that success: there will be a holistic aspect to our moral and to our epistemic assessment" (1995, p. 203).

Through his characterization of the virtue reliabilist account as an unhappy amalgam of aretaic and consequential reasoning, Dancy leads into a provocative discussion of underlying differences between contemporary meta-epistemological approaches. This includes reasons for their mutual dissatisfaction with a Sosa-like "irenic solution." It is theoretically unstable, Dancy maintains, for a virtue theorist to adopt a consequentialist picture in a limited area. There can be no suitable basis in this for a genuine aretaic understanding of the relationship between *beliefs from virtue* and the virtues they exhibit. Any theorist, whether in ethics or in epistemology, must provide a *comfortable home*, if we may call it that, for rules, consequences, and virtues. But that does not mean, to use our prime example, that the virtue theorist must accept a deontological *understanding* of rules, or a consequentialist *understanding* of consequences. The requirement is for comfortably accommodating rules and consequences, not deontologists and consequentialists!

One cannot have all of these theories together, Dancy insists: "they just do not fit together," and compromise solutions are really philosophically unstable. Each ethical or epistemological theory is committed to the primacy of its description, be it of rule, consequence, or character. Views such as Dancy's about the relationship between virtue theory and its others are sometimes considered "radical" (Baier, 1988). But these views (or perhaps "attitudes" would be a better term) are quite prominent in meta-ethics today, and we now see clearly one form that their meta-epistemic counterpart takes.

As another example, take an epistemic deontologist like Schmitt (1992), who argues

that the deontological conception "excludes any account appropriate to an aretaic conception of justified belief." Recognition of the *primacy of rules* may render references to virtue "otiose," in which case the aretaic account is likely to "revert to an account of justified belief that conforms to the deontic conception" (1992, p. 97). This account appears still more radical in the sense that there is to be no quarter given to explanations under virtue-based descriptions, not even for their heuristic value, but only a thin promise of their ultimate reducibility to rule-based explanations. If the notion of responsibility is relevant at all to justification, it is a deontic notion rather than an aretaic one.

The very uniqueness of aretaic explanations is part of what is at issue in Schmitt's claim, and so it is little wonder if it seems that only aretaic theorists find aretaic theory a unique philosophical option. In both ethics and epistemology we are confronted with explanations under alternative descriptions (Audi 1993; 1995), and a resolution to the question of epistemic primacy appears very distant. But it is clear from the foregoing that the oppositions between aretaic theorists and their others must be thought through on *both* sides of the ethics/ epistemology divide.

Dancy's argument places a damper on the kind of synthetic or "irenic" approach Sosa has favored in the debate between epistemic externalism and internalism, and this reflects rather directly on the opposition between virtue reliabilism and virtue responsibilism. Dancy says in no uncertain terms that "to be externalist in its relation to the notion of aptness, where a mere tendency to promote the truth is sufficient, and at the same time to be internalist in its talk of blamelessness and character" is to have "feet in two warring camps" (1995).

The virtue reliabilists' feet may here be in warring camps, but the question is really

whether this particular war is inevitable. In the space that remains I want to further develop virtue responsibilism and then construct a hypothetical exchange between these two camps. I do so in order to suggest that Dancy misses some irenic possibilities, ones that seem closed to externalists and internalists of the usual stripes, but open to those working within the framework of shared assumptions provided by *VE*. The central virtue responsibilist argument we will examine is that the responsibilist, but not the reliabilist, succeeds at what Sosa sees as one of the goals of *VE*: making the person and his intellectual character the seat of justification.

Working from the distinction between subjective and objective justification in ethics, what Montmarquet finds important in the distinction is the difference between justification as reflecting a person's optimal use of his own resources, versus justification as objectively defined relations holding among belief contents and features of the agent's circumstances.

According to Montmarquet, ethical and epistemic justification are essentially interconnected. Our notion of subjective epistemic justification should be guided by, or at least conform with, the consideration that a justified belief is one that a person would be morally justified in *acting* upon (1993 p. 108). He examines the internalist/ externalist debates and the place of subjective justification in both ethics and epistemology. The epistemic analogue of subjective justification in ethics (construed in terms of *conscientiousness*) is epistemic responsibility. Subjective justification is thus a matter of the quality of one's underlying doxastic *efforts*.

The construal of internalism as a matter of the subject's "having reasons" (by his own lights) for his belief is inconsistent with this focus on conscientious effort in ethics. Kornblith and Montmarquet view

virtue responsibilism as consistent only with specially qualified forms of internalism, ones which put emphasis on the responsible cognitive agent and his regulating motivation or desire for truth.[16] Montmarquet's arguments are developed around two kinds of possible cases where the standard internalist accounts of justified belief are found not to provide an intuitive basis for an account of morally justified action. The first is the possibility of a belief justified on internalist views about connection or basing, but unvirtuously held. The second is the possibility of a virtuously held belief that fails to pass the internalist's standard of justification. The upshot of this argument is that it is subjective justification in the responsibilist's sense, rather than in the more common internalist sense of inner coherence, that provides the right kind of *connection* between epistemology and ethical theory (p. 106).

Hilary Kornblith has also argued that justification as inner coherence is unsatisfactory. If we take coherence to be determined by the subject's own lights, it is too subjective; here we focus on the agent's evidence as fixed, and ask only if he has reasons, disregarding how well or poorly he gathers evidence. This is supported by Feldman's doubt that any real sense can even be made of "radical subjective justification," the supremely iterative thesis that "*S* is subjectively epistemically justified in believing *P* if *S* believes that *S* has good reasons to believe P" (1988, p. 411). On the other hand, Kornblith continues, coherence as an objective relation between beliefs "is too external a relation to provide an account of the agent's internal perspective" (1986, p. 122). Factors of coherence so conceived, Kornblith argues, can no more replace the role of epistemic responsibility in justification than can reliability itself.

So responsibility-related traits of character appear to drop out of the reliabilist account whenever the latter says that justification amounts "to a sort of inner coherence" (Sosa) or to an agent's own standards or beliefs "about reliable belief-forming processes" (Goldman of 1986). To characterize our two authors by these lines, however, would be to greatly oversimplify their accounts, and the responsibilist would need to confront their conceptions of subjective justification directly. But the worry is that the notions of reasons accessible on one's perspective reflect the radically subjective or "inner lights" internalism which overlooks questions of quality of agent efforts, and is inconsistent with the motivational elements recognized in a requirement of doxastic responsibility.

Goldman's development of the distinction between "weak and strong justification" in a 1988 article is directly tied to Kornblith's objections to his earlier justification-externalist stance. On Goldman's distinction, weak justification relates directly to responsibility: a belief is weakly justified "as long as it is blameless or nonculpable" (*LI*, p. 169).[17] Sosa also gives examples of epistemically irresponsible agents and says that "the contrast between the aptness and the justification of a belief does not remove the need for two varieties of justification, the subjective and the objective" (*KIP*, p. 11). Both writers today additionally add lots of wrinkles to avoid a simple "own lights" coherentism, like Goldman's that "S neither possesses, nor has available to him/her, a reliable way of telling that [his/her own] process is unreliable" (1986, p. 59).

So there is an acknowledgment of the responsibilists' sense of subjective justification, but perhaps still a problem of little systematic place for it in the virtue reliabilist account. Sosa has been critical of Goldman's weak/strong distinction, and

perspectivism is meant to strengthen it, but whether it does, or whether the responsibilist will object that virtue perspectivism is too weak, depends in part on whether the responsibilist conception of weak justification is retained or lost in Sosa's perspectivism. For otherwise there are cases where S's believing that p meets Sosa's conditions for justification, but where S is nevertheless epistemically irresponsible in believing that p.

The responsibilist's list of virtues should not drop out of the picture if what is going on is really merely a "broadening" of the concept of virtue. The responsibilist sense of justification does not appear to have a place in Sosa's delineation of the virtue-defining parameters of "field," "condition," "environment," nor even of "inner nature" as we have seen that understood. If it has dropped out, then Sosa seems to be inferring that his sufficient conditions for reflective knowledge --roughly, truth plus virtuous generation plus valid epistemic perspective — *imply* agent nonculpability (blamelessness). This would basically be a variation of the justification-reliabilist view that a belief is rational or responsible only if it has an appropriate causal history. But that inference doesn't appear available, at least on the conception of epistemic perspective as a kind of inner coherence. So one question for Sosa is, What insures that the irresponsible agent lacks Sosa's epistemic perspective?

Kornblith raises two related kinds of counter-example cases. One is meant to show that responsibly-produced belief need not be reliable (1983). And Goldman concurs, writing in "Epistemic Folkways" that "a belief is [weakly] justified as long as its acquisition is *blameless* or *nonculpable*. Given limited resources and limited information, a belief might be acquired nonculpably even though its generating processes are not virtuous according to the

reliabilist criterion" (*LI*, p. 169). As long as Goldman is consistently able to acknowledge this and does not suppose that weak justification or blamelessness is *implied* by a truth-linked account of strong justification, then Kornblith's complaint that reliably formed belief "is an ideal to be sought, but cannot be a requirement for justified belief" (1983, p. 45) need not affect him. The reliabilist is no longer *replacing* the responsibilist's requirements on justification, but building upon them.

Kornblith's reasoning in the last quotation seems not based on the previous case, but on the case of reliably produced beliefs due to irresponsible action. Kornblith raises this case, but Greco argues that in normal human cognitive processes, reliability results from responsibility (Greco, 1993a). Greco thus sees that the virtue responsibilist must be careful not to problematize the connection between subjective and objective justification, or to slide back into forms of internalism he explicitly rejects. Let me pose a related question to the responsibilists here: How is the virtue responsibilist to distinguish himself from the kind of internalist who would assume or insist that we need two lists of virtues, one conducive to knowledge, and one conducive to justification? Limiting the virtues to traits of character seems, from the reliabilist standpoint, to drive justified belief and epistemically virtuous belief apart. The claim that deontic and aretaic conceptions of justification don't hook up with truth in the right way has, after all, often been grounds for rejecting reliabilism (Steup 1988 on Alston). It has likewise been grounds for the idea of contrasting "veretic" (internalist) and "evidential" (externalist) conceptions of *epistemic luck* (Hall 1994). In severing the truth connection, the subject is made the seat of justification, but has no kingdom to rule, having no view to issues of broader epistemological concern.

The responsibilist must hold that doxastic responsibility is a necessary condition for justified belief, and hence for genuine reflective knowledge. But Steup seems wrong to insist that he must also hold it sufficient for justified belief, on pain of having an inadequate account (1988); an account can be *incomplete* without necessarily being *inadequate*. Kornblith and Montmarquet concede that virtues of character are a subset of the truth-conducive (a separate issue from the question of what unity the "teleological" construal of intellectual virtue provides). Both seem to agree that doxastic responsibility is grounded in the interests that the individual and society take in having a basic stock of true or well-justified beliefs, and that true beliefs are indispensable for success in whatever other goals one has. These tenets, together with Montmarquet's understanding of responsibilism as a "first-person" account of justification in need of a complementing, externally-oriented "third-person" account, are a clear indication of conciliatory possibilities.

But we are still working with too simple a dichotomy between subjective/ first-person and objective/third-person accounts of justified belief. According to Kornblith's account in "Ever Since Descartes" (1985), where he comes to acknowledge reliability constraints, it is imperative to avoid conflating three separate questions corresponding to three independent kinds of evaluation. I want to end this discussion by proposing that something like the threefold approach he laid out there provides a basis for bringing the virtue epistemologists closer together over the issue of justification.

Very roughly, an account of *objective* justification answers to the question whether the belief arrived at and the actions performed were objectively correct. An account of *subjective* justification has two parts, which separate out questions about the processes by which *beliefs* are acquired, from questions about the voluntary *acts* by which these processes are influenced. One question then is whether the belief was arrived at by way of a subjectively correct process, and another is whether the actions which were performed were subjectively correct in the sense of regulation by the desire for truth. We then have a three-tier basis for a theory of justification that acknowledges the compatibility of, respectively, a reliability constraint, an internal coherence constraint, and a responsibility constraint. It would be in the spirit of my proposal if virtue epistemologists were to concern themselves with a comprehensive conception of inferential "habits" connecting the three tiers. For this emphasis on habit formation would soften the contrast of the innate and the acquired, with its attenuating separation of the reliabilists' and responsibilists' lists of virtues.

VE offers unique advantages because the concept of virtue usefully explains both what it means to be "in a position to know" (a strong emphasis in Sosa's work) and what it means for an agent to be praiseworthy or blameworthy. Still, this is of course far too simplistic a rendition of Kornblith's intended synthesis, and would be qualified or contested by other virtue responsibilists. Montmarquet approves of Kornblith's general framework but argues strenuously against the idea that doxastic responsibility is always to be understood in terms of *actions*.[18] Greco (1990; 1993a) offers an interesting alternative synthesis of reliabilist and responsibilist approaches, but one which leans on a notion of the "countenancing" of norms in need of further development.

The best developed account is Zagzebski's agent-based account. There are two components to intellectual virtue on her view, that of intellectual motivation and that of

success or reliability in reaching the ends of the motivational component, which she takes to be knowledge. Each is able to an extent to avoid the extremes of internalism and externalism, and she sees virtue theory as a key to leading epistemologists beyond this "stalemate" debate. Two main forms of "pure virtue theory" are conceivable, each springing from one of these two components. The issue between them — perhaps a new focus for debate — is the question of which comes first, end or motive. Each of these forms of virtue theory has distinct advantages and disadvantages. The first account "explain[s] the good of a virtue teleologically. Virtue is good because of its connection to the thing that is more fundamentally good [i.e. the general aim]." This approach has the advantage of tradition, being a most natural interpretation of Aristotle view of virtues as constituents of or means to the good life; it also potentially unifies the virtues in the deepest way and promises to supply normative criteria in a straightforward manner (Simpson 1992). But the difficulties of describing the goal, the life of flourishing, are also well known. Some regard appeals to any notion of flourishing (ethical or epistemic) as suspect starting-points because they appear arbitrary choices, like decisions about "ways of life" according to positivism and existentialism.

Considerations like these, Zagzebski thinks, make a non-teleological theory preferable. On the "motivational" version of an agent-based account, the goodness of virtues is based on the goodness of the agent's motives, and this form of goodness is conceived as intrinsic, not derived.

> "I have argued that in the form of virtue theory I call motivation-based, the value of reliability rests on the value of the motive for knowledge. There is no special value in the fact that a particular true belief arises from a reliable belief-forming process except

insofar as the motive to know is a good thing and persons with such a motive use processes known to them to be reliable. So the motive to know operates in the background of those reliable procedures over which we have some degree of voluntary control, and the value of the epistemic state to which this motive leads is enhanced by the value of the motive itself. So I have claimed that the internalist feature of motive is both the usual accompaniment of reliable belief-forming processes and one whose value is important for the value we attach to the resulting state" (p. 312).

This approach is not traditional and has the burden of making a plausible case for each of the virtues being good in a fundamental, non-derivative way, which seems to rebel against the importance of the epistemic community. While reliabilists may not be tempted to take this route, we may agree with Zagzebski that both forms of virtue theory are worth exploring further for their advantages.[19]

V. CONCLUSION

Even a "methodological" use of analogies between ethical and epistemic justification raises deeper issues of a "meta-philosophical" nature. And for some this is what is most challenging and interesting in virtue theory today. The availability of useful analogies between ethics and epistemology has never, at least for them, been sharply divided from a substantial thesis of the structural parity or symmetry between these two fields as the primary normative subdisciplines of philosophy (compare H. and R. Putnam 1987; 1993). In this sense, recent interest in a unified virtue-theoretic account of justification, ethical and epistemic, marks a significant rapprochement between ethicists and epistemologists.

Dancy sees *VE* as laudably raising "analogies with the supposed advantages of virtue ethics, and even the prospect of a

unification of epistemology and ethics, built round the common notion of a virtue" (1994). On Montmarquet's view, contemporary VE has an explicit meta-philosophical goal: to reveal similarities between ethics and epistemology out of which we can understand their respective differences as emerging. The broader ideal standing behind this goal is what Montmarquet calls "a unified conception of ethical and epistemic virtue." Zagzebski, who holds that the only really relevant difference between ethical and intellectual virtues is in terms of the general aim (*eudaimonia*/knowledge) of the two classes, points out that "it greatly distorts the nature of both to attempt to analyze them in separate branches of philosophy," where epistemology is usually categorized with metaphysics, and ethics with political philosophy and aesthetics. "I see no way to explain the value of the state that is the primary concern of epistemology — knowledge — without linking it with the general study of value, and that means ethics" (p. 336) In a companion article to this one, I further explore the meta-philosophical shift that a unitary, virtue-theoretical account of ethical and epistemic normativity would demand. The appeal of such a shift, I argue, can in turn be understood *historically*, both a) as a response to the inadequacy of influential scientistic views

asserting a sharp contrast in the respective rationality of scientific and ethical judgment, and b) in terms of the fortunes of the concepts of "value" and "valuation" in the twentieth century — or more specifically, the against-the-stream effort of a number of Continental and American philosophers, including R. B. Perry and John Dewey, to develop and win support for a "general theory of value" (Axtell 1996). But I view general theory of value, or axiology as it is sometimes labeled, as a better term for the analysis of values, and prefer the common language of ethics as a type of value. So I resist Zagzebski's strong claim that "epistemic evaluation just *is* a form of moral evaluation," even if she insists that this claim be understood as "expansionist" rather than "reductionist." I suspect that these differences are more than semantical, and that Zagzebski here repeats the error she so well pointed out among reliabilists, of smuggling in potentially unattractive substantive conceptions of ethics.[20]

I hope that the debates and range of topics we have canvassed have provided the reader with insight into the wider concerns of contemporary virtue epistemology, and have served to caution against the still common propensity to identify it with only one specific position on already familiar philosophical terrain.

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NOTES

1. Deontologists include the internalist Chisholm and the externalist Schmitt; "epistemic rule-utilitarianism" is a description due to Firth, 1981; as a description of reliabilism it is perceived favorably in Heil, 1984, Sosa, 1991 and Goldman, 1992.

2. On the assumption that "ought implies can" and the issue of doxastic voluntarism, see Steup 1988, Heil 1983, 1984 and Montmarquet 1993. Zagzebski discusses a range or scale of voluntariness of human character traits, both intellectual and moral (1996, pp. 61).

3. "Focusing on the context of inquiry, a kind of activity, encourages the expectation that there might be structural parallels between problems of practical reason and problems of theoretical reason. . . . Justified beliefs are those that issue from the responsible inquiries of virtuous inquirers. It is a mistake to put it the other way round: epistemic virtues are those habits and dispositions which lead us to have justified beliefs. The primary focus is on how we order activities directed at answering questions and assessing methods of answering questions; it is not upon the epistemic status of beliefs" (Hookway, p. & 211 & 225).

4. The analogy between internalism and externalism in ethics and epistemology, however, is not straightforward. In epistemology the dispute focuses on *epistemic access;* in ethics, it focuses on the relationship between moral justification and moral motivation. See Dancy (1992) and Zagzebski (1996), pp. 331.

5. See Kim (1993) for a useful classification of internalist or externalist theories on a distinction of 1) ground, 2) adequacy, and 3) basing connection issues.

6. Sosa 1993, p. 65 Fn 25. "Generic" is an umbrella term covering reliable process, mechanism, and indicator accounts. See Sosa 1991, pp. 131.

7. "A belief that *p* constitutes reflective knowledge that *p* only if one has a perspective on the source of that belief in a [reliable] faculty or intellectual virtue of one's own. Otherwise it is unreflective" (*KIP,* pp. 290).

8. On the "tiered" or "stratified" conception of justification, compare *LI* pp. 163 and *KIP* pp. 189.

9. On the iteration problem, compare Cullity (1995).

10. Compare Zagzebski (1996), for whom the ability to give place to meta-beliefs as an aspect of cognitive integration, is an *advantage* of a theory, but not a strong requirement of ordinary justified belief. Virtues of integration, wisdom, and understanding differ, and it is an advantage of a theory to be able to connect discussions of knowledge and justification to these deeper intellectual virtues.

11. On Aristotle and "being properly affected," compare Kornblith 1985, pp. 274 and 276 n. 22. Neil Cooper (1994) has relatedly argued that there is an 'unofficial superintendent intellectual virtue" in Aristotle's thought, *paideia,* which is "the capacity to discern what intellectual virtues are appropriate in a given subject-matter" (pp. 460).

12. Alston, 1991, p. 148; discussed in Sosa 1994a.

13. Zagzebski makes a useful distinction between "strong" virtue theory, which is definist in that it defines a virtue in terms of a right act or a right act in terms of a virtue, and "weak" or criterialist virtue theory, which says only that what a virtuous person would do is the best *criterion* of what is right. It is unclear why she seems to hold that any "pure virtue theory" must be strong or definist, since the criterialist view still treats evaluation as derivative from the character of an agent. See 1996, p. 16.

14. Hookway (1994) sympathetically develops Montmarquet's conception of an epistemic mean, while Dancy's position is incompatible with it (1995). See Lemos (1994) for background on defenses of the unity of the ethical virtues.

15. "It is quite obvious that sight, hearing, and memory are faculties, and . . . the Greeks identified virtues, not with faculties themselves, but with the excellences of faculties" (Zagzebski, 1996, pp. 10).

16. Desire for truth contrasts with externally-glossed truth-relatedness. For a contrast of grounding epistemic normativity in desire, see Kornblith 1993, where he criticizes Goldman's alternative analytic or semantic account.

17. Goldman 1986, pp. 59; see also Fumerton 1995 for criticism.

18. Montmarquet qualifies Kornblith's account in this respect. See especially his 1993, pp. 21-22 and 134.

19. The complementarity of the two components of intellectual virtue from which they spring is further evidenced by the observation, commonplace in the sciences, that an item's contributing to a desirable result does not fully explain its presence. A functional-teleological analysis cannot explain a feature's presence without a complementary aetiological account, which in our present case must be one in terms of the motivations of the epistemic agent. Zagzebski begins with the latter account rather than the former, but of course motives and reasons are not far separated, and reasons reenter in the normative constraints the motivation-based theory places upon on our epistemic motivations as necessary requirement for knowledge.

20. Zagzebski sees normative epistemology as a branch of ethics. She says that her account "subsumes the intellectual virtues under the general category of the moral virtues, or *aretai*

ethikai, roughly as Aristotle understands the latter" (p. 255). "I think of this move as expansionist rather than reductionist since it would be more accurately described as expanding the range of ordinary moral evaluation to include epistemic evaluation, rather than reducing the latter to the former" (p. 255). "Epistemic evaluation just *is* a form of moral evaluation" (p. 256). See also Zagzebski 1993.