

JUSTIFICATION, TRUTH AND INTERNALISM

BY

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A Thesis
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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Abstract

Considering the relation between epistemic justification and truth, I argue, first, that knowledge is not epistemically better than mere true belief, and second, that to epistemically justified a belief must be likely to be true given the ground it is based on. I also consider at length one main argument – evil demon counterexamples – that has the effect of denying this second claim (that to be justified a belief must be likely to be true). I argue that beliefs of evil demon victims are epistemically rational but not epistemically rational because their beliefs are not likely to be true.

Acknowledgements

While I would dispute the claim that it is something of a “truism” that a work of this scale could not have been written without the help of others, I would readily acknowledge that, truism or no, it is true in my case. And this being the case, I want to acknowledge my gratitude to two persons who greatly affected the existence of the present work. First, I want to thank Professor Bob Bright, whose impressively large view of the various areas of Philosophy saved me from making more than a few errors (including ignoring important issues that should not have been ignored). Second, and in a different way, I also want to thank Doreen Nkatha Mutwiri, whose gentle support and unfailing optimism was (and is) a much-needed antidote to my sometime pessimism.

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Introduction

After more than two decades of sustained debate, the internalism-externalism controversy (IEC) has more or less come to a standstill: both sides stand pat on what they take to be intuition-supported views, bemoan the lack of understanding on the other side, and only now and then manage to emerge from their encampments to launch what they take to be new objections. Eventually one might have expected the seemingly irresolvable nature of the debate to dawn on the participants. Recently – at last, some might say – it has to some extent. Laurence Bonjour, as diehard an internalist as any (at least until recently¹), has recently commented that, in spite of the “large amount” of effort expended towards the IEC’s resolution, “it seems fair to say that there is no very clear resolution in sight – and indeed relatively little agreement about even the force of the main arguments and objections, most of which rely heavily upon intuition.”² Mostly because of this controversy, William P. Alston has gone one step further and suggested that we abandon the concept of “epistemic justification” altogether, suggesting instead that we use the energy saved from that “fruitless endeavour” to “extend full appreciation to a plethora of values in the cognitive enterprise.”³ Perhaps some might view this suggestion from Alston as going a bit too far, but given the despair of reigning stalemate that it is borne

¹ He is still an internalist, just perhaps not as diehard (he now acknowledges that externalism might have something to important to contribute).

² “Internalism and Externalism,” in Moser (2002), p. 234.

³ “Epistemic Desiderata,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (1993), Vol. 53, No.3, 529-51, on. p. 549. See also “Doing Epistemology without Justification,” *Philosophical Topics. The Philosophy of Alvin Goldman*, Vol. 29, nos. 1 & 2, pp. 1-18.

of, it is perhaps understandable. Nevertheless, I would caution against such despair. Perhaps a resolution is near.

Perhaps resolving this dispute is too much to hope for in this thesis. But even so perhaps some progress might be made towards its resolution. The internalism-externalism debate is a debate concerning the nature of epistemic justification. More specifically, it concerns whether we must have subjective access to whatever it is that serves to justify a belief. Internalists insist that we must, while externalists deny this. Instead of tackling this issue directly, however, I want to discuss it as it relates to another important dispute in epistemology: the relation between epistemic justification and truth. I believe that fruitful results concerning the IEC may be obtained by examining how these concepts relate one another. To this end I will have to take recourse to the ideas of Bonjour, someone's whose writings on this issue have been illuminating. Consider the following passage. Bonjour here is concerned about what it is that distinguishes epistemic justification from other kinds of justification. He writes:

What then is the differentia which distinguishes epistemic justification, the species of justification appropriate to knowledge, from [the prudential or pragmatic] species of justification? ... Why should we, as cognitive beings, *care* whether our beliefs are epistemically justified? Why is such justification to be sought and valued?

Once the question is posed in this way, the following answer seems obviously correct, at least in first approximation. What makes us cognitive beings at all is our capacity for belief, and the goal of our distinctively cognitive endeavours is *truth*: we want our beliefs to correctly and accurately depict the world. If truth were somehow immediately and unproblematically accessible ... so that one could in all cases opt simply to believe the truth, then the concept of justification would be of little significance and would play no independent role in cognition. But this epistemically ideal situation is quite obviously not the one in which we find ourselves... The basic role of justification is that of a *means* to truth, a more directly attainable link between our subjective starting point and our objective goal. We cannot, in most cases at least, bring it about directly that our beliefs are true, but we can presumably bring it about directly (though perhaps only in the long run) that they are epistemically justified. And, *if our standards of epistemic justification are appropriately chosen*, bringing it about that our beliefs are epistemically justified will also tend to bring it about, in the perhaps even longer run and with the usual slippage and uncertainty which our finitude mandates, that they are true. If epistemic justification were not conducive to truth in this way, if finding epistemically justified beliefs did not

substantially increase the likelihood of finding true ones, then epistemic justification would be irrelevant to our main cognitive goal and of dubious worth. It is only if we have some reason for thinking that epistemic justification constitutes a path to truth that we as cognitive beings have any motive for preferring epistemically justified beliefs to epistemically unjustified beliefs. Epistemic justification is therefore in the final analysis only an instrumental value, not an intrinsic one.

The distinguishing characteristic of epistemic justification is thus its essential or internal relation to the cognitive goal of truth. It follows that one's cognitive endeavors are epistemically justified only if and to the extent that they are aimed at this goal, which means very roughly that one accepts all and only those beliefs which one has good reason to think are true.⁴

To my mind, this famous passage constitutes the truest description of what might be described as *the fundamental epistemic situation*. I also believe that in the claims that it makes we find very good clues as to what approach to the IEC offers the most hope for its progression, though not perhaps resolution. The argument I will make in this thesis is largely motivated by this passage. In fact it may be properly viewed as largely a defence of the claims made therein (however I will take issue with a couple of points in the passage).

More specifically, Bonjour makes three main claims here that I want to defend. In addition, he makes a fourth claim that, properly interpreted, I also want to defend. First

⁴ *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp.7-8 (footnote omitted); see also pp. 8-10 and 157.

Michael R. DePaul claims that Bonjour "doesn't say that truth is the *only* thing of epistemic value. For all he says in this passage, he could perfectly well hold that there are many things in addition to truth that are intrinsic epistemic goods" ("Value Monism in Epistemology," in Steup 2001a, pp. 170-82, on p. 173). No he could not. Notice that DePaul says two different things here. The first is that Bonjour doesn't say that truth is the *only* thing of epistemic value, which is true. The second is that Bonjour doesn't say that there couldn't be other things of *intrinsic* epistemic value. But I don't see any reason why someone could not take something (say, justification) as an epistemic value while denying that it is an intrinsic epistemic value. I say more about this in section II. Now let me explain just why Bonjour can't here allow that there are intrinsic epistemic goods other than truth. Bonjour claims that "*the goal of our distinctively cognitive endeavours is truth*"(emphasis added) and that if epistemic justification weren't truth conducive, then "epistemic justification would be irrelevant to our main cognitive goal and of dubious worth." But if he were to here allow that there are other intrinsic epistemic goods other than truth, then this would obviously be false, for then even if epistemic justification weren't *truth* conducive, it still might be conducive to whatever *other* intrinsic epistemic goods he might allow. And insofar as it is so conducive it will be valuable and relevant to the main cognitive goal. Bonjour, then, clearly assumes here that there is but one intrinsic epistemic goal, and that it is truth.

he claims that *epistemic* justification, in contrast to other kinds of justification (prudential or practical, say), is distinguished by its particular aim at *truth*. Second, he claims that epistemic justification's "basic role" is of as *means* to truth. Third, he claims that epistemic justification is ultimately only an *instrumental* value, not an intrinsic one. The fourth claim, one a bit less clear than the others – in chapter 2 I will point out an inconsistency in what he says about it – is that having justified beliefs will "tend" to bring it about that one has true beliefs. I will argue that on one interpretation of this claim – that justified beliefs must be likely to be true – Bonjour also gets things right. Thus in my view, all four of these claims are correct.⁵ Below I will endeavour to establish that are.

I will start with truth as the goal of epistemic inquiry. Central to this discussion will be the claim that epistemic justification is only an instrumental value, not an intrinsic one. After discussing this issue and the consequences that flow from it regarding knowledge in chapter 1, I will discuss in chapter 2 the consequences that follow from this regarding the nature of epistemic justification. And finally, with these results concerning the nature of epistemic justification, I will discuss how the internalism-externalism debate is to be affected. We can now turn to truth as the goal of epistemic inquiry.

⁵ In the sentences that immediately follow the passage quoted above, Bonjour went on to say that the "core of the notion" of epistemic justification is "epistemic responsibility," of not accepting a belief unless one has good reasons for thinking it is true. In my view this was a mistake: epistemic justification is not a matter of epistemic responsibility. One can be as epistemically responsible as possible and still not be justified in one's beliefs. In recent papers Bonjour has acknowledged that this talk of epistemic responsibility was a mistake. See his "Internalism and Externalism," pp. 235-7, and "The Indispensability of Internalism," *Philosophical Topics. The Philosophy of Alvin Goldman* (2001), Vol. 29, nos. 1 & 2, 47-65, pp. 51-3.

Chapter 1.

Truth as the Epistemic Goal

I have claimed that truth is the ultimate epistemic goal and that justification is only of instrumental value as a means to that goal. Both of these claims have come under attack in recent years. In this chapter I will examine the arguments put forward to challenge them. It is hoped that examining how these arguments go awry will help to clarify the proper role of justification and truth in epistemology. In addition, it has been argued that knowledge is merely true belief. Using the results of the aforementioned inquiry, I will, as a bonus, show how the argument for this claim goes awry. This will be done in chapter 2. Now let us turn to the epistemic goal.

I. Truth: The Narrow Epistemic Goal

Until recently, the idea that truth was *the* epistemic goal appeared to be the universally accepted – if less often explicitly acknowledged – view among contemporary philosophers. I have already quoted Bonjour's well-known views on the subject. William P. Alston, another major figure in epistemology, largely agrees with what Bonjour has to say, writing:

Epistemic evaluation is undertaken from what we might call the 'epistemic point of view.' That point of view is defined by the aim at [sic] maximizing truth and minimizing falsity in a large body of beliefs. ... [O]ur central cognitive aim is to amass a large body of beliefs

with a favourable truth-falsity ratio. For a belief to be epistemically justified is for it, somehow, to be awarded high marks relative to this aim.⁶ Paul Moser notes that “epistemic justification is essentially related to the so-called cognitive goal of truth, insofar as an individual belief is epistemically justified only if it is appropriately directed toward the goal of truth.”⁷ Alvin Goldman speaks of justified beliefs as those beliefs permitted by a “right system of justificational rules (J-rules),” and claims that “[t]rue belief is the value that J-rules should promote ... if they are to qualify as right.”⁸ Richard Foley argues that the “epistemic goal is concerned with *now* believing those propositions that are true and *now* not believing those propositions that are false.”⁹ Susan Haack asserts, “The goal of inquiry is substantial, significant, illuminating truth; the concept of [epistemic] justification is specifically focused on security, the likelihood of beliefs being true.”¹⁰

It seems that even epistemologists as diverse as the preceding – Moser, for example, is a foundationalist, Bonjour was a coherentist at the time, and Foley is, well, a Foleyian – are united in the view that truth is the ultimate epistemic goal. Yet it is not hard to notice that, despite the apparent agreement, there are differences between them. Haack alone, for example, speaks of “substantial, significant, illuminating truth.” Presumably, she wants to make clear that trivial necessary truths like $776 + 1 = 777$ and $777 + 1 = 778$, tautologies like $(P \vee \sim P)$ and the like just won’t do. And Alston alone speaks of “maximizing” true beliefs and “minimizing” false beliefs in a “large” body of beliefs.

⁶ “Concepts of Epistemic Justification,” *The Monist* (1985), vol. 68; reprinted in Alston 1989, pp. 81-114, on p. 83-84.

⁷ Quoted in Crispin Sartwell, “Why Knowledge is Merely True Belief,” *The Journal of Philosophy* (1992), Vol. 89, No. 4, 167-180, on p. 172. The quote is from Moser’s *Empirical Justification* (1985), on p. 4.

⁸ *Epistemology and Cognition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 103.

⁹ *The Theory of Epistemic Rationality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 8.

¹⁰ *Evidence and Inquiry: Towards Reconstruction in Epistemology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 203.

Apparently, he wants to avoid the possibility of someone satisfying the goal merely by believing only a few evident propositions. Yet it seems reasonably clear that, despite these different emphases, as far as *epistemic* matters go, the goal of truth is *the goal* in question: to the extent that a belief is aimed at some other goal, it could only be *non-epistemically* justified to that extent.¹¹ Indeed, in reading the literature it is not uncommon to find an epistemologist contrast and sometimes even introduce the concept of epistemic justification by discussing some other concept of justification, usually practical justification, where the goal in question is some practical goal.¹² The point in all cases is that *epistemic* justification is distinguished from these other kinds of justification by its particular aim at *truth*.¹³ Let us call this the *narrow* epistemic goal.

Now to describe truth as the narrow goal of epistemic justification is not to take a stand on the various controversies hinted at above by the philosophers quoted: the question of whether the epistemic goal is to believe any truth, or only truths that meet some threshold of significance, as Haack seems to think; the question of whether epistemic excellence can be achieved by believing only a few true propositions, or

¹¹ Foley especially emphasizes this (in terms of “epistemic rationality”) in his *The Theory of Epistemic Rationality*, though he insists (rightly for the most part, in my view) that the “purely” epistemic is concerned only with *now* having true beliefs (and *now* not having false beliefs). I discuss this issue below.

¹² See, for example, Bonjour, *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*, pp. 5-8; Foley, *The Theory of Epistemic Rationality*, pp. 11 and 210-11; John L. Pollock and John Cruz, *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge* 2nd Ed. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), pp. 11-12; Earl Conee, “The Truth Connection,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (1992), Vol. 52, No. 3, 657-669, pp. 667-8; Richard Fumerton, “Theories of Justification,” in Moser (2002), pp. 204-33, on p. 205; and Stewart Cohen, “Justification and Truth” *Philosophical Studies* 46 (1984), 279-295, on p. 279. The widespread assumption that practical and epistemic justification can sometimes diverge and hence conflict has been challenged by Eugene Mills. See his “The Unity of Justification,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (1998), Vol. 58, No. 1, 27-50.

¹³ Conee writes: “*Epistemic* support for a proposition indicates that it is *true*; prudential reasons for believing a proposition are indicative that believing it would be prudent” (“The Truth Connection,” p. 668; emphases added).

whether the body of beliefs must be sufficiently large, as Alston maintains; etc.¹⁴ But this is just the point: to say that truth is the narrow epistemic goal is not to say anything about these issues. Let us say that these issues all concern the *broad* epistemic goal. Questions about the broad epistemic goal are secondary issues that arise only insofar as the epistemic goal involves truth in some essential way. In other words, these questions do not challenge what I am calling here the narrow epistemic goal. Whether the epistemic goal is to believe any truths whatsoever, or only significant truths, for example, it is an *epistemic* goal only insofar as truth is central to it. The epistemic, then, is essentially about truth.

If this distinction is well grounded, it is not necessary to wade into the various controversies discussed above (as well as many others). Since this seems to me to be right, I will not be concerned with all of the issues that may be raised in regard to the broad epistemic goal. But there is one issue I should address, an issue that may be incorrectly thought to fall under the broad epistemic goal. It concerns Foley's claim that the epistemic goal is about *now* having true beliefs and *now* not having false beliefs. He argues that the *purely* epistemic is concerned only with the "present time-slice." He does acknowledge, to be sure, that people not only want their present beliefs to be true, but also their future ones as well. But he says that these "long-term intellectual goals," as he calls them, are not purely epistemic. His worry is that if the epistemic goal is to have true beliefs over the long term, then it might be epistemically rational for someone to believe

¹⁴ For discussions on these issues see Marian David, "Truth and the Epistemic Goal," in Steup 2001a, pp. 151-169, esp. 152-60; Andrew Latus, "Our Epistemic Goal," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* (2000), Vol. 78, No. 1, 28-39, esp. 28-32; and Pollock and Cruz, *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge*, p. 176.

something even though it seems obviously false to him or her.¹⁵ Thus he says that the epistemic goal is a “synchronic” goal – that is, concerned with the present – and not a “diachronic” one – not concerned with the long term.

I think Foley is right to want to exclude the possibility of it being epistemically rational for someone to believe something that seems obviously false to him or her, but I don't think his solution is satisfactory. For one thing his solution doesn't quite work in avoiding the feared circumstance. For example, Richard Fumerton has raised the possibility of “an all powerful being who will immediately cause me to believe massive falsehood *now* unless I accept the epistemically irrational conclusion that there are mermaids.” He says that if he is to achieve the goal of *now* having true beliefs and *now* not having false beliefs he would have to “adopt an epistemically irrational belief.”¹⁶ Thus making the truth goal synchronic instead of diachronic doesn't entirely avoid the kind of problem that Foley wants to avoid. We may say that it excludes the possibility of sacrificing a present truth for later truths, but it doesn't exclude the possibility of sacrificing a present truth for other *present* truths. But put this way we can see that whatever this says about Foley's theory of epistemic rationality, it doesn't really affect my account of the narrow epistemic goal. For my concern here is with the narrow epistemic goal and epistemic justification's relation to it, and we have seen that, just as “practical success” is the central aim of the kind of justification that is practical, truth is the central – and only – aim of the kind of justification that is epistemic. What this means in the present discussion is that, in whatever other sense of “justified” someone might be

¹⁵ *The Theory of Epistemic Rationality*, on pp. 8, 162 and 205. See also pp. 127-30. David makes a similar argument in “Truth and the Epistemic Goal,” pp. 160-1.

¹⁶ “Theories of Justification,” p. 209; see also his *Metaepistemology and Skepticism* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995), p. 12.

justified in believing a proposition that seems obviously false to that person, it is not the kind of epistemic justification that we are concerned with here (nor the kind of epistemic justification that epistemologists have been concerned with). To see this it will be useful to state explicitly the narrow epistemic goal I have in mind: *for any proposition p , p is to be believed if and only if p is true* (for ease of use I will just talk of “the truth goal” and “truth” as shorthand for this formulation). To the extent that a kind of justification departs from this objective, it is to that extent a non-epistemic kind of justification – or, at least, a non-epistemic kind of justification in the sense of “epistemic” that epistemologists have been concerned with. Now it is clear that someone who believes a proposition that seems to him or her to be obviously false will not be aiming for this goal as regards that proposition. Thus in whatever other sense of “justified” someone might be justified in believing this proposition, it wouldn’t be the sense of epistemic justification that we are concerned with here.

What this shows, in my view, is that my specific proposal for the narrow epistemic goal – for any proposition p , p is to be believed if and only if p is true – captures the idea that Foley is after better than Foley’s own synchronic goal. To be sure, my goal *is* a synchronic goal, for it is about believing a proposition if and only if the proposition is true. This excludes as *improperly* epistemic a goal that allows, as it were, a present truth to be sacrificed for later truths. But my goal goes further in disallowing, again as it were, a present truth to be sacrificed for other present truths.

Another way in which my proposal arguably improves on Foley’s also has to do with the synchronic nature of Foley’s goal. This is that his talk of the epistemic goal being about *now* having true beliefs and *now* not having false beliefs might make it seem that

the goal is a momentary goal, which would mean that it is not a single goal but several (indeed, infinitely many). That is, Foley's talk about "present time slice" might make it seem that the goal is to be divided into several (indeed, infinitely many) self-contained temporal bits – as in there being an epistemic goal at time t_1 , an epistemic goal at time t_2 , and so on. In fact, of course, the goal is a single *ongoing* goal. The goal of believing a proposition p if and only if p is true is the same goal at time t_1 as at time t_n . I am not suggesting that Foley has anything in mind other than a single goal. What I am suggesting is that (merely) saying that the goal is about now having true beliefs and now not having false beliefs is more amenable to such a "momentary" interpretation than the goal I offer.

Later I will discuss an objection to the truth goal that seems to me to assume that the goal is such a momentary goal. I will come to this objection in section IV. Now I will proceed to explain my view of the relation of epistemic justification to the truth goal. This will be done against the backdrop of Michael R. DePaul's criticism of truth as the only ultimate epistemic goal.

II. The Epistemic Goal: Truth *and* justification?

Like the idea that truth is the epistemic goal, the idea that justification is only of epistemic interest and value because of its connection to truth appears to be a widely accepted view among contemporary epistemologists. But it is even less often explicitly acknowledged as such. As we have seen, one philosopher who makes the requisite connection fairly explicit is Bonjour. Recall this sentence in the passage quoted above:

If epistemic justification were not conducive to truth in this way, if finding epistemically justified beliefs did not substantially increase the likelihood of finding true ones, then

epistemic justification would be irrelevant to our main cognitive goal and of dubious worth.¹⁷ Now Bonjour here claims that epistemic justification must “substantially” increase the likelihood of finding true beliefs, otherwise it is of dubious worth. This is an important issue that will be the focus of chapter 2; however let us ignore it for the moment. What I am interested in here is the weaker claim (only implied here) that if epistemic justification is unconnected to truth, then it is of dubious epistemic worth. From my vantage point, this is obviously true. If epistemic justification were unconnected to truth, then it’s hard to see what use it could be to epistemic inquiry. It follows from this that justification’s epistemic value is entirely derivative from the epistemic truth goal. As Bonjour says two sentences later, “Epistemic justification is ... in the final analysis only an instrumental value, not an intrinsic one.” In chapter 2 I will argue that if we take this as seriously as we should, important results regarding the nature of justification follow. But what concerns me here with this claim is the result that, being the only other plausible candidate for an ultimate epistemic goal, justification’s exclusion as an intrinsic epistemic good means that, ultimately, truth is the only intrinsic epistemic good.¹⁸ In my view – and quite possibly in the view of most epistemologists – this is as it should be. Unfortunately, this view has recently been challenged. Some have argued that justification is an epistemic good in its own right, and that, as a result, truth is not the only ultimate epistemic goal. It is to one such argument that we will now turn.

In a recent paper, “Value Pluralism in Epistemology,” Michael R. DePaul has argued that value monism in epistemology – the view that there is only one thing of ultimate

¹⁷ *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*, p. 8. See also p. 157.

¹⁸ Perhaps some remarks on terminology are in order here. I will use the words “independent,” “intrinsic” and “ultimate” interchangeably. The idea is that something is an “independent” value only if it is valued for its own sake. The same goes for “intrinsic” and “ultimate” values.

value in epistemology, and that the one thing is truth – leads to the highly undesirable result of being unable to account for the high value we give to knowledge. He states the following proposition, which I will call K, and argues that the fact that we regard it as trivially true presents a problem for monists with respect to epistemic value (hereafter just “value monists”):

K: Knowledge is epistemically better than mere true belief.

DePaul argues that this is a problem for monists because “knowledge cannot be epistemically better than mere true belief IF true belief is the only epistemic good.”¹⁹ If true belief is the *only* epistemic good, then obviously there is no other epistemic good, and *a fortiori* there is no other epistemic good that is more epistemically valuable than the only epistemic good. “But,” he says, “certainly a central, and I would think nonnegotiable element of our concept of knowledge is that it is of great epistemic value, and, more specifically, that it is more valuable than mere true belief.”²⁰ Clearly, we hold knowledge in very high epistemic regard, and it seems no less clear that we regard it as more valuable than mere true belief. But then if we are value monists – and hence regard truth as *the* epistemic goal – then it does indeed seem that we do have a problem, a very big problem indeed.

Let us examine DePaul’s argument in detail. He thinks that there is a quite easy and natural way to explain why we value knowledge; he just thinks that value monists cannot appeal to it. He suggests that it is quite okay to allow that one can account for the value of a good by saying that it is valued because it is reliably connected to “some sort of more basic good.” Indeed, he says, when we look at examples where we think that there are

¹⁹ “Value Monism in Epistemology,” p. 174.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

better and worse ways of achieving some valued outcome or goal, and where the “better” way is the way that (we believe²¹) reliably leads to the goal, then it seems that “we not only value such states [where some good is attained in some way we believe is reliable], but not uncommonly value them more than states of having attained the same goods by other means.”²² He suggests that knowledge may be handled the same way, where the superior value of knowledge is accounted for by the value that justification adds to true belief, and where justification is thought of as something (we believe to be) reliably connected to truth.²³ But this, he argues, is something only a value pluralist like himself can say, someone who accords justification some (independent) epistemic respect. For value monists, there is a problem. He writes:

There is only a problem if we strictly adhere to the idea that justification is good merely as a *means* to the truth. If we do, then one just cannot maintain that a justified true belief is better, in terms of the good of believing the truth, than a true belief plain and simple. To the extent that we really consider attaining the truth by reliable means to be better than attaining the truth by other means, we value forming beliefs reliably for its own sake, apart from any connection with the truth.²⁴

Thus he rejects value monism in epistemology in favour of a more pluralistic view, one in which justification is taken as a concept of independent or intrinsic epistemic value.

I think DePaul gets something right when he suggests that the superior value of knowledge (if it is superior, that is) is to be accounted for just in terms of what

²¹ DePaul does not speak of us *believing* that such ways reliably lead to the goals in question, just of them (in fact) reliably leading to the goals in question. But since he is talking about our beliefs and judgements of better or worse, it seems clear that he means to talk about our beliefs about reliability. Therefore, when he seems to be speaking of the sheer fact of reliability – as when, in the quote that ends this sentence below, he speaks of “states of *having attained* the same goods by other means” (emphases added) – we should interpret him as speaking about *beliefs* about reliability.

²² “Value Monism in Epistemology,” p. 179.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp.178-9 and 182.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.179.

justification adds to true belief.²⁵ But I do not think that his argument for value pluralism succeeds. First notice that his argument gains some plausibility just by supposing that the view it opposes holds that truth is the *only* epistemic good. Surely justification is an *epistemic* good, it might be thought, and any view that suggests otherwise must be wrong. But this apparent advantage is illusory. I see no reason why someone could not take something (say, justification) as an *epistemic* value while denying that it is an *intrinsic* epistemic value. They could say that justification is epistemically valuable because it is a means to truth, but insist that if it were not connected to truth, it would have *no* epistemic value whatsoever. DePaul gives no reason to suppose why this could not be so.

But let us see what would happen if it were not so. If justification could not be an epistemic good in this way, then it must be that if justification is only a means to truth, then it is immediately disqualified as an *epistemic* value. Suppose, in other words, that someone who says that justification is good only as a means to truth (a value monist, in DePaul's terminology) is *ipso facto* committed to saying that only truth has epistemic value (assuming, of course, that truth and justification are the only candidate epistemic values). Then it would seem that only epistemically ultimate values are epistemic values at all. But this is highly doubtful. As a general rule, if someone values X as a means to Y this does not imply that X cannot be the same value-type as Y. I see no reason to suppose that things are different in the epistemic case. So if justification only has value as a means to truth then this does not imply that justification is not an epistemic good. Truth is the only intrinsic epistemic good, but not the only epistemic good.²⁶

²⁵ True belief and, of course, the degetterization condition (if, as seems very likely, that is something that cannot be handled by a correct account of justification).

²⁶ Alvin Goldman acknowledges this in "The Unity of the Epistemic Virtues" (in Fairweather and Zagzebski (2001), pp.30-48), where he defends what he calls "veritism," the view that the various

Now it seems to me that once this is acknowledged DePaul's argument is much less convincing. Once it is allowed that truth is not the only epistemic value, DePaul's argument loses the support it gets from the seeming implausibility of supposing that justification is not an epistemic good. Still, to say this is not to say that his argument against value monism does not succeed. The reason is that his argument doesn't depend on this dubious claim. To see why let us look at how a response based on a (putative) failure to recognize the epistemic good/ intrinsic epistemic good distinction might go. It will help to look at DePaul's two specific examples illustrating the better and worse ways in which some good might be achieved.

One example concerns a battle strategy for war in which one general, General A, formulates a strategy that DePaul describes as "brilliant" and which the general uses to win. But there is another general, General B, who, though he fails to adopt a "coherent" strategy, nevertheless wins "because of several unlikely occurrences over which he had no control."²⁷ DePaul argues that it is "not unreasonable" to regard General A's victory as "superior to General B's." Moreover, he also argues that the example shows that more than one value is at play. He argues that it makes perfect sense to value General A's victory as superior to General B's, because "in addition to taking victory to be a good, we consider excellence a good thing and incompetence a bad thing. Once again, it makes sense to value attaining the goal in one way more than attaining it another, but only because more than one value is at play."²⁸ If this were not so, and "all you care about is

epistemic virtues are unified by the cardinal value of true belief. He writes: "Although veritistic value is the fundamental benchmark of epistemic virtue, it is obviously not the *only value*" (p. 45).

²⁷ "Value Monism in Epistemology," p. 179.

²⁸ Ibid.

victory on the battlefield,” then “it makes no sense to value victory won in one way to victory won in some other way.”²⁹

DePaul’s other example concerns the same general idea of valuing something attained one way more than another. Here, however, the case is one of wealth. He says that we don’t consider as equally good all possible ways of attaining wealth; we consider some ways (e.g. working hard for it) better than others (e.g. betting on a horse race). And this, he says, shows that more than one value is at play. For “[i]f all you care about is money, it makes no sense whatsoever to value the attainment of X number of dollars more or less depending on the means of attainment.”³⁰

A response based on the epistemic good/ intrinsic good distinction might go as follows. In the case of the generals, we *only* find General A’s strategy superior to General B’s because we find that the former had a higher chance of success, something which DePaul largely agrees with. He writes: “Presumably, the brilliance of General A’s strategy largely consists in the fact that the strategy maximizes the chances for victory...”³¹ But instead of the brilliance of General A’s strategy only “largely” consisting in its (stronger) connection to the goal of victory, as DePaul thinks, in fact it *wholly* consists in its (stronger) connection to goal of victory. If it were not so connected, then there is no other reason why we should value it more than General B’s strategy (and hence no reason to praise it with the positive evaluation of the word “brilliant”). We value General A’s strategy more than General B’s *only* because we think that the former is more likely to achieve the goal in question than the latter. And it follows from this that the superior value of General A’s victory is derived entirely from the goal of victory. And

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

much the same may be said in response to the money example. Therefore, on this response to DePaul's argument, it will be argued that his examples do not show, or indeed even suggest, that we value effective strategies for their own sake, as independent goods.

What this response comes to is this: DePaul seems to think that the fact that something is good only as a means to some other good means that the first thing is not a good (of the same type). But this is plainly wrong; the first thing *is* a good (of the same type). Thus, missing this point (the response goes), DePaul accordingly only speaks of the second example showing that money is not the *only* thing we care about, not of it showing that money is not the only thing we *intrinsically* care about. Moreover, it is the non-intrinsic value of something that is a means to some goal that accounts for us valuing the attainment of that goal one way more than another. So *contra* DePaul, it makes perfect sense to value the attainment of X by a more effective means more than the attainment of X by a less effective means – even if, to use his second example, money is all we intrinsically care about.

There is only one problem with this response, and unfortunately it is devastating. This is that it is hard to see how a good that is only a means to another good could “improve” the second good. That is, if one thing's value is derived entirely from its connection to a second thing, then it is hard to see how the first and second thing together could be superior in value to the second thing alone. Thus in DePaul's money example, even if the value of attaining X number of dollars in way Y is derived entirely from Y's connection to X, this still could not account for the superior value of attaining X in way Y. It is not plausible to say that an entirely derived value together with that from which it derives its

value has more value than that from which it derives its value alone.³² But then we still want to say that attaining X in a reliable way is better than attaining it in an unreliable way. Thus we can see that DePaul's argument does not depend on the claim that justification is not an epistemic good. It only depends on the claim that justification's epistemic value is derived *entirely* from its being a means to truth. The person who holds this view still has to give an account for how it is that a justified true belief is better than a true belief "plain and simple," as DePaul puts it.³³

So far as I can see, this leaves us with only two options: saying that epistemic justification *is* good for its own sake, and that this is what explains why we think that a truth arrived at in a reliable way is better than a truth arrived at in an unreliable way, or saying that, though we are tempted to say otherwise, a true belief arrived at in a reliable way is not in fact better than a true belief arrived at in an unreliable way. My choice is the latter. A true belief arrived at in a reliable way is not better than a true belief arrived at in an unreliable way.

There are a couple reasons why I think this is the better option. One reason – indeed the foremost reason in my mind – is that the idea that epistemic justification is good for

³² This is something DePaul recognizes. At one point he considers the potential response of saying that, though justification is only a means to truth, the combination of justification and truth "is an organic unity that has a value in excess of the sum of the values of its parts." But he responds: "The suggestion that the combination of attaining a good (truth) and attaining it by way of something good only as a means to that good (justification) has more value than the good itself does not strike any intuitive cord with me" (ibid., p. 181).

³³ I should note that though DePaul almost always speaks of truth being the "only" epistemic good, it seems that he does recognize that justification is an epistemic good. I say this because he often talks about the problems that arise if justification is "*good*" merely as a means to truth. Presumably he recognizes that this makes justification an *epistemic* good. Also, when he first introduces value monism he describes value monists as taking truth as the "only *intrinsic* epistemic good" (ibid., p. 172; emphasis added). Thereafter, however, he only speaks of value monists holding that truth is the only epistemic good. One could take this to mean that he recognizes that justification is an epistemic good, and that his talk suggesting otherwise reflects an unfortunate looseness with language.

its own sake is just plain implausible. If epistemic justification were good for its own sake, then it follows that it would still be of value even if it were *unconnected* to truth. This is not plausible. It is hard to see why we should be interested in having epistemically justified beliefs if epistemic justification is unconnected to truth. This issue is crucial, for it is exactly what value pluralists like DePaul would have us say. The problem is that it is hard to see what reasons there could be for saying it. Now there is an easy response available here to the value pluralist, and this is to say that the question is unfair. Why, she may ask, should it be expected that an intrinsic good should have a purpose? After all, to say that something is an *intrinsic* good is just to say that it is good for its own sake. In other words, she would say that the request to give the purpose to which an independent epistemic justification is a good makes little sense. It would not be asked of truth “what is it good for?” and neither should it be asked of justification.

It might seem like the value pluralist has a point here, but she does not. Consider the following. It was suggested by the value pluralists above that it would not be requested of value monists that they give an account of the good of truth, for it is an intrinsic epistemic good. And it was suggested that the same respect be shown to value pluralists with regard to justification. What I want to do right now is to ask for such an account of *both* justification and truth. Now I have been talking about the value of justification and truth only as *epistemic* goods. I have not been concerned with how these goods fare outside the epistemic sphere. But in asking for an account of the good of (the intrinsic epistemic goods of) justification and truth, it is clear that we can no longer limit our selves in this way. For example, if truth is an intrinsic epistemic good, then it is clear that its *epistemic* good is *ultimately* not to be accounted for in terms of other epistemic goods it may be

good for. Ultimately, its epistemic value lies elsewhere. And the same is true of justification. Thus if we are asking for an account of the good of (the intrinsic epistemic goods of) justification and truth, we must look outside of the epistemic sphere. But once we do this it becomes apparent that justification encounters a problem that truth does not. It is easy to give an account of the good of truth: it is good for making choices; it is good for our survival, etc. In short, it is good for making our way in the world. We can now turn to justification. What is it good for? I submit that not only is there no answer readily available, but there is no answer available at all. There just doesn't seem to be anything that justification is good for. In my view, there is a reason for this, and this is that the good of justification is back in the epistemic sphere, for justification is good as a means to truth. The value pluralist, however, disallows this, for he says that the good of justification is independent of any connection to truth. The lesson, as I see it, is that the value pluralist is just wrong about justification.³⁴

The preceding considerations lead me to conclude that epistemic justification is only an instrumental epistemic good. It is just hard to see what value it could be if it were unconnected to truth.³⁵ Now while I believe the above arguments should be convincing, I

³⁴ There is still a way of escaping this conclusion. It may be insisted that justification is an intrinsic good all things considered, just like, perhaps, pleasure, beauty and the like. Maybe some might disagree, but it doesn't strike me as plausible in the least to grant justification this exalted status. I therefore reject it out of hand.

³⁵ There is another, related argument a value monist might make. This is to argue that even if epistemic justification were intrinsically valuable, so that it would still be of value even if were unconnected to truth, it would seem to follow that the value of justification wouldn't be of an *epistemic* nature. And this, it will be claimed, would mean that this kind of justification is of dubious epistemic interest. There is, after all, a strong temptation to say that this just what *epistemic* matters are about: they have something to do with truth. As proof someone making this argument might adduce the variety of epistemologists cited earlier who all seem to agree that what distinguishes *epistemic* justification from other kinds of justification is its particular aim at *truth*. The problem with this argument is that value pluralists might take it as a case of begging the question. What such an argument will be doing in effect, they will say, is to take the word 'epistemic' and say that it means 'having to do with truth.' And they will have a point. However,

am unwilling to completely deny the intuitive appeal of DePaul's examples. But I think that there are two reasons why we should resist the conclusion that they suggest (i.e. that justification is an independent epistemic good). One reason concerns his examples. It seems to me that the reason they have some intuitive appeal is that they are different from the case at hand – a case where one thing is a reliable means to another thing – in a fundamental way. In the case where we putatively value attaining something in a reliable way more than attaining it another way, the means of attainment by hypothesis differs with respect to the likelihood that it will attain the goal in question. But if the means of attainment differed in some other respect, then the case potentially becomes dissimilar in an important way. To see why consider the variant on the money example that DePaul mentions in which a fortune is achieved but in which the means of attainment differ with respect to honesty. He says that he hopes we value the honest case more than the dishonest case. I am sure we are inclined to agree that we should. "But this," he says, "just means that we value honesty as well as fortune, that is, we are not thinking about the case as monists."³⁶

But it seems to me that this case is different and the difference is that it is quite plausible to take dishonesty as an intrinsic moral bad. And if so, and this implies that we are not talking about this case as monists, then it is doubtful that anyone is a monist about anything, or very much, for then moral principles will apply whatever the case. For it is obviously true that we should not violate any moral principle while trying to achieve whatever goals we are pursuing. Thus in the case of the battlefield plan, presumably a general shouldn't go and kill (civilian) women and children in order to obtain a copy of

it still seems to me that the value pluralist would be engaging in a something close to a radical redefinition in saying that the 'epistemic' doesn't necessarily have anything to do with truth.

³⁶ Ibid.

the opposing side's battle plan so that he can formulate a plan that ensures his side success. This seems clearly true, but it is hardly informative to say that this shows that, in addition to victory, we also value not murdering women and children. Something like this is true of every case, and so can be said of every case. And indeed this doesn't just go for moral principles. It goes for anything not considered essentially a means to some other good. Suppose someone throws a party, and, determined that guests should enjoy themselves, makes light of the foibles of a few of the guests. The teasing predictably results in hurt feelings. Nevertheless, because of this the party is successful. Now most of us would agree that this is no way to host a successful party. But again, it is hardly informative to say that this shows that, in addition to fun parties, we value politeness on the part of hosts.

We value a great many things. Some are valued only because they are effective means to other things we value; others are valued as ends in themselves.³⁷ Now if something is valued as an end in itself it may nonetheless be the difference between two ways of attaining some good. But even if it is, it will still be valued as an end in itself. But then it

³⁷ It is quite true, however, that a serious argument could be made that all, or almost all, of the things we value we value only instrumentally. For it certainly could be argued that the things we seem to value intrinsically are in fact valued only insofar as those things are thought to contribute to our own self-interest. Psychological egoism, after all, is not an implausible position to take on the human psychological condition. But we are discussing here a single field of inquiry, epistemology, and just as it may be argued that truth is not an ultimate goal all spheres (epistemic and non-epistemic alike) considered, so too it could be argued that, whatever the field of inquiry, the ultimate good of that field is not an ultimate good all spheres considered. The point is that we need not be concerned here with so broad an interest that we are concerned alike with the goals of the subject sphere and the goals outside the subject sphere. For example, I defend truth as the only ultimate *epistemic* goal; how it fares outside of the epistemic sphere is not my concern here. Take the discussion here as assuming a single subject sphere. (DePaul also makes it clear that he is not concerned with how the epistemic goal of truth relates to other nonepistemic goals. For his remarks see "Value Monism in Epistemology," pp. 176-7. Similarly, in presenting his theory of epistemic rationality, Foley remarks that what a person ought to believe "all things considered" is not something that he is concerned with. He is concerned with *epistemic* rationality, not rationality in general. For his remarks see his *The Theory of Epistemic Rationality*, pp. 11 and 211-12.)

is of no use to the value pluralist about epistemic value to say that examples like this show that more than one independent value is in play in cases where the prominent difference between two ways of attaining some goal is one of effectiveness or reliability. Clearly, in the example here, more than one value is in question, but this is just because it is agreed that the difference between the two ways is something that is valued for its own sake. The relevant difference between means of attainment, then, cannot be a non-effectiveness/reliability-related difference. The reason is that in this case the difference will involve goods valued for their own sake. If a good is not a good because of its effectiveness as means to some other good, then that good is good for its own sake. Whether some good that has no other apparent value aside from its effectiveness/reliability is to be valued for its own sake is a different matter – and just the issue in question.

So the difference that DePaul's examples should feature is the difference regarding the effectiveness of means to goal. But it does not seem that DePaul's examples feature this kind of difference. In the money example the difference is between someone working hard for her wealth and someone winning a bet on a horse race. Now it seems to me that a great many people regard honest toil as a good in itself. But if so, then it will be agreed that there are two goods in question. But then the example would be dissimilar in an important respect. In the battle strategy example, General A puts his mind to the task of gaining a victory and conceives of a brilliant winning strategy. General B basically does nothing. But even here it can be granted that there are two goods in question, but only because it is clear that a great many people value intelligence as a good for its own sake. And thus this example too is dissimilar in an important respect.

The other reason why we should resist the conclusion that DePaul's example suggests is suggested by DePaul himself. It may be, he says, that

Justification is valuable purely as a means to truth. [But] [w]e get into the habit of valuing it, forgetting that we value it merely as a means to truth and recalling only that we value it. Then when we encounter a justified true belief, we think it is more valuable than a mere true belief because it has the good of justification as well as the good of truth. But this is clearly a mistake
...³⁸

DePaul acknowledges this as a "live option," but says that he prefers value pluralism. I think this is quite likely what goes on, especially given my argument above. And if so, then we should resist the urge to say that epistemic justification is a good for its own sake, and acknowledge that truth is the only ultimate epistemic goal.³⁹

I conclude therefore that truth is the only ultimate epistemic goal and that justification's epistemic value is entirely derived from its connection to truth. Justification is an epistemic good but it adds nothing to truth. But then this seems to leave us in the position that it would seem we want to avoid. After all, though DePaul spends most of his paper arguing that truth isn't the only ultimate epistemic goal, he also thinks that those who maintain that it is the only ultimate epistemic goal have a problem when it comes to accounting for the high epistemic regard in which we hold knowledge. In particular, he thinks that we are strongly inclined to accept that K is true, that knowledge is epistemically better than true belief. He thinks it is a *reductio* of any view that leads to any other conclusion. And indeed we might still be left with the strong intuition that K states something that is true. So what should we say about it? We should say what all the

³⁸ "Value Monism in Epistemology," p. 180.

³⁹ One obvious way of arguing for the intrinsic value of epistemic justification is by somehow connecting it with the supposed deontological character of epistemic justification. But such a deontological account must be unconnected to truth. It cannot be maintained, for example, that we have epistemic duties, etc. because of the connection between such duties and the overall epistemic goal of truth. But in the absence of such a truth connection, as Sartwell argues (see p. below), it is hard to see what could be the source of such duties, etc. As a result, such accounts are implausible. For Sartwell's discussion, see "Why Knowledge is Merely True Belief," pp. 170-1.

prior discussion suggests: that K expresses a proposition that we have strong reason to reject. The reasoning is as follows. If knowledge is epistemically better than true beliefs, it is only better because of the value that justification adds to true belief.⁴⁰ But we only think that justified true beliefs (JTBs) are better than true beliefs because we think that JTBs were more likely to be true. But as we saw, this does not give justification any independent epistemic value. This is because justification is *only* an instrumental epistemic good, and the only epistemic good for which it an instrument is truth. Truth is the only ultimate epistemic good, and justification can add nothing to it. And if this is right then it follows that justified true beliefs cannot be epistemically better than true beliefs. But then this is just one way of saying that K is false: knowledge cannot be epistemically better than true beliefs.

No doubt some will find this result not a little startling. But I submit that the argument is sound. To see this more clearly perhaps it is well to lay out the argument more fully.

Here it is:

⁴⁰ In 1963 Edmund Gettier famously showed (through the use of examples) the insufficiency of the “traditional” account of knowledge as justified true belief. Consider the following example. Joey tells me that he owns a new house that he just bought. He is someone I consider to be trustworthy. I have never found him to be a liar. In addition, I see that he has moved all his stuff out of his old rented house next to mine. He shows me the papers confirming the new purchase. He talks about how hard he worked for this house. As a result I come to believe that Joey is living in a new house. But this isn’t the real story, for after seeing his son struggle to purchase a new home for many years, Joey’s dad stepped in and bought him a new house, which he is indeed living in. Embarrassed at this fatherly intervention at this late stage in his life (Joey is pushing 40), Joey lied to me for the first time. Now it seems that I have a justified true belief that Joey is living in a new house, but most people are reluctant to say that I *know* that Joey is living a new house. Based on examples like this many philosophers have come to conclude that knowledge requires justified true belief and something they call “degetterization.” In saying that knowledge could only be better than true belief because of the value that justification adds to true belief, I am assuming that whatever is needed to account for degetterization is not what accounts for the putatively superior value of knowledge. DePaul also makes this assumption, and, like him, I won’t argue for it here. For DePaul’s remarks see “Value Monism in Epistemology,” pp. 178 and 183 n.11. For the complication Gettier identified see his “Is Justified true belief knowledge?” *Analysis* 23 (1963), 121-23.

- 1 Justification is good only as a means to truth.
- 2 If justification is good only as means to truth then justified beliefs are only instrumentally good.
- 3 If some X is good only instrumentally as a means to some goal G, then (X & G) cannot be better than G alone. Thus,
- 4 Justified true beliefs cannot be better than true beliefs.
- 5 If knowledge is epistemically better than true beliefs, it is only better because of the value that justification adds to true beliefs. Therefore,
- 6 Knowledge cannot be epistemically better than true beliefs.

This argument ought not be very controversial. DePaul and those who agree with him, of course, won't accept the premise 1. But I think I showed that his argument to the contrary fails. Moreover, I am not optimistic, to say the least, about the prospects of establishing that justification is an intrinsic epistemic good. Premise 2 ought to be entirely uncontroversial. Premise 3 is perhaps a bit more controversial, but again, I don't see how anyone could challenge it. If something is a good *only* as a means to some other good, then its hard to see how it could be claimed that the two goods together are better than the second good when the first only has value because of its connection to the second. DePaul himself assumes some such principle. Premise 4 clearly follows from the first three premises. Premise 5 would be completely uncontroversial except for the possibility that whatever corrects Gettier problems is what accounts for the superior value of knowledge. But I think it is safe assumption – widely shared among contemporary epistemologists, as DePaul notes⁴¹ – that this is not the case and that consequently premise 5 is correct. The conclusion (6) straightforwardly follows from premises 4 and 5. Thus knowledge cannot be epistemically better than true belief. Knowledge, it turns out, is overrated.

⁴¹ "Value Monism in Epistemology," p. 178.

Some, I am sure, will still find this conclusion unacceptable. To them I offer the following consideration to help banish any remaining doubts. Above I noted that truth is good for our making our way in the world. This seems doubtlessly true. What I want to note here is that whether we should come to true beliefs non-accidentally (i.e. with justification) *or* accidentally in no way affects the good of truth here: true beliefs, *however accidentally we came by them*, help us make our way in the world. I don't see how anyone could challenge this. And if true, then we can see the good of a "mere" true belief.

Now it is important that the conclusion that knowledge is not better than mere true belief is not taken to mean something that it does not. For example, to say that knowledge is overrated is not to say that it is not something to be pursued. Marian David has argued that for those holding the view I am defending – that justification is not an ultimate epistemic goal – “Knowledge is not a goal at all as far as epistemology is concerned; it is not an epistemic goal.”⁴² But this only follows if justification is *not* an epistemic good, for if it is an epistemic good then it is surely a good to be pursued (and hence a goal). And if justification is a goal then it follows that knowledge is a goal. As I argued above, it is not plausible to maintain that justification is not an epistemic good. Therefore, knowledge is an epistemic goal. It just isn't an ultimate epistemic goal. Only truth is.

The conclusion that knowledge is overrated is only meant as a conclusion that knowledge is overrated. This in and of itself says nothing (directly) about the nature of justification or knowledge. It does not imply that the puzzle that is the analysis of

⁴² “Truth and the Epistemic Goal,” on p. 155.

knowledge should be of any less interest to epistemologists than it presently is. It just says that knowledge is not the ultimate aim in epistemic inquiry.

Before closing this section there is one last concern I should mention. It is that if truth is the only ultimate epistemic goal, and justification adds no independent value to the truth goal, then why do we want our beliefs to be justified? After all, as DePaul says, it seems to be a consequence of my view that “When one has a true belief, one has already attained the only thing of epistemic value – one’s belief is as epistemically good as beliefs can get.”⁴³ It certainly cannot be because justified true beliefs are epistemically better than true beliefs plain and simple, for I rejected that idea. So why do we want our beliefs to be justified? There can be but one answer, and that is that we want our beliefs to be true. As I will argue in chapter III, to be justified a belief must be likely to be true in some sense, otherwise it will fail to be of any epistemic value.

III. Why knowledge is not merely true belief

Some will no doubt find the above conclusion counterintuitive and unpalatable. But recognizing that our ultimate epistemic goal is not knowledge is perhaps our best hope to avoid an even more unpalatable conclusion. To the “outrage” of one prominent philosopher⁴⁴, Crispin Sartwell has argued that knowledge *is* merely true belief. To be sure, Sartwell insists that he doesn’t want to argue that “an account” of justification is “unnecessary or unimportant;” all he wants to claim, he says, is that “such an account

⁴³ “Value Monism in Epistemology,” p. 175.

⁴⁴ William G. Lycan in “Sartwell’s Minimalist Analysis of Knowing,” *Philosophical Studies* (1993), Vol. 73, 1-3, on p. 1. Lycan calls Sartwell’s thesis “antiSocratic and outrageous.”

is not part of the theory of knowledge.”⁴⁵ Still, it is not an overstatement to say that this goes against the grain of all epistemology.

Sartwell starts off by noting that disputes about the analysis of knowledge seem to boil down to clashing intuitions about the analysandum, and so he accordingly offers “a way of picking out the notion to be defined.” He proposes: “*knowledge is our epistemic goal in the generation of particular propositional beliefs.*”⁴⁶ He uses the term “inquiry” to refer to procedures that have as their goal the generation of belief in regard to particular propositions, and says that knowledge is thus the “purpose or *telos* of inquiry.”⁴⁷ The use of the word “telos” is important here because Sartwell soon contrasts deontological and teleological accounts of normative epistemology and argues that the former are implausible. Briefly, (pure) deontological accounts of normative epistemology hold that there are epistemic obligations, permissions and the like, but that there is no overarching epistemic goal to which such obligations, etc. are aimed. Teleological accounts of normative epistemology, on the other hand, aim at some overarching goal, and they recognize as epistemically good any procedure that leads to the relevant goal. Sartwell says that he sees no plausible *source* of epistemic obligations in the absence of some overarching goal, and as a result concludes that (pure) deontological accounts of epistemic norms are “highly implausible.”⁴⁸ Inquiry, he says, *does* have a purpose, and that purpose is just what philosophers have long taken it to be, namely, the generation of true belief and the non-generation of false belief. Concerning the place of justification in all of this, he says it is just what it

⁴⁵ “Why Knowledge is Merely True Belief,” p. 168.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 171. For Sartwell’s discussion of the teleological/deontological distinction see pp. 169-171.

should be in teleological accounts of normative epistemology, namely, that it is a *means* to truth. But then this creates a problem for those who maintain that justification is also a necessary condition for knowledge. Sartwell writes:

If we describe justification as of merely instrumental value with regard to arriving at truth, as Bonjour does explicitly, we can no longer maintain both that knowledge is the *telos* of inquiry and that justification is a necessary condition of knowledge. It is incoherent to build a specification of something regarded *merely* as a means of achieving some goal into the description of the goal itself; in such circumstances, the goal can be described independently of the means. So, if justification is demanded because it is instrumental to true belief, it cannot also be maintained that knowledge is justified true belief.⁴⁹ Thus, Sartwell concludes, justification cannot be a necessary condition for knowledge, and knowledge is merely true belief.

Now it has been argued that the argument quoted above does not do any real work in support of the thesis that knowledge is merely true belief.⁵⁰ I don't think I would go that far, but I certainly don't think it is Sartwell's main argument. His main argument for this bold thesis is given when he writes,

I have claimed that the conception that accounts of knowledge are attempting to analyze or describe is that of the epistemic *telos* with regard to particular propositions. It would follow that, if a philosopher holds that the epistemic *telos* is merely true belief, that philosopher implicitly commits himself, his own assertions to the contrary, to the view that knowledge is merely true belief.⁵¹ If the epistemic telos is true belief, then since knowledge is the telos of epistemic inquiry, it follows that knowledge is merely true belief.

Before discussing this argument let's go back to the first argument. It is not clear whether this argument is meant to show *only* that justification cannot be a necessary condition for knowledge (if justification is good merely as a means to truth), or whether it is *also* meant to show that knowledge is merely true belief (again, if justification is good merely for knowledge). However, since Sartwell completely ignores Gettier

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 174.

⁵⁰ Andrew Latus argues this in "Our Epistemic Goal," on p. 36.

⁵¹ "Why Knowledge is Merely True Belief," p.173.

complications, one could argue that he takes the former as establishing the latter. At any rate, *if* this is the case and the argument was meant to show that knowledge is merely true belief, it could only show this if it were assumed that knowledge is the same thing as true belief. In other words, Sartwell would beg the question in this argument. He says that it is incoherent to build into an (ultimate) goal something that is only a means to that goal. Justification is a means to truth, and thus if truth, or true belief, is the telos of epistemic inquiry, as major figures in contemporary epistemology have said it is, then it cannot be held that justification is a part of that goal. And it cannot be maintained that knowledge is justified true belief because ... well, knowledge is the same thing as true belief, that telos of epistemic inquiry that justification cannot be a part of. Thus if the first argument above is meant to show that knowledge is merely true belief, it would only work if knowledge is taken beforehand as mere true belief.⁵²

But the second argument above is something else. The argument here, in fact, is quite simple. Let me present it as follows:

- 1 Knowledge is the telos of epistemic inquiry.
- 2 The telos of epistemic inquiry is true belief. Therefore,
- 3 Knowledge is merely true belief.

This is, I submit on Sartwell's behalf, a valid argument. And if it should also happen that the premises are true, then Sartwell will have won the day and knowledge is merely true belief. But the premises are not both true: premise 1 is false, knowledge is not the telos of epistemic inquiry; only truth is. Sartwell takes the above as a solid argument for the conclusion that knowledge is merely true belief; I take it as a *reductio* of one of the premises. I think 1 is that premise. Now given the discussion above it is not hard to see

⁵² Pierre Le Morvan raises the issue of begging the question in a different (but perhaps related) way in his "Is Mere True Belief Knowledge," *Erkenntnis* (2002), Vol. 56, 151-168, on p. 162. But I do not find his arguments convincing.

that I would have said this. But it should be equally clear that this is not the only thing that could be said. One may try to deny premise 2, perhaps by saying that the telos epistemic inquiry is *justified* true belief.⁵³ In my view, not surprisingly, such a strategy is doomed to failure, as the discussion above shows.

The way to escape Sartwell's unsavoury conclusion is just what I have been advocating, namely, to demote knowledge to its proper place in epistemic inquiry, and recognize true belief as the only ultimate goal of epistemic inquiry.

IV. Objection

Before closing this section there is an important objection in the literature that I cannot ignore. David argues that accounts of justification that construe it merely as a means to the synchronic truth goal have the unpalatable result that, to be justified, a belief must be true. First he says that, since having a true belief is “part of what is involved in now having beliefs that are true and now not having beliefs that are false” (i.e. a part of the truth goal), a true belief is what he calls (following Foley⁵⁴) a “constitutive” means to the truth goal. But he says that the fact that justification is understood as a means to the synchronic truth goal makes it “hard to see how justification [too] could be anything but a constitutive means” to that goal, something which he says “will make justification collapse into truth.”⁵⁵ He says this, he tells us, because (“roughly”) “with a synchronic goal only constituent means count, and a constituent of the goal must always be a better

⁵³ This is just what Le Morvan tries to do (without success, it seems to me) in *ibid.* See pp. 163-4.

⁵⁴ In his book *Working Without a Net: A Study of Egocentric Epistemology* (1993).

⁵⁵ “Truth and the Epistemic Goal,” on p. 161.

constitutive means than a nonconstituent.”⁵⁶ The idea, apparently, is that when a goal concerns the present time-slice the only thing that can count as a good thing towards the attainment of that goal is the attainment of something that is a constituent means to the attainment of the goal. If things were such that the nonattainment of a goal could count as a good thing towards the goal (perhaps because some other “good” has been attained) then the goal in question wouldn’t be truly synchronic. It would be diachronic. But since I have admitted that the truth goal must be synchronic, it seems that this spells trouble for the view I defend. David writes:

Assume you have a true belief *p* that is (intuitively) unjustified. The goal-oriented approach [where justification is understood merely as a means to the synchronic truth goal] must nevertheless count believing *p* as a good thing relative to the goal – certainly as better than not believing *p* and as better than believing the negation of *p*, both of which conflict with the goal.

Conversely, David then asks us to assume that we have a false belief *p* that is (intuitively) justified, and says the same thing, *mutatis mutandis*, about this case: “the goal-oriented approach must count believing *p* as a bad thing relative to the goal.” He continues: “The upshot is that the goal-oriented approach will count all true beliefs as justified and will not allow justified beliefs that are false.”⁵⁷ He considers these consequences respectively “absurd” and “very unpalatable.”⁵⁸

The objection David raises seems to be a serious one indeed. The only thing that can count as a good thing toward the synchronic goal of now having beliefs that are true and now not having beliefs that are false is having a belief that is true.⁵⁹ If a belief is not true,

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Stephen Maitzen argues something very similar in his “Our Errant Epistemic Aim,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (1995), Vol. 55, No. 4, 869-876. However, David argues that he makes a “problematic transition” in his argument. See “Truth and the Epistemic Goal,” on p. 161.

⁵⁹ Of course, now not having a belief that is false could also count as a good thing towards the goal. But I will ignore this negative aspect in this discussion.

then there could be nothing else about it that could make it count as a good thing towards the truth goal. Only constitutive means can count. But justification, presumably, is a good thing towards the goal of truth – indeed, as I have argued, this truth connection constitutes its only source of value – which has the result that justification must be a constitutive means to the truth goal. In other words, for a belief to be justified it must be true. There is scarcely a more unpalatable result in epistemological inquiry. After all, it is a widely and strongly held view among contemporary epistemologists that justification need not be infallible: a justified belief can be false. Now this is just one of two bad results that David mentions; the other is the “absurd” result that all true beliefs are justified. But it seems to me that this may be an unwarranted leap. At any rate, I will not argue the point. The result that a justified belief cannot be false is unpalatable enough on its own.

Fortunately, it is an unpalatable result we need not accept. The “problem” David raises is really no problem at all. For even if only constituent means can count towards a synchronic goal, something can still be a good thing towards such a goal if makes it likely that one will find constituent means to that goal. True, when someone has a justified but false belief that p the goal-oriented approach much nevertheless count p as a bad thing towards the truth goal. And the converse is true about an unjustified but true belief that p : the goal-oriented approach much nevertheless count p as a good thing towards the truth goal. But given the account I have defended here of the relation of epistemic justification to the truth goal, this result is neither surprising nor unwelcome. After all, if true belief is the only *ultimate* epistemic goal, as I have argued, we should expect a false belief to count as a bad thing towards that goal (whatever other epistemic

virtues it may have). And conversely, we should expect a true belief to count as a good thing towards that goal (whatever other epistemic vices it might have). Moreover, there is nothing at all problematic about this. Specifically, there is nothing problematic about what this says about epistemic justification. Now while I have said little about the nature of epistemic justification, I have insisted that it is only of epistemic value because of its connection to the goal of truth. In other words, I have insisted that it is only of instrumental value. And, of course, if it is to be an epistemic good, it must be an effective instrument. The question now is how can it be an effective instrument while allowing that a justified belief need not be true? The answer is easy: a justified belief must be likely to be true in some sense (as I argue below), and thus someone whose beliefs are justified will be successful more often than not in satisfying the truth goal. Again, a false belief will count as a bad thing towards that goal. But again, there is nothing wrong with this. True beliefs will count as good things towards the goal, and with justification there will be more true beliefs than false beliefs. David's mistake is in thinking that to say that the truth goal is synchronic is to say that the goal is "momentary." We have already seen that this is an idea to be rejected. To say that the truth goal is synchronic is to say that in aiming for beliefs that are true, the goal is to have true beliefs at the very time in question, not at some later time. It is not to say that there is a different truth goal from one moment to the next.

Chapter 2.

Justification and Truth

In this section I will be concerned with how the essential relation between epistemic justification and truth affects the nature of epistemic justification, and how this in turn affects the internalism-externalism debate. In particular I will be concerned with whether this essential relation means that justified beliefs must be mostly true in some sense. This topic will be the focus of discussion in section II. In the section which follows, section III, I will move on to discuss an influential argument against any such connection between justification and truth: evil demon world examples. Finally, in section IV, I will close with some brief remarks about how I think my results affect the internalism-externalism debate. First, however, let us take a brief look at the internalism-externalism debate.

I. Internalism and Externalism

The internalist-externalist controversy (IEC) in epistemology concerns the nature of epistemic justification. More specifically, it concerns the issue of whether the elements that serve to justify a belief must be *subjectively accessible* to the believer.⁶⁰ Internalists affirm that they must be; externalists maintain that they need not be. Before examining

⁶⁰ This closely resembles Bonjour's view of the central issue involved in the controversy (the difference is that he speaks of "cognitive" access instead "subjective" access). See his "Internalism and Externalism," p. 234.

this dispute in any more detail, however, I want to take some time out to talk about which IEC I am concerned with here.

Most discussions of the IEC during the past two decades have focused on whether internalism or externalism is the correct position to take about *justification*. But there is also an internalism-externalism debate about *knowledge*. However, since (as far as I understand) externalist theories about knowledge – such as Robert Nozick's⁶¹ – repudiate the idea of justification altogether, I am not concerned with such theories here.⁶²

But there is another way in which the IEC is said to be concerned with knowledge. Internalists often suggest that external considerations are really more appropriate to do the work of degetterization: they are that which turns *justified* true belief into knowledge.⁶³ Externalists about justification, of course, have to reject this. Taking up this issue, Matthias Steup has recently suggested that the IEC may be a case of two sides “talking past each other.” He argues that the two sides have different purposes in mind for the concept of justification that they are after: internalists want it to be something that turns true *degettierized* belief into knowledge, and externalists want it to be something that turns true belief into knowledge.⁶⁴ But, plainly, this isn't right. For one thing there is not much indication that this is what externalists have in mind. For another, it is clear that

⁶¹ In his book *Philosophical Explanations* (1981).

⁶² A Nozick defender is Charles Landesman. He allows that “Justification ... is an internalist notion” – and duly repudiates it. See his *An Introduction to Epistemology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 85; see also p. 77.

⁶³ For internalists who have expressed this view see, for example, Matthias Steup, “A Defense of Internalism,” in *The Theory of Knowledge. Classical and Contemporary Readings*, Ed. Louis P. Pojman. (Belmont: Wadsworth), pp. 373-84, on p. 383, and James F. Sennett, “Toward a Compatibility Theory for Internalist and Externalist Epistemologies,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (1992), Vol. 52, No. 3, 641-655, on pp. 654-5.

⁶⁴ Steup, “The Analysis of Knowledge,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2001 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2001/entries/knowledge-analysis/>.

if they did they would fail. The reason has to do with the distinguishing feature of Gettier cases: a belief is justified and true, but its truth is unrelated to its justification. It is only accidentally true. This is a circumstance any account of justification must allow unless it is infallibilist. Thus no fallibilist externalist account of justification can close the gap between true belief and knowledge.⁶⁵

Getting back to the issue at hand, internalists insist that the elements that serve to justify a belief must be subjectively accessible in some way. Just how subjective accessibility is to be understood has varied to some degree, but it is most often taken to mean that the believer has the ability to recognize *on reflection* what those justifying elements are.⁶⁶ Now while I believe this description of the internalist position highlights a central issue of the dispute, it avoids another issue that is also of central importance. This is whether internalists maintain that *all* the elements that serve to justify a belief must be subjectively accessible in some way. Bonjour apparently thinks that they do,⁶⁷ and he may be in line with the general assumption among internalists. However, it is not so clear that it is true. Michael Bergmann has argued that if this were what qualifies one as an *internalist*, then some very prominent “internalists” – Bonjour, Roderick Chisholm and Keith Lehrer – are not internalists at all. For example, he points out that Bonjour says that

⁶⁵ As far as I can tell, William Harper is the only person who has recognized this. See his “Papier-mâché Problems in Epistemology: A Defense of Strong Internalism,” *Synthese* (1998), Vol. 116, 27-49, on p. 44.

For other reasons, Michael Bergmann has argued that the internalism-externalism debate should shift focus to “warrant” – that which in addition to true belief makes for knowledge – instead of justification. But I don’t see much in his arguments to recommend such a shift. In fact, I think such a shift would only create the potential for more confusion. For one reason why I say this see n. 70 below. For Bergmann’s arguments see “Internalism, Externalism and the No-Defeater Condition,” *Synthese* (1997), Vol. 110, 399-417, pp. 403-405.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Steup, “A Defense of Internalism,” and Alston “Internalism and Externalism,” pp. 237-238.

⁶⁷ “Internalism and Externalism,” p. 234.

a necessary condition for S's belief that *p* to be justified is that "there is, in fact, good reason for thinking that *p* is true."⁶⁸ But this, Bergmann says, is an external condition.⁶⁹ And he says that Chisholm and Lehrer similarly include external conditions in their accounts of justification.⁷⁰ Thus if this were the requirement for one to be an internalist, it does not seem that Bonjour, Chisholm and Lehrer would qualify.

Bergmann proposes his own way of understanding the internalism-externalism debate, a way that he says not only rectifies this problem but also takes account of an important aspect of externalist theorizing. This is that just as prominent internalists have included external conditions in their analyses of justification or warrant, so prominent externalists – Alvin Goldman, Alvin Plantinga and Nozick – have included internal conditions in their analyses of justification or warrant. The internal conditions they propose all have to do with defeating conditions. Bergmann calls the general idea the no-defeater condition (NDC), and says that, since some internalists have considered and rejected this condition as insufficiently internalist, it does not seem that endorsing such a condition makes one an internalist. Thus he says it is best to construe the internalism-externalism debate as a debate about whether or not there are internal conditions other than the NDC that are necessary for justification or warrant.⁷¹

⁶⁸ "Internalism, Externalism and the No-Defeater Condition," p. 406. (Bergmann speaks of warrant instead of justification.) I discuss Bonjour's view below.

⁶⁹ He writes: "[W]e do not in general have good access to whether or not there is, in fact, a good reason for thinking a particular belief of ours is true" (ibid.).

⁷⁰ Since Bergmann speaks of warrant instead of justification it is hard to tell if the external conditions he mentions from Chisholm and Lehrer were meant as conditions for justification or conditions for *degettierization*. If it is the latter then this should not be surprising, for I strongly suspect that most internalists would grant that degettierization is an external condition (see, e.g., Steup, "A Defense of Internalism," p. 376). This just shows the folly of focusing the internalism-externalism debate on warrant instead of justification.

⁷¹ "Internalism, Externalism and the No-Defeater Condition," esp. pp. 405-9. See also "Deontology and Defeat," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (2000), Vol. 60 No.1, 87-102.

I think I Bergmann gets things right in recognizing that it is not so clear whether all the people who have been thought of as paradigm internalists have been people whose theory of justification included only internal conditions. And I also think he is right to acknowledge that some externalists have admitted the necessity of a NDC. However I think something should be said about the various ways in which one might be an internalist or externalist. Consider two such conditions: the grounds of a belief and the adequacy of the grounds of a belief.⁷² The ground of a belief is what the belief is based on. The internalist about grounds for belief would insist that one must have some sort of subjective access to the grounds for belief. The adequacy of the grounds of belief, on the other hand, concerns whether the grounds of belief are “good enough” to adequately ground the belief. On one understanding of adequate ground, an adequate ground for a belief means that the belief is in fact likely to be true. An internalist about adequacy of grounds would require some kind of subjective access to the adequacy of grounds. To be sure, it is far from clear how sense can be made of this. Perhaps, as Alston suggests, a justified belief about the belief’s adequacy will do.⁷³ Now one may be an internalist or externalist about only one of these two conditions, and it seems to me that the positions one might take here are not equally plausible.⁷⁴ Thus, in my view, it matters which conditions one is internalist or externalist about.

⁷² See Alston, “An Internalist Externalism,” *Synthese* (1988), Vol. 74, 265-83; reprinted in Alston 1989, pp. 227-245, and “Concepts of Epistemic Justification.” Kihyeon Kim makes a similar distinction, but the internalist position he presents on adequacy is a bit different from the one I use below. See his “Internalism and Externalism in Epistemology,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* (1993), vol. 30, no. 4, 303-316, 307-313. Kim also has a third way or “dimension” on which one may be an internalist or externalist – the basing relation – but it does not seem to me that there has been much of an internalism-externalism debate on this dimension.

⁷³ “An Internalist Externalism,” p. 240. Alston rejects this suggestion.

⁷⁴ In fact, Alston has suggested that the plausibility of some attacks on externalism stems from a failure to distinguish between the ground of a belief and the adequacy of its ground. See *ibid.*, p.

Externalists deny the necessity of an access requirement. All that externalists are concerned about – at least, all that “pure” externalists are concerned about – is that a belief be connected in an appropriate way with truth. Consider Alvin Goldman’s reliabilism, a major externalist theory of justification. Now I’m not going to get into the details, but here is Goldman’s general idea:

The justificational status of a belief is a function of the reliability of the process or processes that cause it, where (as a first approximation) reliability consists in the tendency of a process to produce beliefs that are true rather than false.⁷⁵ The idea is that a belief is justified if it is reliably produced, even if the person has no idea that it is so reliably produced.⁷⁶ Goldman, of course, adds various conditions (including a NDC) to deal with various problems, but this is the central thesis of his reliabilist theory of justification.⁷⁷

Internalist critics have mostly focused on whether reliability is a sufficient condition for justification. Bonjour has claimed that “external or objective reliability is not enough to offset subjective irrationality.”⁷⁸ He has also famously argued against reliabilism with the use of his Norman example. In certain matters Norman is a completely reliable clairvoyant, but he has no evidence for or against the thesis that he has this power. One day he comes to believe, on the basis of this power, that the president is in New York, even though he has no evidence for or against this belief. Bonjour contends that Norman

244 n. 18. However, since most externalist accounts of justification are externalist on both counts, it is not so clear that this distinction generally helps externalism.

⁷⁵ “What is Justified Belief?” *Justification and Knowledge*, ed. George S. Pappas (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1979). Reprinted in Goldman 1992, pp.105-126, p. 113.

⁷⁶ Actually, it may be that, by the end of Goldman’s “What is justified belief?” his position is not very reliabilist at all. The problem is that he seems include our *beliefs* about reliability as a determinant factor about justification. Haack has emphasized this issue. See her *Evidence and Inquiry: Towards Reconstruction in Epistemology*, chapter 7.

⁷⁷ Actually, Goldman’s response to Bonjour’s Norman example (see below) in *Epistemology and Cognition* (p. 112) – that Norman’s belief in the whereabouts of the president is undermined by his lack of evidence for his clairvoyance – arguably represents an abandoning of reliabilism, but I will not get into this issue here.

⁷⁸ *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*, p. 41.

is unjustified in his belief about the president because he has no reason for his belief.⁷⁹

Other philosophers have basically made the same point.⁸⁰ The general reluctance to grant that Norman is justified is captured here in remarks by Alston:

We expect that if there is something that justifies my belief that *p*, I will be able to determine what it is. We find something incongruous, or conceptually impossible, in the notion in my being justified in believing that *p* while totally lacking any capacity to determine what is responsible for that justification.⁸¹

Mostly for reasons of this sort, most epistemologists have been internalists.

While most of the many critics of externalism have focused on the question of whether the “external” connection between a belief and its truth is a *sufficient* condition for justification, less attention has been paid to the issue of whether a connection between belief and truth is a *necessary* condition for justification. Those who do pay some attention to this issue normally do so in the context of discussing demon world counterexamples, which purport to show that justification is not objectively connected to truth. We will get to these examples in section III. But first let us discuss this issue in the context of a discussion of the relation of epistemic justification to the goal of truth.

II. The Truth Goal and Epistemic Justification

Given the centrality of truth in epistemic inquiry, one might expect to find frequent discussions about how epistemic justification’s essential relation to the truth goal might affect its nature. Unfortunately, such discussions are few and far between.⁸² But as on

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ See, e.g., Keith Lehrer, *Theory of Knowledge* 2nd Edition (Boulder: Westview, 2000), chapter 8.

⁸¹ “An Internalist Externalism,” 234-5.

⁸² Especially after the flurry of discussion that followed the publication Stewart Cohen’s “Justification and Truth” died down.

other issues, Bonjour is again one of the few philosophers to be fairly explicit on this issue. Recall the following from the passage quoted above:

The basic role of justification is that of a *means* to truth ... And, *if our standards of epistemic justification are appropriately chosen*, bringing it about that our beliefs are epistemically justified will also tend to bring it about, in the perhaps even longer run and with the usual slippage and uncertainty which our finitude mandates, that they are true. If epistemic justification were not conducive to truth in this way, if finding epistemically justified beliefs did not substantially increase the likelihood of finding true ones, then epistemic justification would be irrelevant to our main cognitive goal and of dubious worth. ... It follows from [the essential or internal relation of epistemic justification to the cognitive goal of truth] that one's cognitive endeavors are epistemically justified only if and to the extent that they are aimed at this goal, which means very roughly that one accepts all and only those beliefs which one has good reason to think are true.⁸³

Readers may find three things to say about this passage. First, Bonjour seems to be saying that justified beliefs must *in fact* be mostly true over the long run.⁸⁴ Second, Bonjour seems to be making a weaker (but arguably still strong) claim that justification must only “substantially” increase the likelihood of “finding” true beliefs, not that the justified beliefs must in fact be true over the long run. Third (and admittedly this is less clear), Bonjour seems to be saying that it is not necessary that justified beliefs must even substantially increase the likelihood that one's beliefs are true; all that is necessary is that one have “good reason” for thinking that such beliefs are true, where having such good reason is presumably not something that requires that the relevant beliefs are in fact likely to be true.⁸⁵ In other words, it seems that Bonjour says three quite different things here.

He seems to start off with the rather strong view that justified beliefs must in fact be

⁸³ *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*, p. 8.

⁸⁴ On my reading of the second sentence of the quote, having epistemically justified beliefs *tending* to bring about true ones means that epistemically justified beliefs will be true *more often* than not. (I don't see a more plausible way of interpreting “tend” here.)

⁸⁵ I am assuming here that Bonjour shares the widespread assumption that having good reasons is something that is ultimately unconnected to truth. While I think that ultimately this is Bonjour's view, I don't think it'll be very useful to delve into an in depth examination of Bonjour's views on the subject, so will not argue for it. However, readers should note that remarks of his in support of demon world counterexamples to reliabilism imply that he does hold this view. See Bonjour's “Internalism and Externalism,” pp. 246-7 (and my remarks in n. 94 below).

mostly true over the long run, then changes to the view that justification must only “substantially” increase the likelihood of finding true beliefs, and finally ends with the rather weak view that all that is necessary for justification is that one have good reasons for thinking that one’s beliefs are true. I point this out because I think this ambiguity is not uncommon for those internalists who have ventured to consider the nature of epistemic justification *given* its essential relation to the epistemic goal of truth. The central issue is the following. I have argued that epistemic justification is *essentially* related to the epistemic goal of truth, so that a belief could neither be *epistemically* justified nor of *epistemic* value if it were aimed at some other goal. Given this, the question is: is it really acceptable to say that all that is necessary for a belief to be justified is that the holder must have good reasons for thinking it is true, or must a justified belief also *in fact* be likely (in some sense) to be true? As we shall see, I know what my answer to this question is; in the passage quoted above, it is not clear that Bonjour does.

To be fair, in the end I think that Bonjour’s considered view on the subject in *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge* is not nearly as inconsistent as the above passage might make it seem.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, his inconsistency in the passage quoted above is

⁸⁶ It seems fairly clear that Bonjour’s considered view in *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge* is supposed to be that justified beliefs must in fact be true over the long run. For example, on the very next page after the quote above he argues that, in addition to whatever favoured standard of epistemic justification one might propose, a full account of epistemic justification also requires that one provide a “metajustification”: “an argument or rationale of some sort to *show* that [the] proposed standards of epistemic justification are *indeed truth-conducive*”(p. 9; emphases added for the last three words). And later he makes seemingly unequivocal statements to the effect that epistemically justified beliefs must *in fact* be likely to be true (e.g., p. 157). Yet, it should be noted that Bonjour isn’t as modest as he should be in offering his coherentist theory of empirical knowledge: he should say that *if* his metajustification is right, and beliefs that satisfy his coherentist standard of epistemic justification are in fact likely to be true, *then* he has offered the correct account of empirical knowledge; but his statements about what he accomplishes are far

instructive: on the face of it, it would seem that the essential relation of epistemic justification to the epistemic goal of truth goal would suggest that, for a belief to be epistemically justified, it must in fact be likely to be true in some sense; however, internalists generally have somehow failed to notice this connection.⁸⁷ (I mention only internalists, of course, because on all externalist views of justification (until recently, anyway) it is a given that a justified belief must be likely to be true.) Later, in section IV, I will have some brief remarks concerning why this might be so, but now let us examine this possible connection.

The question now before us is whether, given what I have said about epistemic justification's relation to the goal of truth, a belief, to be epistemically justified, must in fact be likely to be true in some sense. The answer, of course, is yes. It is hard to see how it could be otherwise. The reason is as follows. If epistemic justification were unconnected to truth, then it is hard to see how it could be of any *epistemic* value. If, on the other hand, epistemic justification is essentially connected to the truth goal, so that whatever epistemic value it has is entirely derived from its connection to truth, then it is hard to see how a belief could be justified if it is not likely to be true. Suppose it were otherwise. Suppose a belief could be justified even if it were not likely to be true in any sense. It is probably useful to introduce some terminology to describe this state of affairs.

less conditional. Moreover, his endorsement of demon world counterexamples is not consistent with this view (see discussion below).

⁸⁷ An "internalist" who it can be argued has seen the connection is Alston. He has argued that the justifying grounds of a belief must in fact be "adequate," which, as we saw, means that they must in fact be "indicative" of the truth. However, Alston only has an access requirement for the grounds of the belief, not its adequacy. Hence he describes his view as a species of "internalist externalism." For his discussion see his "An Internalist Externalism." See also his "Concepts of Epistemic Justification" and "Internalism and Externalism in Epistemology," *Philosophical Topics* (1986), Vol. 14, 179-221; reprinted in Alston 1989, 185-226. More recently, Alston has emphasized the chief value of truth in epistemic inquiry, though he now eschews all talk of justification. See his "Doing Epistemology without Justification," esp. pp. 11-13.

Let us say of a belief that is not likely to be true in any sense of ‘likely’ that it “fails” with respect to truth. And let us say of a belief that is likely to be true in some sense of ‘likely’ that it “passes” with respect to truth. Now its hard to see how a belief could be justified if it fails with respect to truth. If it fails with respect to truth, then it also fails with respect to that from which justification derives its entire epistemic value, namely truth itself. In that case it is hard to see how epistemic justification could be of any epistemic value. But justification is surely of epistemic value. And if its relation to truth is what I have said it is, then a belief simply cannot be justified if it fails with respect to truth.

This argument, I submit, is as unanswerable as it is simple – if what I have argued in chapter 1 is correct. If what I argue there is not right, then the argument does not work. For if the epistemic goal were to have justified true beliefs, a belief failing with respect to truth would not mean that it could not be justified. The reason is that, in that case, justification would be an intrinsic good, and so could be satisfied without any connection to truth. Fortunately, what I argued in chapter 1 is not incorrect.

Now before turning to possible objections there is something I should pause to mention. In introducing the ‘pass with respect to truth’ terminology above I said that a belief passes with respect to truth if it is likely to be true in *some* sense of ‘likely.’ What I want to note here is that by leaving open the sense in which a belief must be likely to be true, I do not mean to allow the sense in which a belief is likely to be ‘true’ as such is understood in subjective probability theory. As should be clear, the sense of ‘truth’ I have been using is the familiar one, namely, the idea of truth as determined by mind-independent facts of the matter or “reality.” Epistemological inquiry is concerned with how we might come to know this reality. It seems fairly clear that subjective probability –

and the Bayesianism that normally goes with it – doesn't have much to say about this. Theories of subjective probability are concerned with something usually described as the "rationality" of belief. They give an account of the conditions (the probability calculus, at least) that must be satisfied for a belief set to count as rational, as they understand that term. Thus if I assign probability (P) .8 to A (i.e. $P(A) = .8$) and probability .6 to B ($P(B) = .6$), I can turn to subjective probability theory to tell me what I should believe about the probability of B on A ($P(B/A)$). And if I should learn the truth of, say, B (such that $P(B) = 1$), then I can also turn to subjective probability theory about how I should adjust my other beliefs (e.g., conditionalization). But none of this, of course, says anything about how I should assign credence *in the first place*. If I assign $P(A) = .8$ and $P(B) = .6$, then subjective probability theory will tell me the degree of credence I should give to $P(B/A)$. But how *should* I assign credence functions in the first place? Subjective probability theory is silent on this issue, for it is silent on how I should form belief in response to experience.⁸⁸ This result, it seems to me, is related to another aspect of subjective probability theory, the aspect that I am in fact most concerned with here. This is that, being concerned as it is about belief, theories of subjective probability do not seem to have an appropriate concept of 'truth' as required in epistemological inquiry.

⁸⁸ Alvin Plantinga and Pollock and Cruz have criticized subjective probability theory (considered as an account of epistemic justification or warrant) on this issue. See Plantinga's *Warrant: The Current Debate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 128-31, and Pollock and Cruz, *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge*, pp. 101-2. (Pollock and Cruz actually go further and argue that "no sense" can be made of subjective probability; see *ibid.*, pp. 93-8. Note also that Peter Baumann has argued that if reliabilists were to endorse a subjective understanding of probability, then they would be forced to accept a relativistic view of knowledge. See his "Can reliabilists believe in subjective probability?" *The Philosophical Quarterly* (1998), Vol. 48, No. 191, 199-200). Subjective probability theory is, of course, not entirely silent on how one should assign credence in the first instance. The probability calculus does say how one should assign credence to propositions that are necessarily true or false, necessarily equivalent, or necessarily incompatible. Almost needless to say, however, this still leaves theories of subjective probability seriously incomplete (considered as accounts of epistemic justification or warrant).

What this means for my purposes is that however much a belief is likely to be ‘true’ in the sense that such terms are used in subjective probability theory, it is not the sense that epistemologists have been concerned with. (I will say more about the sense in which a belief must be likely to be true below.)

With that said, we can now turn to possible objections. So is there any way of challenging the above argument? It might be thought that the argument leaves an opening that might be exploited to useful effect. I offered two possible ways in which epistemic justification might be related to truth: as either unconnected to truth, or as essentially connected such that its epistemic value is entirely derived from its connection to truth. It might be thought that there is an obvious middle ground that I ignore, and which provides a way of blocking the argument. It will be granted that it is implausible to maintain that justification is unconnected to truth, but it will be insisted that the connection is non-essential. This will be to say that not only is epistemic justification’s epistemic value *not* entirely derived from truth, but also its greater, essential value is derived from some other source.

There are two problems with this view. First, of course, is that it is hard to see what this other source could be. The argument in chapter 1 shows that there could be no such source. Second, and equally important, to say that epistemic justification is connected to truth, just not essentially connected to truth, is a dubious improvement over saying that it is not connected to truth. Now I have said that epistemic justification is essentially connected to truth such that it would *not* be of any epistemic value if it were not connected to truth. The notion of “essential connection” I have been employing here, then, is something like the following: F is essentially connected to G iff something could

not be an F unless it were a G. Understood this way it is easy to see why saying that justification is connected to truth just not essentially connected to truth just won't do. If one thing, A, is not essentially connected to another thing, B, then it is possible to formulate both necessary and sufficient conditions under which something qualifies as an A *without* any reference at all to B.⁸⁹ Under such conditions it is hardly meaningful to say that A is connected to B, just not essentially connected. Similarly, it is hardly meaningful to say that epistemic justification is connected to truth, just not essentially connected. To say this is in effect to say that that there is no connection, and that is admittedly implausible.

I see no other remotely plausible way of challenging my argument. No other way, that is, aside from using evil demon (supposed) counterexamples. It is widely thought that these examples show that reliability is not a necessary condition for justification. As we shall see, if such examples are successful they would also show that a belief need not "pass" with respect to truth in order to be justified. And this would mean that what I have argued is mistaken in some way. It is to these examples we will now turn.

III. Justification without truth?

Arguably, the most important obstacle to seeing the connection between epistemic justification and truth I have argued for is the doubt engendered by evil demon counterexamples. These examples, so far as I can tell, enjoy near universal assent – including, as we shall see, from some unlikely quarters. The paper most influential in

⁸⁹ This argument is similar to Sartwell's argument against including justification as a necessary condition for knowledge if it is only a means to the epistemic goal. See his "Why Knowledge is Merely True Belief," p. 174. See also p. 30 above.

advancing such examples is Stewart Cohen's "Justification and Truth." It will therefore be our focus.

The target of Cohen's paper is externalism in general, and Goldman's reliabilism in particular. He argues that it is a consequence of reliabilism that, in a world where our beliefs are mostly false due to the "machinations" of an evil demon, our beliefs are *never* justified. He takes this as an obviously implausible result. Here he describes the evil demon world circumstance that he has in mind, and renders his judgement:

What we want to suppose is the mere truth of the demon hypothesis [unbeknownst to us]. Now part of what the hypothesis entails is that our experience is just as it would be if our cognitive processes were reliable. Thus, on the demon hypothesis, we would have every reason for holding our beliefs, [sic] that we have in the actual world. Moreover since we actually have reason to believe that our cognitive processes are reliable, it follows that in the demon world we would have every reason to believe that our cognitive processes are in fact reliable... It strikes me as clearly false to deny that under these circumstances our beliefs could be justified. If we have every reason to believe e.g., perception, is a reliable process, the mere fact that unbeknownst to us it is not reliable should not affect it's [sic] justification-conferring process ...⁹⁰

If we would have every reason to suppose that our beliefs are reliable in the demon world as we have in the actual world, then it hardly seems plausible to suppose that the two cases warrant different judgements regarding their justificatory status. But this is exactly what reliabilism would have us do, with its judgement that our beliefs in the actual world are justified, because they are reliable, and our beliefs in the demon world unjustified (and in fact never justified), because they are unreliable. Cohen argues that "a theory with this consequence fails to capture a central, perhaps *the* central distinction in epistemology ... [a] distinction ... most plausibly construed as marking the difference between justified

⁹⁰ "Justification and Truth," pp. 281-2.

and unjustified belief.”⁹¹ Thus, he concludes, reliabilism is just wrong about justification.⁹²

Now even though Cohen intends his example to show that reliability isn't a necessary condition for knowledge, it's not hard to see that it also spells trouble for the view I defend. The reason is that the external world beliefs of evil demon victims are supposed to be just as justified as our external world beliefs in the actual world, even though by hypothesis they are all false, something that makes them unlikely to be true in any sense of 'likely.'⁹³ So if successful, evil demon examples would show that a belief could be justified even though it fails with respect to truth.⁹⁴

Before getting to my response proper, something needs to be said about the general externalist reaction to Cohen's argument. On the one hand, it is easy to understand the attraction internalists would have to it. On the other hand, it might be hard to see why

⁹¹ Ibid., 282.

⁹² Another early advocate of this argument is Foley, though he focuses on epistemic rationality (a concept that he suggests may not be the same as the concept that externalists talk about). See his *The Theory of Epistemic Rationality*, pp. 158-162.

⁹³ Strictly speaking, this isn't quite true. If we took account of *all* logically possible worlds, then our external world beliefs might still be likely to be true in virtue of the fact that, in *most* possible worlds, such beliefs are in fact likely to be true. However, discussing the example in this way doesn't really help us to decide the point of the dispute. To see why consider that nothing could prevent a reliabilist from saying that reliability, too, is to be understood in terms of all logically possible worlds. If so, then the fact that evil demon victims' beliefs were likely to be true all logically possible worlds considered – and, let us say, also reliably produced all logically possible worlds considered – would mean that the example would fail to have a crucial characteristic necessary to make it a counterexample in the first place: namely, unreliability. In order to keep the central issue before us – whether a belief can be justified even though it is not reliably produced (or is not likely to be true) – then, if we are to talk about all logically possible worlds, we should suppose that evil demon victims' beliefs are unreliable in most logically possible worlds (and that their beliefs are not likely to be true in most logically possible worlds). But then it is clear that talking about all logically possible worlds adds nothing to the discussion. For this reason I will limit the discussion to the two worlds (what we take to be the actual world and the evil demon world).

⁹⁴ For this reason it is inconsistent for people like Bonjour to endorse demon world counterexamples and yet maintain that justified beliefs must pass with respect to truth. If a belief must pass with respect to truth if it is to be justified, then the beliefs of evil demon victims are simply not justified.

reliabilists should give it anything more than a dismissive glance. After all, reliabilists insist that reliability is a necessary condition for justification (of course, they also say it is a sufficient condition for justification). If a particular belief were the result of an unreliable process we would certainly expect them to issue the judgement that the belief is unjustified. And it might well be expected that this judgement would remain the same even if it concerned not a single belief, but most of our beliefs. But this expectation would be wrong. For it seems that externalists too have felt the intuitive pull of evil demon counterexamples. Goldman, for example, has responded to such examples by adjusting his theory so as to allow that beliefs in the demon world are in some sense justified.⁹⁵ And in a forthcoming paper aiming in part to accommodate intuitions that evil demon victims' beliefs are indeed justified, Bergmann goes so far as to propose an *externalist* theory of justification in which a belief can be justified even though the objective probability of the belief being true is very low.⁹⁶ Apparently, allowing most of our beliefs to be unjustified proves too much even for externalists to allow.

Still, it ought to be clear that they could well allow it. In a recent paper Alston has considered Foley's presentation of evil demon world examples. In Foley's view, he writes, "whatever justifies ('makes it rational' in Foley's terminology) a certain belief in one world will *ipso facto* do so in the other." But he responds: "But this is just what a

⁹⁵ Goldman first introduced a notion of "normal" worlds, and argued that what counts for reliability is whether belief processes are reliable in normal worlds, not actual worlds. But the problems with this view are too numerous to mention, and he subsequently abandoned this strategy. While doing so he introduced the concepts of "strong" and "weak" justification, and argued that evil demon victims are weakly justified but not strongly justified. For Goldman's first strategy of talking about normal worlds, see his *Epistemology and Cognition*, pp. 106-9 and 113. For his later strategy, see his "Strong and Weak Justification," *Philosophical Perspectives*, 2, *Epistemology* (1988), ed. by J. E. Tomberlin, 51-69; reprinted in Goldman 1992, pp. 127-41.

⁹⁶ "Externalist Justification Without Reliability," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (forthcoming). (Bergmann utilizes a notion of proper function in its "designed" environment.)

reliabilist will (should) deny. For the reliabilist the question of whether the way a belief is formed is generally reliable is crucial to its justificatory status.”⁹⁷ In other words, “hard nosed reliabilists,” as Alston calls them, would simply “bite the bullet,” as they say, and insist that evil demon victims are unjustified in their beliefs. This is in a way my view: evil demon victims are just not justified in their beliefs.⁹⁸ For a belief to be justified it must pass with respect to truth. By hypothesis evil demon victims’ beliefs fail with respect to truth. Therefore, they are unjustified.

Now this would be the end of the matter if I did not allow that there is something to such examples. But I do in fact think that there is something to such examples. To see what this is let us consider another example that Cohen gives. He asks us to consider two inhabitants of an evil demon world, one, *A*, “who is a good reasoner, i.e., reasons in accordance with inductive inference,” and another, *B*, “who engages in confused reasoning, wishful thinking,” etc. He then writes:

Since the beliefs of *A* and *B* are both produced by unreliable processes (the evil demon sees to this), a reliability theory of justification must render identical epistemic appraisals of both sets of belief.... [But] [t]here is a fundamental epistemic difference between the beliefs of *A* and the beliefs of *B*.... [T]he Reliabilist does not have the theoretical means to display this difference.⁹⁹

The same would perhaps be said about the view I defend: it would render identical epistemic judgements (i.e. about justifiedness) about the “fundamentally” different beliefs of *A* and *B*. It *would* render identical epistemic judgements (i.e., unjustified, of course), but this does not mean that I am committed to saying that there is no difference

⁹⁷ “Doing Epistemology without Justification,” p. 5. Fumerton also acknowledges that evil demon world examples should not be expected to have much effect on “serious” philosophers who have “carefully considered and embraced reliabilism.” See *Metaepistemology and Skepticism*, p. 116.

⁹⁸ I say “in a way” because, given my arguments above and below, I am not much inclined to think of my position as somehow accepting a bad result because there is nothing else for me to do (as the phrase “biting the bullet” seems to imply).

⁹⁹ “Justification and Truth,” p.283.

(even “fundamental” difference) between the beliefs of *A* and the beliefs of *B*. I allow that there is a difference, but I deny that it is a difference in *justificatory* status.

Let me illustrate what I take to be the difference this way. Suppose *A* and *B*'s world is a place where an evil demon makes it such that it appears to inhabitants of this evil demon world that confused reasoning¹⁰⁰ and wishful thinking are reliable belief-forming processes, just the way it appears to people in the actual world that reasoning in accordance with inductive inference is good reasoning. Suppose further that the converse is true of reasoning in accordance with inductive inference: this appears to inhabitants of this evil demon world to be just as unreliable as wishful thinking and the like appears to us in the actual world to be unreliable. Under these circumstances this means that when the inhabitants of this demon world engage in wishful thinking, for example, the demon arranges things so that beliefs formed in this manner seem to be true, *so far as the inhabitants of this world can tell*. And the converse holds for reasoning in accordance with inductive inference.¹⁰¹ In each case, however, the appearance is deceptive; the demon, after all, is still evil. Now suppose, finally, that, reversing the pattern of belief that Cohen describes, *A* indulges in confused reasoning and wishful thinking, while *B* reasons in accordance with inductive inference. Let us call the evil demon world Cohen describes “world WC,” and the evil demon world I describe “world WM.” I ask what is

¹⁰⁰ Some might find it implausible to suppose that someone could deliberately engage in confused reasoning. However, confused reasoning is easier to come by than this objection might suppose. Consider someone who ignores important facts known to be true *some of the time* while engaged in reasoning. Ignoring the facts only some of the time ensures that the reasoning will be confused. And someone could ignore these facts just by focusing on other facts. If this is unconvincing, just suspend disbelief and suppose this is possible for the sake of the discussion

¹⁰¹ This is, of course, with the exception that the evil demon arranges things so that it seems to the inhabitants of that world that confused thinking and wishful thinking are reliable belief forming processes. That is, the evil demon makes it seem that inductive inference is unreliable in all but these two cases.

the fundamental difference between the beliefs of *A* and the beliefs of *B* in world WM? One answer, surely, is that it is whatever is the difference between *A* and *B*'s beliefs in world WC. And what, exactly, is this difference? The difference is one of *epistemic rationality*.¹⁰² *A* in WC and *A* in world WM both reason in accordance with the evidence they have; in WC and WM the *B*s do not. But this is something *distinct* from epistemic *justification*. To be epistemically justified, a belief must pass with respect to truth; to be epistemically rational, presumably it need not. This distinction is not new. Foley is quite explicit in his view that a belief can be epistemically rational even though it is not reliably formed in any sense. Moreover, he acknowledges that those epistemologists who insist that a justified belief must (to use my terminology) pass with respect to truth may be offering accounts of something other than a theory of epistemic rationality.¹⁰³ And Goldman himself has suggested that there is a difference.¹⁰⁴ So then it could just be maintained that the beliefs of evil demon victims are epistemically rational, but not justified.

Cohen anticipated this response, and makes two rejoinders. First, he claims that “‘reasonable’ and ‘rational’ are virtual synonyms for ‘justified.’”¹⁰⁵ I am inclined to agree that the two concepts are close in meaning, but I reject the idea that they are synonymous.

¹⁰² Remarks by Cohen himself suggest this line of response. For example, he writes: “*A*'s beliefs are conditioned by the *evidence* whereas *B*'s are not. *A* is a good *reasoner* whereas *B* is not. *A*'s beliefs are *reasonable* whereas *B*'s belief are not” (emphasizes added). See “Justification and Truth,” p. 283.

¹⁰³ See his *The Theory of Epistemic Rationality*, chapter 3, and pp.130-45. See especially p.156.

¹⁰⁴ *Epistemology and Cognition*, p. 60. It should be noted that this is before Goldman abandoned his normal worlds analysis of reliability and adopted his “strong” and “weak” justification distinction. Another epistemologist who hints at this distinction is James F. Sennett. However, he argues that rationality is both necessary and sufficient for justification, something that I deny. Aside from this, however, Sennett's position has some similarities with the view I am defending. See his “Toward a Compatibility Theory for Internalist and Externalist Epistemologies.”

¹⁰⁵ “Justification and Truth,” p. 283.

Unwilling to “quibble over semantics,” as he says, Cohen proceeds to his second rejoinder, which is to allow reliabilists to distinguish between “justified” and “reasonable” or “rational” if they want to, but insist that “clearly[,] the important epistemic concept, the one epistemologists have been concerned with, is what the Reliabilist would call ‘reasonability’ or ‘rationality.’”¹⁰⁶ Now it is quite easy for a reliabilist to reject this and say: “No, epistemologists have been concerned with justification, and a justified belief just is a reliably produced belief.” But this doesn’t strike me as quite right. It seems to me that Cohen has a point. It seems implausible to say that epistemologists have not been concerned with reasonability or rationality, only reliability. The problem with this is that it is only a problem for someone who maintains that *all* that a belief requires to be justified is that it be the result of a reliable process (and, to be fair, this is all that Cohen intended). In other words, it is only a problem for a reliabilist. I am not a reliabilist. For all that I have said I may well allow that epistemic rationality, as I understand it (see below), is a *necessary* condition for justification; I would just deny that epistemic rationality is also a *sufficient* condition for justification (assuming, as I am, that a belief can be rational even though it fails with respect to truth). I would just say that even an epistemically rational belief would also have to pass with respect to truth in order to be justified. In fact this is just what I believe.¹⁰⁷ A reliabilist, however, cannot say this, for on any plausible understanding of epistemic rationality it is something that takes place within a subjective perspective, and is therefore clearly an “internal” activity.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 183-4.

¹⁰⁷ It might be wondered why, if epistemic justification is an epistemic good only because of its connection to truth, a belief, to be justified, must be rational. This is no problem. To say that a belief must pass with respect to truth in order to be justified is to say nothing about what other conditions must be satisfied in order to for a belief to be justified.

I should note that, though I mention Foley above, I do not intend by “epistemic rationality” anything as subjective or as complicated as the theory of epistemic rationality that he offers. Rather I intend something closer to the more commonsensical notion of “reasoning in accordance with the evidence.” The idea is somewhat similar to Richard Feldman and Earl Conee’s “evidentialist” understanding of epistemic justification, but only somewhat. Their proposal was to say that a “doxastic attitude” toward a proposition p is epistemically justified for S at t iff having that attitude towards p “fits the evidence S has at t .”¹⁰⁸ My view differs primarily in that I would say that it is epistemic *rationality*, not epistemic justification, that is determined by a believer’s evidence, as Feldman and Conee understand evidence. However much a belief may fit a person’s evidence, that belief isn’t justified unless it passes with respect to truth.

In fact, there is a sense in which something is “good evidence” for a proposition only if it *tends in fact to indicate* the truth of that proposition.¹⁰⁹ If we adjusted my “fail” and “pass” terminology in the appropriate way we would say that something is good evidence for a proposition only if it passes with respect to truth in indicating the truth of that proposition. Another way of saying this is to say that evidence E is good evidence for a proposition A iff the probability of A on E is more than .5.¹¹⁰ Let us refer to good

¹⁰⁸ “Evidentialism,” *Philosophical Studies* (1985), Vol. 48, 15-34, p. 15.

¹⁰⁹ In a footnote Richard J. Hall and Charles R Johnson suggest: “Perhaps on the most general meaning of ‘evidence,’ [the] claim [that the more some piece of evidence support a proposition, the more likely it is the proposition is true] is close to analytic: evidence just is that which indicates truth.” See their “The Epistemic Duty to Seek More Evidence,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* (1998), Vol. 35, No. 2, 129-39, on p.137 n.5. Though this is just a suggestion (in the next sentence Hall and Johnson say they have something else in mind) I take this as support for my weaker claim that there is a sense in which something is evidence for a proposition only if it truly tends to indicate the truth of that proposition.

¹¹⁰ When I speak below of evidence “tending to indicate the truth of a proposition” I will have this idea in mind.

evidence understood this way as “good evidence+.”¹¹¹ Thus when in (what we take to be) the actual world in normal circumstances I look at a lush green lawn in broad daylight and – having no reason to think that what I think I’m seeing is misleading – consequently form the belief that there is something green before me, I form an epistemically justified belief.¹¹² This belief is justified (and thus also epistemically rational) because the evidence it is based on is good evidence+. But if the evil demon hypothesis were true and all of my beliefs about what I take to be the external world were false, then my belief that I see something green would not be justified, even though everything about my experience remains the same. But it would remain epistemically rational. Understood this way, epistemic justification is indeed determined by the evidence (good evidence+, that is) a person has.

Now although this understanding of good evidence (good evidence+) is in my view the most plausible understanding of that concept (see discussion below), I can see why others might be unwilling to discard the other (non-truth-indicating) understanding of good evidence. The reason is that it seems plain to me that there is a sense in which we might want to take something to be good evidence for a proposition if, *as far as it is humanly possible to confirm*, it does tend to indicate the truth of that proposition. Perhaps the idea here is best conveyed through an example. Say we take a stroll out to the beach in broad daylight. While walking along the seashore we come along small roundish dog-

¹¹¹ This may be what Alston means by “adequate grounds.” He seems to be of the view that evil demon victims are not justified because the grounds of their beliefs are not in fact truth indicative (and hence not adequate). See his “Internalism and Externalism in Epistemology,” p. 223, for his remarks about the evil demon world. In a more recent paper, however, he has proposed that we understand reliability in a way that excludes “atypical” situations like demon worlds. See his “How to Think about Reliability,” *Philosophical Topics* (1995), Vol. 23, No. 1, 1-29, p. 10.

¹¹² This is Feldman and Conee’s example of a belief fitting a person’s evidence. See “Evidentialism,” p. 15.

like footprints in the wet sand, and conclude that a dog recently walked along the beach. Now let us suppose that we are in (what we take to be) the actual world, and that, when we conclude, on the aforementioned basis, that “a dog recently walked along the beach,” we are right more often than not (sometimes, perhaps, a wolf somehow manages to make it to the beach for a stroll). But suppose we are in an evil demon world with, as usual, no way of telling that we are. It seems that we would still take the footprints to be good evidence for the proposition that a dog recently walked along the beach. In the sense of good evidence+ just sketched, we would be wrong, of course. What I want to note here is that, as evil demon victims, we would not be able to tell that the footprint evidence is not in fact truth indicative evidence for the proposition that a dog recently walked along the beach. Using all the available means we have – and, indeed, could have in the future – we would not be able to detect that the footprints do not tend to indicate that a dog recently walked along the beach. All the means that we have (and, again, could have) would tend to confirm to us that such evidence is truth-indicating evidence for that proposition. In such circumstances it might seem acceptable to say that we have good evidence for the proposition in question. This is the sense of ‘good evidence’ of I have in mind when I say we may want to say that something is good evidence for a proposition if, as far as it is humanly possible to confirm, it does tend to indicate the truth of that proposition.

So far, then, I have given two senses in which something can be good evidence for a proposition: in the first, more common (more) subjective sense, something is good evidence for a proposition if it does tend to indicate the truth of that proposition, as far as it is humanly possible to confirm; in the second, objective sense, something is good evidence for a proposition if it does *in fact* tend to indicate the truth of that proposition

(good evidence+). Epistemic rationality, as I am construing it here, involves having good evidence in the first sense.¹¹³ Epistemic justification requires having good evidence in the second sense.

This distinction seems perfectly acceptable to me, but I wonder whether it would be acceptable to Cohen. There is reason to suspect that it would not. In his discussion of what makes the beliefs of *A* justified and the beliefs of *B* unjustified he had this to say: “Whether or not reasoning results in false belief, *even if this happens more often than not*, is irrelevant to the question of whether the reasoning good. To maintain otherwise would be on par with confusing truth and validity.”¹¹⁴ Similarly, we can imagine him saying that the fact that something fails more often than not in indicating a proposition’s truth is irrelevant to the question of whether that thing is good evidence for that proposition. Moreover, he may insist that there is only one plausible sense of good evidence, and that this is it. Good evidence, somewhat like validity, has more to do with something like form and less to do with something like content. Thus, on this view, it was wrong of me to say

¹¹³ It is a consequence of this construal of epistemic rationality that if the whole of humankind considered some evidence *E* for some proposition *P* as good evidence for that proposition (and thus believes *P*), but *E* in fact does not tend to indicate *P* as far as is humanly possible to tell (though we can not yet tell, of course), then the whole of humankind would fail to have an epistemically rational belief with respect to *P*. Because of cases like this it might be said that the understanding of epistemic rationality I am describing here isn’t very subjective at all (though it isn’t quite objective either). Also for cases like this, the wisdom of saying that ‘epistemic rationality’ involves this sense of good evidence might also be questioned. The term arguably suggests something more subjective than this. This complaint has a point; perhaps ‘epistemic rationality’ is not the best name to use to describe believing on the basis of good evidence (as I am understanding good evidence here). But I confess that am at a loss for a better name for what I am after. Still, I think that the sense of good evidence I am describing here is just the sense that Cohen and Bruce Russell (see below) have in mind when they say that evil demon victims still have good evidence for their beliefs (and hence are still justified).

¹¹⁴ “Justification and Truth,” p. 283. Emphases added.

that the beliefs of *A* in world WC and the beliefs of *A* in world WM are the same: the beliefs of *A* in world WC are reasonable or rational, the beliefs of *A* in world WM are not.¹¹⁵

I have three responses to this position. First, it still leaves unexplained the fundamental similarity between the beliefs of *A* in world WC and the beliefs of *A* in world WM. Surely they are similar in some significant way. Of course, I would say that the beliefs of *A* in world WC and the beliefs of *A* in world WM are equally epistemically rational, as I understand that concept. It is not clear what Cohen would say, nor, more importantly, whether he could say anything else that is plausible. Second, *contra* the reply above, it is only by construing good evidence as something that has more to do with something like content than something like form that the beliefs of *A* in world WM would be disallowed from counting as cases of believing rationally. After all, *A*'s evidence for his belief that wishful thinking is a reliable belief forming process is just the same as *A*'s evidence in world MC that inductive inference is a case of good reasoning.¹¹⁶ Third, the position is just implausible. It would exclude obvious cases of good evidence+ for no good reason. Consider the following example. Suppose that in an evil demon world there is, in addition to the evil demon, a benevolent angel. Due to her angelic status she is able to detect what her evil counterpart is up to (unfortunately, however, she is powerless to stop him). In other words, she has good (truth-indicative) evidence of his misdeeds. Thus

¹¹⁵ This may also be the view of Bruce Russell. He argues that “[t]he grounds for saying that people in the demon world and the nondemon world are, from the standpoint of justification, in exactly the same situation is ... the intuition that each [group] has equally good evidence for what [they believe] – from which it follows, of course, that the goodness of evidence is independent of its tendency to produce mostly true beliefs” (“Epistemic and Moral Duty,” in Steup, 2001a, pp. 34-48, on p. 38). But it may also be that, presented with my distinction, Russell would accept it.

¹¹⁶ It should be remembered that inductive inference is only an instance of good reasoning because the world, as far as we can tell, is a structured and lawful place. If the world, unknown to us, were an unstructured and unlawful place, then it seems to me that inductive inference may not be a case of good reasoning (as far as getting to the unknown reality of the world).

when you go outside in broad daylight and form the belief that you see something green, she is able to tell that it is the evil demon at work, not the external world as you imagine. On the view we are considering here it will have to be maintained that there is no sense of good evidence in which it can be said that the benevolent angel has good evidence. But this is clearly wrong. She has truth-indicative evidence that the demon is deceiving us. The fact that such evidence is beyond us humans in no way affects the possibility of her having such evidence.

For these reasons I reject the above possible reply. It strikes me as obviously misguided. And indeed, though the passage above may suggest otherwise, Cohen might well accept the same. It may be that he is more likely to accept the distinction between the two senses of good evidence but insist that all that is required for justification is having good evidence in the common sense. Why, he may ask, should it be necessary to have truth-indicative evidence if such evidence is humanly impossible? One answer, of course, is what I argued in section II of this chapter: this is just what justification requires, if it is to be of epistemic value given its essential relation to truth. But there is another answer, and this is that it makes no difference for the need for truth-indicative evidence that it is humanly impossible to attain such evidence. Let me now turn to this argument.

I take it that there are three plausible positions to take on what makes for good evidence. First, there is the view that something is good evidence for a proposition for someone if, *given what else they believe*, it is reasonable for them to take that something as indicating the truth of that proposition. The idea here is that good evidence is

determined *solely* by *belief*.¹¹⁷ The word “solely” is important here because I mean to exclude the idea that having good evidence for a proposition is in part determined by having “good evidence” for that proposition (as in saying that something is good evidence for someone given what they have “good evidence” for believing). This is obviously quite uninformative. The idea instead is that good evidence is determined solely by belief. The counterpart of this idea for justification – that justification is determined solely by belief – has been considered by some philosophers and found wanting.¹¹⁸ They were right to do so. Obviously, anybody can believe anything for any reason, and the reason for belief may be completely irrelevant to whether the belief is true. Feldman rightfully claims that “no epistemologists who have attempted to analyze justification were thinking of justification this way.”¹¹⁹ The idea that good evidence is determined by belief is likewise indefensible.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ This may be similar to what Feldman calls “radical subjective epistemic justification” (which he rejects). See his “Subjective and Objective Justification in Ethics and Epistemology,” *The Monist* (1988), Vol. 71, no. 3, 405-419, pp. 411-14.

¹¹⁸ See, for example, Feldman, “Subjective and Objective Justification in Ethics and Epistemology,” pp. 411-14, and Alston, “Concepts of Epistemic Justification,” pp. 62-3 and 74.

¹¹⁹ “Subjective and Objective Justification in Ethics and Epistemology,” p. 414.

¹²⁰ In rejecting the idea that justification and good evidence are determined solely by belief I mean also to reject accounts such as Foley’s theory of epistemic rationality, were such an account offered as an account of *justification*. Foley’s view is, roughly, that a belief P is epistemically rational for a person S iff, were he or she sufficiently reflective, he or she would regard P as likely to be true given what else S strongly accepts as true. The “sufficient reflection” aspect of this theory ensures that epistemic rationality is not merely a function of whatever a person (presently) believes. Still it is clear that this requirement doesn’t quite make Foley’s theory anything other than a belief-determined conception of epistemic rationality, for there is no guarantee that sufficient reflection would make, say, S’s bizarre belief that P seem any less well-grounded *to S*, and any less bizarre *in fact*. It seems to me that were it maintained that a belief-determined conception of justification (and good evidence) were viable, something like Foley’s theory would offer the best hope. The problem is that Foley’s account is clearly inadequate as an account of justification (or good evidence). Recognition of this fact can be seen by noting that no epistemologist I am aware of, Foley himself included, have been willing to defend anything like Foley’s theory *as an account of justification* (or good evidence).

The second position one might take on what makes for good evidence was already described above. This is the view that something is good evidence for a proposition only if that something tends, *as far as it is humanly possible to confirm*, to indicate the truth of that proposition. We might say that the objective world is taken here to coincide with the limits of human knowledge. Thus, for example, the evidence I have for my belief that I am sitting here typing on a computer is good evidence for that belief in this sense of good evidence, even if it turns out that I am in an evil demon world in which all my beliefs about the external world are false. The reason is that, as far as it is humanly possible to confirm, the evidence that I have for my belief does tend to indicate that I am here typing on a computer. Some might be tempted to call this *objectively* good evidence. I call it *apparently* good evidence.

Then there is the view (also discussed above) that something counts as good evidence for a proposition only if it does tend to indicate the truth of that proposition, whether or not it is humanly possible to tell that it does in fact tend to indicate the truth of that proposition. This is what I have been calling good evidence⁺. To contrast this with the previous view we may now also call this *really* good evidence.

Now my contention is that, if one rejects the view that good evidence is determined solely by belief (as indeed everyone should) and accepts that good evidence must be apparently good as in the second view, then one has no choice but to also accept that good evidence must be really good. I have already argued that the view that good evidence is determined solely by belief is untenable. As for the second view, this is presumably what Russell would say he has in mind when he says that “goodness of

evidence is independent of its tendency to produce true beliefs.”¹²¹ That is, presumably Russell would say that goodness of evidence is independent of its tendency to produce true beliefs *beyond what it is humanly possible to tell*. But suppose it were otherwise. Suppose Russell’s view is that good evidence is independent of its tendency to produce true beliefs even when it *is* humanly possible to tell that this is so. This is an implausible view. It is hard to see how something can count as good evidence if it doesn’t tend to lead to truth (as far as it is possible for us to know). If this view were correct it would mean that someone could have good evidence for a proposition even as a better-informed person could demonstrate to that first person that the evidence does not tend to lead to truth (as far as we know). This is implausible. Presumably all will agree that if someone knows – the reader may interpret ‘know’ however he or she wishes – that her evidence for a proposition is not truth conducive, then that person’s evidence is not good.¹²² But if so then it should also be agreed that the person who is shown that her evidence for a proposition isn’t truth conducive doesn’t have good evidence for that proposition either. Moreover, it is not plausible to suggest that she had good evidence for the proposition *before* she found out that her evidence isn’t truth conducive. But if it were insisted that she did we could ask the following: what is it about her evidence that makes it good? The answer surely cannot be that she had good evidence to believe that she had good evidence. This answer utilizes the very concept we are trying to understand. But there is

¹²¹ “Epistemic and Moral Duty,” p. 38. And, similarly, this is what Cohen has in mind when he says that “Whether or not reasoning results in false belief, *even if this happens more often than not*, is irrelevant to the question of whether the reasoning good” (“Justification and truth,” 283; emphases added).

¹²² Commenting on the fact that in evil demon world counterexamples it is supposed that we do not know that the evil demon hypothesis is true, Cohen writes: “Certainly[,] if we were to know that our cognitive processes are unreliable[,] then the beliefs they generate would not be justified” (“Justification and Truth,” p. 281).

only one other answer, and this is that her evidence is good because she believes it to be good, which is the view that good evidence is determined solely by belief. But we already found this view implausible. It seems to me that the only remaining thing to say in this case is that the person in question does not have good evidence because her evidence does not in fact tend to lead to truth (as far as we know). She does not have apparently good evidence.

This result, it is important to recognize, goes even when the truth-indicative facts of the matter go beyond the available science. Consider the real life case of the history of the human species.¹²³ There is presently a controversy among paleoanthropologists about whether or not, in the history of hominids – all the human-like species starting from about 6 million years ago with more in common with modern humans than apes – there once existed a separate hominid species in Asia (those who favour this “multi-regional” view call it *Homo erectus*) distinct from the hominid species found in Europe and Africa (called *Homo ergaster* by the same people). Not surprisingly, the dating of human fossil remains is central in this controversy. At present the preponderance of the evidence points to a single species throughout. What I want to suppose here is that the current technology used to date human fossils is wildly off base, so much so that such technology is far more likely to produce spectacularly false dating of fossil remains than accurate ones. Let us also suppose that there is no technology even nearly available at present to show this, though it could be one day. My question is: if this were the case, is the present evidence for the single species theory good evidence? I think the answer is clearly “no.”

¹²³ In the discussion here I am assuming that what we take to be the actual world is in fact the actual world.

It is hard to see what basis we could have for saying otherwise.¹²⁴ For note that the evidence can't be good *given what we know*, for this raises the question of what it is to *know* something, which on the present understanding inevitably uses the concept of "good evidence," the very concept we are trying to understand. But then this leaves only one other way in which it could be maintained that the evidence is good, and this is just the rejected idea of saying that the goodness of evidence is determined solely by belief. In other words, the case where the science is unavailable is no different from the case in which the science is available, and we are forced to conclude in the former case what we concluded in the latter case: the relevant evidence is not good because it does not tend to indicate truth (as far as it is humanly possible to know). The evidence is not apparently good, but it should be.

My contention is that there is no relevant difference between this case and demon world cases where it is humanly impossible to tell that all our beliefs about the external world are false. In other words, if evidence must be apparently good, then it must also be really good. To see this let us try to answer this question: in what sense could it be maintained that the evidence for our ordinary beliefs about the external world is good if those beliefs are all false? Again, as in the previous case, it cannot be that they are good

¹²⁴ It might be argued that we do in fact have good evidence in the following way. While the current technology used to date human fossil by itself isn't good evidence for the results of such technology, we have good evidence that technology developed in the way that the technology was developed – using the latest methodologies of science, say – is reliable, and from this we have good evidence for the reliability of current methods of dating human fossil. In response we may ask: what are the grounds of the goodness of such evidence? The answer, it seems, can only be one of the three options suggested above. But then it is clear that this only moves the same issue from one level to another. This can be seen by noting that we could always suppose that developing technology in the way that the dating technology was developed is in fact so far off the mark that technology developed in this way is in fact more likely to be unreliable than reliable. And to the question of whether *this* evidence for the reliability of the technology is good, it is clear that, as above, the answer is "no."

given what we know. There is only one possible answer available here that was not available in the previous case, and this is that they are good *given what it is humanly possible to know*. But even this answer contains within it the concept of “good evidence” we are trying to understand, for presumably what it is humanly possible to know must also be humanly possible to be justified in believing, which on the present understanding has reference to the concept of “good evidence.” And this remains undefined. Again, the only alternatives appear to be the belief conception, or the truth-indicative conception. The choice is clear: good evidence must tend in fact to indicate truth (whether or not it is humanly possible to know the truth). Thus, ultimately, our understanding of good evidence must be that good evidence tends in fact to indicate truth.¹²⁵

The result of all this is that the reply of acknowledging the two senses of good evidence but insisting that justification does not require good evidence in the truth-indicative sense does not work. Ultimately, an adequate understanding of good evidence must be truth indicative (really good evidence). Therefore, lacking really good evidence, the beliefs of evil demon victims are not justified.

Before closing this section there are two last issues to be dealt with. The first concerns whether or not evil demon victims’ external world beliefs pass with respect to truth, even though they are by hypothesis all false. It might be thought that they *do* pass with respect to truth. Before addressing this issue something more should be said about what sense a belief must be likely to be true. I have already indicated that the relevant sense needed

¹²⁵ Another way of arguing for this conclusion is by saying that if one willingly grants that good evidence must tend to indicate truth as far as is humanly possibly to know, then one ought to also willingly grant that good evidence must tend to indicate truth even when it is not humanly possible to tell. The reason is that the motivation for the former view extends to the latter. This is merely a more positive version of the argument above meant for those who willingly grant that good evidence must tend to indicate truth as far as is humanly possibly to know.

here is not the sense in which ‘likely to be true’ is understood in subjective probability theory. Given this, and the fact that epistemologists are interested in truth as a mind-independent reality, it is quite obvious that the sense of ‘likely to be true’ needed here is the sense in which this idea is understood in *objective* probability.¹²⁶ What we are interested in here is actual truth, not our beliefs or opinions about truth. To see what I specifically have in mind consider what follows. First notice that since the account of justification I have offered is evidentialist, the objective probability I am interested in will obviously have reference to some kind of evidence. Now I have said that some evidence E for a proposition A is good evidence iff $P(A/E) > .5$. What this means is that when E is true, A is true *more often than not*. Understood this way it is not too hard to see that evil demon victims’ external world beliefs fail with respect to truth. Consider the example I used above in explaining what I call ‘apparently good evidence.’ In the world that we take to be the actual world, when we have the experience of being appeared to in the manner that we are appeared to when we take the stroll down the beach – i.e. the small roundish footprints, etc. – presumably it also happens more often than not that a dog *in fact* recently walked along the beach. That is, the $P(A/E) > .5$, where A = “a dog recently walked along the beach here” and E is the relevant evidence (footprints, etc.) In the demon world, however, the probability of A on E is always 0. This is because, given E, it is *never* true that a dog recently walked along the beach.¹²⁷ And this is in turn because dogs *never* walk along a beach in evil demon worlds. The evil demon would not have it.

¹²⁶ Alston also claims that objective probability is what he has in mind when he says that an adequate ground for a belief must be “sufficiently indicative of the truth of the belief it grounds.” See “An Internalist Externalism,” p. 232.

¹²⁷ It should be noted that E is *not* that there *actually are* footprints in the sand, but that we have the *experience* of it *appearing* to us that there are footprints in the sand. (If E was that there are actually footprints in the sand, then the probability of A on E might be high (i.e. $> .5$) even in evil demon worlds.)

Thus it is clear that evil demon victims' external world beliefs fail with respect to truth – and, I argue, are unjustified as a result.

Now in a footnote above I identified a way of challenging this conclusion. This is by broadening the discussion to include all logically possible worlds. However, as I argued in the same footnote (see n. 93 above), broadening the discussion in this way adds nothing to the discussion, for if the example is to have the critical feature evil demon worlds examples are supposed to have (i.e. unreliability/unlikelihood), then it should be supposed that evil demon victims' external world beliefs are unlikely to be true (or unreliable) in most logically worlds. And if the discussion were so broadened, the discussion in the preceding paragraph could easily be adjusted to apply to it.¹²⁸

This leaves one more issue to be dealt with. I just noted that broadening the discussion to include all logically possible worlds would add nothing to the discussion. I want to now turn to something else that has to do possibility. In the example just given to illustrate why evil demon victims' external world beliefs fail with respect to truth, I pointed out that the probability of A on E in the demon world differed from the probability of A on E in (what we take to be) the actual world: in the latter it is (presumably) $> .5$, in the former it is 0. But suppose here that someone wanted to talk about the probability of A on E in all logically possible worlds without having anything else to say about what determines the range of possibility we are concerned with. In that

¹²⁸ Furthermore, it is clear to me that this response is not what Cohen and others have in mind when they insist that evil demon victims' beliefs are justified. Instead, their point is that justification is something that is determined wholly "in the head," and that consequently if it should happen that the world is radically unlike what we take it to be, our beliefs would still be justified. Thus if it were maintained that evil demon victims' beliefs are justified because they are likely to be true in most logically possible worlds, this obviously wouldn't capture the intuition that motivates Cohen's (and others) position (unless, of course, it was also maintained that it is part of our justification for ordinary external world beliefs that they are likely to be true in mostly logically possible worlds, something that does not seem to be true at all).

case it is clear that the probability of A on E will be the same in *all* logically possible worlds, (what we take to be) the actual world and the demon world inclusive. And this will mean that, the probability of A on E being no more probable in the actual world than in the evil demon world, we would no longer have the feature that is critical to this whole discussion: namely, unlikeliness. If the two worlds are to differ in the probability of external world beliefs being true (as we want them to), then there must be some way of fixing the range of possibilities so that the probability of A on E is high (i.e. $> .5$) in the actual world, and the probability of A on E is low (0, to be exact) in the demon world. That is, there must be some relevant value that fixes the range of possibilities in the two worlds, and which has the result that the probability of A on E differs in the two worlds. And what might this be? This is just the familiar idea of similarity of worlds. That is, similarity is the value that determines the range of possibilities that in turn determines probability. The idea is that if in the actual world $P(A/E) = .7$, then for every ten times E is true in *all worlds similar to the actual world*, A is true 7 times in *all worlds similar to the actual world*. Likewise the range of possibility in the demon world will be determined by the value of similarity. In this way, the probability of A on E will differ in the two worlds, and we will have a clear account of the value that determines the range of possibility.

IV. Justification, Truth and Internalism

One issue remains outstanding, namely, how all of the above relates to the IEC. Regarding this issue, one question immediately comes to mind: why haven't epistemologists recognized the connection I have argued for between epistemic

justification and truth? But this question immediately requires qualification. There are two main groups of epistemologists concerned, and it's far from clear that one group hasn't seen the connection. In other words, perhaps the question would be more appropriately directed at a specific group of epistemologists: namely, internalists. So then why haven't *internalists* seen the connection between epistemic justification and truth? On the face of it, *this* question seems much easier to answer: internalists haven't seen the connection because such a connection is bad for internalism.

However, this may be too quick. Recall that in section I above I described two ways of drawing the dividing line that would separate internalists on one side and externalists on the other. One position, we recall, is to say that internalism is the view that *all* the elements that serve to justify a belief must be subjectively accessible to the believer. This is Bonjour's position. The other position is to say that internalism is the view that *at least one* condition other than a NDC must be internal to the believer (where something is internal to the believer iff the believer has subjective access to it). This is Bergman's position. Now it may be that the question of whether the connection between justification and truth I have argued for is bad for internalism depends on which view one accepts concerning these two positions. For suppose one were to accept Bergman's view and say that all that internalism requires is that at least one condition other than a NDC must be internal to the believer. In this case it is not clear that there is a problem. It seems quite easy to say that the grounds of a belief just is *that* internal condition, for it seems fairly unproblematic to say that we have subjective access to the grounds of our beliefs (grounds would include mental states grounded in sense experience, memory and the

like¹²⁹). If subjective accessibility is to be understood as recognizability on reflection, then it does not seem that it will be problematic to say that we have subjective access to the grounds of our beliefs. But if we accept Bonjour's view that we must have subjective access to all of the elements that serve to justify a belief, then it seems that there will be a problem. The reason is that if the grounds of a belief must be truth-indicative in order to be adequate, it might seem hard to maintain that we have subjective access to the adequacy of grounds. Alston, we recall, accepts an access requirement with respect to grounds, but rejects any such requirement with respect to adequacy of grounds. He does not think that most of us are "up to it" when it comes to adequacy of grounds. If Alston is right – and in a moment I will examine his arguments in detail – then for those who share Bonjour's view that all of the elements that serve to justify a belief must be subjectively accessible to the believer, internalism will indeed be in trouble. Given the problems that a subjective accessibility requirement with respect to the adequacy of grounds encounters, it will be hard to maintain that we have subjective access to *all* the elements that serve to justify a belief.

But let us examine Alston's argument in detail. He suggests that a suitable accessibility requirement is to require of a justified believer that he or she have the "capability" – "fairly readily on the basis of reflection" – of "acquiring a justified belief that the ground" of the belief is adequate.¹³⁰ He makes two arguments against this view. First, he argues that many subjects who we want to say have justified beliefs lack the level of "conceptual sophistication" to "even raise the question of adequacy of grounds,

¹²⁹ Here I follow Steup's "Epistemic Duty, Evidence, and Internality" in Steup, 2001a, pp. 134-48, p. 137.

¹³⁰ "An Internalist Externalism," p. 240.

much less determine an answer by reflection.”¹³¹ Second, he says that even if they could raise the question of the adequacy of grounds, they “may not be able to arrive at a justified answer.”¹³² He says that if the ground G of a belief B must be “sufficiently indicative of the truth of B” in order to be adequate, as he says it must, then “it seems clear that for me to be justified in believing G to be an adequate basis for belief, [sic] B, I must have sufficient *reasons* for supposing that this truth condition does hold... And many, or most, subjects are not up to this.”¹³³ He gives the following example. He says that if we have been properly trained, we can recognize the marks of competence in an area. Thus when we believe “the pronouncements of one who exhibits those marks, we are believing on adequate grounds ...” “But,” he asks, “how many of us can, on reflection, come up with adequate evidence on which to base the belief that a given putative authority is to be relied on? Very few of us.”¹³⁴ Since he thinks that more than a few of us are justified in believing on authority, he rejects any access requirement with respect adequacy of grounds.¹³⁵

I don’t think that Alston got it right here. First, I think Alston is wrong about the “conceptual sophistication” of most people; the great majority of people do have the requisite level of conceptual sophistication to reflectively raise and answer questions about adequacy of grounds. Instead of trying to argue for this directly, however, I want to tackle this issue through the consideration of another issue. This concerns whether it is

¹³¹ Ibid. Alston has in mind here not only children, but also – he “fears” – “many” adults as well.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 241; emphasis in the original.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Alston goes on to suggest (and reject) a weaker access condition on adequacy – where someone merely has to *have* adequate grounds, even if they “[lack] the conceptual equipment to formulate the issue of adequacy” (p. 241) – but since I will argue that Alston’s argument against the stronger condition fails, there is no need to examine this weaker condition.

possible to separate, in the way that Alston does, conceptual sophistication with respect to the grounds of belief and conceptual sophistication with respect to the adequacy of the grounds of belief.¹³⁶ I find this doubtful. Having an appropriate level of sophistication to know that one's belief is based on some ground, it seems to me, is intricately bound up with having an appropriate level of conceptual sophistication to raise the question of the adequacy of grounds. To be able to tell on reflection that belief P is based on ground G is always, or almost always, to be able to raise the question of the adequacy of G. When someone believes, say, that the fire alarm has gone off in the apartment building up the block on the grounds that it seems to her that some of the building's residents are outside in their nightwear and that it seems to her that there is a fire truck in front of the building, that person will be able to raise the question of the adequacy of grounds of her belief. She will know that there is question of whether the grounds of her belief make her belief likely to be true. This is most clearly seen by considering how this person would react in response to possible defeaters. If soon after seeing the residents and the fire truck the person sees what appears to be a film crew, she will probably reconsider her belief that a fire alarm went off in the building (she might think that perhaps it is some new kind of commercial where non-actors are used instead of actors). In other words, she would be reassessing the *adequacy* of the grounds of her belief. More ordinary beliefs about the external world are no different. When we have the experience of seeing, say, a red object, and consequently form the belief that we are seeing a red object, we know that there is a question of the adequacy of the grounds of this belief. An examination of our response to

¹³⁶ It only makes sense to reject an accessibility requirement with respect to the adequacy of grounds, because many people don't have the requisite conceptual sophistication, but accept an accessibility requirement with respect to grounds, if it is common for people to have the requisite conceptual sophistication with respect to the latter but not the former.

possible defeaters would confirm this. Thus we should reject Alston's suggestion that it is not uncommon for people to be capable of determining on reflection the grounds of their beliefs while lacking the conceptual sophistication to raise the question of the adequacy of the grounds of their beliefs. This is just not plausible.

About Alston's second argument, it is bit less clear how we should go about arguing against it. Still, it is fairly clear to me that it is wrong. If the actual world is what we take it to be, then the majority of people do have sufficient reasons for thinking that the grounds of their ordinary beliefs are adequate. When we see, say, a chair up close in normal circumstances in good lighting, and consequently form the belief that there is a chair in front of us, surely the great majority of us can reflect that "in such circumstances where the lighting is good, I am feeling fine, and the object is near, my faculty of vision is a reliable means of sense perception and so may be trusted." Again, reflecting on how we would react to potential defeaters would confirm this.

So Alston's arguments against requiring subjective access to the adequacy of grounds do not succeed. Unfortunately, however, this is not enough to save internalism – as most internalists understand the view. The problem is that not only do most internalists – though I am unable to establish this here – share Bonjour's view that *all* the elements that serve to justify a belief must be subjectively accessible to the believer (even if, as Bergmann suggests, its not so clear that all the conditions proposed by internalists have in fact been *internal* conditions), but they are also of the view that justification is something that is *determined wholly* "in the head" (see below). Above I noted that the great majority of people do have sufficient reasons for thinking that the grounds of their beliefs are adequate – *if* the actual world is what we take it to be. And if so we can see why most

internalists would have a problem with the position defended in this thesis: it would make justification dependent on facts external to the mind, something that would make us unable to determine the justificatory status of a belief merely by considering what's in our head. Let me explain.

In my view, internalists have been unable to see the connection between epistemic justification and truth because, in their view, epistemic justification is something that takes place wholly “in the head.” The idea here is that whether or not we are justified in a belief is something that is determined wholly *within* our own minds, something that can be determined by reflecting on the state of our minds (see Chisholm quote below). And this view, it seems to me, is connected with the idea that justification is something that *we can determine*. It is not something that is determined by facts outside of our mental life, facts that are beyond our control. Recall Bonjour’s remark quoted above that “We cannot, in most cases at least, bring it about directly that our beliefs are true, but *we can presumably bring it about directly* (though perhaps only in the long run) that they are epistemically justified.”¹³⁷ Whether we are justified, then, is something that we control. And the seat of this control is indisputably in the mind. One could scarcely ask for a clearer enunciation of this idea than the following passage from Roderick M. Chisholm:

The internalist assumes that, merely by reflecting upon his own conscious state, he can formulate a set of epistemic principles that will enable him to find out, with respect to any belief that he has, whether he is justified in having that belief. The principles that he formulates are principles that one may come upon and apply merely by sitting in one’s armchair, so to speak, and without calling for any outside assistance. In a word, one needs only consider one’s own state of mind.¹³⁸

Perhaps some internalists would take issue this or that aspect of this account of internalism – for example, some might raise questions about the role of epistemic

¹³⁷ *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*, pp. 7-8; emphases added.

¹³⁸ “The Indispensability of Internal Justification,” *Synthese* (1988), Vol. 74, 285-296, pp. 285-6.

principles – but I think Chisholm’s main idea would have widespread appeal among internalists: justification is something that is determined wholly in the mind.

Given this it is not hard to see why the connection I have argued for between epistemic justification and truth would present a problem for internalists. Whether a belief is justified depends, on the view I defend, on whether it is likely to be true, given the evidential ground it is based on. In other words, justification depends on facts *external* to the believer’s state of mind. For internalists, this puts things unacceptably out of our control, unacceptably subject to the vicissitudes of unknown contingency. Thus we have Bonjour claiming that the results of externalist approaches to justification have the “fundamental” disadvantage of being “merely hypothetical” and “insecure,” for the positive justificatory status of a belief on externalist views depend on some external condition that *may or may not* be satisfied (as in a reliabilist saying of a particular belief that it is justified *if* it was produced by a reliable process). To be appropriately secure and less conditional, as he sees it, the results of a proper account of justification should be able to be determined “from the resources available within a first person perspective.”¹³⁹ Fumerton effectively makes a similar argument – if some rhetorical flourish has been added – arguing that “If the externalist is right, philosophers should stop doing normative epistemology,” the contingent external conditions that externalists require of a justified belief having obviated their efforts.¹⁴⁰ For internalists, then, the connection I have argued for will be unacceptable because, making justification something determined by facts outside of our mental states as it does, it places justification outside our control.

¹³⁹ “The Indispensability of Internalism,” *Philosophical Topics. The Philosophy of Alvin Goldman* (2001), Vol. 29, nos. 1 & 2, 47-65, pp. 63-4. See also his “Internalism and Externalism,” p. 260.

¹⁴⁰ *Metaepistemology and Skepticism*, p. 173.

It is not clear what this internalist conviction that epistemic justification is something that we are able to determine is ultimately owed to, but it is fairly clear that it is an unfounded conceit. I simply do not see any reason why we need to be *able* to “bring it about that we are epistemically justified,” as Bonjour puts it. It seems to me that internalists should be satisfied with saying that *if* we are to have a justified belief, then we “will be able to determine what it is” that justifies the belief, as Alston puts it. This is exactly the conclusion my arguments come to. If we are to have justified beliefs then we must have subjective access to both the grounds of the beliefs and to the adequacy of the grounds of the beliefs (perhaps the latter may be understood, as Alston suggested – but failed to see as viable – as a justified belief about the adequacy). But it is *not* necessary to be able to *determine* justificatory status merely by considering the state of one’s own mind. Justification depends on facts outside of our mental states, and so any such requirement must be rejected. Perhaps the temptation to say otherwise stems from confusing saying that “if we are to have justified belief, then we must be able to tell what it is that justifies us,” with saying that “we must be able to *determine* whether or not we are justified.” The arguments contained in this thesis make it clear that we have no choice but to reject this latter idea.

V. Conclusion

I have argued that truth is the only ultimate epistemic goal, and that, as a consequence, if epistemic justification is to be of epistemic value, then justified beliefs must be likely to be true. I maintained that this result goes even in evil demon worlds of the famed purported counterexamples. In the course of this thesis I also argued that knowledge is

overrated (a consequence of truth being the only ultimate epistemic goal), and that recognizing that truth is the only ultimate epistemic goal is the best way of avoiding Sartwell's dreaded conclusion that knowledge is merely true belief. Finally, I alerted internalists to the fact that, contrary to received internalist opinion, having justification be determined by facts external to us is not something that should occasion too much worry. In other words, I have provided, at last, the correct understanding of the relation between justification, truth and internalism.

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