UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON
The Career University

UWL REPOSITORY

repository.uwl.ac.uk

The regulative and the theoretical in epistemology

Lockie, Robert ORCID logoORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8340-5158 (2014) The regulative and the theoretical in epistemology. Abstracta, 8 (1). pp. 3-14. ISSN 1807-9792

This is the Draft Version of the final output.

UWL repository link: https://repository.uwl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1763/

Alternative formats: If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact: open.research@uwl.ac.uk

Copyright:

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy: If you believe that this document breaches copyright, please contact us at open.research@uwl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Rights Retention Statement:

abstracta Linguagem, Mente & Ação ISSN 1807-9792 Volume 8, Number 1, pp. 3–14, 2014

The Regulative and the Theoretical in Epistemology[1]

Robert Lockie

Psychology Dept., University of West London,
Paragon House, Boston Manor Rd. Brentford, Middx TW8 9GA
bob.lockie@uwl.ac.uk

Abstract

The distinction between the regulative ('practical', 'subjective', 'decision-procedural') and the theoretical ('objective', 'absolute') pertains to the aims (the desiderata) of an account of justification. This distinction began in ethics and spread to epistemology. Each of internalism, externalism, is separately forced to draw this distinction to avoid a stock, otherwise fatal, argument levelled against them by the other. Given this situation however, we may finesse much partisan conflict in epistemology by simply seeing differing accounts of justification as answering to radically distinct desiderata of adequacy. We should see knowledge as answering to the theoretical desideratum of adequacy alone; and rationality as answering to the regulative desideratum of adequacy alone. Objections to this 'Gordian' [knot] approach to epistemology (from virtues theorists and others) are rejected. Such an approach may make for accounts that violate our ordinary language intuitions; but in developing an epistemological axiology, any such intuitions are not to the point.

1 Three Distinctions

This paper concerns a distinction between different desiderata for an account in normative epistemology. Before proceeding to this, our eponymous distinction, we need to flag two prior distinctions. One distinction is between the things we are seeking to account for. The things we are most concerned to account for are rationality and knowledge. A second distinction concerns the different theories (better, theory-families) that are candidates to account for these: internalist accounts, externalist accounts and (arguably) virtue epistemic accounts – though the status of the latter as a 'third force', genuinely in competition with accounts grouped under the internalism-externalism distinction remains controversial (Lockie 2008).

The internalism-externalism distinction is of course the subject of major, extended, debate. In this paper, stipulatively, I take internalist theories to be epistemically deontological theories: theories which interpret epistemic normativity on the model of reasoning *dutifully*, as one *ought* – as discharging one's intellectual *responsibilities*. This understanding of internalism (and hence of the internalism-externalism distinction) needs to be distinguished from a more purely 'accessibilist', and again a more 'mentalist' conception of this distinction[2].

[1]An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Joint Session of the Mind Association & Aristotelian Society, Stirling, and at the Spanish Society for Analytic Philosophy (SEFA), Tenerife. My thanks to audiences at these forums and to Tony Booth for comments on a previous, written, version of this paper.

[2]This understanding of internalism (hence the internalist-externalist distinction) corresponds roughly to what Bergmann (2006) calls 'subjective deontological justification' or 'epistemic blamelessness' – a notion Bergmann correctly identifies in Plantinga, Foley and Alston. Alston (1985) abbreviates this notion as 'J_{di}' – which stands for *deontic, internalist, justification*. Plantinga just calls this same notion 'internalism', but when pushed, "classical deon-

This paper concerns a third distinction found in normative epistemology – between the regulative and the theoretical. This distinction has been well articulated over the years; yet a contention of this paper is that its significance is still not fully appreciated. It is powerfully similar – arguably identical – to a distinction drawn in ethics. We uncover this third distinction via a consideration of the arguments levelled by internalists (deontologists) against externalists (consequentialists) and vice versa. Of course the protagonists in these debates see them as being directed towards establishing which of internalism, externalism, is the true theory of knowledge or rationality; however, for us, uncovering these arguments will be in the service of another end.

2 Why Internalists and Deontologists draw this Third Distinction: The Epistemic Poverty Objection[3]

The deontic conception of internalism (henceforth and throughout: just 'internalism') involves the idea of *cognitive accessibility*, of *epistemic deontology*, and of these being connected via an *'ought' implies 'can'* principle[4]. These may be used to create a problem for internalism. I may have done all I can epistemically, dutifully discharging my intellectual obligations to the limit of my abilities. Still, I may be desperately far removed from either the truth or an objectively truth-conducive basis for my belief. A classic source for this objection would be Alston (1985). Alston gives examples of dutiful but helplessly flawed cognizers, examples typical of many in the externalist literature: A tribesman may have been brought up to accept the traditions of his tribe as authoritative, and never have seen anything to call these traditions (of inquiry, etc.) into question. A person may be intellectually honest and diligent, but just rather dim; or not dim especially, but highly impressionable. A person may lack an education, being vulnerable to all kinds of unfounded hearsay and superstition as a result. In general, one may have discharged one's epistemic duties as responsibly as one is able, but still (blamelessly) be holding one's beliefs on profoundly inadequate grounds. Thus, it is argued, the deontic conception of internalism is an inadequate basis for epistemology.

This 'epistemic poverty' objection originated as an argument against ethical deontology. In both ethics and epistemology it has a stock response. This is to draw a distinction between *objective* and *subjective* duty[5]. One is culpable, blameworthy, irresponsible, should one fail to discharge one's subjective duty (doing what one has reason to believe will bring about the Right); one is not blameworthy, irresponsible, merely in virtue of failing to discharge one's objective duty (actually maximising the Good) – which failure may be quite out of one's hands. Owens (2000) notes this distinction in Sidgwick (*c.f.* 1907: 413). Plantinga

tological internalism" – and deprecates those pure accessibilist internalists who depart from what he (an externalist) nevertheless identifies as its "deep integrity" (Plantinga 1993: 28). I would endorse the account found in the first chapter of Plantinga (1993) as still the best single overview of this conception of the internalism-externalism distinction, and as glossing the understanding of these terms that I am operating with. For the understanding of the virtues position that is operative in this paper see Lockie 2008.

[3]The phrase 'epistemic poverty' is owed to Bonjour (2003: 176).

[4]The principle that 'ought' implies 'can' is in no sense proprietary to internalism; at least as great reliance is placed on it by most externalists, who argue by contraposition that since our levels of control, access, and freedom are greatly less than would be required for us to be held responsible for our beliefs, we must therefore abandon any conception of epistemic value which sees this as the discharge of intellectual duties (e. g. the 'doxastic voluntarism' debates). There are those who reject 'ought' implies 'can' in epistemology (for example, Ryan (2003), Bergmann (2006), Hieronymi (2008) and Owens (2000)) but these exceptions are not common.

[5]Objective and subjective *duty* because we are here dealing with a response to an objection to ethical / epistemic deontology; shortly we will generalise this response to a distinction between the subjective and objective without any restriction to duties. I note this because there are clear problems with a (strong) notion of *objective* duty – at least for one who embraces 'ought' implies 'can' and seeks after more than just an account of the Good.

(1993) credits his version of this distinction to Aquinas; though a more immediate source might well be Chisholm (1957) who draws the same distinction using the terms 'practical' for *subjective* and 'absolute' for *objective* – himself crediting Richard Price. To escape the epistemic poverty objection, deontic, oughts-based justification must be restricted in its application to the subjective, practical realm. There is another, objective, absolute, sense of being justified for which the discharge of duty, the fulfilment of obligations, be we ever so diligent, is not guaranteed to satisfy. Consider, in light of this, a claim such as the following:

> I shall assume that only *right* epistemic rules make a difference to genuine justifiedness. This point should be equally acceptable to both internalism and externalism (Goldman 2009: 5-6).

This point will be "equally acceptable to both internalism and externalism" only should it be read by each under a different interpretation of "right epistemic rule". For the internalist, this means *subjectively* right; for the externalist, *objectively* right[6]. Argument at cross purposes beckons if we do not keep this in mind.

3 Why Externalists and Consequentialists draw this Third Distinction: The DDP Objection

In ethics there are a set of stock objections to consequentialist theories – e. g. Act Utilitarianism – and in turn a stock response to this set of objections (to draw the regulative-theoretical distinction). The objection and associated response carried over into epistemology. Brink (1986) called this family of objections in ethics generally, the objection from the 'personal point of view'. There are several such objections that do not concern us; but a version which does – found in each of Bales (1971), Brink (1986), Smith (1988) and *passim* in the literature – is as follows: Working through the act-utilitarian (or other) consequences of even a simple choice of action is likely to be a highly involved matter. Bring other choices into the equation, factor in a diachronic time-scale, incorporate a need to take on new information in real time, and the matter becomes massively more involved. The process of calculating these consequences – to even a modest level of surety – takes time. Frequently, for the agent to embark on the process of calculating the consequences of a course of action, will itself be to choose one way or other *how* to act (and often, to choose wrongly)[7].

This objection to consequentialism in ethics carried over directly into epistemology, where it was levelled by internalists against externalism. One traditional ambition of epistemology

[6]Goldman subsequently considers the application of his interpretation of this principle to a specimen "rightness criterion" from the internalist camp – and he chooses as his specimen Richard Foley. He objects that the subjectivism of a 'Foley Rationality' approach "makes Foley's approach ill suited to the objectivist, nonrelativistic spirit of our entire framework" (Goldman 2009: 28). But this section has argued such a subjectivism is and must be a feature of any deontically internalist account. What then becomes of Goldman's claim that "this point should be equally acceptable to both internalism and externalism"? Against an internalist of Foley's stamp, I'd suggest this comes worryingly close to begging the question.

[7]Pettit & Brennan (1986) refer to this state of affairs in ethics as one in which the consequentialist conception of the Good is 'calculatingly elusive' or (more strongly) 'calculatingly vulnerable'. A common response to this objection (in its many forms) is to look for auxiliary rules – 'rules of thumb' – perhaps (Smith 1988) the rule to work from expected utility, or perhaps obedience to the rules of common morality. We will not discuss these responses here; noting however, that whatever may be said in favour of such approaches on their own terms, there is reason to doubt they will be adequate as responses to this objection. Two objections that are well discussed in the literature are firstly, that an expected consequentialism is precisely not a form of consequentialism. A 'bounded' restriction of the agent's justificatory status to *expected* consequences is motivated by an 'ought' implies 'can' *deontic* limit on the grounds for normative appraisal – *c.f.* Clifford's (1947: #1) judgement on his ship owner: whether a given decision is justified is decided *before* the consequences are in. Secondly, as regards auxiliary rules/rules of thumb: the objection is made that these lead to regress (Bales 1971, Brink 1986, Smith 1988, Goldman 1980).

is to offer the agent "rules for the direction of the mind"; that is (whether actually rules-based or not) an epistemology that can offer *guidance* in cases where the agent is undecided and facing a doxastic choice. But for an account to be able to offer me practical help in cases of judgement under uncertainty, it is necessary for it to restrict itself to resources – a justificatory ground – which may be available to me in that epistemic dilemma, with those limited resources (processing/capacity limitations, time constraints to reach decision, restricted knowledge-base, etc.) Decision-making requires me to have *access* to my justifiers. Goldman (1980) referred to this as the aspiration that epistemology should offer the agent, facing a decision, a 'doxastic decision procedure' (DDP) – where this latter is a dummy for whatever set of rules for guidance (whether actually rules-based or not) the epistemologist's theory finally divulges. But the objective, truth-directed nature of an externalist theory in epistemology is not guaranteed to give the undecided agent access to any such DDP. In the language of the psychologists, such theories may yield accounts of justified cognition that are *computationally intractable* – hence unusable for the purpose of guidance under uncertainty. So, relative to this ambition, externalism is a failure.

A digression: DDP objections to internalism

Goldman (1980) made a *tu quoque* response to the DDP objection – namely, that it applies no less to many varieties of *internalism*. His point is well taken as far as it goes: many supposedly internalist theories are indeed too complex and defeasible for an agent to have access to their criterion of epistemic success. Indeed, this may serve as a criticism of certain (e. g. 'mentalist'[8], or highly complex introspectionist-foundationalist[9]) conceptions of internalism. But not all species of internalism are like this. On a deontic conception of internalism together with a commitment to 'ought' implies 'can', one may start with the powers of the agent and delimit one's account of their epistemic requirements accordingly. This 'bounded' (accessibilist) notion of epistemic justification leads to accounts of epistemic justification[10] that are *not* vulnerable to the DDP objection.

The main response: regulative vs theoretical

The classic response by externalists and consequentialists to the DDP objection again involves making a dichotomous distinction as to the aims of an epistemic (/ethical) theory. The terminology of this distinction varies, though in ways which carry some useful semantic pointers as to the underlying differences between its two terms. In what follows I use the terms *regulative* and *theoretical*. A list of cognate terms, with sources, is provided in Table 1.

Externalists / consequentialists are criticised by their opponents for offering epistemic (/ethical) theories that may not be usable by an agent, facing a decision, to regulate thought. Their response is simply to note that this regulative (decision-making, action-guiding) ambition is not a desideratum of their kind of account. Rather, in the case of epistemology, the externalist seeks only to specify when a belief, or a belief-making-process, or a course of cognitive conduct is justified objectively (say, in terms of truth-maximisation or error-avoidance)[11].

[8]This is a familiar objection to 'mentalist' conceptions of internalism (e. g. Conee and Feldman 2001). Simply put: even exclusively mental justifiers may still be massively inaccessible.

[9]If you doubt this, just re-read Chisholm's (1989) across various editions.

[10]A paradigm of such an account in normative epistemology would be Richard Foley – e. g. (1993). In the economics and psychology literature this becomes the notion of 'bounded rationality'.

[11]I shall use this family of contrast terms strictly as explicated here, and have myself been confused by other authors' unexplicated usages. Note that this distinction is not to be assimilated to Sosa's *animal vs reflective* knowledge – an orthogonal distinction that it precedes by many decades. Goldman's 'strong vs weak' justification is clearly somewhere in the vicinity of our distinction (though Goldman (1988: F.N 1) distinguishes that distinction from this). However, I consider the 'strong vs weak' distinction to be confusing and ill formed, accompanied as it is by stipulative and

Table 1: Terms used to draw this distinction

Regulative	Non-Regulative	Goldman (1985) after H.M. Smith
Doxastic Decision Procedure	Theoretical	Goldman (1980)
Regulative	Theoretical	Goldman (1980)
Practical Right [Practical Virtue]	Absolute Right [Absolute Virtue]	Chisholm (1957) [after Richard Price]
Practical	Theoretical	H.M. Smith (1988)
Decision Procedure	Right-Maker,	Bales (1971)
Decision Procedure	Criterion of rightness (Sidgwick 1907)	Brink (1986)
Motive	Standard	Sidgwick (1907)
Subjective	Objective	Alston (1985), Plantinga (1993) after Aquinas

4 Two Motivations but one Distinction

Each of internalism, externalism, levels a standard objection against the other. Each must draw a distinction to escape the objection to their position. Each draws this distinction in terms of the desiderata of their theory, what their theory aims to account for – and what instead it surrenders, what it acknowledges to be no part of its aim. And each does this by explicitly borrowing both objection and distinction from an already developed body of argument in ethics.

Externalist theories identify a very central aspect of what one expects of an epistemic theory: their different, proprietary, ways of marking a connection with the truth, their *objectivity*. Minimally, this connection with the truth is represented by the idea of truth as a necessary condition on knowledge; though, of course, conventional externalist theories tend to go far beyond this in their different (reliable, counterfactual, etc.) accounts of warrant. These wide variations of detail do not affect the point: that one cannot mark the objectivity, factuality, that such accounts base their epistemic success term upon – their emphasis on what is actually truth conducive (or error avoiding) in cognition – without losing any necessary connection with accessibility. Making epistemic normativity *essentially* objective means that it can be at best only *contingently* accessible. For the world is as it is, and we are as we are, and as fallible beings with widely differing epistemic resources, our ability to achieve a given objective epistemic status will be tenuous and uncertain. The potential inaccessibility characteristic of externalist theories is then not a definitional primitive, but a derived consequence of their objectivity – however this latter be construed, even if it be no more than the attainment of truth, much less if it be something more.

Internalist theories also identify a very central aspect of what one expects of an epistemic theory: their different, proprietary, ways of marking a connection with the subject, their help to the subject as a guide, their directiveness – of the subject's cognitive conduct, of thought. Internalist theories' restrictions on only accepting a justificatory ground that may be accessible

unmotivated entailment claims (e. g. that 'strong' entails 'weak' – Goldman 1988: 56); claims which represent what I have (below) entitled 'halo effects'. There is a double dissociation between the internal and the external success notions in epistemology. Any terminology which obscures the radical nature of that double dissociation is to be regretted.

to the agent is also then best seen not as a definitional primitive, being rather *derived* from the desideratum of satisfying this regulative, directive, aim: of satisfying it not accidentally but essentially. To be necessarily capable of directing cognitive conduct – of providing "rules for the direction of the mind" – a theory must be accessible, it must not go beyond the resources of the epistemic agent: resources within the compass of his intellectual abilities, or at least his 'Zone of Proximal Development' (Vygotsky 1978, Plato 1992: 197c-d, the *Theaetetan* aviary example)[12].

The two families of theory, internalism and externalism, have then, as an outcome of their conflict, each been forced to draw the same distinction: a distinction between two separate desiderata of adequacy. Under severe pressure from the other's arguments, each has been forced to abandon any pretensions to satisfy one arm of that distinction – to meet one desideratum of adequacy. Between them, they account for both desiderata, separately, they each account for one alone.

5 Irenic Resolution or Gordian [Knot] Threat?

What is not often noticed is that this task-separation at once offers us both the promise of an irenic resolution of some tangled traditional disputes in epistemology and the threat that any such resolution may be Gordian in nature. We may see as irenic a solution that promises a simple division of labour in epistemology (and ethics). Many erstwhile disputes are then not so much solved as dissolved. Internalist accounts alone offer us the resources to satisfy the regulative desideratum; yet must disavow any claim to satisfy the theoretical desideratum. This surely leaves such accounts uniquely well-suited to offer us our position on rationality. And externalist accounts alone offer us the resources to satisfy the theoretical desideratum; yet must disavow any claim to satisfy the regulative desideratum. This surely leaves such accounts uniquely well-suited to offer us our position on knowledge. The fact remains, however, that a number of knotty problems will have been severed rather than untied. For we will end up with an account of knowledge which openly flouts paying even lip service to the regulative desideratum of adequacy; and an account of rationality which openly flouts paying even lip service to the theoretical desideratum of adequacy. We have seen that there are powerful motivations to go down this route; but were we to do so, could we abide the destination we would find ourselves?

5.1 Objections to the Gordian Threat: The Virtues Objection

Virtues theorists in both ethics (Aristotle 2000) and epistemology (Zagzebski 1996) are wont to claim that we have achieved our epistemic end (most commonly knowledge) or our ethical end (sometimes the Good, sometimes the Right) just in case we have maximised satisfaction of both desiderata: Theoretical and Regulative. They will deny that we have achieved our success state should only one desideratum be satisfied; thus they will deny that drawing this third distinction renders otiose (solves or dissolves) any or many of the perennial disputes found in normative epistemology.

Response: Stipulative

As I have argued at length in Lockie 2008, this objection is merely stipulative. We, all of us (pro or anti virtues-theory) can and do recognise these two desiderata; and may identify in any given case whether this or that desideratum has separately been satisfied. As distinct axiological projects, delineating distinct axiological properties they exist (virtues theorists do not typically

[12] *Cf.* Kornblith's (1983) objections to Boyd and Goldman: we cannot identify justified belief with *reliably regulated belief*, but (with suitable, e. g. time-indexed, provisos) we can assimilate it to *diligently regulated belief*.

deny this – nor can they). One may, after recognition of this truth, stipulate that 'virtue', now employed as a term of art, applies only when both desiderata are met (e. g. Zagzebski 1996); and if this is felt a useful (stipulative) restriction of our philosophical terminology, then fine. What cannot be done to win anything other than a terminological victory, is to specify that knowledge (say) or rationality (say) require this stipulatively so-defined conjoint state of 'virtue' (q.v.) to be met; and thus that a candidate account of knowledge, say, which (suppose) brilliantly meets several theoretical desiderata is to be dismissed for failing to meet certain wholly distinct regulative desiderata – thus failing to be a state of virtue, as stipulatively so-defined. It is noteworthy that non-Aristotelian conceptions of virtue, particularly the Stoic (Annas 2003) recognise this point and tend to restrict their account of the 'virtuous' to one satisfying the regulative desideratum alone: of which more in the next sub-section.

5.2 Objections to the Gordian Threat: The 'Violated Intuitions' Objection

Envisage a candidate externalist theory of knowledge that sets out solely to address the theoretical desideratum, perhaps offering a very promising candidate to satisfy this desideratum, yet does so in a way that flouts the regulative desideratum in its entirety (say, it permits very lucky or irresponsibly acquired knowledge – take Sartwell (1991, 1992) as a paradigm: the claim that knowledge is merely true belief). Or envisage a candidate internalist theory of rationality that sets out solely to address the regulative desideratum, perhaps offering a very promising candidate to satisfy this desideratum, yet does so in a way that flouts the theoretical desideratum in its entirety (say, it permits objectively entirely awry, radically false, yet putatively rational beliefs: take Foley (1993) as a paradigm). It will be protested (it routinely *is* protested) that suchlike theories 'violate our intuitions' (perhaps, our 'core' intuitions); and that is an awful thing – so awful that we must reject the abrupt divorce between theoretical and regulative accounts of epistemic value: an ordinary language / 'conceptual analysis' / intuitions-driven metaphilosophy establishes we must satisfy both desiderata in accounting for knowledge or rationality.

Response: Abandon the indefensible metaphilosophy

When our intuitions are outraged by, say, an account which has it that an agent *knows* yet wholly fails to satisfy the regulative desideratum, or *is rational* yet wholly fails to satisfy the theoretical desideratum, social-cognitive psychologists refer to (and dismiss) this type of phenomenon as a named species of error: a *halo effect*. We tacitly suppose a beautiful person must be good, and a good person must be wise… and a person who has achieved one epistemic success-state must possess another; but it is not so. Our feelings of oddness at attributing knowledge to someone who has not regulated her thought well (Lockie 2004), or rationality to someone operating under a massive framework of false beliefs (Foley 1993), are just that: mere feelings of oddness – and as such are not to the point. The view that an argument to a position that is driven by fundamental epistemic theory should nevertheless be put in full reverse when it militates against ordinary language intuitions that do not answer to anything like the constraints that shaped and motivated that argument's development is unacceptable. Affording a priority to such intuitions over fundamental epistemic theory rests on an indefensible (and presently very hard-pressed) tacit, framework, metaphilosophy. There is no reason at all why those of us who are normative epistemologists should cede all the arguments against this metaphilosophy to the naturalists.

The Conjunction of 5.1 & 5.2: They Don't Sit Well Together

Furthermore, when the virtues objection is conjoined with the 'violated intuitions' objection, an interesting tension is manifest: the ordinary language intuitions appear to militate against

the virtues account. As the present author and others have previously noted (against, for instance, Zagzebski's (1996) account) the ordinary resonance and normative connotations of calling someone a 'virtuous' character suggest we strongly identify this state with a satisfaction of the regulative desideratum alone – whether in ethics or epistemology (Lockie 2008). This is a point emphasized by the Stoic (as opposed to the Aristotelian) tradition in virtue theory, and noted in their different ways by Russell (1996), Annas (2003) and others:

> men everywhere give the name of virtue to those actions, which amongst them are judged praiseworthy; and call that vice which they account blamable... (Locke 1975: II,28; cited in Goldman 2001: 30).

5.3 Objections to the Gordian approach: Impoverished justification is too cheap a notion

Nottelmann (2013) has an important discussion of blameless belief where this be cut away from other, more objective notions:

> blamelessness in the minimal sense of non-blameworthiness sometimes comes cheaply. In fact too cheaply, it would seem, to take a version of DCEJ [the deontic conception of epistemic justification] predicated on plain blamelessness seriously as a conception of EJ [epistemic justification]. The problem is that there could be beliefs which are blameless, only because it makes no sense to blame the believer for holding them. But intuitively it would then seem that it makes as little sense to evaluate such beliefs as epistemically justified.[22] ... suppose that each of us is for some reason born with an ineradicable[13] belief, for or against which we may never obtain relevant evidence. ... Blaming us for this belief, if it is truly innate and ineradicable, seems strange. But so does declaring it somehow epistemically justified. I shall assume here that adherents of DCEJblame are willing to bite this bullet. Perhaps they will, like Goldman rest content that their conception of EJ captures "some chunks of intuition regarding "justification" (in its epistemic application).
>
> [His F.N. 22] One way out of trouble here, is distinguishing justified belief from responsible belief, and maintain that the former is a purely negative concept, e. g. consisting in the absence of obligations breached in holding the belief. In this vein, ineradicable beliefs may well be held justified, even if they are neither responsible, nor irresponsible. I hold this reply to be unconvincing: To me, justification seems more than a merely negative concept and cases of ineradicable belief provide decisive evidence against this view.

Nottelmann is right here, as far as it goes, but he has just identified that blamelessness (which in this context may hold place for any justificatory notion that solely answers to the regulative desideratum) is an *incomplete* notion of justification – and we established that ourselves. Of course an important axiological notion in epistemolgy concerns *objective* truth-conduciveness; but that is just a different notion to the deontic notion. Equally it may sometimes be important to conjoin our two notions of epistemic justification: internal and external – but they are distinct notions, then-conjoined. The terminology isn't important (so, Nottelmann's canvassed (footnoted) distinction between 'justified' and 'responsible' doesn't seem felicitously phrased to me)[14]. What matters is that we acknowledge that the principle 'ought' implies 'can' and our

[13] I have corrected throughout 'eradicable to 'ineradicable' as Nottelmann has confirmed (personal communication) that these are typos.

[14] Note that I don't define thin deontologism in terms of *blamelessness*. My deontologically justified subject has typically worked hard for his or her justificatory status – for instance, to the point where he or she could be *commended*

epistemic limitations forces on us a notion of perspectivally limited 'blameless' (if you must) justification however much it jars the ears: this jarring is just a halo effect. Suppose, to take Nottelmann's example, we consider ineradicable beliefs, or cognitive limitations forced upon us by our biological natures (à la Kant, Chomsky, McGinn). Were there such beliefs / limitations it would seem to me to be indeed correct to say we would then be, as a species, blameless and *as justified as we can be* in holding these (nevertheless false) beliefs. The same thing goes for beliefs that are a product of our cultural-historical situation rather than our biological limitations: Newton blamelessly believed in absolute simultaneity – he was justified in this (false) belief; Alston's tribesman blamelessly believes in his culture's metaphysical world-view, and so on. We all have our limits. Justification in this important sense, applies to us thinking as well as we can within these limits.

5.4 The Situation that Confronts Us

There is a general objection to any attempt to efface this distinction. Any insistence that we should elide or conjoin the twin desiderata we have identified thus far, faces the charge that this would be simply to ignore the situation that confronts us as epistemic agents. Recognition of the distinct nature of these desiderata is forced on us by consideration of our nature in facing decision. By hypothesis, in facing a decision, we have no 'marker' of which of our beliefs are true, which false – if we had, epistemology as an enterprise, and the questions we are addressing, would be superfluous. We have our beliefs, both true and false, and must move forward from these altogether to *find out* the justified ones – those likely to be of facts. This just is the regulative project. A consideration of one engaged with this project (and we are all engaged with this project) leaves us with no choice but to acknowledge the agent's epistemic limitations, her fallibility and frailty, the fact that her epistemic resources may not (and often will not) be up to the task. This situation simply confronts us, each of us, *qua* epistemic agent, *qua* inquirer in the world, and in acknowledging it we must recognise two things. First, notwithstanding the possibility that in such situations the agent may unavoidably be led into error, there is a core, vital, sense in which in such a situation she may nevertheless be justified – and *will* be justified should she marshal her resources as effectively as her perspectival limitations permit. Second, that in such a situation, she is nevertheless avowedly *in error* – that is, as much as she may have satisfied one desideratum and achieved justification thereby, she has failed to satisfy another undoubted aim of epistemology and lacks justification thereby. Conversely, when our agent, despite guiding her thought badly, has attained the truth, or some other objectively desirable factive state or relation to the world, we are describing at once both a type of epistemic success and a distinct type of epistemic failure. We have no option but to recognise these types of achievement (and failure) as distinct. There is a double dissociation between these two desiderata. Insisting that we must abandon two separate and distinct forms of assessment of the epistemic agent ignores much of what it is to be an agent in the world: the subject of decision and normative appraisal consequent upon that decision.

---

for this. But certainly he or she could be (radically) *wrong* – conceivably because of ineradicable beliefs. Note also, that justified beliefs in this sense are not usually punctate (e. g. indivisible, *sui generis* – say biologically 'ineradicable'). Usually, even if objectively false, such beliefs are a product of articulated reasoning, inferential relations and complex argument. Such argument is a cultural-cognitive product and the beliefs which eventuate from it may indeed be 'eradicated' by further argument or diachronic dialectic, albeit not necessarily for an objectively true belief in turn. Issues here intrude concerning Whig history, verisimilitude, and topics long discussed in the philosophy of science, but a punctate ineradicable belief that is yet apt for normative epistemic assessment – as justified or unjustified – would actually be rather an unusual thing.

6 Normative Epistemology in Light of this Distinction

6.1 Knowledge / Rationality and the Regulative-Theoretical distinction

As stated at the outset, the existence of this third distinction is hardly esoteric knowledge in epistemology. Yet how seriously has it been taken by those seeking to develop accounts on either side of our first distinction – accounts of rationality or of knowledge? Does an awareness of the theoretical/regulative distinction really inform theory construction in epistemology? Periodically, the philosophical community approaches the insight that an epistemology which developed and shaped accounts of either rationality or knowledge in light solely of the appropriate desideratum for that item, might make space for Gordian treatments of certain epistemic problems: shocking accounts which otherwise would be scorned, marginalized or simply not entertained. But then, having approached such insights, the world of academic epistemology just seems to veer away[15].

So, over the last decade, a long overdue consideration of the *Meno* value problem has been underway (via, for example, the growing literature on the 'Swamping Problem'; and variants of Zagzebski's (2003) 'espresso machine' analogy). But the terms under which this problem has been discussed are desperately prescribed; participants in these debates seem, at the level of framework presupposition, not to entertain the possibility of a *radically* theoretical account – say, of the need to address the challenge represented by a genuinely Theaetetan[16] theory of knowledge (Sartwell 1991, 1992, Plato 1992: 187b, Plato 1956: 97a-b). Where such accounts are entertained, they are taken unargued to be merely a *reductio* of any theory that entails them (Chisholm 1988: 287). From the other side of the first distinction, the viability of extremely internalist accounts of rationality – e. g. 'Foley rationality': that rationality consists in being justified by our own deepest epistemic standards (Foley 1993) – are routinely disparaged on grounds which, for one who sees any such account as answerable solely to regulative considerations, are plainly non sequiturs.

6.2 Internalism / Externalism and the Regulative-Theoretical distinction

The big challenge for intransigents on either side of the internalist-externalist distinction, is to ask how much will remain of their respective hostile arguments after fully acknowledging this distinction concerning the desiderata for epistemic theories; and in particular, after establishing that internalists and externalists alike are each already committed to their specific account answering only to one of the distinct component aspects of this distinction in desiderata. Isn't this just to effect a (possibly unwelcome) irenic resolution of much that was hitherto in vehement dispute? Internalism satisfies the regulative desideratum of adequacy and gives us our account of rationality. Externalism satisfies the theoretical desideratum of adequacy and gives us our account of knowledge. There is then plenty still to disagree about, like: What *is* the correct externalist theory of knowledge? What *is* the correct internalist theory of rationality? And in particular: What would an externalist theory of knowledge look like were this theory to be de-

[15] Foley (e. g. 2004) is the one, great, stand-alone exception to this rule, and I am right glad to acknowledge my debt to him. There are however, many others who approach his insight only then to retreat from it. For instance, Kvanvig considers an agent who possesses (with full understanding) true beliefs of, as he put it, a 'fortuitous ætiology' and notes *solely on grounds of their provenance* [which surely pertains to the regulative desideratum] that "we should not say that .. she is lucky to have the knowledge she has, for knowledge [which surely answers to the theoretical desideratum] rules out this kind of luck" (Kvanvig 2003: 199). At least, we should rule this out "if we have learned our lessons from the Gettier literature" (Kvanvig 2003: 198). Given the plain fact that there exists some lucky knowledge, I suggest we might choose to learn a quite different lesson from, and about, this literature. *C.f.* Lockie 2004. For a further argument for Foley's position see Booth (2011).

[16] I mean: the theory advanced by Theaetetus in the *Theaetetus* (187b), not the theory advanced by Plato in the *Theaetetus*.

veloped wholly and solely with a view to addressing the theoretical desideratum? What would an internalist theory of rationality look like were this theory to be developed wholly and solely with a view to addressing the regulative desideratum? Should such questions be addressed with, and motivated by, an explicit awareness of the foregoing meta-epistemic arguments, the answers to them would be likely to prove *very interesting indeed*. But that such a state of affairs should come to pass would require a Rubicon to be crossed in modern epistemology.

What an informed awareness of these meta-epistemic issues should minimally lead us to question is how much point there is to the familiar dialectic which occurs when partisans for the one approach upbraid partisans for the other approach on the basis of, say, the inability of this (avowedly theoretical) account to satisfy this (clearly regulative) desideratum – or vice versa. Further, these meta-epistemic issues should lead us to question the requirement that one and the same normative epistemic theory should answer to (indeed maximise) both desiderata at once. There are strong reasons to doubt whether any one account can satisfy both desiderata. Within epistemology we need to confront this situation and entertain the radical conclusions which appear to follow from it.

References

Alston, W. (1985) 'Concepts of epistemic justification', *Monist*, 68.

Annas, J. (2003) 'The structure of virtue', in L. Zagzebski & M. de Paul, (eds) *Intellectual Virtue: Perspectives from Ethics and Epistemology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Aristotle (2000) *Nichomachean Ethics*, tr. R. Crisp, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bales, R.E. (1971) 'Act-Utilitarianism: account of right-making characteristics or decision-making procedure?' *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 8, (3).

Bergmann (2006) *Justification Without Awareness*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Bonjour, L. (2003) in Bonjour, L. and Sosa, E. *Epistemic Justification: Internalism vs. Externalism, Foundations vs Virtues*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Booth, A. (2011) 'The theory of epistemic justification and the theory of knowledge: a divorce', *Erkenntnis* 75: 37–43.

Brink, D.O. (1986) 'Utilitarian morality and the personal point of view', *Journal of Philosophy*, 83, (8).

Chisholm, R. (1957) *Perceiving: A Philosophical Study*, Ithaca: Cornell.

Chisholm, R. (1988) 'The indispensability of internal justification', *Synthese* 74: 285–296.

Chisholm, R. (1989) *Theory of Knowledge* 3rd edn., Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall.

Clifford, W. K. (1947) 'The ethics of belief', in *The Ethics of Belief and Other Essays*, London: Watts and Co.

Conee, E. & Feldman, R. (2001) 'Internalism defended' in Hilary Kornblith ed. *Internalism and Externalism* Oxford: Blackwell.

Foley, R. (1993) *Working Without a Net: A Study of Egocentric Epistemology*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Foley, R. (2004) 'A trial separation between the theory of knowledge and the theory of justified belief', in John Greco ed. *Ernest Sosa and His Critics*, Wiley.

Goldman, A. (1980) 'The internalist conception of justification', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy, Vol. 5: Studies in Epistemology*, eds French, Uehling & Wettstein, University of Minnesota Press.

Goldman, A. (1985) *Epistemology and Cognition*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Goldman, A. (1988) 'Strong and weak justification' in *Philosophical Perspectives* 2, *Epistemology*, James E. Tomberlin (ed.): 51–69.

Goldman, A. (2001) 'The unity of the epistemic virtues' in A. Fairweather and L. Zagzebski, (eds) *Virtue Epistemology: Essays On Epistemic Virtue And Responsibility*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Goldman, A. (2009) 'Internalism, externalism and the architecture of justification', *Journal of Philosophy*, 106 (6): 1–30.

Hieronymi, P. (2008) 'Responsibility for believing', *Synthese* 161 (3): 357–373.

Kornblith, H. (1983) 'Justified belief and epistemically responsible action', Philosophical Review, 92(1): 33–48.

Kvanvig, J. (2003) *The Value Of Knowledge And The Pursuit Of Understanding*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Locke, J. (1975) *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. P.H. Niddich, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lockie, R. (2004) 'Knowledge, provenance and psychological explanation', Philosophy Vol. 79, 421-433.

Lockie, R. (2008) 'Problems for virtue theories in epistemology', Philosophical Studies, Vol. 138, no. 2, March 169-191.

Nottelmann, N. (2013) 'The deontological conception of epistemic justification: a reassessment', *Synthese*, 190 (12): 2219–2241.

Owens, D. (2000) *Reason Without Freedom*, London: Routledge.

Pettit, P. & Brennan, G. (1986) 'Restrictive Consequentialism', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 64 (4): 438–455.

Plantinga, A. (1993) *Warrant: the Current Debate*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Plato (1956) *Meno*, tr. W.K.C. Guthrie, Harmondsworth, Middx: Penguin.

Plato (1992) *Theaetetus*, tr. Levett (revised Burnyeat), Hackett.

Russell, B. (1996) *A History of Western Philosophy,* London: Routledge.

Ryan, S. (2003) 'Doxastic compatibilism and the ethics of belief', *Philosophical Studies* 114: 47–79.

Sartwell, C. (1991) 'Knowledge is merely true belief', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 28, (2).

Sartwell, C. (1992) 'Why knowledge is merely true belief', *Journal of Philosophy*, 89, (4).

Sidgwick, H. (1907) *The Methods of Ethics*, London: Macmillan.

Smith, H. M. (1988) 'Making moral decisions', *Nous*, 22: 89–108.

Vygotsky, L. (1978) *Mind in Society*, tr. M. Cole, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Zagzebski, L. (1996) *Virtues of the Mind*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zagzebski, L. (2003) 'The search for the source of epistemic good', *Metaphilosophy*, 34, (1–2): 12–28.