OTHER-REGARDING EPISTEMIC VIRTUES

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Abstract
Epistemologists often assume that an agent's epistemic goal is simply to acquire as much knowledge as possible for herself. Drawing on an analogy with ethics and other practices, I argue that being situated in an epistemic community introduces a range of epistemic virtues (and goals) which fall outside of those typically recognized by both individualistic and social epistemologists. Candidate virtues include such traits as honesty, integrity (including an unwillingness to misuse one's status as an expert), patience, and creativity. We can understand such traits to be epistemic virtues insofar as they tend to produce knowledge – not for the agent alone, but for her community. Recognition of such 'other-regarding epistemic virtues' both broadens the area of inquiry of epistemology, and introduces new standards for the evaluation of epistemic agents.

Epistemologists within the analytic tradition have typically focused their attention on the analysis of the knowledge of individuals, attempting to answer the skeptic, and determining the factors relevant to the justification of beliefs. As such, they have generally had little to say concerning the impact of being situated within an epistemic community, beyond its relevance to their aforementioned primary concerns. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the social dimensions of knowledge – the organization of science, the nature of group beliefs, and so on.

In what follows I argue that there is a broad range of other-regarding epistemic virtues that have been largely overlooked by both individualistic and social epistemologists. Such virtues are epistemic as they produce knowledge, but other-regarding as the knowledge is created in others, rather than in the agent herself. In section I, I present a basic case for this claim, drawing on an analogy with ethics. In section II, I argue that recognition of such virtues allows us to account for intuitions which are ill-founded given individualistic assumptions about epistemology. Finally, I consider several objections to the proposal in section III.

I. The Analogy and Initial Case

In the domain of ethics we find both self-regarding virtues (virtues which tend to directly benefit oneself), and other-regarding virtues (virtues which tend to directly benefit others).[1] Self-regarding virtues may include such virtues as courage, patience, and self-honesty. We may also have self-regarding duties to satisfy our preferences, maintain our physical and mental health, and so on.[2] In sum, they are virtues (and duties) which guide and assist us in achieving our own personal flourishing and well-being. An agent who focuses entirely on developing such self-regarding virtues, while rejecting duties to others is essentially an ethical egoist.

Other-regarding virtues in ethics may include compassion, benevolence, justice, honesty, and so on. These virtues do not aim primarily at promoting the flourishing of the agent who abides by them, but rather tend to help others in the agent's moral community (and the community as a whole) to flourish. The agent herself will benefit insofar as her community becomes more stable and conducive to her own flourishing, she experiences the rewards of friendship, and gains the respect of others, etc. Note that the development of other-regarding virtues may constitute part of an agent's flourishing, even if the virtues are not focused on the agent's flourishing. For example, it seems plausible to hold that a human agent who is entirely lacking in benevolence is not flourishing as an individual, even if the virtue of benevolence is directed towards promoting the flourishing and well-being of others.[3]

An ethical agent who fails to develop either kind of virtue will be ethically deficient. Clearly, a patient, intelligent ethical agent who lacks benevolence, compassion, or justice is not an ideal ethical agent. An agent who constantly devotes too much of his attention

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[1] This distinction is drawn by Michael Slote in his *From Morality to Virtue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), chapter 8. Philippa Foot draws attention to the same basic distinction in 'Virtues and Vices' in her *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 2–3.

[2] Of course, the exact range of self-regarding and other-regarding virtues and duties will vary from theory to theory. These variations are not of importance for our present concerns.

[3] The distinction between an individual's flourishing (or well-being) and being a good ethical agent can roughly be drawn as follows. An individual's flourishing is essentially a matter of the individual's leading as good a life as is possible for herself (in terms of benefits accruing directly to her). This may or may not require being a good ethical agent. Being a good ethical agent requires developing the moral virtues. It seems plausible to maintain that for humans, flourishing will require being at least a moderately good ethical agent.

to the well-being of others at the expense of his own health and well-being seems to lack a certain self-respect which is essential for his full flourishing as an ethical agent.[4] Concern for both kinds of virtues is crucial to being a good ethical agent.

We can now turn to the tradition of analytic epistemology. Here we find that, at least until recent years, epistemologists have been primarily concerned with individuals, their knowledge, and the justification or warrant of their beliefs.[5] Discussion of an agent's epistemic community would arise only insofar as the members of this community are potential sources of knowledge via testimony,[6] or as the presence of an epistemic community has an impact on attributions of knowledge or justification to the agent.[7]

It would seem then, that epistemologists have focused on the study of epistemic self-regarding duties and virtues. They have concerned themselves with how individual epistemic agents can flourish *qua* individual epistemic agents, attempting to determine which intellectual virtues lead to knowledge,[8] what constitutes sufficient justification or warrant to attribute the status of knowledge to an agent's beliefs or acceptances, and so on. Thus, they have focused on each agent's own personal set of beliefs and its formation.

Drawing on the domain of ethics, a possibility presents itself: *other-regarding* epistemic virtues. Just as the practice of ethics involves the development of both self-regarding and other-regarding ethical virtues on the part of ethical agents, the practice of epistemology may require epistemic agents to develop both self-regarding and other-regarding epistemic virtues.

What might these other-regarding epistemic duties and virtues be? Plausible candidates include (i) honesty (e.g. in one's testimony),

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[4] Agents can be seen as standing in special relationship to themselves. Just as we have strong responsibilities to friends and family, we have special responsibilities to ourselves.

[5] Some well-known examples include Laurence Bonjour, *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985); Roderick Chisholm, *Theory of Knowledge* 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs: PrenticeHall, 1989); Fred Dretske, *Knowledge and the Flow of Information* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981); and Robert Shope, *The Analysis of Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

[6] See, for example, C. A. J. Coady, *Testimony: A Philosophical Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[7] Cf. Ernest Sosa, *Knowledge in Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[8] Following common practice, I will use the terms 'epistemic virtue' and 'intellectual virtue' interchangeably. (I believe that there are good reasons to distinguish between the two, to the extent that we could have intellectual virtues which are not focused on acquiring truth, but will not discuss the issue here.)

sincerity, integrity (including an unwillingness to misuse one's status as expert), and creativity (which can inspire others, and lead to the discovery of new truths in a community), (ii) duties to develop the skills of a good teacher, and (iii) duties to develop the skills of a good listener (and critic) insofar as these help other epistemic agents to articulate and examine their own beliefs carefully and lucidly. These would be epistemic virtues insofar as they tend to produce knowledge – not in the agent herself, but in others in her community. Honesty and other such virtues could thus be as essential to being a good epistemic agent as having reliable sensory faculties or good reading skills.

Note also that the development of other-regarding virtues may constitute part of the epistemic flourishing and well-being of an epistemic agent, though these virtues do not directly aim at aiding the agent herself in accumulating knowledge. An epistemic agent who focuses exclusively on self-regarding epistemic virtues (gaining knowledge and justified beliefs for herself alone) could be a deficient epistemic agent to the extent that she is a member of a community. Similarly, an epistemology which examines and articulates only the self-regarding duties and virtues of agents could be an inadequate epistemology to the extent that it fails to analyze the other-regarding virtues of epistemic agents.

Several philosophers suggest that reliabilists hold a position in epistemology that is analogous to rule-utilitarianism. Roderick Firth, for example, writes:

> What shall we say, however, about the plausibility of epistemological positions that are analogous to ethical *rule*-utilitarianism? Such positions are sometimes called reliability theories of justification, but might well be described as forms of *epistemological* rule-utilitarianism. [. . .]

> according to epistemological rule-utilitarianism, the degree of warrant attached to the belief of a particular person at a particular time, is positively correlated with the degree of statistical reliability overall of some set of rules for arriving at true beliefs.[9]

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[9] Roderick Firth, 'Epistemic Merit, Intrinsic and Instrumental' in John Troyer (ed), *In Defense of Radical Empiricism: Essays and Lectures by Roderick Firth* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), pp. 264–5. Reprinted from *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 55 (1981). See also Linda Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 25–28, and Alvin Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), section 5.4.

This does not seem to be the most apt analogy available. Rather, the position of reliabilists is much more akin to ethical hedonistic egoism: they maintain that individuals should attempt to maximize their own personal stocks of true beliefs (while avoiding falsehoods), not the overall total of true beliefs in their communities. This parallels the hedonistic egoist's focus on her own happiness or pleasure.

However, if an epistemologist were to take the rule-utilitarianism analogy seriously, interesting possibilities would open up. Such an epistemologist would maintain that we are to maximize our community's stock of true beliefs (while avoiding falsehoods) by following reliable methods of belief production (for oneself, or in helping others gain true beliefs). This would parallel the utilitarian's emphasis on overall happiness, rather than merely focusing on her own happiness. Honesty, being a good teacher, etc. would all take on a much greater importance for an epistemic agent. And this, of course, would be of a piece with the current proposal.[10]

Virtue epistemology

What constitutes the flourishing of an epistemic agent – towards what goals should she aim? A common view is that a good epistemic agent is one who acquires as much knowledge as possible. For example, William Alston holds that

> Epistemic evaluation is undertaken from what we might call the 'epistemic point of view'. That point of view is defined by the aim at maximizing truth and minimizing falsity in a large body of beliefs. The qualification 'in a large body of beliefs' is needed because otherwise one could best achieve the aim by restricting one's beliefs to those that are obviously true.[11]

Elsewhere Alston claims that 'the most basic cognitive aim [is] to believe what is true and not to believe what is false.'[12] But why must an agent's basic aim be improving her own set of beliefs, rather than improving beliefs (in terms of truth and falsity) in her

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[10] Note that I would not endorse utilitarianism in either ethics or epistemology. The discussion of epistemic utilitarianism is intended only as an illustration of the broad approach that is being recommended.

[11] William P. Alston, 'Concepts of Epistemic Justification' in his *Epistemic Justification: Essays in the Theory of Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 83–4. Reprinted from *The Monist*, 68 (1985).

[12] William P. Alston, 'A 'Doxastic Practice' Approach to Epistemology' in Marjorie Clay and Keith Lehrer (eds), *Knowledge and Scepticism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), p. 17.

community, or even *tout court?* Note that while concern with other-regarding epistemic virtues and duties is compatible with Alston's stated understanding of the epistemic point of view (as perhaps a secondary field), Alston does not embrace such a concern. An epistemic individualism is quietly assumed.

In a similar vein, Ernest Sosa characterizes intellectual virtues as follows:

> An intellectual virtue is a quality bound to help maximize one's surplus of truth over error; or so let us assume for now, though a more just conception may include as desiderata also generality, coherence, and explanatory power, unless the value of these is itself explained as derivative from the character of their contribution precisely to one's surplus of truth over error.[13]

Here Sosa is concerned with knowledge and epistemic aptness for individuals, so he has no need to consider the potential broader range of intellectual other-regarding virtues. But allowing other-regarding intellectual virtues might be a worthwhile supplement. Why not consider honesty an intellectual virtue, one that will reliably help maximize the surplus of truth over falsity in the beliefs of others? Or, to follow Sosa more closely, we could take more specific skills or methods which would allow one to lead others to true beliefs in various fields of inquiry to be intellectual virtues. Again, we need not assume that being a good epistemic agent is solely a matter of improving one's own set of beliefs.[14]

Alvin Goldman has in recent years embraced a virtue-based approach to individual epistemology. What are epistemic virtues on his approach?

> [Goldman's] answer invokes the notion of reliability. Belief-forming processes based on vision, hearing, memory, and ('good') reasoning are deemed virtuous because they (are deemed to) produce a high ratio of true beliefs. Processes like guessing, wishful thinking, and ignoring contrary evidence are deemed vicious because they (are deemed to) produce low ratios of true beliefs.[15]

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[13] Ernest Sosa, 'Knowledge and Intellectual Virtue' in his *Knowledge in Perspective*, p. 225. Reprinted from *The Monist*, 68 (1985).

[14] Sosa is, in fact, sympathetic to an extension of the notion of an epistemic virtue along the general lines proposed here (personal correspondence).

[15] Alvin I. Goldman, 'Epistemic Folkways and Scientific Epistemology' in his *Liaisons: Philosophy Meets the Cognitive and Social Sciences* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), p. 160.

Here Goldman is concerned with the justification of the beliefs of individuals (which is a matter of being produced solely by virtuous processes or methods), but we again have the potential to supplement his account with other-regarding epistemic virtues, which (are deemed to) produce high ratios of true beliefs in others. Indeed, given Goldman's recent work in social epistemology, this would be a natural extension.

Sosa and Goldman follow Aristotle in not treating epistemic virtues as strictly analogous to moral virtues, and instead treat them largely as reliable belief-forming faculties (basically distinguished by the fields of information over which they range).[16] What of virtue epistemologists who draw more extensively upon analogies with moral virtues? James Montmarquet writes:

> What I want to suggest then, as a first approximation, is that the epistemic virtues are those personal qualities (or qualities of character) that are conducive to the discovery of truth and the avoidance of error.[17]

Montmarquet clarifies this suggestion by holding that epistemic virtues are traits which people who desire true beliefs would want (given our basic, commonsense picture of the world) to be entrenched parts of our character. But he adds that this might still be an inadequate conception:

> The larger goals of epistemic life cannot be confined to the mere acquisition of truths, let alone truths already known to others in the intellectual community. For, ideally, one seeks not only truth but *science*. That is, one seeks a kind of deep, economical, explanatory understanding of the world. One seeks to participate somehow in the advance of this understanding – if not by directly contributing to it, by somehow indirectly assisting it or perhaps just by becoming knowledgeable of its results.[18]

The current proposal expands on the social aspect of Montmarquet's suggestion. A good epistemic agent wants to contribute to knowledge, and perhaps to science. More generally, we wish to share knowledge and our views with others in our communities. The traits which help us in providing knowledge to others could

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[16] See Zagzebski, pp. 89.
[17] James A. Montmarquet, *Epistemic Virtue and Doxastic Responsibility* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993), p. 20.
[18] Montmarquet, p. 33.

thus be seen as epistemic virtues.[19] On the other hand, Montmarquet writes:

> What the virtues of intellectual honesty share with the moral virtue of honesty is clearly one thing: a regard for the truth as such. Such regard becomes a distinctly moral value insofar as it involves contexts of communication with others. But, taken purely in itself, it does not seem, for example, that the unwillingness adequately to face or pursue truth is, to the exclusion of the other, a moral or an epistemic failure. It is a personal failing that may certainly be seen as epistemic, but can be seen as moral as well.[20]

Here Montmarquet suggests that honesty in communication with others is a moral virtue, while being honest with oneself in one's belief-formation is a mixed moral and epistemic virtue (or, at least – an inadequate pursuit of the truth is a mixed moral/epistemic vice). I am proposing that we should also understand honesty in our communications with others as being an epistemic, other-regarding virtue. We can certainly at the same time continue to view it as a moral virtue – we need not confine the virtue to either domain.[21]

Linda Zagzebski proposes the following account of an act of intellectual virtue:

> *An act of intellectual virtue A* is an act that arises from the motivational component of *A*, is something a person with virtue *A* would (probably) do in the circumstances, is successful in achieving the end of the *A* motivation, and is such that the

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[19] We could follow Montmarquet more closely, and hold that other-regarding epistemic virtues are those traits which agents who value true beliefs would want (given our common-sense picture of the world) to be entrenched for the purpose of producing true beliefs in others.

[20] Montmarquet, p. 109.

[21] Montmarquet suggests another virtue which blurs the lines of morality and epistemology:

> For even though such an openness to others' *ideas* does not constitute and cannot by itself generate the whole of our moral responsibilities to others, it certainly qualifies as a moral as much as an epistemic virtue. [. . .] How, after all, are we to respect others as rational beings – a common theme of much moral philosophy – if we lack due respect for their ideas, the distinctive product of their rationality? (pp. 109–110)

I again agree with Montmarquet that this virtue of openness has both moral and epistemic dimensions. But I would add that by helping others to improve their beliefs we are showing an epistemic respect for them – it reflects the value we place on knowledge, and on others as epistemic agents in a common intellectual community. Thus, it is not only listening to others openly which is an epistemic (and moral) virtue; *sharing* our beliefs and knowledge openly can also be understood as epistemically (and morally) virtuous.

agent acquires a true belief (cognitive contact with reality) through these features of the act.[22]

Zagzebski holds that an agent knows when she performs an act of intellectual virtue.[23] We could modify her position and hold that acts of self-regarding intellectual virtue produce knowledge as she suggests, while acts of other-regarding intellectual virtue produce knowledge in others:

> *An act of other-regarding intellectual virtue A* is an act that arises from the motivational component of *A*, is something a person with virtue *A* would (probably) do in the circumstances, is successful in achieving the end of the *A* motivation, and is such that the intended beneficiaries of the act acquire a true belief (cognitive contact with reality) through these features of the act.[24]

Of course, further modifications are possible – we could hold that agents are at least epistemically praiseworthy if they testify clearly, though their listeners fail to form an appropriate belief (where the error lies in the listeners), and so on.

Lorraine Code draws more attention to the importance of epistemic communities. She argues that the fact that

> we naturally seek information from others is not merely an anthropological, psychological, or sociological fact; it is a fact about basic possibilities and fundamental preconditions of knowledge. Human beings come into existence and begin and continue to acquire knowledge in and through social interaction.[25]

Given the importance of our social embeddedness, she claims that

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[22] Zagzebski, p. 270.

[23] At times in her book Zagzebski appears to acknowledge other-regarding epistemic virtues. For example, in an initial list of epistemic virtues she includes 'the teaching virtues: the social virtues of being communicative, including intellectual candor and knowing your audience and how they respond' (p. 114). However, these virtues fall by the wayside, and are never discussed again.

[24] Consider a teacher giving a lesson. To perform an act of other-regarding intellectual virtue she must create true beliefs in her intended beneficiaries (presumably her students) through her teaching. To the extent that her students fail to gain true beliefs, she does not perform an act of other-regarding intellectual virtue on this variant of Zagzebski's rather demanding characterization. On the other hand, if a passerby in the hall outside of the classroom fails to form true beliefs on the basis of what he overhears, this need not count against the teacher, as the passerby is presumably not an intended beneficiary.

[25] Lorraine Code, *Epistemic Responsibility* (Hanover, NH: University of New England Press for Brown University Press, 1987), p. 192.

a virtuous practitioner within a cognitive practice values partic-
ipation for the sake of goods internal to the practice. He or she
sees value in the pursuit of and contribution to knowledge
within the practice, simply *per se*.[26]

Code clearly recognizes the need of an epistemically virtuous
agent to contribute to knowledge within a practice, or commu-
nity, and should be amenable to the possibility of other-regarding
epistemic virtues.

   Thus, even if we accept the claim that the epistemic point of
view focuses solely on acquiring true beliefs and avoiding false-
hoods, why assume that the measure of an epistemic agent is
the stock of true beliefs she acquires for herself? Why not hold
that a good epistemic agent helps to produce true beliefs in
general – in her family, in her friends, in her community, and
herself? An epistemic agent's virtues are those traits which help
to produce true beliefs (and knowledge), whether in herself or
in others.

Social epistemology

We might think that these sorts of other-regarding virtues would
be the proper focus of social epistemology. This seems correct,
however these virtues do not appear to have been discussed by
such epistemologists. Steve Fuller writes that

> [t]he fundamental question of the field of study I call social
> epistemology is: *How should the pursuit of knowledge be organized,
> given that under normal circumstances knowledge is pursued by many
> human beings, each working on a more or less well-defined body of
> knowledge and each equipped with roughly the same imperfect cogni-
> tive capacities, albeit with varying degrees of access to one another's
> activities.*[27]

Fuller himself focuses on the organization of groups attempting
to acquire knowledge. Generally, discussion in this area has been
devoted (i) to the notion of collective, or group beliefs and their
justification, (ii) to how individuals can come to know 'social
facts', (iii) to how knowledge-building institutions (such as the
sciences) should be organized to maximize the production of
knowledge, and (iv) to how being embedded in an epistemic

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[26] Code, p.194.
[27] Steve Fuller, *Social Epistemology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 3.

community can impact upon attributions of knowledge (justifi-
cation, warrant) to individual knowers.[28] These concerns either
overlap with those of individualistic epistemologists, or they
focus on groups and their organization.

Alvin Goldman, in his recent *Knowledge in a Social World*,
explains the social dimensions of social epistemology as follows:

> In what respects is social epistemology social? First, it focuses
> on social paths or routes to knowledge. That is, considering
> believers taken one at a time, it looks at the many routes to
> belief that feature interactions with other agents, as contrasted
> with private or asocial routes to belief acquisition. [. . .]
> Second, social epistemology does not restrict itself to believers
> taken individually. It often focuses on some group entity – a
> team of co-workers, a set of voters in a political jurisdiction, or
> an entire society – and examines the spread of information or
> misinformation across that group's membership. Rather than
> concentrate on a single knower, as did Cartesian epistemology,
> it addresses the distribution of knowledge or error within the
> larger social cluster. Third, instead of restricting knowers to
> individuals, social epistemology may consider collective or
> corporate entities, such as juries or legislatures as potential
> knowing agents.[29]

Goldman's emphasis is on believers (of various kinds), and the
social paths to beliefs. But what of our roles as individual trans-
mitters of knowledge – particularly in non-formal institutions?
Goldman does present an interesting, if rather brief discussion of
some steps a person can take to improve her testimony.[30] But
these steps and her testimony are not seen as part of her role as
an epistemic agent – rather, they are seen as means to help other
epistemic agents accrue knowledge. The current proposal stresses
that we are believers, but that we are also testifiers and distribu-
tors of knowledge. An agent's performance in all of these areas is
relevant to our appraisal of the agent from an epistemic point of
view.

[28]   See, for example, J. Angelo Corlett, *Analyzing Social Knowledge* (Lanham: Rowman and
Littlefield, 1996), Alvin I Goldman, *Knowledge in a Social World* (New York: Oxford Univer-
sity Press, 2000), and Frederick Schmitt (ed.), *Socializing Epistemology: The Social Dimensions
of Knowledge* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1994).
[29]   Goldman, *Knowledge in a Social World*, pp. 4–5.
[30]   See Goldman, *Knowledge in a Social World*, section 4.1.

II. Why posit other-regarding epistemic virtues?

To this point I have only argued that there is no obvious reason why we should assume that an agent's epistemic goal is simply improving her own belief set, rather than producing knowledge in general (including her own). In this section I will present several considerations which will provide us with positive reasons to expand our conception of our epistemic goals to include other-regarding concerns. In particular, the recognition of other-regarding epistemic virtues would allow us to account for a number of intuitions which can seem somewhat ill-founded given an epistemology which recognizes only self-regarding virtues.

First, consider the sciences and other academic disciplines. Individual scientists often see themselves as attempting to 'contribute to science', and similarly (*mutatis mutandis*) with historians, philosophers, and others. Clearly, this reflects a commitment to developing a common body of knowledge. Their ambition is not simply to maximize their own personal stock of knowledge. Thus, we find that many of our most respected epistemic agents see themselves as situated within an epistemic community, and this recognition shapes how they function as epistemic agents. How could this commitment to a collective body of knowledge be explained given only self-regarding epistemic concerns? These alone seem unlikely to provide a satisfactory explanation.

Of course, social epistemologists can better account for such commitments. But other-regarding epistemic virtues at a personal, non-formal level could also be at play here. At present there seems to be a sharp divide; individual agents try to accumulate true beliefs, but then have distinct roles in knowledge creating-communities. The two tasks seem distinct (my goals vs. fulfilling my role in a social institution). For example, Goldman notes that

> In fact, it is not obvious what generally motivates knowledgeable agents to disseminate their knowledge. The conveyance of knowledge, it appears, generally profits the receiver rather than the communicator. So wherein lies the motivation or incentive for informed agents to disseminate their knowledge?[31]

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[31] Goldman, *Knowledge in a Social World*, pp. 105–6.

On one level this question could be applied, *mutatis mutandis,* to the domain of ethics – how can we motivate people to act morally? But on another level, the question doesn't apply – helping others is simply part of morality, and if one wishes to be a good moral agent one must develop other-regarding moral virtues. On the current proposal, Goldman's question does not apply to epistemology at this second level, anymore than it does to morality. Part of being a good epistemic agent lies in sharing knowledge with others, and requires the development of other-regarding epistemic virtues. We could then ask how we can motivate people to become better epistemic agents, but this would be no different than asking how best to motivate people to be good moral agents. Embracing other-regarding epistemic virtues would allow us to bridge our goals of accumulating knowledge for ourselves, and sharing knowledge with others – being an honest, clear testifier would be seen as part of our epistemic flourishing in the same way as being patient, or open-minded in forming our own beliefs. We could thus provide an integrity to epistemic agents and their goals which might be lacking otherwise.

Relatedly, other-regarding duties and virtues allow us to explain the high value we place on acquiring knowledge that is new to a community. There is a strong intuition that an agent who simply memorizes a reputable encyclopedia is not as admirable as an agent who may not have as much propositional knowledge, but who has, for example, discovered a number of new species in an isolated region of the Amazon basin. Within an epistemic community it would seem to be a virtue to contribute new truths to the community, even at the expense of the agent's own acquisition of a personal body of knowledge.

If we focus on self-regarding concerns it would seem that individual agents should simply maximize their own personal stocks of knowledge, something which could generally be done quite simply by memorizing the knowledge already acquired by others. But then why search for information or truths that are unknown to one's community (an often long and difficult task), when one could far more easily and efficiently acquire more truths (and likely fewer falsehoods) by reading encyclopedias and textbooks? In both cases the truths are new to the individual agent. Positing an other-regarding duty or virtue of contributing such truths to one's epistemic community provides at least the beginnings of an explanation, one which does not

seem to be forthcoming from epistemologies which focus only on self-regarding concerns. After all, if we appeal only to self-regarding concerns, we would seem to be poor, inefficient epistemic agents in pursuing truths unknown to our communities when we could accumulate more truths for ourselves by acquiring readily-available, easily-assimilated knowledge from our community. And notice that this seems to apply even to those who are not involved in organized knowledge-building environments. It is not just journalists and archeologists who want to do more than acquire a set of insignificant beliefs. Ordinary individuals also seem to do well to acquire true beliefs that are not well-known within their communities.[32]

Accepting other-regarding epistemic virtues allows us to justify our intuition that Aristotle can be considered an exemplary epistemic agent, even while he could well have had a poorer ratio of true beliefs to false beliefs, produced by less reliable procedures, than many current undergraduates. He discovered a number of truths (which were new to his community), and his teachings have inspired countless generations of philosophers and scientists, even if most of his specific beliefs have been rejected. More generally, creative agents can be seen as good epistemic agents, even if their creativity leads them to false beliefs, to the extent that their creativity acts as a catalyst for others in their epistemic community.

A further case can be made for other-regarding epistemic virtues on the basis of the following example, drawn from Jonathan Kvanvig:

[S]uppose that there are two cognitive beings, S1 and S2, each of whom knows all and only what the other knows. They acquire their knowledge in different ways, however. S1 knows on the basis of investigation; S2 knows on the basis of being told by S1. In such a case, S1 is a superior cognitive being to S2. However, this superiority cannot be explained in terms of the knowledge or justification that attaches to each. Not even a modal move will work here, one which attempts to distinguish S1 from S2 on the basis of the possibility of S1 knowing without S2 knowing, for it is possible for beings to be related to each

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[32]   And while social epistemologists may account for the intuition that scientists strive to contribute a body of knowledge, it is not at all clear that they capture the intuition that ordinary people also do well to strive for knowledge not already held in their communities (which need not be formal knowledge-building or disseminating institutions).

other so that necessarily one knows if and only if another knows by being told by the first.[33]

Kvanvig focuses on our intuition that S1 is in some way cognitively superior to S2. Positing other-regarding epistemic virtues could help to clarify our intuitions. If we look at S1 and S2 as constituting a small epistemic community, we see that S1 testifies and adds knowledge to the community; S2 is essentially parasitic. We could thus see S1 as a superior epistemic agent insofar as she has developed other-regarding epistemic virtues which S2 appears to entirely lack. This would also help to capture our intuition that S2 is inferior not just in terms of his own beliefs, but in his lack of contribution to the community. There are thus two intuitions at play: (1) S2 is cognitively inferior to S1, and (2) S2 is inferior as a member of an epistemic community.

Finally, consider the case of an excellent teacher who is able to communicate a love of knowledge to her students, and whose students almost always become engaged with the subject matter she teaches. Further, her students acquire a great deal of knowledge. There is a strong intuition that she is being a good epistemic agent, even if she is not simply concentrating on acquiring knowledge for herself. She is helping to create knowledgeable, engaged agents within her community. The pursuit of truth in her community will likely be more successful for her efforts. Her teaching contributes to a surplus of true beliefs over false beliefs; but among her students and community, not just herself. Recognition of other-regarding epistemic virtues would allow us to see such a teacher as a good epistemic agent.

In what ways would the study of epistemology be changed if we were to posit other-regarding epistemic virtues? Perhaps most significantly, the study of teaching and testifying would become an essential part of epistemology. How can an agent best transmit information and knowledge to others in her epistemic community?[34] What are our epistemic duties as testifiers? Just as we, *qua* epistemic agents, will be concerned to acquire the other-regarding epistemic virtues of good teachers and testifiers, we will be concerned *qua* epistemologists with the study and articulation of

[33] Jonathan L. Kvanvig, *The Intellectual Virtues and the Life of the Mind: On the Place of the Virtues in Epistemology* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1992), p. 148. See also Zagzebski, pp. 26–28, and Charles Taliaferro, 'Divine Cognitive Power', *International Journal of Philosophy of Religion*, 18 (1985), pp. 133–40.

[34] Again, see Goldman, *Knowledge in a Social World*, section 4.1. A call for further work on these questions is a facet of the current proposal.

these virtues and duties. The study of the methods by which an agent can best convey information will become part of epistemology, akin to determining and studying the most effective (reliable) methods of belief formation.

More generally, epistemologists will study how individual agents contribute to their communities and their goals of group knowledge. To some extent, similar work is already being done by social epistemologists,[35] but again this work focuses on the organization of groups, and the actions of individuals playing defined roles within organized groups. There is also a need to examine individual agents and their epistemic goals. What virtues should we develop, once we have removed the individualistic assumption that our sole epistemic goal is the accumulation of knowledge for ourselves alone? How do we compare the epistemic achievement of an effective teacher and a successful researcher – how do we balance distributing and acquiring knowledge?

III. Objections

Still, we must consider whether there might be sound reasons for claiming that there are no other-regarding virtues within the practice of epistemology, or that if there are such, they are relatively unimportant (as compared with self-regarding virtues). Perhaps the clearest objection lies in the claim that *all* other-regarding virtues or duties fall within the realm of ethics. After all, ethics is what guides us in our interactions with others. If this is correct, there can be no *epistemic* other-regarding virtues or duties. When we share knowledge with others, this is a morally praiseworthy action, but not an epistemically praiseworthy action.

A careful examination of other practices shows this objection to fail. Consider, for example, a member of an orchestra. Such an agent has certain duties to other members of the orchestra: to follow the conductor, to adjust her dynamics as appropriate to the other players and the music being performed, and so on. These duties are not plausibly construed as solely ethical duties. Note that these duties could be both aesthetic and ethical: aesthetic insofar as they lead to a better performance, ethical insofar as they show a proper respect for others. They are duties which arise within the practice of music performance. Each member of the

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[35] See Philip Kitcher, *The Advancement of Science: Science without Legend, Objectivity without Illusions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), ch. 7.

orchestra will strive to flourish as an individual musician (by improving her own technique, extending her repertoire, etc.), but must also strive to flourish within the orchestra by working with the other members of this community towards achieving the common goals of the orchestra (such as improved performances as a group). Being part of an orchestra presents aesthetic possibilities which would be unavailable to individual musicians – more complex harmonies, a broader palette of tones, and so on.

Surely a musician who is sensitive to her conductor, etc., is not simply being a good ethical agent; rather, developing these virtues seems to be essential to being a good musician. In a similar fashion, the practices of various sports require the development of certain dispositions towards team-mates, the practice of medicine place duties on medical practitioners towards both patients and their colleagues, and so on. Abiding by these other-regarding duties and virtues is essential to achieving excellence in any such practice, and is not merely an ethical requirement.

Note also that a good musician's performance will produce pleasure and other valuable emotions or mental states in her listeners. This is true whether the musician is part of a formal orchestra, or sitting on a porch with friends. Surely we need not reduce her aesthetic achievements to moral achievements simply because they have an impact on others which is morally significant. Similarly, why think that honest testimony, which will help to produce valuable states in others (knowledge, or justified belief) must be reduced to an exclusively moral achievement?

The general lesson drawn from the consideration of the requirements of groups sharing common goals can be applied to epistemic agents and their communities. Succeeding in a practice will require abiding by both the self and other-regarding duties and virtues imposed by the practice. Thus, each epistemic agent should attempt to flourish as an individual by acquiring an extensive personal body of knowledge, but must also contribute to the community's goal of developing a common body of knowledge through the development of other-regarding epistemic virtues. This does not require formal institutions – compare again the musician(s) simply playing on a porch. Working together towards a common body of knowledge creates possibilities unavailable to individual epistemic agents: divisions of cognitive labour, varied problem-solving approaches, and so on.

Why else might we question whether we can have epistemic other-regarding duties or virtues? We might hold that we do not

have control over the beliefs of others in a way that would allow us to speak of epistemic duties to others. While we might be able to control our own cognitive activities, we cannot so control the cognitive activities of others. We cannot guarantee that a person will understand our testimony or believe it. Given our lack of control over the epistemic behaviour of others we might hold that we therefore cannot have other-regarding virtues and duties. This draws on our intuition that 'ought implies can' – if we cannot guarantee the epistemic behaviour of others, how can we have duties of the sort being suggested?

This objection seems to misconstrue the sorts of virtues and duties at stake. Honesty is a virtue, and we have duties to testify clearly, etc. in a fashion which should help others to gain true beliefs. But we need not guarantee that our testimony will be accepted. Compare – there is a moral other-regarding virtue of benevolence, even if we cannot guarantee that, e.g., money we donate will be used for food and not bombs. We must do our best to ensure that all goes well, but we need not abandon all of our other-regarding virtues simply because we cannot guarantee the behaviour of those with whom we interact. In any event, we can at least act virtuously with respect to those aspects of the situation which we can control.

A third objection rests on an apparent disanalogy with ethics. If we don't obtain true beliefs ourselves, we cannot do anything for others – it seems that we can only pass along the knowledge or true beliefs that we have. But in the domain of ethics producing happiness in others, for example, is not a matter of passing along our happiness to others. So perhaps we ought to view other-regarding epistemic virtues as quite minor, as we crucially require knowledge (a product of self-regarding virtues) in order for such other-regarding virtues to be effective.

In response, note that there are cases in which we can produce knowledge in others, even while lacking knowledge ourselves. Jennifer Lackey gives the example of a creationist teacher who is required to teach evolution in her biology class. Clearly this teacher might lack knowledge (given that she rejects evolution) while being able to provide her students with knowledge (given that they come to understand and accept evolution on the basis of the teacher's clear, accurate presentation).[36] Thus, producing

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[36] Jennifer Lackey, 'Testimonial Knowledge and Transmission', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 49 (1999), pp. 471–90. Lackey responds to a number of objections which I cannot discuss here.

knowledge in others does not always require knowledge on the part of an agent.

More importantly, even in ethics, unless we preserve our strength, have courage, etc. (through self-regarding virtues) we cannot help others. But there are still genuine, important other-regarding virtues. Even if generosity requires something to give in order to be effective, it is an important virtue for any moral agent. The mere fact that we might require certain basics before we can help others does nothing to show that helping others is morally unimportant. Similarly, even if we must accumulate knowledge ourselves in order to be able to improve the beliefs of others, this does not show that this distribution of knowledge is correctly dismissed as unimportant from an epistemic point of view.

We are members of epistemic communities with the goal of developing common bodies of knowledge. We testify, we teach, we act as critics, and so on; surely we are acting as good epistemic agents when we perform these actions well. Recognition of our other-regarding epistemic duties and virtues brings us a step closer towards understanding the full impact of being situated within an epistemic community. Such embeddedness does not merely alter the conditions of knowing for an epistemic agent; it creates a host of new duties and virtues which must be acquired by epistemic agents, and studied by epistemologists.[37]

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The case of the creationist teacher may lead us to question whether this teacher is being honest with her students, and whether honesty is an other-regarding epistemic virtue. Perhaps we can distinguish between two kinds of honesty. Compare philosophy teachers – we often have to teach things with which we disagree. Honesty here amounts to providing a fair picture of a position, not a strawman, etc. Thus, we might refer to this as pedagogical honesty: presenting all evidence and positions fairly and completely to allow others to assess them. We can then distinguish standard honesty, which requires us to present what we ourselves believe. The creationist teacher is thus being pedagogically honest, even if not standardly honest; and her role as a teacher requires pedagogical honesty.