

The Right in the Good: A Defense of Teleological Non-Consequentialism

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Abstract: There has been considerable discussion recently of consequentialist justifications of epistemic norms. In this paper, I shall argue that these justifications are not justifications. The consequentialist needs a value theory, a theory of the epistemic good. The standard theory treats accuracy as the fundamental epistemic good and assumes that it is a good that calls for promotion. Both claims are mistaken. The fundamental epistemic good involves accuracy, but it involves more than just that. The fundamental epistemic good is knowledge, not mere true belief, because the goodness of an epistemic state is connected to that state's ability to give us reasons. If I'm right about the value theory, this has a number of significant implications for the consequentialist project. First, the good-making features that attach to valuable full beliefs are not features of partial belief. The resulting value theory does not give us the values we need to give consequentialist justifications of credal norms. Second, the relevant kind of good does not call for promotion. It is good to know, but the rational standing of a belief is not determined by the belief's location in a ranked set of options. In the paper's final section, I explain why the present view is a kind of teleological non-consequentialism. There is a kind of good that is prior to the right, but as the relevant kind of good does not call for promotion the value theory shows us what is wrong with the consequentialist project.

1. Introduction

Moore never said that the only possible reason that can justify any belief is that its formation would result in the greatest amount of what is good.¹ This omission is surprising. Given his interests in epistemology and his consequentialist instincts, we could have expected him to say just this.² Did Moore miss out on a good thing? Might our beliefs be right or rational because of the role that they play in promoting the epistemic good?

An increasing number of epistemologists seem to think so.³ Starting from the idea that accuracy is the fundamental epistemic good, epistemic consequentialists try

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² In *Principia Ethica*, Moore said, "The only possible reason that can justify any action is that by it the greatest possible amount of what is good absolutely should be realized" (1993: 153).

³ See Ahlstrom-Vij and Dunn (2014), Dorst (MS), Easwaran and Fitelson (2015), Goldman (1986), Greaves (2014), Joyce (1998, 2009, MS), Konek and Levinstein (MS), Pettigrew (2013, 2014, 2015), and Talbot (2014) for discussions of epistemic norms that are (to varying degrees) sympathetic to the consequentialist idea that the epistemic good determines the epistemic right. These writers are all sympathetic to

to determine which norms govern belief. If you wanted to know why we should be probabilistically coherent, epistemic consequentialism gives you a plausible answer. Given some plausible assumptions about how to score the accuracy of a set of credences a coherent set can never be dominated by an incoherent alternative. Most people don't like to be dominated, so maybe this will move you to keep your credences in order even if you aren't moved by a fear of Dutch bookies. If you were struggling to decide whether it's possible to be rational and inconsistent because you were pulled in different directions by lottery and preface cases, you might think that it is interesting and important that the cost of conforming to some consistency norm is steep. In some situations, the way to maximize expected accuracy is to keep an inconsistent set of beliefs. Perhaps the wise person ought to proportion her beliefs to the evidence and ignore the putative principles people appeal to in an attempt to defend the virtues of consistency.⁴

While the current literature is filled with lots of interesting results about the costs and benefits of conforming to various (putative) epistemic norms, it suffers from two serious deficiencies. First, there hasn't yet been enough discussion of the value theory used by epistemic consequentialists. While the veritists are right that there's something bad about believing falsehoods and often something good about believing truths, their account doesn't capture what's bad or good about it. Second, there hasn't yet been enough discussion of whether the right and the good are related in the way the consequentialist takes them to be. Once we see why the veritists are wrong about the fundamental epistemic values, we will see why the consequentialist justifications of epistemic norms are problematic. The paper concludes with a brief presentation of a teleological alternative to consequentialism.

2. Truth and Consequences

Suppose we were to pursue Moore's methods in epistemology. If we adopt Moore's basic theoretical orientation and try to identify the norms governing belief, we would have to assume that the epistemic good is prior to the epistemic right:

Priority Thesis: The good is metaphysically prior to the right.

To determine what makes right belief right or rational belief rational, we would have to identify the fundamental epistemic good or goods. The standard proposal about the epistemic good is a *veritist* proposal that says that truth or accuracy is the fundamental epistemic good. We would use this account of the good to give an account of the better and best.

If our consequentialists are veritists who see accuracy as the fundamental epistemic good, we should expect them to accept the following:

Necessity Thesis: Only accurate states are epistemically good.⁵

the idea that the fundamental epistemic good is true belief, so we can see some of the arguments here as challenges to some of the assumptions operative in their work.

⁴ For interesting defenses of the virtue of consistency that appeal to principles of the sort we would expect consequentialists to attack, see Ryan (1996).

⁵ Strictly speaking, these claims are claims about final goodness. An anonymous referee reminded me that actual veritists (e.g., Goldman (1999)) think that the value realized by our beliefs depends upon things like the significance or importance of the relevant accurate states. I wanted to avoid these complications because they are

Sufficiency Thesis: Every accurate belief is epistemically good.

Distinctiveness Thesis: The beliefs that are epistemically good are distinctively valuable.

Monism: The fundamental epistemic good is accuracy.

Roughly, this captures the idea that accuracy is the good-making feature of the beliefs that are good and that accurate belief plays a unique role in determining how well things are going. These theses all play important roles in consequentialist arguments for their favored epistemic norms because they tell us what does and does not matter when it comes to ranking options.

There are two further theses to consider when thinking about ranking options in terms of the value they contain and the kind of value such rankings are sensitive to:

Totalizing Thesis: The right is determined by comparing the total value that options would/could realize.⁶

Promotion Thesis: If an option is acceptable and an alternative is at least as valuable, it must also be acceptable.⁷

The Totalizing Thesis reminds us that the ranking of options that determines the rational status of our attitudes is done in terms of the total value that these options contain. The thesis plays an important role in justifications of consequentialism. As Foot (1984) observed, the reason that consequentialism seems so compelling is that when it comes to the good, the better, and the best, it *is* irrational to prefer some acknowledged lesser good to one that is greater. The Promotion Thesis tells us that the rational status of the attitudes contained in an option will be wholly determined by the value contained in those options. This rules out the possibility that there might be some principle that functions like a side-constraint, forcing us to opt for a suboptimal option by making it impermissible to opt for some superior alternative.⁸

Our epistemic consequentialists should agree to this much, but they might disagree about the kind or kinds of accuracy that matter. An epistemic consequentialist concerned with full belief might adopt this value theory:

Categorical Veritism: True belief is intrinsically good, false belief is intrinsically bad, and these are the only intrinsic values that matter to inquiry (Goldman 1999).

One concerned with partial belief might adopt this one:

Gradational Veritism: The categorical good of fully believing truths is replaced by the gradational good of

orthogonal to the issues discussed here. None of the objections discussed below can be met by distinguishing interesting from uninteresting truths, for example.

⁶ For discussion, see Carlson (1995).

⁷ For discussion, see Vallentyne (2006).

⁸ Pettigrew (2013a) reads Easwaran and Fitelson's (2012) challenge as involving an appeal to side-constraints. I should mention that I don't think we need side-constraints in the fight against epistemic consequentialism. We only need to invoke them if we concede that certain options should be ranked in such a way that the best options strike us as inappropriate. If you don't see much good contained in the inappropriate options, the side-constraints become otiose. Like many consequentialists, I'm skeptical of side-constraints because they often seem to be ad hoc.

investing high credence in truths (the higher the better); the categorical evil of fully believing falsehoods is replaced by the gradational evil of investing high credence in falsehoods (the higher the worse) (Joyce MS).

As stated, these are competing views about the bearers of epistemic value. The first view sees full belief as the only thing that could be epistemically good. The second says that partial beliefs can be good even if they don't constitute full beliefs and doesn't think it matters whether some partial belief is, *inter alia*, a full belief. My impression is that many of the leading consequentialists are open to a kind of hybrid view on which full belief and partial belief are both potential bearers of epistemic value. If we define 'accuracy' broadly enough, we can say that the fundamental veritist commitment is to the thesis that accurate states are the positive epistemic value atoms and that inaccurate ones are the negative value atoms.⁹

Not all consequentialists are maximizers, but it will simplify the discussion to speak as if they are.¹⁰ According to maximizing epistemic consequentialism, it's only possible to say which beliefs are rational once we've found some way of ranking the agent's options and seen which options contain the relevant attitude. Roughly, an attitude is rational iff this attitude is included in the best feasible option(s). This requires two points of clarification. First, we will think of the outcome as the possible world that would be actual if the agent were to have the attitudes contained in the relevant option. Second, remember that some writers use 'best' to refer to the *objectively best* and others to refer to the *prospectively best* where the former is understood in terms of actual value and the latter in terms of expected value.

⁹ I'm borrowing this talk of value atoms from Bradley (2009: 5). Think of the value atoms as the things that are most fundamentally good or bad. They are things that don't derive their value from the value contained in their proper parts and that incorporate all the properties involved in the realization of the value. Together, the value atoms determine how well or badly things are going for you. We might say that accurate states are to the veritist what hedons and dolors are to the hedonist.

¹⁰ An anonymous referee observed (quite rightly) that this is an understatement as reliabilism appears to some to be the most popular form of consequentialism and reliabilists are not maximizers. (Although, it is debatable whether reliabilism truly is a version of consequentialism. See Goldman (2015) and Littlejohn (2012).) It would complicate the discussion considerably to discuss satisficing and maximizing views, so I thought it would be best to stick with a maximizing view and focus on objections that would apply with equal force to any satisficing view (provided that the suitable modifications are made). This is because the objections (suitably modified) apply to any view that takes permissibility to supervene upon outcomes and the maximizers and satisficers agree that permissibility supervenes upon the value realized by outcomes. The main difference between the maximizers and satisficers is that the maximizers think we are permitted only to bring about the best and the satisficers think that we are permitted to bring about anything that is good enough and allows that there can be things that are good enough that are suboptimal. Neither view has resources to explain why we should not bring about options that are better than a permitted option and some of the challenges discussed below have that shape.

It's easy to see how to rank options if Categorical Veritism is true. On this view we would say that the total value realized by your *epistemic state* in a world is identical to the total value realized by your *doxastic state* in that world. Your epistemic state is composed of your doxastic state (i.e., your full beliefs) and your credal state (i.e., your partial beliefs). We would assign some positive value to each true belief and then subtract out some negative value from each false belief.¹¹ Suppose you wonder whether this exit is the way to San Jose. You might believe that it is, believe that it is not, or suspend. It might be the way. It might not. If it is, believing that it is should count positively. If it is not, believing that it is should count negatively. If you suspend, the suspension should not count either way. To rank the options using an objective version of Categorical Veritism, we would have to compare the total epistemic value your doxastic state could realize if you believed that this was the way to San Jose to the total epistemic value your epistemic state could realize if you suspended or disbelieved. We would want to hold fixed the fact that this was (or was not) the way to San Jose. It might seem that believing that it is on the condition that it is will rank higher than suspending or disbelieving, but this overlooks some complications that we'll come back to later.

It's harder to see how to rank options if Gradational Veritism is true. The standard story goes something like this.¹² We begin by identifying the ideal state. This is the state in which you are maximally confident in all the truths (or all the truths you can grasp or all the truths you have attitudes concerning) and maximally unconfident in all the falsehoods (or all the falsehoods you can grasp or all the falsehoods you have attitudes concerning). This is the ideal because it's supposed to be ideally accurate. Whenever you are less than maximally confident in some truth, you deviate from the ideal. The less confident you are in a truth, the greater your deviation from the ideal. To determine how far off you are from the ideal, we sum up the deviation of each partial belief from the ideal.

The methods we are given for ranking options do not tell us how to answer two important questions about the value of credal states. We don't know what sort of value the ideal state realizes. We also don't know what sort of value the non-ideal state realizes. First, if all we know about states that include non-extremal credences is that they are at some distance from the ideal, it seems that we have a potentially powerful argument for skepticism. If we know apriori that *any* credal state that involves some non-extremal credence is worse than the ideal, it might be irrational to be in such a state. Suppose that it is possible to assign no credences whatever to the propositions we grasp. And suppose that the total value realized by the ideal state is

¹¹ In Littlejohn (2012) I argued that if we wanted to explain in consequentialist terms why it's wrong to believe p on the basis of weak evidence or unreliable methods we would have to say that the values of true and false belief differed in magnitude so that it's worse to believe one truth and one falsehood than to believe nothing at all. Dorst (MS) calls this the *conservativeness constraint*. Using the lottery case, I argued that consequentialists will never get the threshold right, but that argument rested on two controversial assumptions. The first is that it's not rational to believe lottery propositions outright. The second is that it can be rational to believe things on the basis of testimony even when the probability of erring by so relying is greater than it would be if we were to believe that the tickets we hold for large lotteries will lose.

¹² See Joyce (1998) and Pettigrew (2013).

also 0. If so, it would be irrational to have a credal state that involved any non-extremal credence.

Of course, a proponent of Gradational Veritism might say in response that some positive good *does* come of having the ideal credal state. This might help to mitigate part of the problem, but only if we have a further story about how defective states could nevertheless rank higher than states of universal suspension (or a state that assigns extremal credence to a handful of obvious logical truths). We need an argument that shows that you can be better off by being in a non-ideal state than you would be if you were to suspend across the board or suspend on all the non-tautologies.

At the root of these problems is this concern. If we wanted to model our value theory on, say, hedonism, and model our consequentialist view on utilitarianism, we need to see the states assessed for accuracy as value atoms that function like hedons and dolors. In the case of full belief, it is easy to see how this is supposed to go. Treat a true belief like a hedon, treat a false belief like a dolor, operate on the assumption that the best option maximizes these values, and work from there. In the case of partial belief, it is hard to see how this is supposed to work. Should we think of a partial belief that doesn't amount to full belief as more like a hedon if it's closer to the truth than not or should we see it as more like a dolor because it deviates from the ideal? We have decent enough formal tools for ranking options when limited to fixed sets of propositions, but I don't see how these materials could answer some basic questions about whether it's rational to get into the partial belief game if and when it can be avoided.

These worries extend to the hybrid views that tell us that both partial beliefs and full beliefs are potential bearers of epistemic goodness. The hybrid view faces a further worry, which is that it is difficult to say what sort of value we should attach to an element of the subject's epistemic state if it is both a partial belief and a full belief. Suppose you work with a kind of Lockean view according to which full belief just is a partial belief that is sufficiently confident.¹³ Suppose that while I'm not maximally confident in p , I am sufficiently confident in p to count as having a full belief. By crossing the line, I would get some boost in total value (or decrease gradational inaccuracy) simply by increasing confidence in some truth. I would get a further boost in value by having a full belief in a true proposition. Is this double counting?

While I have some real concerns about the possibility of fleshing out the story to provide satisfactory answers to these questions, I want to move on. The real problem with combining veritism with epistemic consequentialism has little to do with the details and more to do with the operative assumptions about epistemic goodness (e.g., that the good of true belief calls for promotion and that such value is the fundamental epistemic good). The veritist works with a dubious value theory. The most fundamental problem with this project is the way that the veritist understands the value of accuracy. Work out your own way of filling out the missing details however you see fit. I don't think that on any admissible modification of the basic structure will we find a plausible view of epistemic norms.

3. The Value of Truth and the Varieties of Veritism

¹³ For sympathetic presentations of the Lockean view, see Dorst (MS), Foley (2009), and Sturgeon (2008).

If you're looking for a careful defense of the idea that true belief is valuable, you will not find it in discussions of epistemic consequentialism. Veritism often acts as the unmotivated motivator. The most sophisticated discussion of the value of truth that I've found is in Lynch's work, so I want to see whether his arguments support the sort of veritist view that the consequentialists need.

Lynch makes an initial pitch for the value of truth in this passage:

Nobody likes to be wrong. If anything is a truism, that is. And it reveals something else we believe about truth: that it is good. More precisely, it is good to believe what is true (2004: 12).

Even if everyone had this preference, this observation doesn't provide much support for the idea that there's something good that attaches to each true belief. It only suggests that there's something bad about being mistaken. At best, this is a point in favor of the Necessity Thesis, one that tells us nothing about the Sufficiency Thesis. If people are risk averse and hate to make mistakes, what could entice them to take a risk?

Lynch provides a more promising line of argument in this passage:

If truth was *not* a basic preference, then if I had two beliefs B1 and B2 with identical instrumental value, I should not prefer to believe B1 rather than B2. The considerations above already point to the fact that this isn't so, however. In particular, if we didn't have a basic preference for the truth, it would be hard to explain why we find the prospect of being undetectably wrong so disturbing. Think about a modification of the experience-machine scenario we began with. Some super neuroscientists give you the choice between continuing to live normally, or having your brain hooked up to a supercomputer that will make it seem as if you are continuing to live normally (even though you're really just floating in a vat somewhere). When in the vat, you will continue to have all the same experiences you would have in the real world. Because of this, you would believe that you are reading a book, that you are hungry, and so on. In short, your beliefs and experiences will be the same, but most of your beliefs will be false (2004: 17).

He then offers these remarks about this thought experiment and experiments like it:

If we didn't really prefer true beliefs to false ones, we would be simply ambivalent about this choice. Vat, no vat; who cares? But we don't say this. We don't want to live in the vat, even though doing so would make no difference to what we experience or believe. This suggests that we have a basic preference for truth (2004: 17).

Neither would I wish to live in the fool's paradise, where people just pretend to like and respect me. These examples, and others like them, show that we value

something more than experience—even just pleasurable experience. We want certain realities behind those experiences, and thus we want certain propositions to be true. (2004, pp. 138–39).

This suggests that something of value might be missing from our lives even if our lives were quite pleasant and that this value has to do with truth. He offers this by way of elaboration:

In preferring not to live in either the vat or the Russell world, I do not simply prefer that the world be a certain way. My preference involves my beliefs and their proper functioning, so to speak. For not only do I not want to live in a world where I am a brain in a vat, I also don't want to live in a world where I am not so deceived, but believe that I am. That is, if such and such is the case, I want to believe that it is, and if I believe that it is, I want it to be the case. We can put this by saying that I want my beliefs and reality to be a certain way—I want my beliefs to track reality, to “accord with how the world actually is”—which is to say I want them to be true (2004: 18).

And this suggests that the reason that true belief matters is that it matters that we have a way to 'track reality'. The last line suggests that he thinks that some sort of veritist view to do justice to intuitions about what's missing from life in Nozick's experience machine. I think there's something important and right here, but something that explains what's wrong with veritism.

3.1 Niggling Doubts

I have concerns about most of the veritist assumptions about value. The Distinctiveness Thesis seems solid, though. Belief plays a distinctive role in our psychology and its value seems to be tied to the role it plays. It tracks reality by helping us to keep hold of the facts. If we drop the thesis, it's hard to see how the epistemic consequentialist arguments could work. If the Distinctiveness Thesis were false, we could get the goods that attach to accurate belief without belief. If the best options aren't best because they contain the best beliefs, it's hard to see how a norm that enjoins us to maximize some sort of epistemic value would require us to have the beliefs the consequentialist thinks we're required to have.

Armed with the Distinctiveness Thesis, we can cause trouble for the Sufficiency Thesis and Monism. It is easy to see why Sufficiency is important for the standard consequentialist arguments. If Sufficiency were false, it should be possible for two epistemic states to score equally well when scored by veritists and yet differ in terms of their epistemic value. Were we to allow that these states could differ in value, we couldn't rely on arguments that equate the epistemic ideal with perfect accuracy and treat the imperatives to maximize expected accuracy and expected epistemic value as extensionally equivalent.

There is a *prima facie* plausible argument against Sufficiency, one that uses part of the standard story about epistemic goodness. Consider Distinctiveness. According to Distinctiveness, belief is the distinctive bearer of epistemic goodness. On a natural reading of Sufficiency, such states are good (when they are) because they

are accurate. On a standard story about belief and perception, both beliefs and perceptual experiences have accuracy conditions.¹⁴ Indeed, it is typically part of the typical story about these experiences and beliefs that they share content and share accuracy conditions. If so, it would seem that Sufficiency would support a view on which both experience and belief share the very same good making features. So, they should both be good. So, it would seem that if experiences and beliefs can both be assessed for accuracy, we have to reject Sufficiency to account for the distinctive value of accurate belief.

In my view this argument rests on a mistaken assumption about experience.¹⁵ I don't think experiences have representational content, so I don't think that they have the same good-making features that beliefs (allegedly) have. Experiences don't put us in touch with the facts in the same way that beliefs do. Most readers probably disagree with this point. If so, you have to answer a tricky question that I do not. How could belief be the distinctive bearer of epistemic goodness if it is not the distinctive bearer of the good-making features?

Because experience and belief are typically taken to be alike in possessing the properties that veritists identify as the good-making properties of belief, it might be worth asking veritists to explain why the putative good-making feature of good belief is a good-making feature. I know of only two answers to this question. Both answers start from some claims about the point, purpose, or aim of belief. The first says that the aim of belief is truth. The idea is that a belief will have the good-making features iff it fulfills its aim by being a true and accurate representation of reality. The problem with this line is that it doesn't seem to give us the resources we need to explain the Distinctiveness Thesis. On the standard line about experience, experiences can have contents that can be assessed for accuracy in the way that beliefs can, in which case the challenge to the Distinctiveness Thesis remains. The second answer says that the aim of belief is to provide us with reasons. Specifically, they should provide us with potential motivating reasons (i.e., things that could function as our reasons for believing, feeling, or doing things). If we're guided by these reasons, we're guided by reality because these reasons consist of facts or true propositions.

This second way of thinking about the aim of belief and its good-making features helps to save the Distinctiveness Thesis. I have identified a role that beliefs play that experiences do not. (It also fits nicely with the nice story that Lynch gives us about the value of truth, but we'll get back to that later.) Consider the experiences you had when you came to believe that your neighbor was stealing your Sunday paper. In the absence of the belief that your neighbor was the thief, you couldn't have been upset with the neighbor for taking your paper. These experiences couldn't render the belief that rationalizes the reactive attitudes otiose. If you had the experiences but didn't have the belief, your reason for being upset with him could not be that he took the paper. To you, the fact that he took the paper would not make your anger

¹⁴ See McDowell (1998), Siegel (2010), and Schellenberg (2014) for discussion.

¹⁵ See Brewer (2011) and Travis (2013) for critical discussion of the view that experiences have representational content. In Littlejohn (Forthcoming), I argue that even if experiences had content, they wouldn't play the epistemological role that people often assume. Even if they had contents, our perceptual beliefs aren't cases in which we believe things for reasons. Thus, belief plays a distinctive epistemic role in that it has to be in place for us to be guided by reasons.

intelligible because for all you know this fact is not a fact. And if that wasn't your reason, it's quite possible that any negative feelings you had toward him wouldn't be fitting. Your emotional responses are fitting only when an accurate belief is there to guide your emotional responses.

To my mind, this story about the role that belief plays in supplying potential motivating reasons is the best story about why belief aims at the truth and why beliefs have distinctive good-making features. It allows us to sidestep the tricky issues about the nature of perceptual experience because even if we think that perceptual experiences do have representational content, we tend not to think that experience involves the kind of commitment to the truth of this content that belief does. Unfortunately, I think that this story about the good-making features of belief causes serious trouble for all versions of veritism and for epistemic consequentialism. Upon this rock, I shall make my mess.

3.2 Against Gradational Veritism and the Hybrid View

In defending the Distinctiveness Thesis, I said that belief plays a distinctive role in certain kinds of folk-psychological explanation. I should be clear that I think *full* belief plays this role. *Partial* belief does not play this role. If you are confident that p but you do not believe p , you cannot believe things, feel things, or do things for the reason that p .

Adler draws our attention to the fact that certain reactive-attitudes do not, as he puts it, 'admit of epistemic qualification':

Mild resentment is never resentment caused by what one judges to be a serious offense directed toward oneself tempered by one's degree of uncertainty in that judgment—for example, a student's mildly resenting her teacher's lowering her grade because she refused his persistent personal advances, although she is not sure that the grade wasn't deserved. For similar reasons, there is no actually engaged attitude corresponding to a conditional resentment (anger), whose condition can only later be known to be fulfilled (2002: 217).

In the absence of the right kind of full belief, resentment isn't possible. As Gordon noted in his discussion of attributions of emotions, many attributions of these emotions require a corresponding attribution of full belief. You couldn't be angry about the fact that a grade was lowered unfairly unless (a) certain conditions obtained such that the belief that the grade was lowered unfairly would, when combined with these conditions, make you angry and (b) you did indeed believe your grade was lowered unfairly (1987: 48).

What is it about belief that equips it to play roles that experiences cannot? One answer is that only belief has propositional content, but this doesn't explain why *full* belief plays a distinctive role. A better answer is that belief is distinctive in being *committal*. Belief involves a kind of commitment to truth that other attitudes and mental states do not. If it seems to you that p because of how your experiences are but you don't believe it, you won't be mistaken about p or right about p . This feature of belief helps us understand why belief is a necessary condition on *V*-ing for the reason that p . To *V* for the reason that p , the (apparent) fact that p has to capture the light in which you took *V*-ing to be favorable, appropriate, right, etc. If you don't take it to be

the case that p , the apparent fact that p wouldn't be an apparent fact. It thus couldn't be the light in which you took V -ing to be favorable, appropriate, right, etc.

We have seen that you can use this feature of full belief and the role that full belief plays in providing us with potential motivating reasons to argue for Distinctiveness. Beliefs are unique in bearing the fundamental epistemic good-making properties because the good-making properties have to do with 'tracking reality' so that we believe, feel, and do things for reasons that consist of facts. A nice feature of this account is that it helps to explain the Necessity Thesis. If a proposition you believe isn't true, it is not among the facts that would constitute reasons that could be our reasons for feeling, doing, or believing things. It would also explain why any false belief fails to do what beliefs are supposed to do. The false belief does not put us in touch with a fact that could rationally guide our actions, feelings, or thoughts. While this is a promising line of argument, it also gives us what we need to cause trouble for veritism.

Gradational veritism and the hybrid view both see credal states that don't constitute beliefs as states that can be epistemically good. On the account of epistemic good just sketched, some accurate states are good because they're states that can give us potential motivating reasons. Unfortunately, this is something that partial beliefs cannot do when they do not constitute full beliefs. Thus, they don't have the good-making feature that accounts for the value of the valuable full beliefs. Thus, *if* this is the sole fundamental epistemic good-making feature, gradational veritism and the hybrid views have to be mistaken. By failing to be full beliefs, these credal states cannot be good beliefs. The kind of accuracy they have isn't the kind of accuracy that accounts for the value realized by the full beliefs that are good beliefs.

3.2 Against Categorical Veritism

A crucial premise in the argument for Distinctiveness is the idea that the good-making properties are the properties in virtue of which beliefs 'track reality' and enable us to do, feel, or believe things for reasons that consist of facts. Since only true beliefs will have such properties, the premise supports Necessity. Since, however, some true beliefs will lack such properties, the premise also gives us the argument we need to reject Sufficiency. Just as Lynch appropriated Nozick's experience machine for his purposes, I shall appropriate it for mine. Lynch is right that there's something missing from the experience machine, but it would be a mistake to think that what's missing is *accuracy*. A subject's attitudes in the experience machine can be accurate even when that subject's attitudes do not 'track reality'. We can use Gettier cases to show that. Set the machine up to create a series of convincing appearances. As events outside the machine unfold, there might be the occasional 'match'. It might seem to the subject because of what's happening in the machine that something very nice is happening. It might also be that this nice thing *is* happening. Maybe you smile because you believe that your sister just got a promotion. Maybe you do this just as she informs the family of her promotion. It couldn't be that *your* reason for smiling is the fact that your sister has been given a promotion at work. That part of reality isn't a part of reality that you track. Your attitudes might happen to match events in the external world, but they don't thereby help these events or facts about them guide you in your thoughts, feelings, or deeds.

Two beliefs might score the same in terms of accuracy while differing in terms of whether they track reality. If the reason that some accurate beliefs are good is that

these beliefs track reality, we have some reason to think that there's not much that's good about the accurate beliefs that fail to track reality. That is, we do if the point or purpose of belief is to put us in touch with the part of reality that consists of facts. Since I think that *is* what the point or purpose of belief is, I think that we can use the experience machine to undermine Sufficiency. This isn't the place to defend this, but I would suggest that only beliefs that constitute knowledge put you in a position to be guided by reasons that consist of facts.¹⁶ If this is correct, only those true beliefs that constitute knowledge will have the good-making properties that are distinctive to belief. Since there can be differences between how accurate a subject's beliefs are and whether these beliefs constitute knowledge, I think that there's something seriously wrong with the way that Veritism in all its guises will rank options. In turn, I think that this should complicate the consequentialist arguments concerning putative epistemic norms.

4 Knowledge and the Good

Once we see that there are true beliefs that do not track reality (e.g., accidentally true beliefs formed in Gettier cases), we can see why Lynch's observations don't support veritism (i.e., because they don't support the Sufficiency Thesis) and why the Sufficiency Thesis is so dubious.¹⁷ There's nothing good about the true beliefs that don't track reality, so there must be more to the fundamental epistemic good than mere accuracy. If, as I've suggested, only *knowledge* tracks the parts of reality that consist of facts, the intuitions that Lynch appeals to support an alternative to veritism and suggest that it's a mistake to rank options using the veritist value theory.

Even if I am right that the Sufficiency Thesis is mistaken, it might seem that this tells us little about epistemic consequentialism. The consequentialist is not committed to any particular account of epistemic goodness, so couldn't they adopt my preferred value theory?

Gnosticism: Knowledge is the fundamental epistemic good, the fundamental epistemic disvalue is realized by belief that fails to constitute knowledge, and these are the only basic epistemic values and disvalues.¹⁸

A move from veritism to gnosticism is independently motivated. Many epistemologists seem to think that it is better to know than to simply have a true belief.¹⁹ Gnosticism vindicates this intuition in a straightforward way. It also helps to solve (or dissolve) the swamping problem, a problem that seems to arise when we assign value to true belief and knowledge and then try to work out how knowledge could contain all the value contained in true belief along with some further value. If

¹⁶ See Hyman (2015) for discussion and defense. Gordon (1987) and Unger (1975) defend similar views, as do Littlejohn (2012) and Williamson (2000).

¹⁷ Opinion might divide over whether this holds true for all kinds of Gettier cases. Hughes (2014) and Locke (2015) think that fake barn cases are trouble for the idea that knowledge is necessary. In my (2012) I relied on these objections to knowledge accounts of various kinds, but see Littlejohn (2014) for a response/retraction.

¹⁸ In Littlejohn (2015), this view was dubbed 'conscientiaism' but I think 'gnosticism' is a much better name for the view. Thanks to Margot Strohminger for the name. (Matthew Benton suggested 'knosticism' but I think this took things to far!)

¹⁹ See Kvanvig (2003).

some true beliefs cannot do what beliefs are supposed to do (i.e., provide us with potential motivating reasons by putting us in touch with reality), we can see why the gnostic would think that the worries about swamping are misplaced. While there's much to be said for moving from veritism to gnosticism, this move only helps to highlight the problems with consequentialism.

There's some sense in which knowledge is good or it is good to know. In accepting this, what *precisely* have we accepted? Our talk of 'good', 'better', and 'best' is quite varied. Let's consider four ways of trying to understand the gnostic view:

Good Simpliciter: Knowledge is good simpliciter. The state of affairs of knowing a true proposition is among the states of affairs that are intrinsically good, states of affairs that have the goodness property, or states of affairs that are just plain good.

Good For: Knowledge is good for the knower. It is good for the knower to know things. Knowledge is thus among the value atoms that determines whether things go well or badly for the knower.

Good in a Way: Knowledge is good in a way. Just as a good toaster is good insofar as it can do what toasters are supposed to do, a belief that constitutes knowledge might be a good belief in a way that's similar

Normatively Good: Knowledge is good in the sense that it is good that you believe only if you know. It is good because such beliefs conform to the norm that governs belief.

In which of these ways should the gnostic say that knowledge is good?²⁰

4.1 Good Simpliciter and Good For

Moore thought that 'good' (often?) functions as a predicative adjective. In saying that some conduct was good conduct, he thought we said that it was conduct and that it was good. On this use, 'good' functions to attribute the property of being good to something (e.g., persons, conduct, states of affairs, etc.). On this use, if we say that this was good conduct and that she was a good person, we would be saying that this conduct and this woman shared a property in common. They would share the goodness property. On this use if we said that Agnes was a good companion but not a good person, we would say, *inter alia*, that Agnes was good and that she was either not good or not a person.²¹

²⁰ Even if the reader holds some remaining sympathy for veritism, it is clear that many of the critical remarks below about certain versions of gnosticism apply *mutatis mutandis* to veritism. If, say, knowledge is not good simpliciter or good for you, say, it is pretty clear that true belief isn't good simpliciter or good for you.

²¹ If Agnes is my lovely pet dog, this makes perfectly good sense. If, however, Agnes was a wonderful companion who was, *inter alia*, a terrible person, it would be harder to see how I could say this consistently. If we used 'good' as a predicative adjective and said that Agnes was not a good person, we would say that she was either not a person or not good. Since she was a person, we should be able to conclude that she was not good, but this is inconsistent with saying that she is both good and a companion. In

We also use 'good' to talk about things that are good for subjects. It might be thought that knowledge or true belief is good for the person, that her life is somehow improved just by the presence of knowledge or true belief. If the gnostic wanted, she could say that knowledge is good for people without any commitment to the idea that knowledge is good simpliciter. There is no obvious inconsistency in saying that something is good for some person and denying that this thing is just plain good. (Nor is there any obvious inconsistency in saying that something is good even if we deny that it is good for someone.)

If knowledge were good in one of these two ways, this might seem to be good news for consequentialists who accept the Totalizing and Promotion Theses. If some states of affairs are good simpliciter, it would be plausible that things are going better when these states of affairs are prevalent and it would, in turn, be plausible to suggest that the proper mode of responding to such values would be to promote them. If there are epistemic standings that would be good for us to stand in, this might suggest that the more often we stood in these standings the better things would go for us.

Is knowledge good in either of these ways? Some philosophers are skeptical of the idea that 'good' functions as a predicative adjective and skeptical of the idea that there are things that are just plain good.²² Such skepticism, if not put to rest, spells trouble for any veritist or gnostic who wants to vindicate intuitions about value by saying that true beliefs or instances of knowledge are things that bear the goodness property. Why are philosophers skeptical of talk of the idea that some things might be good simpliciter? One worry is that it seems that we simply cannot use 'good' as a predicative adjective. If there is such a thing as the goodness property and it plays a useful role in our theory of epistemic norms, we should be able to grasp what it would be for something to be good simpliciter and express this thought using terms like 'good'. But it seems that we cannot because when we use 'good' in sentences of the form 'a is a good F' it seems the *only* admissible reading of that sentence is one on which 'good' functions as an attributive adjective, not a predicative one.²³ If we thought that beliefs could be good simpliciter (if true or if they constituted knowledge) and thought that we could express this belief in language, we should be able to say that 'Such and such is a good belief' and get a reading according to which it entails both 'Such and such is a belief' and 'Such and such is good', but the way we read such sentences doesn't allow this. Consider, 'This is a good toaster' or 'Agnes is a good dog but a bad chef'.

Some people might think they grasp the truth of the view that some beliefs are good simpliciter but cannot express this in language or think that it can be expressed in language and deny the observation that 'good' functions exclusively as an attributive adjective in sentences of the form 'a is a good F'. Fair enough. We will see that there's a second objection to this proposal, but let's first consider a second way of understanding the gnostic view.

On the first use of 'good' it seems that if things are good, things are better for it even if things are not better for anyone at all. There is another use of 'good'

this context, it is clear that reading 'good' as a predicative adjective is completely unnatural.

²² See Foot (1985) and Thomson (2008) for criticism of the Moorean view of 'good' and the goodness property. See Zimmerman (2001) for a response.

²³ See Almotahari and Hosein (2015) for discussion.

according to which something is 'good' only if it is good for some subject. In this sense, the good has to do with the subject's interests. It's an interesting question how these two notions of good are related. I don't see any reason to think that if something has the property of being good that this involves something being good for some subject and I see no reason to think that whenever something is indeed good for some subject there is something that has the property of being good. Moore, recall, thought that it was analytic that if some option is the best, it is the one to choose. I don't think he ever thought that it was analytic that if some option is best for some individual, some group, or the set of all possible individuals that this was the option to choose. If we want to connect the sense of 'good' that has to do with interests to the sense of 'good' that is used in trying to attribute the goodness property to some thing, we should demand an argument in support of any view that posits some entailment between claims about the goodness property and a subject's interests.²⁴

One of the advantages of thinking of epistemic goodness in terms of things that are good for a subject is that we don't have to make sense of the idea that there are things that are good simpliciter. Another is that it might seem to handle some of our intuitions about the importance of being able to track reality. We've already seen that these intuitions seem to cause trouble for veritism, so it would be good if we had a view that made some sense of them. In spite of this, we should reject both views.

It's important to the consequentialist project that rightness or rationality is determined by the interplay of some norm that tells us how value relates to rationality or rightness and how the options rank in terms of the total value they contain. The veritist ranks options in terms of the total amount of true beliefs. The gnostic ranks them in terms of total amount of knowledge. On the veritist view, the rational belief is the one that's part of the option that contains the greatest total amount of epistemic goodness (determined by adding up the values realized by the accurate states and subtracting out the disvalue realized by the inaccurate ones). On the gnostic view, the rational belief is the one that's part of the option that contains the greatest total amount of epistemic goodness (determined by adding up the values realized by the states that constitute knowledge and subtracting out the disvalue realized by the states that fail to constitute knowledge).

The trouble with this way of thinking about things is there is a potential gap between the probability that a particular state is accurate or constitutes knowledge and the probability that the good particular states will be part of the best option. Take a simple example. You might have thought that Trump would never be the GOP

²⁴ An anonymous referee pointed out that Goldman (1999: 88) might provide part of the argument requested in arguing that a subject's interests (e.g., in answering questions, satisfying curiosity, etc.) have significant implications when it comes to determining the total good realized by our epistemic state. (He suggests, for example, that a subject's failure to have answers to uninteresting questions might not matter for the score we assign to their belief states.) I fear that Goldman's arguments can only give us part of what we want. They don't speak to the problem that mere accuracy of a belief about some interesting or important might be insufficient for the realization of a value. They also don't speak to the problem that the inaccuracy of a state should be sufficient for the realization of disvalue quite apart from the interest we take in the relevant issues. For a helpful discussion of these issues, see Cote-Bouchard (forthcoming).

nominee *and* thought that you would never change your mind about this. As the evidence comes in, you might come to see that the first belief isn't quite as likely as you might have hoped. What about the second belief? If you manage to 'resist' modifying your first belief in light of the evidence, you just might be able to sustain this knowledge that you'll never change your mind. So, part of the cost of updating in light of the evidence is that you'd lose knowledge that you could have retained. Depending upon how the numbers work out, you can get cases where the kosher beliefs are too costly to keep or form and the bad beliefs are too costly not to form or too costly to drop.

We tend not to think that the way to show that a belief is rational is to show something about the *extrinsic* epistemic value associated with its formation, revision, or retention. A bad belief isn't rational by virtue of carrying with it good epistemic consequences that couldn't be acquired otherwise. This is the notorious problem of epistemic trade offs.²⁵ The problem is actually somewhat worse on gnosticism than it is on veritism. There is no interesting relationship between the truth or falsity of a particular belief and its rational standing. There *is* an interesting relationship between the rational standing of a belief and its status as knowledge. It's plausible that if you know p , your belief about p is rational. The normative status that we're trying to understand in terms of the interplay of ranked options and norms that use this ranking to determine a belief's status uses that status in the ranking. This is incoherent. It's equivalent to building rightness into the states of affairs we use in ranking options and then trying to use the ranking to determine which state of affairs we might rightly bring about. This is incoherent for two reasons. First, it is incoherent because it allows that there's something that's independent from the ranking that determines the status. (Otherwise, the status couldn't figure in the ranking.) Second, it is incoherent because it should allow that one of the things rightly brought about would be wrong to bring about because of where it stands in the ranking. (If we assume the Totalizing Thesis, it should be possible for a 'right' action to figure in options that rank very low simply because alternative options contain more 'right' actions.)

It looks as if there is a simple argument from gnosticism to the denial of epistemic consequentialism. Suppose it's rational to believe p if you know p . Whether you know p or not depends upon things like whether your belief about p is safe, not upon whether your belief about p is part of an option that contains the greatest amount of epistemic goodness. (The consequentialists *have* to concede this. They cannot say that a belief's status as knowledge is dependent upon the ranking because the ranking is given in terms of the amount of knowledge contained in the options.) Having conceded this, however, they cannot *then* say that rationality is determined by how the options are ranked. If an item of knowledge is included only in suboptimal options, it is nevertheless a rational belief.

Epistemic rationality does not permit or require tradeoffs when it comes to knowledge. Because epistemic consequentialists have to allow for tradeoffs, their view

²⁵ The problem first is discussed in Firth (1981). Jenkins (2007) presents a version of the worry in discussing epistemic entitlement. In Littlejohn (2012), I appealed to these intuitions about tradeoffs to attack epistemic consequentialism. The same sort of objection to epistemic consequentialism is also found in Berker (2013) and Greaves (2014). See also Carr (this volume).

is at odds with gnosticism. Once we see that tradeoffs are not allowed, we should see that it is implausible that knowledge is good simpliciter. If we thought that it was, we would think that tradeoffs would be allowed if only there were no side-constraints that prohibited it. Even if we thought that such side-constraints existed, we would think that there was something regrettable about not being able to make the tradeoff. We don't think that. We don't think that it's regrettable that someone knows p when that knowledge precludes knowing some other things. (For example, if you know that you are a star pupil, you know that you'll never know that you don't know much about history, that you'll never know that you don't know much about biology, that you'll never know that you don't know much about science books, etc...).

4.2 The Remaining Options

There are other uses of 'good' to consider. We often treat 'good' as an attributive adjective. In saying that something is a good book, we don't seem to be saying that it has the property of being a book *and* the property of being good. In saying that something is a good book and that some second thing is a good toaster, we aren't saying that they share something in common. On this use, 'good' does *not* function to attribute the property of goodness to anything. When we say of some book that it is a good book, we are saying that it is good as a book or good for a book. There is some standard of evaluation that we use to evaluate books, and the good book comes up to snuff.

There is a final use of 'good' that is not evaluative at all. In saying that it would be 'good', 'better', or 'best' if something is done, we often mean to say that it is good because it should be done. Such things are good because required, not required because good. Consider this example.²⁶ Suppose one pile contains thousands of tickets for an upcoming lottery and another contains a handful. Suppose that nobody knows this yet, but the smaller pile contains the winning ticket. While the best outcome would be the one in which you pick the smaller pile, it would be best (and better and good) for you to pick the first. One seems evaluative and the other does not. If I say that it would be good to keep your lunch date or best to visit your sick relative, this might simply be my way of trying to get you to see that you have most reason to do these things and I might not base this judgment on any calculation of total value. Indeed, I might know full well that no calculation of total value would support such a claim. I might say, for example, that it would be best for you to do something even if I know full well that this wouldn't be what's best for the affected parties.

When it comes to the Promotion and Totalizing Theses, it is clear that these theses are plausible only for good simpliciter and good-for.²⁷ If something is good only in the sense that it is a good instance of a kind, it does not make much sense to measure its goodness and then use this to rank options from better to worse. (If two toasters are good toasters and only one toaster is needed to toast things, the state of affairs that contains two does not seem better than the state of affairs that includes just one. If there is no need to toast anything at all, there is still a perfectly good distinction to draw between good and bad toasters, but it also seems that there is no

²⁶ Thanks to Julien Dutant for the example. For discussion, see Dutant (2013) and Piller (2009).

²⁷ See Baron (1995) for a helpful discussion of value and reasons to promote.

reason to think that the presence of absence of such toasters matters much to the ranking of options.) If something is good only in the sense that it is a good instance of a kind, it needn't call for promotion. The good-making features of a good book or toaster do not call for promotion. If something is good in the sense that it is normatively good (i.e., good because right or appropriate) and we can determine this without appeal to its role in determining rankings, this notion of good cannot be the one that's at play in the Totalizing Thesis. Even if it called for promotion, the fact that it called for promotion quite independently from considerations about the ranking of options is a fact that would cause trouble for the consequentialist. The stuff that we used to establish the propriety of the act or attitude renders the ranking otiose.

Once we see that the truth in gnosticism is captured by the idea that beliefs that constitute knowledge are good instances of a kind or good precisely in that they conform to the norms that govern belief, we can see that the truth in gnosticism reveals the falsity of epistemic consequentialism. It doesn't make sense to rank options in terms of the amount of good they contain and the idea that we should promote the relevant goods by choosing the option that contains the most of it conflicts with the apparent platitude that knowledge is all you need to rightly believe that something is so.

5. The Priority Thesis

Lynch captured something important about epistemic value. It's something that's easy to miss if we're fixated on questions about the value of truth and don't think about the possible differences between veritism and gnosticism. He's right that there is something good about beliefs that 'track reality', but mistaken if he thinks that all accurate beliefs track reality. We want accuracy, but we want more besides. The experience machine is all we need to demonstrate this. Someone can be in the experience machine and luck into the occasional true belief. In having such beliefs, however, they are not 'tracking' reality. If someone believes correctly that, say, her sister is being awarded her doctorate just when it happens to be that her sister is being awarded her doctorate, the subject isn't smiling for the reason that her sister is being awarded her doctorate. You can be totally out of touch with reality even when you have accurate beliefs.

Only beliefs that constitute knowledge track reality. There's no obvious value in having a true belief that doesn't track reality. The occasional accidentally accurate attitude formed in the experience machine does not track reality, put a subject in touch with reality, or enable her to believing things, feel things, or do things in light of how things are. Thus, it's hard to see that there's anything left of the idea that all true beliefs are intrinsically good or that any state of affairs in which someone believes a truth is one that is good. The very same examples that we can use to challenge the idea that all true beliefs are good can be used to challenge the idea that all true beliefs are good for us. Just as it's obvious that there are true beliefs that don't make you better off overall, the experience machine makes it obvious that there are some true beliefs that don't make you better off in any way. When you think about the cases where the relevant belief is true but does not track reality, it is hard to see how this kind of failure to track reality could be something that makes even a small contribution to your well-being.

Once we abandon these two ideas about the good of true belief, we should then ask whether there is any sense in which true beliefs are good simply by virtue of being true. It shouldn't come as a surprise that I think there is not. While I think there is something important about what Lynch says, the importance of it will be lost if we don't pursue this idea of his that the beliefs that have epistemic value are those that track reality. Three things are true about the good of true beliefs. First, the true beliefs that are good are those that constitute knowledge. Their status as knowledge is essential to understanding the sense in which they are good. Second, that the sense in which they are good is that such beliefs are good beliefs. Third, there is a further sense in which it is good to believe these beliefs, which is simply that such beliefs are the right ones to hold.

Let's consider the two ways in which it is plausible to say that knowledge is good:

Attributive Goodness: Knowledge is good in the sense that a belief that constitutes knowledge is a good belief (i.e., it is good precisely because it can do what beliefs are supposed to do much in the way that a good toaster is good precisely because it can do what toasters are supposed to do).

Normative Goodness: It is good to know in the sense that believing what you know ensures that you conform to the norm that governs belief (i.e., in this sense it is good because it conforms to the norm).

To understand the thesis about attributive goodness, it helps to understand why it matters that beliefs track reality. The best answer is that it matters whether we are guided by reasons and reasons are truths.²⁸ Reasons that consist of facts can only rationally guide us when we believe them to obtain *and* our beliefs track the part of reality that consists of the relevant facts. To be guided by a reason, the reason has to capture the light in which you took the relevant response to be appropriate. If your reason for driving to the store was that you were out of gin and bitters, it was the fact that you were out of the essentials that you took it that heading to the store was the thing to do. If you didn't take yourself to be out of gin or out of bitters, the mere fact that you were couldn't have convinced you that you should head to the store. Not only do you need belief to be guided by the fact if you didn't believe it to be a fact, you also need knowledge to be guided by it. This is what the experience machine shows. Only beliefs that enable you to be guided by such reasons are good beliefs. Putting you in touch with the facts so that they can guide your thoughts, feelings, and actions is a virtue of a belief just as the power to toast bread is a virtue of a toaster and being sharp is a virtue of a knife.

There is a further sense in which it is good to believe truths. It is normatively good to believe p when you know p . The idea here is that it is good to believe only when you know because it is only then that you conform to the norms governing belief.²⁹ The good comes from norm conformity, so it is not a kind of good that explains why some norm is in force. If knowledge is the fundamental standard that we use to evaluate beliefs, a belief is good because it meets this standard. It would be a

²⁸ See Alvarez (2010), Hyman (2015), Littlejohn (2012), Unger (1975), and Williamson (2000) for defenses of this idea.

²⁹ See Williamson (2000) for a defense.

mistake to say that beliefs that constitute knowledge do so because they are good in some further way where the goodness makes the belief meet the standard.³⁰

As I said above, these claims about the value of knowledge pose a problem for consequentialism. Suppose knowledge suffices for rationality. Suppose further that the conditions that determine whether a belief constitutes knowledge can obtain independently from whether that belief is included in the best options. If so, it would be wrong to say, as consequentialists must say, that the status is determined by the ranking of options. What about the Priority Thesis? While I think we have to reject the Totalizing and Promotion Theses, the Priority Thesis might well be correct. Allow me to explain.

According to the Priority Thesis, the good is prior to the right. If rightness, rationality, or justification were an *ingredient* of knowledge, we would have a neat and tidy argument against the thesis. Unfortunately, I see no good reason to accept the idea that rightness, rationality, or justification is an ingredient of knowledge. For all that's been said, these might merely be necessary conditions on knowledge and the claim that something is a necessary condition on knowledge implies nothing about priority. Indeed, for all that's been said, these might not even be necessary conditions on knowledge, in which case there wouldn't be any tension between gnosticism and the Priority Thesis at all.

In arguing against consequentialism, I did say that knowledge suffices for rationality, which is equivalent to saying that rationality is necessary for knowledge. Let me make one qualification that does not affect the previous argument. In arguing from gnosticism to the rejection of consequentialism, I did not need the strong premise that *every* case of knowledge is a case of rational belief, only the much weaker premise that there are *some* cases of knowledge that are cases of rational belief where

³⁰ It might seem that the proposal faces an obvious objection. If knowledge is attributively good and normatively good but not good in any further sense, it's hard to see how there could be any rational pressure to conform to the knowledge norm. The account seems to deny that there is some reason to promote the good that comes from conforming to it. Here is one avenue of response. We could say that the knowledge norm is categorical in the sense that it applies to any subject that can be held responsible for her attitudes. On every occasion, the norm determines whether our beliefs are as they should be. On these occasions, though, there might be different reasons (e.g., non-epistemic reasons) that determine the importance of conforming to the norm. On this model, the standards that apply to belief apply categorically but the normative pressure to meet this standard varies from one occasion to another (e.g., on the basis of the importance of meeting or failing to meet the standard). A similar but different view might be that the normative pressure to conform to the norm applies equally across all the cases but is nevertheless a pressure that comes from outside of epistemology. Perhaps the practice of trying to meet epistemic standards and being held to such standards serves some non-epistemic purpose. The point is that the standard's content might be determined by one thing and the normative pressure for meeting this standard might derive from something else entirely. So, even if knowledge is not good simpliciter or good for you, there might be some further good that explains why you ought to revise your beliefs as if it did matter that you believed only what you know. We find suggestions for developing some of these ideas in recent work by Maguire and Woods (MS) and Owens (2012).

the total amount of good realized by holding onto the rational belief is less than the total amount of epistemic good that could be realized in some alternative option that does not include this belief. There are plausible cases of knowledge without rational belief or justified belief. Some non-human animals know things. So do children.

To my mind, it makes perfectly good sense to say that Agnes knows that I have come home from work even if Agnes is a dog.³¹ If Agnes is the right kind of non-human animal (Dog? Hamster? Turtle? Spider? Fish? Flea?), it might make perfectly good sense to say that she knows things and yet be odd to say that her doubts, emotions, or beliefs are justified. A cow might perform an action that is optimific, but I don't think that they would act rightly, not even if the consequentialists are right about rightness. To know or perform an act that is optimific, one does not need the capacities required for accountability, but such capacities are required for being justified or rational.

This possibility is enough to show that a belief that is attributively good need not be normatively good. Once we have that, the gnostic can consistently say that they accept the claim about attributive goodness and say that a belief is an instance of a good belief iff it is knowledge. They can then say that in the special case where we are dealing with creatures that can be held accountable or responsible, attributive and normative goodness coincide. This position is consistent with the Priority Thesis. The reason that it is normatively good to believe only what you know is precisely that these are the beliefs that are attributively good. The view is *teleological* but not *consequentialist*.³² It is teleological because the norm that governs belief tells us that the beliefs we ought to have are the beliefs we ought to have because they perform a function or serve some aim. The view is non-consequentialist because the good that such beliefs realize is not one that calls for promotion and doesn't determine what's right or rational by ranking options in terms of total value.

On the consequentialist view, we cannot determine whether something is right until we work out the total value of the various options and see whether it is contained in the options that rank highly enough. Satisficers and maximizers disagree about whether the right option has to be tied for first, but they both accept the Totalizing Thesis and Promotion Thesis. If you accept the Totalizing Thesis, you have to think that the normative status of an action or attitude isn't something we can discern just by thinking about its merit in isolation from the other actions or attitudes

³¹ Thanks to Maria Alvarez for pressing me on whether I thought that non-human animals had to have justified beliefs in order to have knowledge. It's possible that I did not quite capture the point she was making. If I haven't captured her point, I would happily claim credit for the point I thought she had made.

³² Mehta (forthcoming) defends a view that is also teleological without being consequentialist. He thinks that knowledge is a standard of success and that it grounds further epistemic norms. I don't know if he would accept my explanation as to why knowledge is good (i.e., that the fundamental good that attaches to belief attaches to those beliefs that provide potential motivating reasons), but the view being proposed here is hardly the first attempt at stating a view that is both teleological and non-consequentialist. Indeed, my aim in (2012) was to show that the right way to derive a theory of epistemic norms was to identify the point or purpose of beliefs (i.e., which is to provide reasons) and work from there (e.g., explain why conforming to the norms of belief requires not just accuracy but non-accidental accuracy).

contained in the options that contain it. An act that brings about some positive outcome isn't justified by that fact. The justification of this act turns on whether there were feasible alternatives that would be overall better. If the epistemic consequentialists are consequentialists, they have to think that the same would hold for attitudes that realize some good. An attitude that has no value might be justified because it is part of an option that ranks sufficiently high and an attitude that has value might not be justified because it is only included in options that do not rank highly enough.

Ross thought that when we think about situations in which we harm or help others, we can see that there is something wrong with the consequentialist attitude towards beneficence and maleficence. To determine whether we have violated a duty of beneficence or maleficence, Ross thought, we need to look to the results brought about (i.e., whether we harmed or helped), which is not the same as looking to these consequences along with those associated with all the feasible alternatives to see where the action ranked (i.e., to determine whether the harmful or helpful action was included in the option that maximized the good). If you injure someone, you have committed a wrong even if had you not acted someone would have brought about the very same injury. If you falsely describe someone in a less than flattering light, this is a wrong. It is a wrong even if that person would have been described in an even less flattering light by two more malicious slanderers had you remained silent. In the epistemic case, when we're evaluating our attitudes as we should, we focus on whether these attitudes are accurate or would constitute knowledge.

When we assess a belief, we do focus on the features that matter to veritists and gnostics (i.e., accuracy and the conditions required for knowledge), but we do not see the relevance of these features as the consequentialists do. We care about an aspect of the result of settling a question (i.e., whether the answer is one we know to be correct), not the way that all of our options were ranked in terms of the total value realized by our other attitudes in these possibilities. We do not think that the accuracy of some attitude matters only because of its effect on total accuracy and we certainly think that it does matter even if this accurate attitude is one that is held only in suboptimal options.

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