Evidence and Virtue (and Beyond)

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Introduction

For many years after their early formulations in Conee and Feldman (1985, 2004) and Sosa (1980, 1991), evidentialism and virtue epistemology appeared to be markedly divergent theories. This divergence reflected a broader rivalry between *reasons-first* epistemology, which grounds epistemic normativity in reasons, and a family of *virtue-first* epistemologies, which ground epistemic normativity in competences or character traits. But times are changing, thanks to new work on reasons, evidence, and virtue. Some theorists have been have been gradually revising their views, with the result that some versions of evidentialism and virtue epistemology are converging in their predictions.[1] Given these trends, one might be tempted to jump to the Parfitian conclusion that the two parties climb the mountain from different sides, only to arrive at the same peak.

But even if this happy conclusion were true, a question would remain about how to best describe the view from the peak. One possibility is that the best view about the shared subject matter of evidentialism and virtue epistemology is *hybrid*. But it would be nice to have a unified theory rather than a hodgepodge. Three unifying options present themselves. Firstly, one could argue that evidentialism hits on the fundamental truth, and that we can derive the themes of virtue epistemology from evidentialism properly understood. Secondly, one could argue that virtue epistemology provides the correct fundamental description, and that we can derive the themes of evidentialism from virtue epistemology properly understood. Thirdly, one could argue that *neither* captures the fundamental truth, and that we should derive the themes of both from a third theory.

I've come to suspect that the third option is best. The aim of this paper is to defend this suspicion after explaining why evidentialism and virtue epistemology in their best forms seem to be converging, but why neither seems a satisfying fundamental theory.

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[1] See e.g. Cloos (2015), Lord (2018), Lord and Sylvan (2019), Schmidt (2019), Sosa (2015, forthcoming), Sosa and Sylvan (2018), and my own efforts in Sylvan (2017) and (2020b) to help responsibilist virtue epistemology get on firmer footing (though, as I clarify in (2020a) and (2020b: note 20), I am not a virtue epistemologist at the fundamental level). This trend follows a better-known tradition of attempts to integrate evidentialism and reliabilism; see Alston (1988), Comesaña (2010), and Goldman (2011). Since Goldman sometimes characterizes his reliabilism as a virtue approach (see, e.g., Goldman (1993: 274)), the two trends might be treated as one.

As Cloos documents, the original defenders of evidentialism haven't been keen to follow suit—at least not by agreeing that virtue is *constitutive* of epistemic justification. Conee and Feldman agree that virtues can *causally* result in changes in evidence, so that (e.g.) a skilled birdwatcher can have evidence that a novice cannot have. But the pair will insist that the ground of the difference in justification is evidential, not virtue-theoretic; the skill merely causally influences justification. On his own, Feldman (2003: 75) appears to allow skill to make a constitutive contribution. But in their (2011) response to Goldman (2011)'s insistence that skills ground differences in justification, Conee and Feldman return to the view that skills only make a difference by affecting what evidence one possesses; in their (2008: 91), they also describe virtues as mere 'background conditions'.

Here is an overview of what is to come. After making some preliminary remarks in §1 about how we should understand the core theses of evidentialism and virtue epistemology, I review in §2 why evidentialism is not defensible without the help of virtue. I also show that there is a natural way of understanding the moving parts of evidentialism such that virtue needn't be tacked on but emerges as a prepackaged component. But I argue that an explanatory problem remains. In §3-4, I use the lingering problems for both to argue that we shouldn't use one as the foundation for the other, but rather try to derive both from a third theory. §5 describes that theory and why it is a better foundation. §6 concludes by taking stock and considering some remaining issues that must be resolved for us to conclude that this theory is better than *all* the alternatives, including not only evidentialism and virtue epistemology but also plain-old reliabilism.

1.   Formulating Evidentialism and Virtue Epistemology

Evidentialism is a theory of epistemic justification, and in the first instance of *propositional justification* (i.e., the justification one possesses to hold a doxastic attitude toward a proposition, even if one doesn't yet do so). VE, by contrast, started out as a theory of knowledge, and gradually developed into a comprehensive theory of epistemic normativity, including *doxastic justification* (i.e., the justification that attaches to doxastic attitudes when properly formed). It is controversial whether knowledge is partly constituted by or even entails justification, and indeed whether knowledge is normative at all.[2] It hence ought to be controversial whether evidentialism and VE in its narrowest form are in the same business. I think only certain versions of them are in the same business.

Let's consider the proper formulation of evidentialism in more detail. Evidentialism is a theory of a normative status (epistemic justification), in a broad sense of 'normative' consistent with Feldman (1988, 2000)'s take on such matters. Such a theory could be framed in different ways, since there are different levels at which one can theorize about a normative status. On the one hand, one can attempt to give a *first-order normative* theory of epistemic justification, akin in purpose to theories of right action in ethics like utilitarianism and Kantian ethics. On the other hand, one could attempt to give an *analysis* of epistemic justification, which would be more akin to *meta-normative* theories like Schroeder (2007)'s Humean theory of reasons or Scanlon (1998)'s buck-passing account of value. Through Conee and Feldman (2004)'s work, evidentialism has come to be understood as something closer to this second kind of theory.[3]

In their first statement of evidentialism, Conee and Feldman (1985/2004: 83) didn't offer it as a full reductive account of justification but rather just 'to indicate the kind of justification we take to be characteristically epistemic.' I take it that what they mean is that

(a) what it is for justification to be epistemic just is for it to be evidence-based,

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[2] For an argument against the view that knowledge is partially constituted by justification and the normativity of knowledge more broadly, see Sylvan (2018). For argument against the weaker thesis that knowledge entails justification, see Kornblith (2009) and Goldman (1967, 1975).

[3] There is a different evidentialist tradition stemming from Clifford (1877/1999) that makes it out to be a first-order normative theory. I am tempted to agree with Dougherty (2014), however, that this kind of evidentialism is a contribution to ethics, not epistemology. It obviously was in the hands of Clifford.

where

> (b) the 'what it is' claim isn't offered as a non-circular, reductive analysis but rather an *elucidation.*

But Conee and Feldman (2004: 101) went on to characterize evidentialism by appeal to supervenience: 'Our bedrock claim is a supervenience thesis. Justification strongly supervenes on evidence.' As Beddor (2015) has suggested, this formulation needs updating in the light of work on grounding. Supervenience claims are not plausibly *explanatory* in the way that theories of justification should be explanatory. To be sure, it might be that the explanation cannot be reductive in a strict sense. But grounding explanations needn't be reductive in that sense.

Accordingly, I think it is best to take evidentialism to consist in a metaphysical thesis that is stronger than a mere supervenience thesis but weaker than a reductive thesis in the traditional sense. I will use generic talk of 'metaphysical explanation' to capture something stronger than mere supervenience but potentially weaker than reductive explanation.[4] For Conee and Feldman, the core thesis of evidentialism concerns propositional justification, and can be put broadly as follows:

> (Evidentialism-PJ) A subject S's propositional justification for believing that p at *t* is fully metaphysically explained by the total evidence that S possesses at *t*.

Evidentialists like Conee and Feldman also, however, embrace a claim about doxastic justification (or what they call 'well-foundedness'). Theorists I will call *pure* evidentialists hold that we can explain doxastic justification purely in terms of propositional justification and *non-normative* factors, of which the *basing relation* is meant to be an example:

> (Evidentialism-DJ-Pure) Whether S's belief that p is doxastically justified at *t* is fully metaphysically explained by whether S's belief that p is based on S's propositional justification for believing p at *t*, where that propositional justification in turn is fully explained by the total evidence S possesses at *t*.

Some epistemologists, such as Turri (2010), think there can be propositional justification for believing p and for one's belief to be based on this very justification, but for the basing to be *improper* in a way that precludes doxastic justification. I doubt it, as we'll see. Still, to bring views like Cloos (2015)'s into the fold, we might want to make room for an *impurely* evidentialist view. This view would appeal not to basing *simpliciter* but rather to *proper* basing. To preserve the distinction between evidentialism and views that yield pragmatic encroachment, we should add that the relevant kind of propriety is not pragmatically determined. Here is a generic statement of this impure evidentialist view:

> (Evidentialism-DJ-Impure) Whether a subject S's belief is doxastically justified is fully metaphysically explained by whether S's belief is properly based on the propositional

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[4] *Contra* Berker (2018), I would endorse the pluralist view that there are several kinds of metaphysical explanation, of which reductive explanation is one kind.

justification that S possesses for believing that p, where (i) S's propositional justification is fully explained by the total evidence S possesses and (ii) proper basing is not partly determined by S's practical context.

With these generic statements in mind, I can now preview some themes to unfold below.

There are two underappreciated places where evidentialists can make room for virtue-theoretic points: in explaining (i) what it is to *possess* evidence and (ii) what it is for a belief to be *(properly) based* on the evidence. Evidentialists can subsume points from VE by allowing that certain kinds of virtuousness are *necessary conditions* for possessing and properly basing one's belief on sufficient evidence. But they can achieve this without becoming virtue epistemologists. Not all necessary conditions are grounds. So evidentialists may grant the necessary link while denying that virtue must figure in the *analysis* of possession and proper basing.

A final set of remarks about the nature of evidence will matter below. Conee and Feldman are famously *mentalists* about evidence, holding that one's evidence consists in (some of) one's *non-factive mental states*. But this kind of mentalism is not entailed by the formulations of evidentialism above. It is open to evidentialists to follow Williamson (2000), Dougherty (2011), and many others writing on reasons and rationality in taking evidence to consist in *propositions* or *facts*. It is also consistent with the theses stated above to understand the relation of *possession* we bear to these propositions or facts in terms of *factive* mental states like seeing that p. Indeed, one could even follow Williamson and invoke knowledge, provided it is not constituted by justification. Conee and Feldman would frown upon such a view. But it would merit the title of 'evidentialism' unless that term is defined in a historical way that requires reference to Conee and Feldman.

So much for evidentialism. What about VE? Again, VE has long focused first on *knowledge* rather than justified belief. This is especially clear for what Baehr (2011) calls the 'strong conservative' forms in Zagzebski (1996) and Sosa (2007) that are intended as contributions to traditional epistemology rather than alternatives to it (like Code (1984)'s responsibilism). VE of this kind does not automatically conflict with evidentialism. Conflict only looms if virtue epistemologists accept the letter of the JTB+ analysis of knowledge and explain justification in terms of virtue. But Sosa (2015, 2017) has made clear that he wants to explain justified belief in virtue-theoretic terms, and Zagzebski's larger project is a systematic account of epistemic normativity. Accordingly, the larger projects of the most central virtue epistemologists include ideas that could conflict with evidentialism.

So understood, I take it that 'strong conservative' VE makes the following claims about the nature of knowledge and doxastic justification:

(Strong Conservative VE-K) For any S and p, S's knowing that p is metaphysically explained by S's believing truly that p as a manifestation of intellectual virtue.

(Strong Conservative VE-DJ) For any S and p, S's having a doxastically justified belief that p is metaphysically explained by S's holding this belief as a manifestation of intellectual virtue.

Zagzebski and Sosa then disagree about how to understand the relevant intellectual virtues. Sosa takes them to be competences or skills, which are understood as dispositions to hit the mark of truth (for

Sosa, the fundamental epistemic value). Zagzebski takes them to be character traits requiring a certain sort of motivation (1996), and adopts a pluralist conception of fundamental epistemic value (2004b). Although Sosa (2015) has tried to do justice to some of Zagzebski's themes, he still takes the fundamental building block of epistemic normativity to be competence. He captures her themes derivatively, by invoking a special kind of competence. Similarly, while Zagzebski agrees that reliability matters for knowledge, its importance for her derives from its role in knowing and some epistemic character traits.

It is worth noting that when VE is understood in either of these ways, it is unlike virtue ethics. Virtue ethics is a first-order normative theory. In Aristotle's hands, it was entangled with certain views about goodness that fit well within a naturalist meta-ethics. But the contribution virtue ethics makes to first-order ethics that distinguishes it from consequentialism and Kantian ethics is not meta-normative. It is separable from the naturalistic meta-ethics that Aristotelians often accept. Zagzebski is a *non-naturalist* virtue ethicist (see, e.g., Zagzebski (2004a)). So, one can separate the first-order and meta-normative claims of Aristotelian virtue ethics.[5]

One could do the same in epistemology. Instead of taking the virtue epistemologist's account of justification to be a metaphysical claim about the constitution of justified belief, it could just be taken as a fundamental first-order normative claim. One could then still accept a broadly evidentialist *analysis* of intellectual virtues (e.g., intellectual virtues consist in evidence-responsive dispositions) and justified belief (e.g., justified beliefs are manifestations of such dispositions).

There are other ways in which VE form needn't conflict with evidentialism, even if it is not offered as a first-order normative theory. Notice that we can distinguish between *direct* and *indirect* grounding. On the face of it, it is conceivable that justification could be grounded both in evidence and virtue, with the grounding first running through one or the other. One might hold that justified beliefs are first grounded in manifestations of intellectual virtue, but then ground intellectual virtues in evidence-sensitive dispositions. This view *directly* grounds justified belief *a la* strong conservative VE, but *indirectly* grounds it *a la* a kind of evidentialism I explain in the next section. Alternatively, one could first ground justified belief in proper basing on sufficient evidence, but then ground possession and proper basing in virtue-theoretic terms. This view is defended by a group agent I partly compose (viz., Sylvan and Sosa (2018)).

The literature on evidentialism and VE has not sufficiently considered these possibilities. There is strong reason to take them seriously: pursuing them provides a natural way to escape serious problems for both views without abandoning the letter of either. Once we have gone that far, however, I think it becomes clear that we might need to derive both from a third view.

2. How Evidentialism Stands to (and May Need to) Benefit from Virtue

Evidentialism has long faced pressure from apparent counterexamples that seem neatly explained by VE. But these examples do not refute the core evidentialist theses. They only provide further reason to understand *possession* and *basing* so that both entail (but are not constituted by) manifestations of

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[5] See Fine (2002, 2012) for the idea that we can distinguish metaphysical necessity and metaphysical grounding from normative necessity and normative grounding.

virtue. Along the way we will, however, see a different concern that suggests that we might want to derive the core evidentialist theses as secondary truths from deeper *rationalist* roots.

Let's consider some of the counterexamples pressed by virtue epistemologists. These examples fall into three classes. Firstly, there are examples that suggest that a belief can fit a subject's total evidence but be epistemically unjustified owing to the subject's epistemically blameworthy ignorance of other easily acquirable evidence. I will call such cases 'Ignorant Thinker' cases, where 'ignorant' is used in the familiar normative sense rather than the technical sense of merely not having knowledge. Secondly, there are examples that suggest that a belief can fit the evidence but be unjustified because of the way in which it is based on the evidence. Thirdly, there are examples that suggest that evidence isn't necessary for justified belief, and that virtue alone does the work.

Ignorant Thinker cases are at least as old as evidentialism itself, though the earliest cases didn't merit such a pejorative label. Conee and Feldman (1985/2004: 89) considered an example of this sort from Kornblith (1983):

> HEADSTRONG PHYSICIST: '[Consider] a headstrong young physicist who is unable to tolerate criticism. After presenting a paper to his colleagues, the physicist pays no attention to the devastating objection of a senior colleague. The physicist, obsessed with his own success, fails even to hear the objection, which consequently has no impact on his beliefs.'

Conee and Feldman's response is to insist that the example is underspecified and offer a dilemma: either the physicist was aware his colleague was making an objection but didn't hear the details, or he was just lost in thought and didn't realize that an objection was being made. In the first case, they say—reasonably—that evidentialism doesn't make the wrong prediction: here there is evidence he ignores.[6] In the second case, they not unreasonably insist that the physicist's belief *is* justified (what else is he supposed to think if he couldn't hear it?).

Perhaps this response is tolerable in this case, but more recent Ignorant Thinker cases seem less comfortably addressed in this way. Consider an example from Miracchi (2019):

> NUNES MEMO: A Trump supporter has just read the Nunes Memo, which alleges that the FBI inappropriately surveilled the 2016 Trump Campaign. Because he does not read or listen to the 'liberal media', he has no reason to doubt that the highly redacted memo supports the conclusion it alleges. He believes the conclusion on this basis.

After giving this example, Miracchi suggests that the subject's objectionably limited evidence does support their conclusion, but that the belief remains unjustified. Part of the reason is that there is evidence out there that the person could easily acquire that would defeat the belief, and the person fails to possess this evidence only owing to intellectual vice. Here it is less easy to bite the bullet.[7]

Perhaps one could try to use the first horn of the dilemma and insist that there is relevant evidence the Trump supporter has that blocks support for the conclusion (e.g., he knows there are many other news outlets that give contrary evidence). But it is easy to extend the case so that the

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[6] See Conee and Feldman (1985/2004: 90).

[7] Some internalists defend similar conclusions about less realistic examples. See Foley and Fumerton (1982).

person is so deep within their echo chamber that they would be incapable of grasping this evidence even if they were exposed to the 'fake news' outlets that present it. Biting the bullet is no easier here.

Evidentialism can handle this kind of case if it makes a concession to VE. And I don't think this concession requires abandoning the letter of the core theses above in the way Cloos (2015)'s responsibilist evidentialism does. To see why, first consider the approach from my (2012: 165-6, 2014: Ch.5, and 2017b: 142-5) according to which rational and justified beliefs are beliefs that manifest different kinds of *respect for truth*.[8] I had in these earlier works glossed the idea of respect for truth in a way that is consistent with the letter of core evidentialism as I am understanding it here. To manifest the kind of respect for truth needed for justification, a believer must manifest *sensitivity to objective evidence-for relations*, where these are relations of objective truth-indication. The Trump supporter does not manifest sensitivity to objective evidence-for relations.[9] For one thing, his evidence is not objectively good. But even if it were objectively good, it would be a mere accident that he forms a belief which fits objectively good evidence, since he is not sensitive to objective evidence-for relations.

It is worth admitting that this move will only directly secure the prediction that the Trump supporter's belief is *doxastically* unjustified. But I am unsure whether there is a correspondingly strong intuition about propositional justification if we stipulate (as Miracchi does) that he has only positive evidence and no counterevidence. Yes, we should say something negative here. But perhaps the thing to do here is to blame the *agent* for *earlier acts* which resulted in their being stuck in the echo chamber. We could grant that there is propositional justification for the belief *within* the echo chamber, and grant that such justification makes their view understandable (though false).[10]

Still, even if there is an intuition that the Trump supporter lacks propositional justification, moves are available provided we make a further concession to VE. A reasons-firster could *first* ground doxastic justification in sensitivity to objective evidence-for relations, and then explain propositional justification in terms of doxastic justification in the manner of Turri (2010). Conee and Feldman won't like this. But unlike them, I've never thought we should be ideal theorists about propositional justification. I agree that limitations on what a person is in a position to believe with doxastic justification are limitations on what they have propositional justification to believe. But this agreement alone doesn't require being a virtue epistemologist.

Similar points apply to the second class of alleged counterexamples.[11] In the simplest alleged counterexamples of this sort, we are meant to imagine that a person does possess sufficient epistemic

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[8] Acknowledging Sylvan (2018) as an influence, Miracchi (2019: §3.1, n.19) and (Forthcoming: §3) expands her knowledge-first virtue epistemology to include the concept of *proper practical respect* for knowledge. Nevertheless, Miracchi continues to understand knowledge as the 'aim' or 'objective' of believing, in line with the performance epistemology developed in her (2014, 2015). By contrast, my notion of respect for truth was from the outset understood as the basis for an alternative to *teleological* epistemologies of that sort; see Sylvan (2012, 2014, 2017b, 2018, 2020) and cf. Sosa (2015: Ch.2, n.22). Any aim-based notion of competence cannot, I believe, coherently play a *fundamental* role in an overall theory which also appeals to the Kantian notion of respect in its core normative story; on this point, see Sylvan (2017a). But since acts, attitudes, and competences needn't be understood in terms of aims but rather in terms of *norms* or *values to be respected rather than promoted*, it may still be possible to invoke a non-teleological notion of competent action or attitude-formation. The appeal to the competences of Reason in this paper is an example.

[9] See Lord and Sylvan (forthcoming) and Sylvan and Sosa (2018). Lord (2018) and Mantel (2018) both defend more general accounts of ϕ-ing for normative reasons of this kind.

[10] Compare Smith (1983)'s approach to the significance of culpable ignorance for act and agent evaluation.

[11] For earlier versions of this point, see Sylvan (2016), Sylvan and Sosa (2018), and Lord and Sylvan (2019).

reasons to believe that p and does believe p on the basis of these reasons, but reasons from them improperly.[12] One can deny that believing for a good reason is simply a matter of believing on the basis of some propositions that *happen to correspond* to good reasons. One must rather *comply* with these reasons, by manifesting sensitivity to the relevant reason-for relations. In these alleged counterexamples, one doesn't manifest such sensitivity.

The stock examples involve obvious insensitivity to objective normative relations. The core evidentialist thesis about doxastic justification should be consistent with the simple thought that the evidence calls not just for a certain attitude, but for one to heed the evidence in forming this attitude. Yet one does not heed the evidence by using bad inference rules. Accordingly, I see no reason to deny that heeding the evidence is *sufficient* for justified belief. The examples we've considered just show that heeding the evidence involves more than (accidentally) forming the attitude that the evidence supports by whatever means, including means that manifest disrespect for evidence.

The final class of examples can't clearly be addressed in the same way. These cases are meant to show that heeding the evidence is *unnecessary* for justified belief, and that justified beliefs can *go beyond the evidence*. While externalists have long defended this conclusion about animal knowledge and some cases of beliefs justified by memory,[13] some of the most compelling examples are new. Srinivasan (forthcoming) provides some of the best, including:

> RACIST DINNER TABLE: 'Nour, a young British woman of Arab descent, is invited to dinner at the home of a white friend from university. The host, Nour's friend's father, is polite and welcoming to Nour. He is generous with the food and wine, and asks Nour a series of questions about herself. Everyone laughs and talks amiably. As Nour comes away, however, she is unable to shake the feeling that her friend's father is racist against Arabs. But replaying the evening in her head she finds it impossible to recover just what actions on the host's part could be thought to be racist, or what would justify her belief in the host's racism. If pressed, Nour would say she just had a strong feeling that her host was racist: that she 'just knows'. In fact the host is racist – he thinks of Arabs as inherently fanatic, dangerous and backwards – and as a result did treat Nour in ways subtly different to how he would have treated a non-Arab guest. And in fact Nour is subconsciously sensitive to this subtly racist behaviour. It is this subconscious sensitivity that lead to her belief that her host is racist.'[14]

Srinivasan claims that Nour is justified in believing that the host is racist in virtue of her 'capacity to dependably get on to the truth' about whether some behavior was racist. She initially uses examples of this kind to oppose accessibilist forms of internalism. But she takes them to favor a radical externalism that goes beyond the mere claim that one's evidence can include facts about the world. She thinks they are structurally parallel to BonJour (1980)'s clairvoyance cases (forthcoming: 6), and support the stronger externalist conclusion that one can be justified just in virtue of manifesting her reliable capacity to hit the truth.

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[12] See Turri (2010) for many alleged examples of this kind.
[13] See Goldman (1999) and Sosa (2007).
[14] Srinivasan (forthcoming: 1-2).

I am not persuaded that the cases are structurally parallel. In the example above and Srinivasan's other examples, the subjects do have access to indicators (and hence evidence) that favor their conclusions. But the indication relations are subtle and hard-to-articulate. These subjects respond to the relevant evidence not by conscious inference but rather by a spontaneous sensitivity whose underlying structure is opaque. Nevertheless, Nour is justified because she is picking up on genuine indicators of racism, as a manifestation of her reliable sensitivity to such indicators. We wouldn't do justice to the depth of Nour's insight if we denied she was aware of genuine indicators of racism. Moreover, it is not clear that a subject who *wasn't* similarly picking up on genuine indicators, or at least manifesting a sensitivity to them, would be justified. BonJour's Norman is meant to have *no* indicating evidence in support of his belief.

Nevertheless, a lingering concern remains, which I suspect favors foundations for evidentialism consistent with a stronger kind of externalism.[15] The concern is that the evidence isn't doing the real work here: the epistemological heavy-lifting is being done by the underlying virtues.[16] Hence, even though Nour does have sufficient evidence for her belief, it is justified in virtue of a sensitivity that is pre-evidential. It is hard to believe here (as evidentialists have often insisted) that the relevance of virtue is merely causal, or merely that of a background condition.[17] The relevance seems constitutive: Nour's sensitivity seems to *directly* explain her doxastic justification. While some evidentialists may rest content with biting the bullet, I do not.

This challenge can be strengthened by considering basic beliefs outside the perceptual realm, such as one's belief that 1+1=2. As Sosa argues, mere seemings don't plausibly do the fundamental work of explaining our justification for such beliefs, any more than mere beliefs would do.[18] For the phenomenology of the intuition that 1+1=2 doesn't seem comparable to the rich phenomenology of perception: the phenomenology is barely distinguishable from that of belief.[19] While one might instead claim that factive rational insight gives one access to a perfect reason in these cases—namely, the sheer fact that 1+1=2—the status of this insight still needs epistemic explanation. Even if this proposition is evident to one, it is plausibly the rational abilities that underpin this evidentness that also explain why one's belief is justified. I will return to these points in §5.

3.   How VE Can (and Should) Benefit from Evidence

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[15] I remain confident that Norman's judgment is unjustified, and that the kind of belief this judgment expresses (which Sosa (2015) calls a 'judgmental belief') is also unjustified. I do, however, think that it is possible for Norman to have animal knowledge, and indeed think that all knowledge is fundamentally animal knowledge; see Sylvan (2018b), though also see Goldberg and Matheson (forthcoming) for arguments against this view.

[16] Sosa (2015: Ch.5) makes similar claims in response to the objection that he fails to explain the value of believing for reasons; these objections were taken verbatim from emails I sent.

[17] See Conee and Feldman (2004), (2008), and (2011) for this tack.

[18] See also Sosa (2007).

[19] I don't deny it is possible to have a richer, presentational sort of intuition in which one sees one object singly and another singly and then, aha, sees them as two. But I don't think most people's current basic belief that 1+1=2 is justified by *current* presentations of this kind. When I consider this proposition, my intuition has no such phenomenology. Only in childhood did presentation play a role. Such presentation needn't be part of my current evidence; indeed, I doubt I can remember real childhood moments of this kind.

Especially in its reliabilist forms, VE has faced at least as much pressure as evidentialism. Some of this pressure is self-imposed, with Sosa in his most recent work—especially Sosa (2010, 2015)—seeking an account of the higher kind of epistemic normativity that is missing in the clairvoyant. These pressures have transformed VE, bringing it closer to evidentialism.[20] Ultimately, however, I don't think that reliabilist VE can secure these predictions without taking a hybrid form in which evidence plays a co-equal metaphysical role. I also don't think responsibilist VE is best understood as a theory about the *metaphysics* of epistemic normativity that would compete with evidentialism. Hence, I don't think pure VE gives the fundamental metaphysics of epistemic normativity. I'll defend these claims in this section, and then suggest that it might be better to move beyond hybrids and seek a unified theory from which one can derive the themes of evidentialism and VE.

Reliabilist VE seeks to explain all epistemic normativity as a special case of the kind of performance normativity associated with skill evaluations of archery. In Sosa's work, the central moving part of the theory is the notion of a *competence* to succeed, where Sosa takes doxastic success to consist in hitting the mark of truth. Succeeding *as a manifestation* of competence is aptness, and knowledge just is apt belief. In Sosa (2007), competences to succeed were just understood as dispositions to succeed relative to suitable situations and assuming the performer is in suitable 'shape'. Such competences can be equally manifest by what Sosa now calls mere cognitive 'functionings', such as one's passive *attraction to assent* to a proposition, and by more active mental states and events like *judgments*. Sosa (2007)'s corresponding account of the higher kind of epistemic normativity—what he then called 'reflective knowledge'—was just a matter of *knowingly* hitting the mark of truth through competence, where the higher-order knowledge is understood as a manifestation of the fundamentally same kind of competence to hit the mark of truth, with the difference lying merely in subject matter (viz., hitting the mark of truth about one's own abilities and success).

A fundamental trouble for this early theory is that it fails to give a satisfying explanation of what subjects like Norman the clairvoyant are missing. First-order apt belief is obviously no help: an unenlightened clairvoyant's beliefs qualify as apt at the first order. But if first-order aptness is unsatisfying for this reason, it is unclear why apt belief aptly noted would be much better. After all, can't second-order apt beliefs be just as blind as first-order ones? Can't we imagine a *higher-order clairvoyant* whose apt meta-beliefs are from her perspective arbitrary? Obviously, ascending another level won't solve this problem.

Sosa's view has undergone two revisions since (2007), but I don't think either of these revisions solves this fundamental problem. I have defended this claim elsewhere, so I will be brief here.[21] In his (2010), Sosa revised the view so that higher knowledge requires not merely second-order aptness, but that one's first-order belief be guided to aptness by a second-order apt judgment. The trouble here is that if the higher-order judgment can be just as blind as the first-order judgment, then all the new theory adds is that the lower-order blind must be led by the higher-order blind. It is hard to believe that the highest epistemic achievement is akin to the blind leading the blind.

Sosa (2015)'s view seems initially to contain a more promising kind of solution. The higher kind of knowledge is now understood as partly constituted by a mental state that is *different in kind* from the mental state that partly constitutes animal knowledge. For Sosa now distinguishes two kinds

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[20] In his joint work with me, Sosa has accepted a reasons-based account of justification.
[21] See Sylvan (2017a).

of belief: mere 'functional' beliefs and *judgmental* beliefs, which are paradigmatically expressed by judgments. Judgmental beliefs are robustly agential in a way that functional beliefs are not. One might hence think that this difference in kind will ground a corresponding difference in kind between judgmental knowledge and animal knowledge suited to get around the sort of regress objection considered earlier.

Although I agree we need something different in kind from animal knowledge to get around this problem, I don't think Sosa (2015)'s maneuver does the work. Although Sosa (2015) takes judgmental beliefs to constitute a different kind of mental state, they are subject to fundamentally the same kind of performance evaluation on the new theory: judgmental knowledge is achieved in its occurrent form when one affirms the truth as a manifestation of a competence to affirm only if one's affirmation would be apt. Yet a person could have and exercise such a competence without having any evidence for their affirmation, and hence while affirming in a subjectively reckless way. Norman, for example, could *aptly affirm* that he has a clairvoyant power and then aptly affirm that Iggy Pop is in Manhattan in the endeavor to make an apt affirmation, as a manifestation of that higher-order aptness, while still having no reason to think Iggy Pop is in Manhattan. This is merely a case of *willful clairvoyance*. Willful clairvoyance seems no better than passive clairvoyance. Being led by the blind and being blind and leading one's own way are both ways of proceeding blindly.

Now, there are other ways in which one could try to solve the problem. Firstly, one could follow the proposal in Sylvan and Sosa (2018) and directly invoke competences to believe p only if p is supported by one's evidence, and piggyback on the evidentialist's explanation of what is missing in the clairvoyance case. This move would yield convergence between the sophisticated kind of evidentialist view considered at the end of the previous section. I do not, however, think that this move provides a deep solution to the problem if one remains fundamentally within the framework of reliabilist VE and also continues to take truth to be the fundamental epistemic value. For it is then unclear why competences to hit the mark of truth *with the help of evidence* should be epistemically better from equally reliable competences to hit the mark of truth *whether or not* one has evidence. Sure, one could supplement this hybrid view with a pluralist account of fundamental epistemic value, and insist that believing on the basis of good evidence is itself just as fundamentally epistemically valuable as believing the truth. Yet it is not easy to believe that believing on the basis of good evidence is *fundamentally* valuable: it seems *derivatively* valuable, and derivation seems to flow—just not *instrumentally*, as I insist in Sylvan (2018)—from a link to truth.

A different move would be to remain monist about fundamental epistemic value but switch from truth to knowledge, and then invoke competences to know in the style of Millar (2010) and Miracchi (2015). My own dissatisfaction with this option rests on the worry that knowledge is not essentially high-grade, and can itself be relevantly blind (as in Radford's old example of the underconfident examinee). There is hence a concern that knowledge is not fundamentally more *enlightened* than reliable true belief, though it may be better in another way. Here I share Foley (1987, 2004)'s suspicion that the theory of knowledge should be separated from the theory of justified belief precisely because knowledge *can* be had by clairvoyants while justified belief cannot. As long as low-grade knowledge is possible, switching from competences to hit the mark of truth to competences to know won't advance us beyond Sosa (2010)'s account of high-grade knowledge.

What is needed is a view founded on a different kind of normativity than performance normativity, which bears a different relation to truth than the means-end relation of aiming. Sosa is right that judgments are constitutively associated with a higher kind of normativity. But this normativity is not a special case of performance normativity. Without moving in this direction, the best VE can do is make an *ad hoc* appeal to competences to believe in accordance with one's evidence, without giving a deep explanation of why there is something better about these competences.

Perhaps the notion of competence could be understood to go beyond a mere knack at fulfilling an aim. It is plausible that a judgment is necessarily incompetent if it is based on no evidence. This fact suggests that an epistemology based fundamentally on the ordinary notion of competence could converge in its predictions with evidentialism, while also avoiding the lingering worry about a foundational evidentialism from the previous section.

But without mooring in a more comprehensive theory, the shift from skill to robust competence is unsatisfying. The notion of competence seems as adaptable to different theoretical inclinations as the notion of virtue. It is no help to Sosa to observe that a judgment is necessarily lacking in *virtue* if based on no evidence, since virtue might be more than skill. And the more comprehensive theory that Sosa invokes in his current work (see Sosa (MS)) remains teleological, with truth understood as an aim. This theory raises the same questions about what evidence could add to perfect reliability, if truth is the fundamental value and orientation to truth is understood in terms of aims.

Could responsibilism offer a better mooring? I'm unsure it could if its aim is to provide the kind of metaphysical explanation of justified belief that reasons-based epistemology is meant to provide. Justified beliefs might well be *co-extensive* with responsible beliefs, and *derive their value* from this fact. But metaphysically analyzing justification in terms of responsibility seems hardly more illuminating than metaphysically analyzing awareness in terms of consciousness. The properties are too closely connected. Moreover, the one doing the analytic work needs at least as much explanation. .

4.   Converging Theories (and Problems) and the Task of Unification

Let's take stock by considering how evidentialism and VE have come closer together, and the lingering problems that a more unified theory ought to solve.

Evidentialism can withstand the alleged counterexamples of virtue epistemologists if it understands some of its moving parts in virtue-friendly ways—especially the *possession* and *proper basing* relations. A natural way to develop evidentialism in this direction takes the fundamental notion of evidence to be the ordinary notion of facts that stand in the *evidence-for* relation to conclusions. The theory can then understand a subject's having a justified belief as her having a belief that is based properly on sufficient evidence that she *possesses*, where:

- *possessing* evidence E for a conclusion *h* is a matter of

    (1) having access to the fact that constitutes that evidence (in the good case, via factive mental states like seeing that p),

  and

(2) being disposed to treat E as evidence for *p* as a manifestation of competence with the evidence-for relation that holds between E and *h*;[22]

- *competence* with the evidence-for relation between E and *h* is a matter of being disposed to form the attitudes to *h*-like hypotheses that are fitting when E-like facts obtain;

and where

- a belief that p is *properly based* on E when one holds it because of E, as a manifestation of the aforementioned competence.

Although I think this view is extensionally satisfactory, there are explanatory challenges for it. Most importantly, it is unclear that the justifiedness of basic beliefs like the belief that 1+1=2 is *fundamentally explained* by basing on evidence. It rather seems that exercise of a rational capacity simultaneously explains *both* the status of <1+1=2> as evident *and* the fact that the belief is justified. This concern is connected to a further challenge that should be clearer now that we have considered the problems for VE. In particular, more must be said about the notion of competence with evidence-for relations that this new form of evidentialism invokes. For it doesn't seem right to understand these competences *merely* as dispositions: this invites the worries we considered for reliabilist VE. A natural thought is that the relevant competences are just the sorts of *rational capacities* that can also do the work of explaining how propositions like <1+1=2> become evident.

Explaining the difference between these capacities and mere dispositions to hit the mark of truth will require avoiding the other problems for reliabilist VE. A central problem was the problem of clairvoyance. This problem becomes more challenging when considered alongside the lingering problem for evidentialism. Initially, it seemed that a reasons-sensitive VE might get around this problem by mimicking evidentialism, and saying that what the clairvoyant lacks is experiential evidence. Yet Srinivasan's question becomes pressing: what is the difference between the clairvoyant and a person who has a groundless rational intuition of an arithmetic truth? Experiential evidence won't help. For I think Sosa (2007) was right there is no general analogue of sensory evidence in the case of the *a priori*. The closest thing is the *seeming*. But as Sosa insists, seemings alone seem too belief-like to justify. Seemings can be manifestations of incompetence, after all: a view may seem plausible only because one is confused. To me, it feels hard to bite the bullet and accept that such seemings give good reasons.

These lingering problems for evidentialism and VE make me wary of explaining their convergence by making one the foundation of the other. What I suggest we do is seek a third theory that can simultaneously provide foundations for each as secondary theories. I will close in the next section by sketching a *rationalist* theory that does this job.[23]

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[22] One might think that it could be possible to have good evidence E for believing P without having the competence to treat E as evidence for P. But I reject this view in Sylvan (2015). I think the intuition here concerns objective evidence, not possessed evidence.

[23] Srinivasan (forthcoming) considers a theory she calls 'rationalist' as a way to distinguish clairvoyance cases from the cases of justified belief that she thinks undermine evidentialism. But she considers a limited kind of rationalism that

5.   Rationalist Foundations for Evidence and Virtue

This rationalist theory begins with a simple idea and pushes it farther than its traditional name suggests is possible. The simple idea can be grasped by considering Srinivasan's question: what is the fundamental difference between the seemingly baseless intuition that 2+2=4 and the clairvoyant's belief? The rationalist's answer is that the former is a *manifestation of reason*, while the latter is not, where reason is understood as a fundamental mental capacity. More generally, the rationalist claims that reason is what confers the status of evidence on certain propositions, and also what confers the status of virtue on some dispositions (including dispositions that play a role in the *possession* of evidence and the *proper basing* of one's beliefs on it).

In this section, I will first explain the rationalist account of evidence, then explain the rationalist account of virtue, and then show how their conjunction explains the convergence of evidentialism and VE. It is beyond the scope of this paper to give a full defense of this view.[24] Here I suggest only that *if* we think that evidentialism and VE need revisions which lead to extensional convergence, then rationalism provides the best underpinning for both as secondary theories rather than fundamental accounts of epistemic normativity.

5.1.   *Rationalist Foundations for Evidence (and a Derivative Evidentialism)*

The rationalist view I have in mind is inspired not by 17th century rationalist metaphysicians, but rather by Kantian thinkers in the philosophy of practical reason—viz., Korsgaard (2009) and Markovits (2014)—who develop what I take to be the best analysis of practical normativity. An important virtue of the overall picture in this paper is that it smoothly integrates with that Kantian project.

The first step in the view is not specifically Kantian or rationalist. It consists in a general analysis of *reasons* as inputs to good reasoning, where 'reasoning' is understood broadly to include transitions like the transition from seeing that p to judging that p.[25] It then adds a distinctively rationalist position about the nature of good reasoning, which echoes themes from Korsgaard and Markovits:

> **Kantian Rationalism**: The norms of reasoning are constitutive norms of the power of reason—i.e., they are norms one must be minimally disposed to follow to count as engaging in reasoning, or possessing the power of reason, at all.

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specifically appeals to *a priori* justification for moral propositions. This theory, as she rightly observes, can only explain the intuitions about one of her cases. The theory I will develop below is a more comprehensive rationalism that can subsume the sort of explanation she considers as one special case, while also explaining her other cases as different kinds of special cases. It also manages to avoid granting justification to the clairvoyant, which is what Srinivasan believes we are forced to do barring a plausible account of the difference between that case and her cases.

[24] See Sylvan (MS) for a defense.

[25] See Gregory (2016), Silverstein (2017) and Way (2017) for a defense of this view. I think it is fine as the first step in a larger analysis, though we need an extra step to get much of an explanation of reasons.

In the case of reason's *theoretical* side, these constitutive norms include principles of deductive reasoning and—following Strawson (1952) and BonJour (1998) on the problem of induction—fundamental principles of ampliative reasoning. On a natural extension inspired by Peacocke (2000)'s moderate rationalism, one could also count the introduction and exit rules constitutive of some acquired concepts among these norms as well, to explain the rationality of other transitions. Since constitutive norms of theoretical reason are plausibly a priori, this view explains why reason-for relations seem a priori.

What is evidence? The notion of evidence is Janus-faced in a way that makes the full rationalist story have two sides, one of which is itself subdivided. On the one hand, there is the *relational* notion of evidence as a fact that stands in an *evidence-for* relation to a proposition. To be evidence in this sense just is to be a theoretical reason for believing that this proposition is true. A theoretical reason is, in turn, an input to good theoretical reasoning. Different kinds of evidence will be distinguished by the class to which the constitutive norms underpinning the relevant sort of good theoretical reasoning belong. To be sure, as Skorupski (2011) noted, the ordinary notion of evidence seems more restrictive, so that it is only proper to call inputs to good *ampliative* reasoning 'evidence'. But evidentialism has always invoked a much wider notion of evidence. Evidentialism so understood becomes hard to distinguish from reasons-based views that may initially sound broader.

The fundamental sort of evidence in this ordinary relational sense is *objective*: evidence consists in facts that are out there in the world, which some may not have discovered. But only *possessed* evidence can do much work in epistemology. Possession is a further work of reason. A person *possesses* a fact E as evidence for a proposition *p* only if that person is not just minimally attuned to the reason-for relation that underwrites that evidence, but is disposed to treat that evidence in the right way, by forming the attitudes that are favored by it. This disposition can be *masked* if one is sleepy, drunk, distracted, or the like. But possession of evidence does require genuine grasp of the relevant evidence-for relation. That grasp is constituted by a disposition to exercise reason *well*, according to its constitutive standards.

Rational attunement of this kind is one necessary condition on possessing a fact E as a certain kind of evidence for p. But it is not the only necessary condition. It must also be true that this fact is itself evident to one (or in a position to become so). Here we encounter a different use of the notion of evidence. This use appears when people talk about a person's 'body of evidence' in abstraction from the evidence-for relations that members of this body bear to propositions. What is a person's 'body of evidence'? A narrow view would be that it is the set of propositions whose truth is evident to her. A wider view would be that it is the set of propositions that her reason is *in a position* to make evident to her, were she to consider them with no further change to her total mental state.

A full rationalist picture will also need to give an analysis of what it is for a proposition to be *evident* to a person. Here I suggest integration with Kantian thinking that will be familiar to epistemologists through McDowell (1995). One might have thought it tempting to suppose that possessed empirical evidence is grounded in sensory experience. But if sensory experience is understood—plausibly, I believe—as consisting in the *simple sensing* of particulars, features, events, and states of affairs that one reports by claims of the form 'S sees/hears/smells NP', then it is *not* sufficient to make a part of the world evident to one.[26] I can bear the simple seeing relation to a state

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[26] See Dretske (2000) for the notion of simple or 'non-epistemic' seeing.

of affairs reportable by the proposition that *p* without seeing that p; I can walk past a street performance rehearsal without realizing that it is one. As Kant suggested, simple sensory experience provides matter without form. Only the form that is added by *reason* enables one to transform the simple seeing of parts of a state of affairs into the seeing *that* it obtains. Sure, we can use 'experience' in a wider sense to include seeing that p. But we must remember that seeing that p is a complex state, and the sensory constituent of it is blind to truth. Only reason enables us to see empirical truths.

Reason enables us to see other truths without imposing form on sensory matter. Here one's seeing of the truth is *intuition* in the familiar sense. In principle, however, we could imagine reason seeing the truth of contingent propositions without any evident help from sensory matter. Some perception plausibly works in this way (e.g., proprioception). But if it is clear that BonJour's Norman doesn't have a justified belief, we cannot suppose that Norman is exercising reason in this way, where non-evident matter is used to render some truth evident. Hence the difference between Norman and Nour.

With these ideas in hand, we can give a fuller rationalist account of evidence, and derive evidentialism as a secondary truth. We can begin with the non-relational notion of evidence, and then invoke that to give a fuller account of the possession of relational evidence (which, when unpossessed, is only 'evidence' in a *potential* sense):

> **Non-Relational Evidence**: E is in S's evidence set $=df_{metaphysical}$ E is a member of the set of truths which are evident to S, where the evidentness of a truth to S consists in S's attraction to this truth as a manifestation of S's theoretical reason (where S's theoretical reason may use other materials—e.g., sensations—to generate this attraction).

> **Possessed Relational Evidence**: A person S *possesses* E as evidence of a certain sort (deductive, inductive, etc.) for p $=df_{metaphysical}$ (1) E is evident to S in the foregoing sense, and (2) S is disposed by reason to treat E as evidence of this sort for p, where this involves S's being disposed to believe p-like propositions when E-like propositions are evident to her according to a principle of reason (deductive, inductive, etc.).

Objective evidence, in turn, just consists in facts that are potential inputs to good theoretical reasoning, where that is grounded in the foregoing Kantian way.

Whither evidentialism? Consider a simple rationalist account of justified belief. A belief will be doxastically justified iff it manifests the power of theoretical reason, relative to a fixed set of mental conditions (e.g., the person bears the simple awareness relation to various sensa). Theoretical reason must operate by taking certain facts as input via these mental conditions. These facts are evidence. If reason manifests its power by moving from these facts to some conclusion, that conclusion will be based on this evidence.

Hence it emerges as a derived truth that a conclusion will be justified iff it is properly based on good evidence. But reason explains the normativity of that evidence. It is also what makes a person's ultimate evidence evident in the first place. The priority of reason is clear in the case of foundational beliefs like the belief that 1+1=2. Yes, these beliefs are justified iff there is sufficient evidence for them.

But the sufficient evidence just consists in the sheer fact made manifest by reason, which when taken up in belief yields a state that is justified fundamentally by reason, not some separate piece of evidence.

5.2.   *Rationalist Foundations for Virtue (and a Derivative VE)*

The ability of rationalism to subsume the predictions of evidentialism while giving a more satisfying account of basic beliefs is unsurprising. Rationalists and evidentialists are often on good relations, especially when evidentialists reject a crude empiricism that grounds evidence in simple sensory awareness. VE especially in its reliabilist form, by contrast, might seem too fundamentally different to make friends with rationalism. Indeed, one might think it obvious that virtue is not essentially a rationalist notion. One might hence be skeptical about any attempt to derive VE from rationalism. One might also suspect that the greater generality of virtue makes it a more promising ground for normativity, some of which is not reflective but animal (in Sosa's language).

The generality of virtue is, however, not a great thing for someone interested in explaining the normativity that attaches to works of agency and other states for which we can be held accountable. Paperweights, toasters, chairs, and plants all display virtues in the most general sense. It is a virtue of this paperweight that it prevents the paper from flying away when it is windy. It is a virtue of this toaster that it browns the toast just right. It is a virtue of this office chair that it is not too hard but also not too soft to put me to sleep. Virtues in this general sense are just useful qualities. If we want to invoke the notion of virtue in its widest sense, this is what we get. Yet it is wrong to analyze justified beliefs as beliefs that are produced by virtues in this wide sense. VE needs a narrower notion to do this work.

We could stipulate a narrower notion: namely, the notion of a disposition of a person to come to occupy a desirable state (e.g., to have a true belief). In Sosa's earlier efforts, intellectual virtues were understood in this way. But this way of understanding intellectual virtues provides no help with the problem of clairvoyance. Nor is it even clear that it illuminates animal knowledge, as Sosa (2015) recognizes: a competence to form true beliefs is not *just* a disposition to form them, but rather a *special case* of a disposition to form them.

How should we specify this special case? Sosa (2015) offers no answer and instead takes the notion of competence as primitive. Yet competences are a special case of virtues in the wider sense, and a VE that is analogous to virtue ethics would appeal to virtue and then analyze other normative properties in terms of virtues and other non-normative properties.

Rationalism enables us to explain which dispositions are virtues of the *relevant* sort for explaining normative statuses like justification and rationality. Not just any dispositions will do. Competences are what we want. What makes a disposition a competence? The rationalist story is reminiscent of the account of skill developed by Bradford (2015) and Stanley and Williamson (2017). Competences are *intelligent* dispositions, dispositions 'guided' by reason. Here it is best to understand this guidance as consisting in the *manifestation* of reason in the workings of the disposition, rather than the occupying of some higher-order state: otherwise the view threatens overintellectualization. The dispositions are just dispositions *of reason* in the broad sense needed in a comprehensive rationalism for the theoretical and practical domains. They are intelligent and amount to

competences in virtue of this fact. Dispositions to hit the mark of truth that are not intelligent aren't suited to explain justification and rationality. This fact should be obvious, and is what lies behind the clairvoyance problem. Yet its consequences seem unappreciated: if only intelligent dispositions can explain these things, then the virtues in VE converge with workings of reason.

We are now in a position to give a rationalist account of the sort of virtue relevant to understanding justification and rationality:

> **Virtue**: X is an intellectual virtue of the sort manifested by justified beliefs and rational beliefs iff X is a disposition of thought grounded in the power of theoretical reason.

Whither VE? Consider again the simple rationalist account of justified belief. A belief will be doxastically justified iff it manifests the power of theoretical reason, relative to some fixed mental conditions (e.g., awareness of various particulars and properties). Theoretical reason does, however, manifest its power through the workings of various dispositions. It does its work, in other words, through intellectual virtues, though they *count* as intellectual virtues in the relevant sense only in virtue of having their basis in reason.

Hence it emerges that a belief will be justified iff it manifests certain intellectual virtues. But the relevant virtues have their seat in reason. No other virtues are suited to explain justified belief. That is the lesson of the clairvoyant.

5.3.   *Explaining Convergence and Other Payoffs*

From a rationalist account of justified belief, then, we can *derive* both evidentialism and VE in derivative forms. According to rationalism, what *fundamentally* explains the justifiedness of a given belief is the fact that it manifests the power of theoretical reason, working in its unmasked glory. In the case of non-basic beliefs, the power of reason will always be manifest in one's basing one's belief on independently identifiable evidence. Here rationalism is extensionally equivalent to evidentialism. But it gives a more satisfactory explanation in the case of basic beliefs. Hence, a belief will be justified in rationalist terms iff it is justified in suitable evidentialist terms, but rationalism is the more fundamental theory.

Parallel claims hold for rationalism and reliabilist VE. Manifestations of reason will always involve manifestations of what reliabilist VE calls 'competences', though the powers of reason are more fundamental for reasons suggested in the previous subsection. Hence, a belief will be justified in rationalist terms iff it is justified in sophisticated virtue reliabilist terms. But rationalism is again the more fundamental theory. It gives a better explanation of the difference between the intuitively unjustified clairvoyant and a person who intuits a contingent truth or enjoys a sensationless perception of a necessary truth.

We hence get a derivation of evidentialism and VE as secondary theories and also explain why these theories converge in their best forms. The resulting unified outlook is preferable, I think, to a merely hybrid outlook. Of course, one could avoid hybridity by trying instead to derive evidentialism from VE or *vice versa*, and to treat rationalism itself as a secondary theory. But these alternative unified theories give worse explanations of some basic beliefs. Moreover, rationalism in epistemology

seamlessly integrates with what is arguably the most attractive reductive approach to practical normativity—viz., the Kantian constitutivism of Korsgaard and Markovits, which avoids the relativism of Humeanism and the spookiness of non-naturalism, and has a better explanation of the normative significance of reasons and rationality than neo-Aristotelian approaches (which I also suspect will invite an unhappy sort of moral relativism).

6.   Conclusion

More would need to be done to establish the preferability of rationalism to views other than evidentialism and VE. But much of this work has already been done by evidentialists and virtue epistemologists. For they have already convincingly explained why a simpler sort of reliabilism doesn't adequately explain the nature and value of the higher sort of knowledge and justification that the reliable clairvoyant clearly lacks.

The main unresolved question to pursue in future research is a sort of skeptical challenge to the very idea that there is such a special, higher sort of knowledge and justification. Commonsense won't favor this approach on its own, since the intuition about the clairvoyant is stark, and reliabilist attempts to explain it have been unsatisfying. A more compelling challenge would come, I believe, from empirical attempts by new wave 'massive modularity' theorists like Mercier and Sperber (2017) to knock reason off its high horse, and to establish that it is merely one module among others. It is beyond the scope of this paper to undermine this different basis for rejecting rationalism. But I remain hopeful about the Fodorian division of mind between central processing and modules. And this division just is the division between reason understood in a broadly Kantian way and the likes of mere sensation.

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