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# Warrant and the Value of Knowledge

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WARRANT AND THE VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE

by

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Fuqua, Jonathan (Scott), 2009, UMSL, p. 3

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to Angela, my wife, for her unflagging support and patience.  
Without her backing a project like this would be impossible.

### ABSTRACT

There is a widespread intuition that knowledge is more valuable than any of its subparts. In the literature the need to show that this is the case is known as the secondary value problem. In this paper I propose to defend this intuition by solving the secondary value problem. In the first part of the paper I introduce and explain the problem I propose to solve. In the second part of the paper I discuss two objections to the very possibility of solving the secondary value problem. In parts three and four I attempt to solve the secondary value problem and respond to the two objections by setting forth a certain view of the nature of knowledge and the value of its subparts. The conclusion the paper aims at is that each constituent part of knowledge has fundamental epistemic value, meaning that all the parts together are more valuable than any of the subparts – i.e. the whole is more valuable than any subset of the parts.

There is a widespread intuition that knowledge is more valuable than any of its subparts. In the literature the need to show that this is the case is known as the secondary value problem. In this paper I propose to defend this intuition by solving the secondary value problem. In the first part of the paper I introduce and explain the problem I propose to solve. In the second part of the paper I discuss two objections to the very possibility of solving the secondary value problem. In parts three and four I attempt to solve the secondary value problem and respond to the two objections by setting forth a certain view of the nature of knowledge and the value of its subparts. The conclusion the paper aims at is that each constituent part of knowledge has fundamental epistemic value, meaning that all the parts together are more valuable than any of the subparts – i.e. the whole is more valuable than any subset of the parts.

## 1. The Secondary Value Problem

In our epistemic pursuits we often betray an assumptive belief in the value of knowledge. As Duncan Pritchard points out, this assumption best explains the focus on the concept of knowledge in recent epistemology<sup>1</sup> as well as our seeming preference for knowledge over “other lesser epistemic standings.”<sup>2</sup> To demonstrate our preference for knowledge over other lesser epistemic standings, consider which option you would prefer were you to be given a choice between knowledge that p and the lesser epistemic standing of mere true belief that p. It is probably safe to say that most of us would pick

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<sup>1</sup> According to Duncan Pritchard, “Knowledge, Understanding and Epistemic Value,” *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 64 (2009): 19, “It is a widespread pre-theoretical intuition that knowledge is distinctively valuable. If this were not so, then it would be simply *mysterious* why knowledge has been the focus of so much epistemological theorizing, rather than some other epistemic standing like justified true belief. Given this fact, however, it is obviously important to a theory of knowledge that it is able to offer a good explanation of why we have this intuition.”

<sup>2</sup> Duncan Pritchard, “Recent Work on Epistemic Value,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 44 (2007): 86.

knowledge over mere true belief, which seems to indicate that most of us intuitively value knowledge more than its subparts. *Showing* that knowledge is more valuable than any of its less-preferred subsets is known as the secondary value problem.<sup>3</sup> Solving the secondary value problem is the task of this paper.

It is important to distinguish this problem from another in the neighborhood. Showing that knowledge is more valuable than any subset of its parts is not the same thing as showing that knowledge has a special kind of value that may or may not be had by its subparts. Showing that knowledge has a special kind of value, or is *distinctively* valuable, can be thought of as the tertiary value problem.<sup>4</sup> The secondary value problem is not equivalent to the tertiary value problem in that it is possible to solve the former with also solving the latter. Let me give an example. Something has final value only if it has at least some non-instrumental value – i.e. only if it is valued at least partly for its own sake. Now it may be that knowledge is more valuable than any of its subparts but also that the value it possesses is only instrumental value relative to some further good. For example, it may be that knowledge is more valuable than its subparts because knowledge is more practically useful than its subparts. If this could be shown it would solve the secondary value problem but not the tertiary value problem, for in this case knowledge would not be distinctively valuable in the sense of possessing the special kind of value known as final value.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 86-87.

<sup>4</sup> The concept of a tertiary value problem comes from Duncan Pritchard, “The Value Problem for Knowledge,” in *The Nature and Value of Knowledge: Three Investigations*, Duncan Pritchard, Alan Millar, and Adrian Haddock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming), 3-4 typescript. However, I owe the formulation of the problem given in this paper, which is slightly different than Pritchard’s, to Berit Brogaard.

However, while it is possible to solve the secondary value problem without solving the tertiary value problem, the arguments given here for the resolution of the former also appear to resolve the latter. The case for the value of knowledge made here will also support the intuition that knowledge has final value, intrinsic value, and epistemic value. First, the arguments will show that we value knowledge for its own sake and thus that knowledge possesses final value. Second, the arguments will also show that knowledge is valuable on account of its internal properties, or its non-relational properties. External or relational properties are those properties a thing has in virtue of its relationship to something else. The arguments given here support the intrinsic value of knowledge in that the properties on which the value of knowledge supervenes are internal. It should be noted, however, that I am not arguing that knowledge has intrinsic value simply because it has final value or vice versa. Something could be finally valuable without being intrinsically valuable in that its final value could supervene on its relational properties, as when we value an ancient relic because of its relationship to an important historical figure or event.<sup>5</sup> Finally, the arguments here will support the idea that knowledge has epistemic value as opposed to, say, moral or practical value.

In order to show that knowledge is more valuable than its subparts one needs to show that each constituent part of knowledge has fundamental epistemic value, meaning that each subpart possesses non-instrumental value vis-à-vis the other subparts. One subpart of knowledge has fundamental epistemic value if and only if its value is not completely derived from some other of knowledge's subparts. Non-fundamental

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<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of and argument for the distinction between final and intrinsic value see Wlodek Rabinowicz and Toni Ronnow-Rasmussen, "A Distinction in Value: Intrinsic and for Its Own Sake," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 100 (2000): 33-51.



epistemic value is had by a subpart if that subpart's value is wholly derived from some other epistemic good which is needed for knowledge. If one subpart's value is completely derived from another, then the former possesses only instrumental value relative to the latter – this is what is meant by non-fundamental epistemic value. With Pritchard, we have to note the possibility that an epistemic good may have fundamental epistemic value without possessing final value all things considered. As an example, Pritchard points out that it is possible that truth is fundamentally epistemically valuable in the sense that its value is not derived from some other epistemic good and yet lacks final value because it gets its value from its practical utility.<sup>6</sup> Thus, truth may be non-instrumentally valuable relative to other epistemic goods because it does not derive its value from any other epistemic goods, but its value may be instrumental relative to some further non-epistemic good. I will parse this by saying that the subparts of knowledge must have fundamental epistemic value, or non-instrumental value relative to other epistemic goods necessary for knowledge.

But why must each part be fundamentally epistemically valuable? The strategy is to show that each constituent part of knowledge is valuable such that all the parts together are more valuable than any subset of the parts – i.e. the whole is more valuable than any subset of the parts. That is what is meant by saying that knowledge is more valuable than its subparts. Now in order to do this it is necessary that each subpart possess fundamental epistemic value. If some of the subparts possess only non-fundamental epistemic value vis-à-vis one or some of the others, then it is difficult to see how all of the parts together

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<sup>6</sup> Pritchard, "The Value Problem for Knowledge," 7-8 typescript. This paragraph is heavily indebted to Pritchard's very helpful analysis.

could possess more value than those that have fundamental epistemic value. Pritchard spells out the value principle at work here: “If the value of X is only instrumental value relative to a further good and that good is already present, then it can confer no additional value.”<sup>7</sup> If this principle were false it would license what Alvin Goldman and Erick Olsson refer to as double-counting errors. Goldman and Olsson nicely illustrate a “double-counting error” by means of an analogy in which the bank gives you a certificate after you deposit a lump of gold in a safety-deposit box. The certificate’s value is parasitic or instrumental relative to the lump of gold, meaning that its value is wholly derived from the lump of gold. It would be a mistake to think that one’s lump of gold is made more valuable by the simultaneous possession of the certificate.<sup>8</sup> The application to knowledge is fairly straightforward. For example, if knowledge has only two conditions, X and Y, and if X is only valuable because it leads to Y, then X and Y together are no more valuable than Y by itself. Thus, each subpart of knowledge must have fundamental epistemic value. The secondary value problem, then, boils down to that of showing that each constituent part of knowledge has fundamental epistemic value.

## **2. Two Difficulties for Any Resolution of the Secondary Value Problem**

In the literature there are at least two formidable difficulties posed for any attempt to solve the secondary value problem. In that “benighted pre-Gettier era” it was commonly assumed that knowledge could be defined as justified true belief.<sup>9</sup> In that day

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 10 typescript.

<sup>8</sup> Alvin Goldman and Erik Olsson, “Reliabilism and the Value of Knowledge,” in *Epistemic Value*, eds. Duncan Pritchard, Alan Millar, and Adrian Haddock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming), 7 typescript.

<sup>9</sup> Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 4.

and age the secondary value problem could have been solved simply by showing that true belief and justification both possess fundamental epistemic value – for then a justified true belief would have been more valuable than either a justified falsehood or an unjustified truth. The first problem for any such resolution of the secondary value problem arises from the ubiquitous assumption that there is only one epistemic good that has fundamental epistemic value: truth. This is a particular form of something Pritchard calls “epistemic value monism,” which is the view that there is only one fundamental epistemic good from which all other epistemic goods derive their value.<sup>10</sup> For ease of exposition I will follow Goldman and Olsson and refer to that version of epistemic value monism which posits truth to be the only fundamental epistemic value as “veritism.”<sup>11</sup> Veritism renders the secondary value problem insoluble, for if all other epistemic goods necessary for knowledge derive their value solely from their connection to true belief, then true belief is not more valuable with these other epistemic goods than without them. If all other subparts of knowledge have only instrumental value relative to true belief (non-fundamental epistemic value), then they can confer no additional value on true belief.

Given veritism it follows that justification is valuable only because (or if) it is truth-conducive. Thus, the value of justification is parasitic on the value of true belief in the sense that the value of justification is wholly derived from the value of true belief. But if the value of justification is wholly derived from the value of truth, then it is

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<sup>10</sup> Pritchard, “The Value Problem for Knowledge,” 9ff. typescript.

<sup>11</sup> Goldman and Olsson, “Reliabilism and the Value of Knowledge,” 7 typescript.

difficult to see how justification can then add any extra value to the true belief which is the source of its own value. To think otherwise would be to commit a double-counting error; it would be like supposing that one's lump of gold is made more valuable by the simultaneous possession of the certificate. Likewise, given the derivative nature of the value of justification, it would be a mistake to think that justification somehow adds value to the fundamental epistemic good of truth. Since the value of justification is parasitic on the value of truth, we have no reason to value justified true belief over mere true belief. Jonathan Kvanvig refers to this difficulty as the swamping problem – the value of truth simply swamps the value of justification on account of the derivative nature of the value possessed by the latter.<sup>12</sup>

The other difficulty stems from the fact that knowledge is no longer defined as justified true belief, which means that, even if we could overturn veritism and show that justification and true belief each have fundamental epistemic value, we would not have shown that full-blown knowledge is more valuable than its subparts. Thanks to Edmund Gettier we now know that there are cases of justified true belief that do not count as knowledge.<sup>13</sup> The central problem in Gettier cases is that, although one has a justification for one's true belief, the explanation for why one has a true belief is put down to sheer luck rather than one's justification. A variation on a well-known example: the battery on

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<sup>12</sup>See Jonathan Kvanvig, *The Value of Knowledge and the Pursuit of Understanding* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 28-75. A version of the swamping problem has been argued for independently of Kvanvig in Ward Jones, "Why Do We Value Knowledge?" *American Philosophical Quarterly* 34 (1997): 423-439. Linda Zagzebski develops a version of the problem targeted specifically at reliabilist theories of justification in her "From Reliabilism to Virtue Epistemology," in *Knowledge, Belief, and Character: Readings in Virtue Epistemology*, ed. Guy Axtell (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 113-122 and "The Search for the Source of Epistemic Good," *Metaphilosophy* 34 (2003): 12-28. See also Pritchard, "The Value Problem for Knowledge," 4-20 typescript.

<sup>13</sup> Edmund Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis* 23 (1963): 121-123.

your clock runs out at 9am on Friday morning while you are at work. On Saturday morning at 9am you happen to look at your dead clock and form the justified true belief that it is 9am. You do not have knowledge, however, because your justified true belief is more a matter of luck than anything else – it is only accidentally true. It would seem, then, that we need to add an anti-luck condition on knowledge, one that ensures that our justified true beliefs do not fall prey to the sort of luck at play in Gettier cases.

If this is correct, then justified true belief is insufficient for knowledge, meaning that a demonstration of its value fails to amount to a demonstration that knowledge is more valuable than all other lesser epistemic standings. In other words, a demonstration of the fundamental epistemic value of justification and truth would show that one particular subset of knowledge – justified true belief – is more valuable than mere true belief. But we are still left with the problem of showing why full-blown knowledge is more valuable than any subset of its parts. Now, in addition to showing that justification and truth possess fundamental epistemic value, we will also have to show that the anti-luck condition on knowledge has fundamental epistemic value. Notice that the swamping problem only makes this second difficulty worse, for if truth is the only fundamental epistemic value, then the value possessed by satisfying the anti-luck condition is wholly derived from its connection to truth. Kvanvig argues that this renders the secondary value problem insoluble, for there just does not seem to be any fundamental epistemic value had by satisfying the anti-luck condition. His point is simply that we are unable to show why satisfaction of the anti-luck condition is valuable in its own right.<sup>14</sup> But if we

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<sup>14</sup> See Kvanvig, *The Value of Knowledge*, 108-39.

cannot do this, then we cannot show why knowledge is more valuable than any subset of its parts. We should here note that one cannot argue that the conditions for knowledge are valuable because they lead to knowledge, for that presupposes the value of knowledge, which is precisely what needs to be demonstrated. In trying to establish the value of knowledge by establishing the value of its parts we cannot establish the value of the parts by presupposing the value of knowledge.

### **3. Solving the Secondary Value Problem**

Unless one is prepared to identify knowledge with mere true belief it will be impossible to solve the secondary value problem without demonstrating that there are other subparts of knowledge that possess fundamental epistemic value. Of course, there may well be epistemic goods that are fundamentally epistemically valuable but that are not necessary for knowledge. Showing this to be the case would not be insignificant but it would not help us much with the secondary value problem. For example, say that understanding has fundamental epistemic value but is separate from and also not a condition on knowledge. If this is the case then the secondary value problem remains, for we have still failed to show that each constituent part of knowledge has fundamental epistemic value. Thus, what must be shown is that each subpart of knowledge has fundamental epistemic value. I do so by laying out a general account of the nature of knowledge and the value of each of its subparts.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Before proceeding I should pause to note that the way I have set up the problem of the value of knowledge is the way that it is typically set up in the literature. This setup imposes certain constraints on any solution, such as the constraint that every part of knowledge have fundamental epistemic value. For the purposes of this paper I am taking the typical setup and the constraints it imposes for granted. However, it is not clear that this setup and its constraints are correct. For example, according to (a simple formulation of) the principle of organic unities, it is possible for the value of a whole to be unequal to the value of the sum of its parts. If organic unities are at least possible, then it is at least possible that

The lesson of Gettier cases is that knowledge is incompatible with epistemic luck. Of course, there are different kinds of luck, not all of which are incompatible with knowledge. Sorting all of this out is important but not germane to my project here. For the sake of convenience I will refer to the kind of luck incompatible with knowledge simply as epistemic luck.<sup>16</sup> If an account of knowledge allows one to meet all of its conditions and yet still fall prey to epistemic luck, then it is deficient. This is precisely what happened to the classical tripartite view of knowledge as justified true belief. Gettier cases show that it is possible to have an epistemically lucky justified true belief and hence that there is more to knowledge than justified true belief. Because of this the classical tripartite definition of knowledge has been all but abandoned.

In the wake of Gettier three options seem to be available. One option is to argue that there is a fourth condition on knowledge, one that, when added to justified true belief, eliminates the epistemic luck incompatible with knowledge. Taking this option seems to lead to the problem brought forward by Kvanvig: that of showing that satisfaction of the anti-luck condition has fundamental epistemic value. On the other hand, we need not add a fourth condition on knowledge. Another option is to beef up the justification condition, such that one's belief that p is not justified unless it is also

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knowledge could have more value than the sum of the value of its parts or perhaps even less. Such possibilities open the door for solutions to the secondary value problem other than that of showing that each part of knowledge has fundamental epistemic value. This constraint only works if the principle of organic unities is false or perhaps has no application with regard to knowledge. As I said, in this paper I do not take issue with the typical formulation of the value problem. Here I will only note that, if the principle of organic unities does pose problems for the typical value problem setup, the argument in this paper could be recast as but one way in which it could be shown that knowledge is more valuable than its subparts. For a defense of organic unities see Noah Lemos, "Organic Unities," *Journal of Ethics* 2 (1998): 321-327. Thanks to Berit Brogaard, Eric Wiland, and John Greco for bringing these issues to my attention.

<sup>16</sup> See Duncan Pritchard, *Epistemic Luck* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) for an illuminating discussion of epistemic luck.

“degettierized.”<sup>17</sup> One problem with this option is that the term “justification” has an incredible amount of baggage, such that when one hears “justification” one automatically thinks of a particular theory of justification. This seems to preclude debates about the nature of justification. Another is that, owing to Gettier and post-Gettier literature, philosophers have become used to the idea that justified true belief simply doesn’t add up to knowledge. Thus, a proposal that knowledge just is justified true belief will fall on ears conditioned to reject it. For these reasons, almost no one defines knowledge as justified true belief. In attempting to uncover the nature of knowledge a third option has arisen, that of identifying knowledge with true belief plus some other condition, one that is not identical to justification and that is sufficiently strong so as to be incompatible with epistemic luck.

I will pursue the third option and, taking a cue from Alvin Plantinga, propose that we think of knowledge as warranted true belief. According to Plantinga, warrant is “that ... which together with truth makes the difference between knowledge and mere true belief.... It is that which distinguishes knowledge from mere true belief.”<sup>18</sup> In this sense warrant now takes the place previously occupied by justification as that which turns true belief into knowledge. Warrant is stronger than justification in that it is taken to be incompatible with epistemic luck. There may well be a may be a plurality of necessary conditions on warrant that are jointly sufficient for its attainment. On the view of knowledge as warranted true belief whatever else is needed for knowledge other than true

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<sup>17</sup> For the term and the distinction see Matthias Steup, “The Analysis of Knowledge,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2009 Edition), ed. Edward Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/knowledge-analysis/#TWO>.

<sup>18</sup> Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate*, 3.



belief will pertain to warrant. In defining knowledge as warranted true belief, however, I in no way mean to endorse Plantinga's own particular theory of warrant.<sup>19</sup> The account of warrant and knowledge that I intend to lay down is much more general and could be adopted by a wide variety of philosophers who themselves disagree over the specific nature of the requirements for warrant.

Where I do intend to follow Plantinga is in placing multiple conditions on warrant. Warrant, on my view, requires what John Greco calls objective fitness and subjective appropriateness. This means that, in order to know that p, one's belief that p must be objectively well formed as well as subjectively well formed. Greco sometimes refers to these two epistemic desiderata as objective justification and subjective justification.<sup>20</sup> In keeping with the broad and accommodating nature of my account of knowledge I do not intend to endorse any particular conception of objective fitness or subjective appropriateness. Thus, two philosophers could agree on the necessity of objective fitness but disagree over what is required for it. Likewise, two philosophers could agree on the necessity of subjective appropriateness but disagree over what is required for it. However, I take it that no one would disagree that knowledge cannot be had unless one's beliefs are objectively fit and subjectively appropriate.

A subjectively appropriate true belief that is not objectively well formed does not count as knowledge. For example, I may form a true belief on the basis of unreliable

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<sup>19</sup> See Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3-47.

<sup>20</sup> See John Greco, "Justification is Not Internal," in *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*, eds. Matthias Steup and Ernest Sosa (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 257-70; "Knowledge as Credit for True Belief," in *Intellectual Virtue: Perspectives from Ethics and Epistemology*, eds. Linda Zagzebski and Michael DePaul (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 111-134; *Putting Sceptics in Their Place: The Nature of Sceptical Arguments and Their Role in Philosophical Inquiry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 164-203.

testimony in a way that is subjectively appropriate on account of the fact that I have good reasons to believe the testifier to be reliable. Here I have subjectively appropriate true belief but not knowledge on account of the fact that my true belief was not objectively well formed. But nor is an objectively fit true belief that is not subjectively appropriate a case of knowledge. For example, if I form a true belief on the basis of reliable testimony in spite of the fact that I have good reasons to think the testifier is unreliable, then I do not have knowledge. Here I have objectively fit true belief that is not knowledge on account of the fact that it is subjectively inappropriate. It thus appears that objective fit and subjective appropriateness are both required for knowledge. But since I am defining knowledge as warranted true belief I am placing these two requirements as conditions on warrant rather than as two separate conditions on knowledge itself. They are conditions on knowledge only in an indirect sense in that warrant is required for knowledge and they are required for warrant. We will see, however, that placing these requirements on warrant rather than on knowledge is not crucial to my resolution of the secondary value problem. (More on this below.)

Recall that in order to solve the secondary value problem we need to show that each constituent part of knowledge has fundamental epistemic value. On my conception of knowledge this means showing that warranted belief that p and true belief that p each have fundamental epistemic value. It is widely conceded that true belief has fundamental epistemic value. Indeed, this is so deeply embedded in the way that we think about matters epistemic as to give rise to the notion that it is the only fundamental epistemic value – veritism. In this paper I will not discuss the fundamental epistemic value possessed by truth except to say that true belief is not the only epistemic good that has

fundamental epistemic value. For purposes of this paper I will assume what is already widely conceded – that true belief has fundamental epistemic value.<sup>21</sup> Thus, what remains to be shown is that warrant has fundamental epistemic value. If it does, then it follows that warranted true belief will be more valuable than mere true belief and the secondary value problem will be solved. My argument is simply that warrant is fundamentally epistemically valuable on account of the fact that both of its own constituent parts – objective fitness and subjective appropriateness – are themselves fundamentally epistemically valuable.<sup>22</sup> Technically, however, so long as one of these parts has fundamental epistemic value warrant will still have epistemic value. Thus, in order to show that warrant does not have fundamental epistemic value it will have to be shown that the arguments for the fundamental value of both objective fitness and subjective appropriateness are fatally flawed.

Let's start with objective fitness. Presumably objective fitness is in the actual world truth-conducive and so has non-fundamental epistemic value in that it has instrumental value relative to truth – part of its value is derived from the value of truth. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that, in addition to having non-fundamental epistemic value, objective fitness has absolutely no fundamental epistemic value. In order to show that objective fitness has fundamental epistemic value we need to consider

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<sup>21</sup> For a sustained defense of the value of truth see Michael Lynch, *True to Life: Why Truth Matters* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004).

<sup>22</sup> Kvanvig seems to endorse the viability of this strategy. For example, in *The Value of Knowledge*, 112, he writes: "If we assume that there is some property like justification that distinguishes knowledge from true belief, then an adequate explanation of the value of knowledge could be achieved by giving an adequate account of the value of justification." My claim is simply that warrant distinguishes knowledge from true belief, and that warrant has fundamental epistemic value, thus rendering warranted true belief, or knowledge, more valuable than true belief.

two possible worlds in which everything is the same except for the fact that objective fitness is present in one but absent in the other and then consider whether or not we value the world with objective fitness more than the one without it. The answer is that we do.

Consider two possible worlds, P1 and P2. In P1 my beliefs are mostly true, subjectively appropriate, and reliably formed but fail to be objectively fit. To borrow an example from Greco, say that in P1 a helpful demon arranges the world so that it conforms to my beliefs.<sup>23</sup> In P2 my beliefs are mostly true, subjectively appropriate, and reliably formed; moreover, they are objectively fit. Instead of being controlled by a demon, say that in P2 God designed my cognitive faculties and my cognitive environment to ensure that, in most cases, my beliefs are objectively well formed. Now it seems that, from a purely epistemic point of view, I would value P2 over P1 even though my beliefs are mostly true in both worlds. The reason seems to be that I value objective fit even when I “already” have true beliefs. We value objectively forming our beliefs well. Thus, I would rather have an objectively well formed false belief than an objectively ill-formed false belief. I want to reason well and form my beliefs properly from an objective point of view even when I do not get the right result. Objective fitness, then, has fundamental epistemic value. But since objective fitness is one component of warrant, a warranted belief will necessarily be objectively fit and thus will possess fundamental epistemic value. Thus, warranted true belief has more overall value than mere true belief.

Perhaps an example will help. Take two epistemic agents, A and B. A has a subjectively appropriate true belief in God that is also objectively fit, while B has a

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<sup>23</sup> Greco, *Putting Skeptics in Their Place*, 175.

subjectively appropriate true belief in God that is not objectively fit. A believes in God solely on the basis of powerful and successful arguments from natural theology. Let us further stipulate that A is not aware of any defeaters for his theistic belief. B also believes in God on the basis of natural theological arguments and also is not aware of any defeaters. The difference, however, is that the arguments for God's existence upon which B's theistic belief is based are logically fallacious, absolutely pathetic, and utterly fail to establish their conclusion, although B is unaware of this and mistakenly thinks that they are terrific and irresistible. Clearly, we would say that A is in a better epistemic situation than B, that A's doxastic state or position is more epistemically valuable than is B's. It does not matter that A and B both have subjectively appropriate true belief. The verity of A's belief in no way swamps the value of its objective fitness.

The fundamental epistemic value had by objective fitness takes care of the problem posed by the anti-luck condition. Recall that Kvanvig argues that there is no hope of showing that knowledge is more valuable than its subparts on account of the fact that there is no hope of showing that satisfaction of the anti-luck condition has what we are calling fundamental epistemic value. We can resolve this difficulty by noting that there is no objective fitness and hence no warrant when epistemic luck is present. One's belief that p is not objectively well formed when it is infected with epistemic luck. It is highly counterintuitive to say that a belief is objectively fit but only luckily true. In standard Gettier cases it seems that agents have subjectively appropriate true beliefs that fall short of knowledge on account of a lack of objective fitness, and this lack is due to epistemic luck. On the view of knowledge and warrant I am advocating here it does not matter if satisfying the anti-luck condition fails to have fundamental epistemic value. By

properly understanding the structure of knowledge and warrant we can see that this problem is actually a pseudo-problem. The anti-luck condition is actually a necessary condition on objective fitness, which is itself a necessary condition on warrant. It does not matter if the value had by satisfying the anti-luck condition is wholly derived from some other epistemic good, such as objective fitness or true belief. This in no way undermines the fundamental epistemic value of objective fitness or warrant, which is what we need to show that warranted true belief is more valuable than mere true belief.

To show that subjective appropriateness has fundamental epistemic value we will pursue the same strategy we used with objective fitness. We need to consider two possible worlds which are identical except for the fact that one has subjective appropriateness and the other does not. Take two possible worlds, P3 and P4. In P3 my beliefs are objectively fit and mostly true but subjectively inappropriate. Say that I am intellectually irresponsible but, due to certain features of P3, nearly always reliably form true beliefs. In P4 my beliefs are objectively fit, mostly true, and subjectively appropriate. Surely P4 is a more valuable world than P3, even though I have the same proportion of true beliefs in each one. In fact, even when my beliefs turn out false I still value subjective appropriateness. If I did not care about subjective appropriateness there would be a real sense in which I would fail to care about being rational, which would itself be irrational (more on this in a moment). So it seems as if subjective appropriateness also has fundamental epistemic value. Thus, it seems as if warrant has fundamental epistemic value on account of the value of objective fit *and* subjective appropriateness. If so, then warranted true belief would be more valuable than mere true belief.

Let us turn to another example of two theists, C and D, to illustrate the value of subjective appropriateness. C has an objectively fit true belief in God that is also subjectively appropriate. C bases his theistic belief solely on powerful and successful theistic arguments that, so far as he knows, are not subject to defeat. D, on the other hand, has an objectively fit true belief in God that fails to be subjectively appropriate. D bases his belief in God on the same arguments as C. The problem is that D recently read an atheological argument in a philosophy journal purporting to demonstrate that the arguments upon which D bases his theistic belief are severely flawed. This atheological argument is in reality unsuccessful, but D mistakenly believes that it is successful. Because he is not intellectually virtuous, however, D keeps on believing in God on the basis of arguments he thinks have been defeated on the grounds that God just *has* to exist, so there *must* be some way to defeat the atheological defeaters, even though he hasn't a clue how to answer the atheological charges. Clearly, we would say that C is in a better epistemic situation than D, that C's doxastic state or position is more valuable than D's. The value of C's true belief does not swamp the value of its subjective appropriateness.

To further support the fundamental epistemic value of subjective appropriateness note that there is an intimate connection between subjective appropriateness and rationality, namely, that rationality requires a due regard for subjective appropriateness. Now in saying that rationality requires due regard for subjective appropriateness, however, just exactly what is being said? There are myriad views of rationality,<sup>24</sup> so any attempt to say that a person or belief is rational will need to be specific about the concept

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<sup>24</sup> For a catalogue and discussion of various conceptions of rationality see Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 108-134.

in order to say anything very significant. On the other hand, I do not want to go into a full-blown theory of rationality, so I will try to be as concise as possible. Let us suppose that “rationality” is not just a synonym for “justification,” although of course there may be various similarities and relations between them. As a corollary let us also say that rationality is not identical to objective or subjective justification. Instead of giving an all-out theory of rationality, I will proceed by identifying a particular kind of epistemic vice as an instance of irrationality. This will suffice for my purposes here.

When your belief is subjectively appropriate it is subjectively well formed. At least one thing that it means to have your belief subjectively well formed is that it is rational, meaning that, so far as you know, the way your belief was formed was not epistemically improper – no epistemic obligations were violated, no malfunction was at play, no potential defeaters were ignored, and so on. A cognizer is rational, then, if he attempts to regulate his doxastic practices according to whether or not his beliefs are well formed so far as he can see. A cognizer is irrational if he sees, or seems to see, that his beliefs are not well formed but continues to try and hold them anyway. Such a person shows no regard for forming his beliefs properly, for his doxastic practices are not affected by situations in which it seems to him that his beliefs are not well formed. By contrast, upon seeing or suspecting that his beliefs are not well formed, at least so far as he knows, a rational person will take the appropriate doxastic action and disbelieve or perhaps suspend belief pending further investigation – whatever exactly the appropriate action is, that is what he will do, or try to do. The fact that we value subjective appropriateness can be seen by the fact that we think that being rational is good all by itself, meaning that we think it is good to regulate our doxastic activity according to



whether or not our beliefs are, as far as we can see, well formed. A cognizer with an objectively fit true belief who mistakenly thinks that his belief is not well formed and yet persists in holding on, or trying to hold on, to this belief displays a deep form of irrationality that is disvaluable and that is incompatible with subjective appropriateness. So rationality has fundamental epistemic value and is necessary for subjective appropriateness, therefore subjective appropriateness has fundamental epistemic value.

The arguments given above in favor of the view that warrant (objective fit and subjective appropriateness) has fundamental epistemic value get added plausibility from considerations in ethics. In order to perform a virtuous act an agent must do the right thing for the right reason. Doing the wrong thing for the right reason does not count as virtuous, nor does doing the right thing for the wrong reason. The right result must be gotten in the right way in order to be virtuous. The act must be objectively justified in that it is the right thing to do and subjectively justified in that I think it is the right thing to do and do it for that reason. Reflection seems to show that we value each of these components for their own sake. Thus, I would prefer a possible world in which I do the right thing for the right reason to one in which I do the right thing for the wrong reason. But I would also prefer a world in which I do the wrong thing for the right reason to one in which I do the wrong thing for the wrong reason. These considerations show that we value performing an action for the right reason for its own sake. But I also value doing the right thing for its own sake. Thus, I would rather do the right thing for the wrong reason than do the wrong thing for the right reason. This shows that doing the right thing is also valued for its own sake. But if each of these components is valued for its own sake, then surely they are more valuable together than apart.

The analogy with knowledge is fairly straightforward. In my cognitive endeavors I value getting the right result (truth) in the right way (warrant). Most everyone agrees that truth has fundamental epistemic value, so there is a broad consensus that it is important to get the right result. But it has not been sufficiently appreciated that we also value getting the right result in the right way. Thus, even when we get the wrong result (falsehood) we still value proper belief formation (warrant). Even when I miss the truth I want to conduct my cognitive affairs properly. I want to have beliefs that are objectively well formed and subjectively well formed. Thus, the value I place on warrant is not solely derived from its connection to truth. Warrant is valued for its own sake, meaning that it has fundamental epistemic value, meaning that warranted true belief is more valuable than mere true belief. When I have a true belief I have something valuable for I have gotten the right result. But when I have knowledge I have something more valuable because I have gotten the right result in the right way.

In response to the thought experiments given above that purport to demonstrate the fundamental epistemic value of warrant, it might be objected that all I have shown is that we value warrant. In other words, perhaps the only thing accomplished by the thought experiments is a repetition of our intuitions when what is actually needed is a demonstration that these intuitions are correct. The fact that we prefer knowledge to its subparts does not necessarily mean that knowledge is more valuable than its subparts.<sup>25</sup> By way of rebuttal it should be noted that this problem, if indeed it is a problem, would

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<sup>25</sup> This objection was brought to my attention by Berit Brogaard.

also plague attempts to demonstrate the fundamental epistemic value of other epistemic goods. A couple of examples will be instructive on this point.

In his argument for the value of truth Kvanvig attempts to show that true belief is more valuable than empirically adequate belief by showing that we prefer empirically adequate true beliefs to empirically adequate false beliefs. When pressed to give more of an account of the value of truth than this, Kvanvig retorts that the critic needs to give a reason for supposing that his intuition “is a misleading indicator of what is truly valuable.... In the absence of such reasons, I propose that the conclusion that truth is intrinsically valuable is the best explanation of the data before us.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, in his account of the value of truth, Kvanvig assumes that a demonstration of our preference for truth over lesser epistemic standings is an adequate means of showing that truth has value. The second example comes from Pritchard. In his discussion and evaluation of the idea that knowledge has value on account of the fact that it is a cognitive achievement, Pritchard argues that our preference for achievements is “strong evidence” for their final value.<sup>27</sup> Now if this method suffices for a demonstration of the values of truth and cognitive achievements, then it ought to suffice for a demonstration of the value of warrant. And if it will not work for warrant, then it will not work for truth or cognitive achievements.

If the arguments put forward for the fundamental epistemic value of warrant go through, then it has at least been shown that warrant is something we desire for its own sake. This is not an insignificant finding. On a wide variety of ethical and

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<sup>26</sup> Kvanvig, *The Value of Knowledge*, 42.

<sup>27</sup> Duncan Pritchard, “Knowledge and Final Value,” in *The Nature and Value of Knowledge*, 29 typescript.

epistemological theories such a finding is substantial indeed. If it is thought that we can confer value on something by having a certain kind of pro-attitude toward it, then by showing that we do have a pro-attitude toward warrant I have also shown that warrant does indeed have final value (because we desire it for its own sake). On the other hand, if it is thought that things have value independently of our pro-attitudes, then our pro-attitude toward warrant might well be taken as evidence for its final value, or perhaps as an intuition that grounds our knowledge of the final value of warrant. The only way to rebut these considerations is to deny that our pro-attitude toward warrant has any ethical or epistemological import, which would be hard to swallow indeed.

#### **4. The Value of the Anti-Luck Condition**

So far my resolution of the secondary value problem has proceeded on the assumption that knowledge is warranted true belief and that warrant has fundamental epistemic value on account of the fact that its constituent parts, objective fit and subjective appropriateness, have fundamental epistemic value. If knowledge does indeed have this structure, as I think it does, then the problem posed by the anti-luck condition is nullified. The fundamental epistemic value of warrant would not be compromised by the fact that satisfaction of the anti-luck condition lacks it because the value of warrant does not supervene on the value of the anti-luck condition.

We could further support the value of knowledge, however, if we could show that one need not accept the particular structure of knowledge outlined here in order to accept the value of knowledge. For example, suppose one wants to place the anti-luck condition directly on knowledge rather than on some other epistemic good, such as warrant or justification. Would it then be possible to answer Kvanvig's challenge by showing that

satisfying the anti-luck condition does indeed have fundamental epistemic value? I think so.

*Pace* Kvanvig, as a matter of fact it turns out that satisfying the anti-luck condition does have fundamental epistemic value and thus is not only valued on account of the fact that it is necessary for objective fitness and thus warrant. The upshot here, as we've seen, is that those who want to place the anti-luck condition directly on knowledge rather than on objective fitness or warrant still have an able response to the challenge posed by Kvanvig. I take it that when we have warranted true belief that *p* we have a belief, at least dispositionally, that our beliefs are objectively well formed. Cognizers in standard Gettier cases have subjectively appropriate beliefs, but their beliefs lack objective fit on account of the serendipity. Also, they have a false belief about the objective fitness of their belief. It's not just that their beliefs are not objectively fit, it's also that they mistakenly believe that their beliefs are objectively fit, although through no fault of their own. Thus, I would say they are deceived about their epistemic situation; they are duped about the kind of world they presently inhabit. And I take it that such deception is undesirable and disvaluable. We value worlds in which we are not deceived about our epistemic situation to worlds where we are. A world in which our reliable true beliefs about, say, the external world are paired with true beliefs about the kind of world we live in is more valuable than one in which our reliable true beliefs about the external world are paired with false beliefs about the kind of world we live in. This shows that correct beliefs about our epistemic situation are valuable even when we "already" have the truth.

Now at first blush it might seem that this putative solution fails to overcome veritism on account of the fact that it is the value of true belief that is doing the work here: presumably we value not being deceived because it is incompatible with believing the truth. This is true so far as it goes, yet it does not prevent satisfaction of the anti-luck condition from possessing fundamental epistemic value. When one knows that p one also truly believes, at least dispositionally, that one's belief is objectively well formed. Thus, in a state of knowledge that p a knower has an extra true belief that is absent in Gettier situations – namely, a true belief regarding the objective fitness of his belief that p. The value possessed by this true belief is not derived from the value of truly believing that p. It is valued independently, for its own sake, and thus when it is added to true belief that p a cognizer's overall epistemic situation is more valuable than when a cognizer is deceived about the objective fitness of his belief that p. To illustrate: no one would want to live in a world where a benevolent demon consistently arranges reality so as to fit our beliefs. In such a world we reliably believe the truth but are radically deceived as to the objective fitness of our beliefs. Here we think that our believings are a result of the facts when in truth the facts are a result of our believings. Such a world would be less valuable than a world in which we are not so deceived. Again, this seems to show that correct beliefs about our epistemic situation are valuable even when we “already” have the truth.<sup>28</sup> Thus, even if someone demurs with regard to my conception of the structure of

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<sup>28</sup> Of course, I do not mean to say that not being deceived is *ultima facie* valuable. There certainly seem to be cases where one is better off being deceived, such as is often the case with children. In such situations the good of not being deceived is outweighed by a higher good. Analogously, presumably being wealthy is valuable, although if wealth would corrupt your character then it would be better for you to be non-wealthy – in the end you fail if you gain the world but lose your soul. Having made the necessary qualifications, it still seems to me obvious that we put a premium (highly value) on not being deceived, including not being deceived about the epistemic merits of the epistemic situations in which we find ourselves.

knowledge and warrant and insists that the anti-luck condition pertains directly to knowledge, Kvanvig's challenge has still been answered – satisfying the anti-luck condition has fundamental epistemic value on account of the fact that it entails having a true belief (at least dispositionally) about the epistemic merits of our epistemic situation.

Before leaving this section I should mention how my argument for the value of satisfying the anti-luck condition relates to similar proposals in the literature. Berit Brogaard argues that, when one knows that *p*, one also knows that the evidence on which *p* is based is reliable. This means that, when one has knowledge, one understands why one's belief is warranted or justified – because it is based on reliable evidence. This second order belief is what makes knowledge more valuable than lesser epistemic standings.<sup>29</sup> The other proposal in the literature I have in mind is Ernest Sosa's notion of reflective knowledge, which requires aptly believing that one's belief is apt, or accurate (true) because of or through cognitive adroitness. Reflective knowledge is distinct from animal knowledge in that the latter does not require a second order belief about the aptness of the first order belief.<sup>30</sup> My proposal in this section is similar to both Brogaard's and Sosa's in that all three of us are proposing that cognizers frequently have second order beliefs – or metabeliefs – about the objective fitness of their first order beliefs.

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<sup>29</sup> Berit Brogaard, "Can Virtue Reliabilism Explain the Value of Knowledge?" *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 36 (2006): 335-354.

<sup>30</sup> Ernest Sosa, *A Virtue Epistemology: Apt Belief and Reflective Knowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). Sosa says that "reflective knowledge ... requires apt belief that he aptly believes" (32) and refers to the second order belief as a "meta-belief" (33).

Unlike Sosa, however, Brogaard and I both maintain that this kind of second order belief is always present in cases of knowledge and make no distinction between animal and reflective knowledge. Also, Sosa does not go on to highlight the significance of this second order belief for epistemic value. For Sosa, what makes knowledge more valuable than its subparts is aptness, or believing the truth through an intellectual competency. Sosa holds that such cognitive performances have as much fundamental epistemic value as do true beliefs.<sup>31</sup> Now when one has reflective knowledge, one has apt belief that one aptly believes. And it seems, although Sosa does not spell this out, that the value of the second order belief and the value of the first order belief both derive from the value of cognitive performances. I do not go so far as to require or deny that aptness is needed for knowledge here because it is not needed to make the arguments of the paper go through. On my account the value of the metabelief stems from its being true rather than from its being a cognitive achievement. Of course, it is possible that it is valuable both because it is true and a cognitive achievement, although the latter proposal is no part of my argument here.

The second order belief that I attribute to knowers is in fact inspired by Brogaard's account, although it is not identical to it. Brogaard requires that knowers have a second order belief about the reliability of the evidence on which the first order belief is based. I do not require that the second order belief at hand be specifically about the reliability of the evidence. Rather, I require that knowers have a second order belief that their first order belief is objectively well formed. This may not always take the form

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 87-88: "One part at least of the solution to the value problem lies in a point central to virtue epistemology: namely, that the value of apt belief is no less epistemically fundamental than that of true belief."



of a belief that one's evidence is reliable, although it is certainly plausible to maintain that second order beliefs frequently do take this form. Objective fit should not be reduced to reliable evidence as it is possible to have an objectively well formed belief that is not based on evidence. Of course, if evidentialism is true, then this is not possible. I suggest a metabelief regarding objective fitness rather than reliable evidence because (1) I am skeptical that the metabelief in question always pertains to evidence in cases of knowledge and (2) I want to stay neutral, at least in this paper, between evidentialism and non-evidentialism.

Also, although Brogaard and I both highlight the significance of this second order belief for matters of epistemic value, we do so in somewhat different ways. Brogaard holds that the extra value of knowledge comes from understanding why one's beliefs are justified. By contrast, my proposal that having a true second order belief about the objective fitness of one's first order belief that p helps to make knowledge that p more valuable than mere true belief that p does not appeal to the value of understanding. Brogaard's proposal is plausible and intriguing, although I do not want to endorse it or deny it at this point. The relationship between knowledge and understanding is a tricky issue that I do not want tackle here. For present purposes it is enough to note the similarities between my account and other prominent accounts of metabeliefs and their relevance for epistemic value. I take it that this similarity gives added plausibility to the argument I am developing here.

## **5. Concluding Thoughts**

I said earlier that my solution to the secondary value problem would also solve the tertiary value problem. It does so on account of the fact that we seem to value warrant

(objective fit and subjective appropriateness) for its own sake. It's not just that warrant has fundamental epistemic value but lacks final value all things considered because its value is derived from some non-epistemic good such as practical utility. We value objective fitness and subjective appropriateness for their own sake, thus they possess final value. This means that warrant possesses specifically epistemic value, for it is not valued because of its connection to another non-epistemic good. Objective fitness and subjective appropriateness are epistemic goods that are fundamentally epistemically valued for their own sake. We might say they have the following special kind of value – final epistemic value. Finally, it also appears that warrant has intrinsic value in that we value it on account of its internal properties – objective fit and subjective appropriateness. Now if we assume that truth has final, epistemic, and intrinsic value, then we can put this together with the results reached here to reach the conclusion that knowledge has final, epistemic, and intrinsic value.

Nor does one have to subscribe to my view of knowledge as warranted true belief to accept my resolution of the secondary value problem. Since objective fitness and subjective appropriateness are both fundamentally epistemically valuable goods that are ultimately necessary for knowledge, when it comes to solving the secondary value problem it is irrelevant where they are placed. In order to reassert the secondary value problem it will have to be shown that there is some further necessary condition for knowledge that lacks fundamental epistemic value, thus rendering full-blown knowledge no more valuable than any of its subparts. The problem is that it does not seem that there are any such conditions, for it seems that any epistemic good other than true belief which is necessary for knowledge will pertain to either objective fitness or subjective

appropriateness, and we have already seen that both of these have fundamental epistemic value.

Because I have not given any detailed account of the nature of objective fitness or subjective appropriateness (warrant) my resolution of the secondary value problem is not open to the criticism that I have misdiagnosed the nature of knowledge. There are two ways to criticize someone's argument for the value of knowledge. First, it could be argued that one has not given a correct explication of the nature of knowledge. Second, it could be argued that one has correctly identified all that is needed for knowledge but has failed to show that each subpart has fundamental epistemic value. When Kvanvig argues that the justification and anti-luck conditions do not have what we are calling fundamental epistemic value he is making a criticism of the second sort. The argument would be that perhaps knowledge really is justified true belief + the anti-luck condition but that not all of these subparts are valuable. This sort of criticism has been met by identifying knowledge with warranted true belief and showing that warrant has fundamental epistemic value.

But the first sort of criticism is altogether avoided on account of the fact that I have not specified what it means for a belief to be objectively fit or subjectively appropriate. So long as it is agreed that each of these are necessary for knowledge or warrant it cannot be argued that I have identified epistemic goods that actually do have fundamental epistemic value but are nevertheless not needed. Thus, because my accounts of the nature of knowledge and warrant are general rather than specific, my resolution of the secondary value problem is less likely to be found wanting due to an error in my view

of the natures of knowledge and warrant.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, this kind of criticism plagues other arguments for the value of knowledge currently at play in the literature.

One example is the argument that knowledge is valuable because it is a cognitive achievement – something for which we are responsible, for which deserve credit.<sup>33</sup> This argument is open to the criticism that there are cases of knowledge without cognitive achievement. Another example is the idea that knowledge is valuable because it entails having a true belief that one's evidence is a reliable indication of the truth of one's belief. Thus, knowledge entails understanding how our evidence makes our beliefs warranted and is valuable on account of the value of understanding.<sup>34</sup> Again, the problem here is that this explanation of the value of knowledge is open to the charge that it has misidentified the nature of knowledge, and this due to the fact that we needn't understand how our beliefs are warranted in order to have knowledge. One more example. It has been argued that when one has knowledge one is able to answer correctly certain questions about the target propositions against the background of contrastive propositions and, further, that knowledge is finally valuable because being able to answer a question is

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<sup>32</sup> Miranda Fricker, "The Value of Knowledge and the Test of Time," *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 64 (2009): 124, makes a similar point: "The value problem seems to present itself to most who tackle it as a challenge and an opportunity to advance whatever particular epistemological theory they espouse.... This has two disadvantages: any proposed solution is hostage to epistemological fortune in that it stands or falls along with the particular analysis of knowledge that issues it; and it encourages players to look for the value of knowledge in something that distinguished their theory of knowledge from their competitors' theories, when in fact the basic value of knowledge may be better explained by reference to something less epistemologically specific."

<sup>33</sup> For various versions of and variations on this proposal see Zagzebski, "The Search for the Source of Epistemic Good"; Greco, "Knowledge as Credit for True Belief"; Wayne Riggs, "Reliability and the Value of Knowledge," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 64 (2002): 79-96 and "Beyond Truth and Falsehood: The Real Value of Knowing that P," *Philosophical Studies* 107 (2002): 87-108; and Sosa, *A Virtue Epistemology*, 70-91.

<sup>34</sup> For this proposal see Brogaard, "Can Virtue Reliabilism Explain the Value of Knowledge?"

finally valuable.<sup>35</sup> The downside of this proposal in terms of epistemic value is that, if knowledge is not the ability to answer a question, then we no longer have any explanation of the value of knowledge.

In all three of these cases what is going on is that an epistemic desideratum with fundamental epistemic value has been identified, but that it is not required for warrant or knowledge. Any theory which specifies exactly what it means for a belief to be warranted will have to contend with the criticism that the nature of warrant or perhaps knowledge has been misidentified. Of course, since we want an account of the nature of warrant and knowledge we should not allow such criticisms to prevent us from giving detailed accounts of these things. But we do not need a detailed account of warrant to see that it has fundamental epistemic value. Thus, even if we cannot agree on what is required for objective fitness we can still agree that it has fundamental epistemic value. And even if we cannot agree on what is required for subjective appropriateness we can still agree that it has fundamental epistemic value. So long as it is seen that these are genuine requirements for warrant or knowledge and that they really do have fundamental epistemic value we need not reach unanimity on their nature.

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<sup>35</sup> This argument is made in Martijn Blaauw, "Epistemic Value, Achievements, and Questions," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 82 (2008): 43-57.

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