

Epistemic Value. Curiosity, Knowledge and Response-Dependence

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The paper addresses two fundamental issues in epistemic axiology. It argues primarily that curiosity, in particular its intrinsic variety, is the foundational epistemic virtue since it is the value-bestowing epistemic virtue. A response-dependantist framework is proposed, according to which a cognitive state is epistemically valuable if a normally or ideally curious or inquisitive cognizer would be motivated to reach it. Curiosity is the foundational epistemic virtue, since it bestows epistemic value. It also motivates and organizes other epistemic virtues, so it is foundational and central for epistemology. The second issue is the one of the fundamental bearer of epistemic value. I shall argue that truth is the primary goal, but that mere true belief is not the fundamental bearer. Rather, the bearer is a relatively minimalist kind of knowledge. Mere true belief cannot be rationally accepted in isolation from a supporting structure. However, any efficient supporting structure introduces further epistemic goods (justification, reliability, anti-luck guarantees), thus upgrading the original true belief. Mere true belief can be neither defended, nor rationally sustained through time, due to isolation. Mere true belief cannot be rationally sustained in the face of a slightest bit of contrary evidence (the Meno insight). Therefore, mere true belief is not rationally stable. Minimal knowledge is, and this accounts for the primary and secondary value problem, and for a relatively undemanding kind of tertiary value.

Keywords: Curiosity, belief, epistemic value.

1. Introduction

Let me first express my gratitude to Ilhan Inan; I am very happy that we were able to organize an Ilhan day in Maribor, from which the papers in this volume mainly come.¹

Many philosophers, scientists and educators agree that knowledge has a value. Inan is surely among them: in his brilliant curiosity book he writes:

Whether curiosity is taken to be a form of virtue or not, it should be clear that there are important connections between being curious and some of our basic epistemic attitudes and achievements. Knowing, for instance, is an epistemic achievement, at least in certain cases, and curiosity is one of its basic motivators. (Inan 2012: 143)

Other, related epistemic items, like true belief or understanding also seem to have a value. Some of the value seems clearly instrumental. Knowledge that my two new neighbors are happily married to each other might be useful for me in order to know what to expect from them, how to behave towards each and both, and so on. Knowledge that some Neptune moons are rich in water might turn out to be practically useful in a more distant future, when we might need water from outside our usual earthly sources. But, other kinds of value are also in the offing. I was happy to learn about the Neptune moons not because I expected that I will need some water originating from them, but simply because I saw it as a very interesting fact about our distant neighbors in the solar system. Call this other kind of value “intrinsic”. Call the value of epistemic states (or facts) “epistemic value”, or “e-value” for short. I shall assume that instrumental e-value is not problematic, and concentrate on the intrinsic e-value.²

Allow me a few terminological proposals. Take the basic epistemic item of your choice: truth, true belief, justified true belief, knowledge, and understanding. Let me for now call it just „grasping”.³ I shall abbreviate grasping the truth that p , as „ Gp ”. Let us agree that some items of this kind do have intrinsic e-value. For example, “Some Neptune moons are rich in water” has such value for me. Consider now some p and grasping the truth of it (Gp). One option concerning their value is that they are not valuable; at a more general, philosophical level, then, no such item has epistemic value. We have already embraced a more optimistic view, according to which such items often are valuable.

¹ Thanks go to Ilhan Inan, Safiye Yiğit, Duncan Pritchard, Ian Carter, and other colleagues participating at the curiosity conference in Istanbul (2014), virtue epistemology conference at Taipei (2014), at the philosophy conferences in Rijeka (2014) and Bled (2015), the Inan conference in Maribor in April 2015, and at the discussion of my presentation in Edinburgh in 2016.

² I am leaving aside here the difficulties concerning the instrumental e-value, put forward by Allan Hazlett in his (2013).

³ Following Duncan Pritchard’s (2014) terminology of grasping the truth (either true belief, or something richer and closer to knowledge).

Now, suppose I am interested in “ p ”, and curious whether things are as the proposition p represents them to be. Again, there are two options. I might be curious about the items as a means to an end, extrinsically and instrumentally. Knowledge that my two new neighbors are happily married to each other often has this extrinsic character, having to do with expectations and useful ways to behave. Alternatively, some topic might be intrinsically interesting, epistemically attractive in itself. Following Brady (who in this context also mentions Hurka (2001: 6)) I shall equate intrinsic goodness with non-instrumental goodness, leaving aside complicated cases where one can, in a sense, have one without the other (Brady 2009: 265).

Intrinsic curiosity and intrinsic e-value will be our topic. I have already quoted Inan. Let me add one more quote connecting curiosity to epistemic value:

Human curiosity may or may not be considered to be a virtue; but even if it isn't, it must still be of vital importance in its relation to certain epistemic attitudes that most of us value. We wish to be inquisitive and open-minded, and we wish to realize how fallible our beliefs are and become aware of our own ignorance and our cognitive limits. This requires epistemic self-reflection. But where would one find the motivation to do this? There are a lot of things that we do not know, but only a small portion of them is brought to our consciousness. Why is that? Because we care about certain things and not others. We have an interest in certain topics, and we care to know more about them. It is this kind of interest that motivates us to reflect on our ignorance, and only then we become curious. So in this sense, curiosity is value laden. We are curious only about things that we are interested to know. Such an interest surely is a product of what we value. Even if we don't value the very object of our curiosity, we are interested in it because we believe that coming to know it relates to certain things that we do value. The broader our interests are, the broader the scope of our curiosity. (Inan 2012: 183)

Let me next borrow three more quotes listed by Stephen Grimm in his (2008) paper, to illustrate the fact that epistemologists normally accept that some items have intrinsic e-value:

[Goldman:] Our interest in information has two sources: curiosity and practical concerns. The dinosaur extinction fascinates us, although knowing its cause would have no material impact on our lives. We also seek knowledge for practical reasons, as when we solicit a physician's diagnosis or compare prices at automobile dealer shops. (Goldman 1999: 3)

[Alston:] [Although having true beliefs furthers our practical goals] the attainment of knowledge and understanding are also of intrinsic value. (Alston 2005: 31)

[Lynch:] We care about the truth for more than just the benefits it brings us... There are times in our lives when we simply want to know for no other reason than the knowing itself.

Curiosity is not always motivated by practical concerns. Consider extremely abstract mathematical conjectures. With regard to at least some such conjectures, knowing their truth would get us no closer to anything else we want. (Lynch 2004: 15–16) (All three quoted in Grimm 2008: 727)

I shall return to these quotes in a few lines, and I shall freely assume that there is intrinsic e-value. Our question in this paper is *where intrinsic e-value comes from, and the conjecture we are going to develop and defend is that it derives from human curiosity or inquisitiveness*. The first quote from Goldman already suggested the connection, without making the crucial step of deriving value from curiosity. Similarly, in the continuation of Alston's quote:

... the attainment of knowledge and understanding are also of intrinsic value. 'All men by nature desire to know,' said Aristotle, and this dictum has been reaffirmed by many of his successors.

And he goes on in the same direction:

Members of our species seem to have a built-in drive to get to the truth about things that pique their curiosity and to understand how and why things are as they are and happen as they do. So it is as close to truistic as we can get in philosophy to take truth as a good-making characteristic, and falsity as a bad-making characteristic, of beliefs and other outputs of cognition. (Alston 2005: 31).

The quotes point in the direction of the thesis that desire for knowledge, or truth, or something similar is connected to the intrinsic value of these items, but they do not tell us what the connection is exactly like. Grimm himself is a bit more explicit:

...according to this way of thinking, our curiosity about how things stand in the world is . . . importantly like the thirst we (characteristically, at least) feel when our body is dehydrated. When our body is dehydrated—when we experience thirst—*satisfying* our thirst is naturally thought to possess a kind of intrinsic value. (Grimm 2008: 727).

(Let me note that he does not clearly endorse the way of thinking he mentions.) I shall try to formulate the claim about the assignation of e-value by the desire to know, and in doing it, assign the central role to the desire, which I shall simply call "curiosity". Curiosity bestows e-value. It is central for the area of epistemology, and we shall be exploring one important aspect of this centrality.

All this brings us to the work of İlhan Inan dedicated to curiosity. As Safiye Yiğit has noted at a presentation (in Maribor), my work could be seen as being complementary to his. Inan is focused upon more internal matters, above all the definition of curiosity, whereas I am more interested in its external status within the general field of epistemology, in particular virtue-epistemology. In my first paper connected with Inan's work I have noted that his descriptive-explanatory interest in curiosity is well-matched by my normative view that curiosity is the central motivating epistemic virtue, since his stress on the explanatory centrality of curiosity is well matched by its central normative role in the account. Here I shall be making a step further and talk about curiosity bestowing epistemic value; I hope our views can still be brought into harmony.

Besides this broad agreement, I shall be referring to Inan's work in talking about kinds of curiosity that can bestow value, since his work

on various degrees of ignorance (inostensibility) is very useful for drawing distinctions in this field. Finally, when I shall be characterizing valuable epistemic states, I shall, besides propositional belief/knowledge take into account Inan's highly relevant objectual(ist) distinction of inostensible vs. ostensible conceptualizing of the target of curiosity.

Here is the brief preview. We have two issues to address, first, the metaphysical one: where does the e-value come from? Is it more subjective or more objective? Second, the epistemological issue: which items are really epistemically basic?

I want to start from the metaphysical issue, the crucial issue in epistemic axiology. So, in the next section (section 2), I shall be talking about grasping, leaving open its precise nature, and going straight to the metaphysical issue of the source of value. I shall introduce the idea of response-dependence, and propose that e-value is response-dependent. Grasplings of "*p*" are e-valuable because they would be positively valued by relevant cognizer(s), on the basis of interest in whether *p*, or *p*-curiosity. Curiosity is the foundational epistemic virtue, since it bestows epistemic value.

Section 3 discusses the issue of the target of idealized curiosity which is at the same time the fundamental bearer of epistemic value, namely a relatively minimalist kind of knowledge. Mere true belief cannot be rationally accepted in isolation from a supporting structure. This point is introduced by a discussion of a coffee-machine thought experiment, and the e-value of reliability is affirmed and discussed. The result is then developed into a characterization of the structure(s) that are serious candidates for the bearer of e-value.

Section 4 brings together the results from the two previous sections, and connects them to the conjecture that curiosity is also an organizing epistemic virtue. It thus ends with the double claim: curiosity organizes all other epistemic virtues, and it bestows e-value on our knowledge, and knowledge-like states.

2. *Response-dependence, curiosity and value*

Once upon a time I wanted to know whether Neptune's moons are rich in water, and I learned from a reliable source that they are. Sue wanted to know which town is the capital of Rwanda, Inan tells us (2012: 138), and she learned that it is Kigali. I ended up having a piece of propositional true belief, hopefully even a piece of knowledge. Sue ended up with a piece of ostensible information ("Kigali") with which to replace her former inostensible description "the capital of Rwanda". We ended up with positive "graspings", to use the term introduced in the previous section. I had a propositional grasping, *G_p*, of the proposition that *p*, Sue had an objectual one, *G_o*, of the object *o*. We were both happy, since we reached something that has epistemic value (e-value, for short) for each of us. We shall discuss in the next section the precise nature of

the bearers of e-value. Here, let me just mention that I agree with a long tradition that on the propositional side truth is paramount, and I assume that in the case of objectual acquaintance correctness plays the same role. But what about achievement? It is welcome but it is not crucial.

Now, how can we account for such intrinsic e-value? Someone may try to avoid the problem by denying the existence of intrinsic e-value: nothing is intrinsically valuable as the object of cognition, or as the state of grasping it. Some of my students were defending this intrinsic e-value nihilism. We agreed at the beginning of the paper that nihilism is untenable: knowing facts about Neptune, or Rwanda, might be intrinsically valuable.

So, the tactics to be followed in this section will be to assume that some *Gps* (and *Gos*) are e-valuable; where does the intrinsic epistemic value of *Gps* (and *Gos*) come from? Let me call both *Gt* for short, “*t*” standing for “target”. Now, what is epistemic valuing like? The usual feeling (“phenomenology”) is clear: some *Gts* concerning some states of affairs (or objects) are intrinsically e-valuable, and people, if intelligent, well-informed-educated and sensitive are curious about these states of affairs. Here is Inan:

If curiosity always involves interest and interest always involves values, then it follows that curiosity is always value-laden. I believe that such a position is correct. This would imply that strictly speaking there is no such thing as “sheer curiosity”, if the term is taken to refer to a mental state in which one is merely curious about something that is not motivated by anything he values. (Inan 2012: 128)

And the link with the desire to know is easy to spot:

If such an interest causes a desire to know, then it must be of the second order, in that the curious being not only has to be aware of what he or she does not know but must also desire to come to know the unknown. What exactly is involved in such a desire to come to know the unknown, how it is possible, and whether such a desire is to be taken as identical to that mental state of curiosity are issues to be explored now.

It appears that the general tendency is to take curiosity as being an essential tool in achieving something that has intrinsic value, whether that is knowledge or understanding, in the propositional or objectual sense. (Inan 2012: 10)

This is what we have on the side of the desiring or interested cognizer. On the side of the object, the target to be grasped, grasping itself, or its external referent, we have a brute fact of being valuable. But why would a target of curiosity have *intrinsic epistemic* value? Take Neptune’s water-rich moons and the capital of Kigali (or the fact that a determinate city is such a capital). Why would anything about them have *intrinsic epistemic* value? Consider first the extrinsic value: information about Neptune’s water-rich moons is epistemically extrinsically valuable because it is useful *for us*. But the idea that there is a non-relational intrinsic value attached to them (or to Kigali), and that

such a strange fact could be dictating epistemic axiology seems a bit extravagant. Just postulating that it has one leaves epistemic value unexplained.

We are thus facing Euthyphro's dilemma concerning the order of determination: does curiosity bestow value upon truths and graspings of truths or is it the other way around? Analogous questions arise about other kinds of value (moral, aesthetic) and the usual feeling ("phenomenology") and the kinds of options are the same. As we are all aware, there are roughly three groups of options altogether, differing in the order of determination.

First option: graspings (Gp , Go) and their objects are not really valuable; 'e-value' is mere projection. We might call it value nihilism, or strong anti-realism (projectivism). An example of it is offered by Stephen Stich in his 1990 book.⁴

Second option: graspings (Gp , Go) and their objects are intrinsically e-valuable in themselves—strong realism. Here, the strong realist claims that intrinsic e-value determines human curiosity (at least in the right cognizers). A fine defense of such objectivism about e-value can be found in Michael Brady (2009) and I shall be addressing some of his arguments a few pages below.

Third option: graspings (Gp , Go) and their objects are e-valuable because of our curiosity-dispositionalism or the response-dependence view. This is the view to be defended here.

Note the analogy with color: strong anti-realism (projectivism) would claim that 'nothing is really red'. Strong realism would claim that being red is a completely objective feature of red because it produces some relevant redness-related perceptual state. Finally, the response-dependence view has it that a surface is red because it tends to produce the redness-response in relevant observers under normal circumstances.

I shall set aside the strong projectivism that comes close to error theory, and e-value nihilism, and turn directly to response-dependence (dispositionalism) and thereby to the claim that intrinsic curiosity is the e-value bestowing epistemic virtue. This is the strong (and, to many tastes problematic) claim that I want to start to defend here. Here is the general form for accounting for e-value:

p (& Gp) are e-valuable iff a person H , sufficiently cognitively normal (or, alternatively, idealized), and familiar with the domain of p , would be stably intrinsically curious about p .

Now we need a bit of refining. Let me start by introducing a distinction. When Sue learns about Kigali being the capital of Rwanda, she experiences the information (and her grasping of it) as being valuable. This is the subjective aspect, and I shall talk of e-value as experienced, or e-VALUE_{exp} distinguishing it from the objective e-value we want to account for (compare it to the experience of surface being colored, in

⁴ See my extended criticism in Mišević (2000).

contrast to the objective color). So, please note the terminology: Value as experienced = value_{exp}

The experience represents the information about Kigali (and the grasping of it) as being valuable; the value as experienced is being felt as the property of the information (and grasping). I can feel how valuable this thing I have learned is for me, Sue might think. And the experience is transparent; it goes right to the target itself. The e-value is *transparently* present in the target:

1. e-value_{exp} is being experienced as being a property of a state of affairs. (*A transparency datum*)

The datum is both obvious and robust. It crucially distinguishes the experience of value from the experience of pain-causing devices. Locke's mana (a laxative inducing stomach pain), a device that produces pain in the thumb, say a thumbscrew, or an imaginary pain-producing surface, like those in Wittgenstein's thought experiment are, or would be, experienced in a quite different way. Victim's perceptual apparatus does not ascribe to those a phenomenal property corresponding to their pain-producing power. With value, as with color, things stand otherwise: they are experienced as belonging to the targets.

- 1a. Intentionally experiencing e-value is an act of axiological intuition.

I use the term "intentionally" in the sense of being object-directed. Remember our wondering at what non-human facts could make an item (like "Neptune's moons are rich in water", or the Kigali fact) intrinsically epistemically valuable. In a sense, the wondering points to a minimally naturalistic stance: there is nothing in the nature of physical reality that accounts for axiological properties. This gives us our next premise:

2. The e-value_{exp} is not an experiencer-independent property of the state of affairs. (*naturalism*)

It has been objected by Stroud that accepting the scientific, "unmasking" premises, like our 2, leads the theoretician to believe there are no corresponding properties. His example involves color. He claims that in order to defend such a view, the theoretician must be able to "identify perceptions as perceptions of this or that colour without himself ascribing any colour to any physical object", and this "cannot be done" (Stroud 2002: 245; the argument is deployed at length in 2000, Ch. 7). However, this objection underestimates the possibilities of bootstrapping: the unmasking theoretician starts in his own case with the full panoply of commonsense beliefs, and then proceeds by weakening them, as his theorizing progresses, going from "this is red" to "this looks red to me", where the content of "red" changes accordingly. To apply it to our case, the response-dependentist theoretician starts in his own case with the full panoply of commonsense beliefs, and then proceeds by weakening them, as his theorizing progresses, going from "this is valuable" to "it feels valuable to me", where the content of "valuable" changes accord-

ingly. And he does not have to end up as a value nihilist, as we shall see in a moment.

3. The e-value_{exp} is not a property of a subjective state (*From Transparency*).

It is the value projected onto the target (moons, Kigali and facts about them). Unfortunately, both claims, 2 and 3, attribute a certain error to Sue. But, no one is perfect. And our everyday experiences and folk conceptualizations offer no guarantee of being error-free. Sue's error might be like the folk error of taking "up" and "down" as absolute properties of space. It is not dramatic, but it is an error nevertheless. *Charity* in interpretation dictates that we don't see folk as referring to nothing whatsoever when referring to directions conceptualized in the absolutist, folk way. Rather, they are best interpreted as managing to refer to the property that is the closest cousin of the intended one. The point is not just minimizing the error, but also rationalizing it, making it intelligible. *Charity* and *inference to the best explanation* go hand in hand. The traditional dispositionalist or response-dependantist thesis honors both. It captures the fact that *the closest actual referent for color concepts and expressions* is the disposition of surfaces to cause the target intentional states. And that *the closest actual referent for value concepts and expressions* is the disposition of targets to cause the right intentional states. And it does this stressing the right order of determination: what makes a surface red is its state-causing power, and not the other way around, what makes the information e-valuable is causing the satisfaction of curiosity, and not the other way around. Therefore (*by principles of charity and by inference to the best explanation*):

4. Conclusion: Being e-valuable in the objective sense is being such as to cause the response of experiencing e-value_{exp} in *normal/ideal-? observers under normal circumstances*. (*Response-intentionalism*)

Let us now start unpacking the Conclusion. As for observers, we have left open two options, the first referring to normal observers, the second to ideal ones. Start with the first, the egalitarian one:

p (&Gp) are e-valuable iff a person H, endowed with at least normal cognitive capacities and at least some general knowledge, and familiarity with the domain of p , would be stably intrinsically curious about p (either whether p is true, or about truths in connection with p , or both).

Assume that the cognizer is aware of her cognitive capacities (a small idealization). But now, why do we say "in connection with p "? To deal with the "curious facts" problem raised by Brady (2009: 278–9). Suppose we think about the following piece of information:

It is forbidden for aircraft to fly over the Taj Mahal.

Brady suggests that we are happy to know such facts without having any antecedent curiosity about them. I suggest that there is a conse-

quent curiosity: we appreciate grasping them because we find them curious, raising further questions, like why anyone would forbid flight over Taj Mahal and the like.

But this is just the beginning of a dialogue with Brady, who has come up with a collection of objections to the response-dependence account in his paper on curiosity and the value of truth in the *Epistemic Value* volume. Here is his remark about the egalitarian version of the account (he doesn't call it "egalitarian" himself):

But there seems to be a strong reason to be sceptical about this line on epistemic value. For it is a general truth in value theory that, although the fact that I do desire or care about something might incline us to think that that thing is worth desiring or caring about, it does not guarantee that it is. There is always the possibility that I desire or care about something that I ought not to desire or care about, that is, something that is not worthy of my concern. In other words, there is always the possibility that one of my ends or goals is not a proper end or goal. If so, we might think that the fact that I desire the truth on a particular subject for its own sake does not guarantee that the truth on that subject is worth desiring, or is valuable as an end. (Brady 2009: 269)

We obviously have to idealize; the question is how much. Here is the general form:

Gp is e-valuable iff a person H, endowed with (decent to high) cognitive capacities and general knowledge, and familiarity with the domain of p , would be stably intrinsically curious about p (either whether p is true, or about truths in connection with p , or both).

Michael Brady in his paper delineates such a position without endorsing it; in fact he proceeds to criticize it and ends by rejecting it. Here is the proposal:

How can we move from the claim that we are naturally curious to discover the answers to particular questions, to the claim that answers to those questions are valuable in themselves? This problem is pressing, given that there might be something amiss with our curiosity or concern, and which therefore casts doubt upon the value of the truths which constitute the object of that curiosity or concern. A simple solution is to idealize the relevant concern for truth. Thus, we might claim that the truth on a certain issue is valuable, not if someone does care about or desire the truth on that issue, but only if the person would care about the truth under certain idealized conditions: if, for instance, the person would desire the truth on that issue were she fully rational (...). A process of rational idealization will bring to light whether the subject's interest is instrumental or intellectual, will ensure that inquiries are not based upon false beliefs, and will rule out curiosity that results from irrational compulsions. We might therefore maintain that it is the satisfaction of natural and rational, idealized curiosity which has final value. (Brady 2009: 271)

Obviously, the proposal needs a lot of work to arrive at the right level of idealization. Too little is unsatisfactory, given human limitations; unfortunately, some people are intrinsically curious about worthless matters. Too much is equally bad: only high level problems will be in-

trinsically interesting to such an epistemically ideal person. In addition, we have the issues of depth and width: short of omniscience, what is the right proportion of going into detail and depth, and wanting to encompass as many areas as possible? So, the general question is with us, concerning both subjects and circumstances: how much idealization and of what kind? I still believe that intrinsic curiosity is the e-value bestowing epistemic virtue. Instead of trying to solve all the difficulties at once, I shall limit myself to a handful of problems, some of them raised by Brady and his original and challenging counterexamples.

First problem: the superficiality of novelty. In his “Interest and Epistemic Goodness” (2011) Brady starts from psychology: “There is wide agreement—among psychologists, at least—on the appraisal variables that generate interest”, he writes. “One of the central appraisals is of novelty: ‘whether or not an event is new, sudden, or unfamiliar. For interest, this novelty check includes whether people judge something as new, ambiguous, complex, obscure, uncertain, mysterious, contradictory, unexpected, or otherwise not understood.” (Silvia 2006: 57). He also mentioned that interest and importance diverge. In the handout he points out that “... we tend to find old, expected, familiar things comfortable or enjoyable, but are interested in things which are unexpected, unfamiliar, mysterious, baffling” (Brady 2011: 2). So, the curious person starts by noting that something is ambiguous (complex, obscure, mysterious, contradictory), and asks oneself how one should one understand it. He finds such interest superficial and unstable.

Answer: To me it seems that if curiosity is directed to the “new, ambiguous, complex, obscure, uncertain, mysterious, contradictory, unexpected, or otherwise not understood” then its central goal is achieving understanding, rather than arriving at isolated items of knowledge, and I think it is epistemically quite a good thing. The interest in complexity leads to the desire to understand, the crucial epistemic desire. Novelty is in the vicinity; it involves not-yet-understood matters. Finally, a virtuous researcher is able to control herself, to balance novelty with relevance and depth, and so on. So much for the first line of defense. But one may also add that the interest in the novel and the complex is, globally seen, extremely epistemically useful. Novelty liberates us from cognitive inertia; just think of depressed people who have lost their natural curiosity.

Second problem: M. Brady’s symmetrical problem for curiosity as a source of value:

... [t]here are *epistemic* windfalls, truths whose value depends upon the fact that they were unsought, and so depends upon the fact that they were not the results of inquiry. (Brady 2009: 280)⁵

⁵ Here is a longer quote:

...we might think that there are epistemic windfalls, truths whose value depends upon the fact that they were unsought, and so depends upon the fact that they were not the results of inquiry. For example, if unsolicited affection constitutes a positive value in our lives, we might think that unsolicited knowledge of affection

He claims that, for instance, unsolicited knowledge of affection constitutes a positive value in our lives.

Answer: Suppose I care for the love of three persons, Jane, Julia and Peter, but I don't care at all whether Kate loves me, and I don't give a damn for info about it. Why would "unsolicited knowledge" of her affection constitute a positive value in my life? So, I assume that these counterexamples to the response-dependant account do not really threaten it. On the other hand, if I cared about Kate's feelings, I would have normally asked myself whether she has affection for me, and thus I would have been (perhaps very passively and lazily) curious about the matter.

The third problem: the fact-value gap. Here is a remark against response-dependantism made by Stratton-Lake in his Introduction to Ross's classic *The Right and the Good*:

[o]ur knowledge that certain things are intrinsically good does not seem to be derived from other evaluative knowledge, and given the autonomy of ethics, this knowledge cannot be derived from non-evaluative premisses, such as our knowledge that we desire or approve of that thing. (Stratton-Lake 2002: xlili)

A simple answer: Let us accept for the sake of argument that moral value is completely autonomous. We have no reason to accept the analogy with e-value; it is simply not so separate from its factual supervenience basis as moral value is.

The fourth problem: omniscience. Inan, Carter, and my student M. Bakalova warned me that a person, who knows everything and is thus epistemically close to perfection, would not be curious, and would thus paradoxically lack the alleged main motivating epistemic virtue.

One answer is that many human virtues are tailor-made for human agents in less-than-perfect but better-than hellish human circumstances. Curiosity is one such virtue, typical for finite and relatively ignorant beings, in need of constant updating of information in order to function successfully. (Analogy: an all-powerful, even omnipotent being does not need courage.)

But I would add more: I stipulate a slightly wider meaning of "inquisitiveness" that also includes cherishing the truth once found. It seems to me a natural extension of the narrower meaning: a person with bad memory but eager to learn things, who subsequently doesn't care a bit for the knowledge acquired and is completely unworried about having forgotten everything she learned, is not consistently inquisitive. So, the hypothetical omniscient person who keeps her virtue by cherishing what she knows is "curious" in this wider sense.

does as well. Thus, I might learn that 'she loves me' because of her unsolicited declaration of love. Here my true belief has value that it would lack if it resulted from inquiry on my part. There seem to be a great number of surprising but welcome truths that fall into this category. So the efforts of inquiry are sometimes incompatible with the intrinsic value of true beliefs. (Brady 2009: 280)

The fifth problem is the issue of bad curiosity: some cases of curiosity are really bad. How can curiosity then bestow any positive value?

Answer: Most bad curiosity is the one that is extrinsically motivated (envy, bad goals, etc.) but what if I am intrinsically motivated, but my curiosity is still unacceptable (say, curious about the private life of my student, whom I just find an interesting person, without having further goals but grasping truths about him)? In these cases, the moral disvalue (in the example, the derogation of privacy) counterbalances the intrinsic e-value, and wins (there are two further sub-options: either the e-value is annihilated, or it stays there but is simply defeated by the negative extrinsic, moral disvalue).

Sixth problem: sometimes intense curiosity can block insight. Scientists tell us that they got their best ideas when they stopped being obsessed with the issue they were working on; suddenly the insight would come, often in unexpected circumstances.

Answer: psychologists agree with scientists-discoverers, but they tell us that the best explanation is to postulate the existence of a sub-personal inquisitive drive (see Kounios and Beeman (2015)).

There are further issues to be addressed: kinds of curiosity reflected on the features of e-value, the nature and the origin of e-disvalue, and many more. But we have to conclude. Let me reiterate the main idea of the section and of the paper: intrinsic curiosity is the e-value bestowing epistemic virtue. Probably *most things that concern us in our normal human lives are response-dependent*: goodness-wickedness, beauty-ugliness, attractiveness-repulsiveness, being humanly meaningful vs. being meaningless and empty. In contrast, *most things that are metaphysically important are not response-dependent*. To put it in a form of a slogan, *response-dependence belongs to the manifest picture we care about humanly, independence belongs to the deep reality we care about scientifically*. Philosophy is the happy branch in which we can discuss both.

Let me now turn to the empty slot I left in the story. What are the targets of curiosity and the bearers of epistemic value? Although I think that the proposed account would work for a very wide range of candidates, an opponent might see the lack of discussion of the topic as a fatal lacuna in the account. So, the question should be addressed. It will take a lot of space, in comparison with the main topic, but still I apologize for too brief a treatment of an intricate and important topic.

3. *Targets of curiosity: Bearers of epistemic value*

We have been freely talking about “grasping” as candidate bearer of epistemic value. But what kinds of doxastic-epistemic states are eligible candidates? Let us stay with propositional curiosity and corresponding states; we shall try to generalize our result(s) to their objectual counterparts later. Certainly, we have true belief, (internally) justified true belief, knowledge, understanding and perhaps even more, for example wisdom. Does each item have a value? And what are the paramount

qualities that support the value? Let me agree with a long tradition that truth is paramount. But what about achievement? It is welcome but is not crucial. So many items are valued that do not involve significant achievement, as Duncan Pritchard has argued at length, in detail and to my mind convincingly (for instance in his (2014)).⁶ So it is good to have true belief, and to have internally justified true belief, and reliably acquired true belief, and knowledge. But also the components (justification, reliability) seem to be valuable. Knowledge seems to have a high status partly because of its stability and reliability. On the theoretical level it would be nice to have an account that could order the bearers of e-value, for instance show that value of understanding is greater than value of knowledge that is greater than value of justified true belief that is greater than value of mere true belief (what about reliably acquired true belief?). But some comparisons might be difficult, and there might be no consensus about ordering.⁷

So, let me start by discussing the value of stable, reliable origin. It has been famously contested by Linda Zagzebsky, for instance in her (2003) paper, where she offers a few remarks on coffee and coffee machines, that have been reconstructed as a provocative thought experiment. I shall use the summary offered by Duncan Pritchard, since it makes clear the thought-experimental character of the argument:

Imagine two great cups of coffee identical in every relevant respect—they look the same, taste the same, smell the same, are of the same quantity, and so on. Clearly, we value great cups of coffee. Moreover, given that we value great cups of coffee, it follows that we also value reliable coffeemaking machines—i.e. machines which regularly produce good coffee. Notice, however, that once we've got the great coffee, then we don't then care whether it was produced by a reliable coffee-making machine. That is, that the great coffee was produced by a reliable coffee-making machine doesn't contribute any additional value to it. In order to see this, note that if one were told that only one of the great identical cups of coffee before one had been produced

⁶ But Pritchard goes very far:

When I say that truth is the fundamental epistemic good, I mean that from a purely epistemic point of view it is ultimately only truth that we should care about. Call this the truth thesis...

... Elsewhere, I have characterised this view as epistemic value T-monism, in that:

- (i) it is a view about epistemic value specifically (that's the 'epistemic value' part);
- (ii) it says that there is just one finally epistemically valuable epistemic good (that's the 'monism' part); and
- (iii) it says that this finally epistemically valuable epistemic good is truth (that's the 'T' part) (2014:114)

⁷ Compare John Gibbons' (2013) book on the norm of belief. He notes that the following are all fairly plausible claims about when we ought to believe things.

- (T) You ought to believe p only if p is true.
- (J) You ought to believe p if and only if you're justified in believing p.
- (K) You ought to believe p only if you'd thereby know that p.

And that though they're all plausible, they can't all be true. But, he tries to do justice to all of them.

by a reliable coffee-making machine, this would have no bearing at all on the issue of which cup one preferred; one would still be indifferent on this score. In short, whatever value is conferred on a cup of coffee through being produced by a reliable coffee-making machine, this value is ‘swamped’ by the value conferred on that coffee in virtue of it being a great cup of coffee. (Pritchard 2011: 246–7).

Pritchard calls it the swamping argument and here is his formulation:

(1) The epistemic value conferred on a belief by that belief having an epistemic property is instrumental epistemic value relative to the further epistemic good of true belief.

(...)

(2) 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.

(...)

(3) Knowledge that *p* is sometimes more epistemically valuable than mere true belief that *p*. (Pritchard 2011: 248–9)

This brings the Swamping Problem onto the scene: if the value of a property possessed by an item is only instrumental value relative to a further good and that good is already present in that item, then this property can confer no additional value on that item. This holds for epistemic properties in relation to the good of truth. So, knowledge that *p* can be no more valuable than mere true belief that *p*. Pritchard accepts (1) and (2) and rejects 3. Knowledge has *no added epistemic value* in comparison to true belief. Justification is epistemically worthless! But this seems really counterintuitive and problematic. Is there a way out?⁸

⁸ Here is a longer quotation from J. Kvanvig offering an analogous problem. He talks about Meno problem, of whether, and if yes, why knowledge is more valuable than true belief.

Assumption 1: The Meno problem can be solved if there is a property P that (i) distinguishes knowledge from true belief and (ii) is a valuable property for a belief to have.

Assumption 1, however, is false. To see that it is false, consider some simple analogies. If we have a piece of art that is beautiful, its aesthetic value is not enhanced by having as well the property of being likely to be beautiful. For being likely to be beautiful is a valuable property because of its relationship to being beautiful itself. Once beauty is assumed to be present, the property of being likely to be beautiful ceases to contribute any more value to the item in question. Likelihood of beauty has a value parasitic on beauty itself and hence has a value that is swamped by the presence of the latter. Take anything that you care about: happiness, money, drugs, sports cars, and so on. Then consider two lists about such things, the first list telling you where to obtain such things and the second list telling you where you are likely to obtain such things. Now compose a third list, which is the intersection of the first two lists. It tells you of ways and places that both are likely to get you what you want and actually will get you what you want. But there would be no reason to prefer the third list to the first list, given what you care about.

These analogies show that when the value of one property is parasitic on the value of another property in the way that the likelihood of X is parasitic on X itself, the value of the first is swamped by the presence of the second. So even if likeli-

Let us look at the coffee thought experiment again. Are we ever being offered the choice as described?

“Here are two beliefs, e.g.

1. *Wuhan is in China.* and
2. *Maribor is the Slovenian town closest to Graz.*

Both are true, but 1 is from an unreliable source, and 2 is from a reliable one. Which one do you prefer?”

Did you ever receive such an offer? Does it make sense? Imagine: I am telling you that Maribor is the Slovenian town closest to Graz, and that you are hereby getting it from an unreliable source! If I am offering you the choice, and you can trust me that “*Maribor is the Slovenian town closest to Graz.*” is true, then you are getting your belief from a reliable source. If you cannot, the offer cannot be formulated. In short, *there is no viable equivalent of the tasting of coffee, no neutral checking*: if the checking is worthy of its name, it yields more than mere true belief: either justified true belief, or knowledge. If it does not, it does not test for the truth of the belief. So, the coffee thought experiment is ok for coffees. But it lets us down at the stage of generalizing (all kinds of goods) and of analogizing beliefs to cups of coffee. Moral: the coffee model is not applicable to beliefs.

I have been telling the story in terms of propositional knowledge, but it can be retold in terms of objectual curiosity and knowledge, dear to Inan. Let us repeat the game. I just told you:

“Here are two sentences:

1. *Wuhan is in China.* and
2. *Maribor is the Slovenian town closest to Graz.*

Both are true, but 1 is from an unreliable source, and 2 is from a reliable one. Which one do you prefer?”

Consider now the critical definite descriptions “the country in which Wuhan is located”, and “the Slovenian town closest to Graz”. You have started with two inostensible concepts, the first corresponding to “the country in which Wuhan is located”, and second corresponding to “the Slovenian town closest to Graz”. In the game I am also offering you their ostensible equivalents, “China” and “Maribor”, but I am doing it in a thoroughly unacceptable way, by saying that the first offer is reliable and the second is not. But it makes no sense to make an offer and then claim it is unreliable. It is not like offering two coffee cups that taste the same. The analogy with coffee fails for the ostensible/inostensible contrast as well as for the more traditional epistemological concepts.⁹

hood of truth is a valuable property for a belief to have, adding that property to a belief already assumed to be true adds no value to the resulting composite that is not already present in true belief itself. So Assumption 1 is false; one cannot solve the Meno problem simply by finding a valuable property that distinguishes true belief from knowledge. (Kvanvig 2003: 45, thanks to J. Adam Carter for pointing the passage out to me.)

⁹ Here is the third consideration:

So, merely true belief taken in isolation cannot really be rationally accepted. Belief is unlike coffee in crucial respects. Most importantly, its value cannot be tested without the test importing new, crucial information that turns true belief into something more powerful (justified true belief or knowledge). Therefore, a *de facto* true belief cannot be rationally accepted in isolation from these crucial additions.

The coffee model seems to make sense from the third person perspective, but not from the first person perspective of the cognizer. And it is the cognizer that is being asked about her preferences, not the external judge. But what kind of stability is involved here? Pritchard claims it is merely practical,¹⁰ but in our context there is no mention of practical use. It is a matter of pure credibility, so, it should be *informational or epistemic*. Let me generalize. Here is a general dilemma for the coffee model:

If you were informed from an epistemically authoritative source that “*p*” is a true belief, then you would have reliable information that *p*.

If you were not, then you would have no reason to accept that *p*.

There is no middle ground here. The opponent, for instance Pritchard, might try to argue that our point is simply a matter of pragmatics. Indeed, offering a piece of information and claiming at the same time

BELIEF-MACHINE VARIANT The person who is curious whether Goldbach’s Conjecture is true would not be fully satisfied by a mere true belief as to whether it is true. If offered a choice between a device that would, upon pressing a button, implant a true belief as to whether the Conjecture is true and a device that would implant knowledge, the subject would prefer the latter device and would do so to satisfy curiosity. Indeed, the requirement of knowledge is not merely for a justified true belief. (Schmitt and Lahroodi 2008: 134)

So far, so good. But it is too little to say that the subject would just prefer the knowledge machine. Imagine waking up with the mere belief: Goldbach’s Conjecture is true. No reasons, no awareness of the source! Like the Truetemp. It would be quite irrational to accept the belief-machine offer.

¹⁰ Pritchard writes:

*/t*here is little to be gained by responding to the swamping problem by arguing that the epistemic standing in question generates a practical value that mere true belief lacks. For example, suppose one responded to the swamping problem by arguing that knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief because knowledge entails justification and justification is practically valuable. Justified true belief, we might say—in a broadly Socratic fashion (...)—a ‘stability’ that mere true belief lacks, and this means that it is more practically useful to us in attaining our goals. The problem with this response, however, is that it doesn’t appear to engage with the swamping problem at all. After all, the difficulty that the swamping problem poses concerns how to make sense of the idea that knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief because it involves an epistemic standing which better serves our specifically epistemic goals—in particular, the epistemic goal of true belief. Thus, the kind of value that is at issue is specifically an epistemic value. Accordingly, even if it is true that knowledge has more all-things-considered value because it entails an epistemic standing which adds practical value to true belief, the problem would still remain that, on the face of it, knowledge is not epistemically more valuable than mere true belief (Pritchard 2011: 246–7)

that the source, namely the speaker herself, is unreliable is a pragmatic contradiction, or paradox. But this pragmatic incompatibility tells us nothing about the actual distribution of e-value, he might claim. We need an example of a situation where pragmatic considerations are blocked, but the importance of justification and reliability remain. Here is a possible example:

The elections

You are very curious about the presidential elections in my country, which involve two candidates, Kolinda and Josip. It is the election day, 5 p.m. The results are not yet known, they will be known at midnight, but you are not aware of it, and you trust me.

I try a practical joke. I toss a coin (at 5 p.m.) And the coin says “Kolinda”. I call you and tell you “Kolinda is the winner”. You accept, form the belief and you thank me warmly for the info.

At midnight, it becomes public that Kolinda indeed won. I call you, and tell you that it was a joke, and I had no clue when I called you. “But at least, my info was true”, I add. How would you react?

One rational reaction: “Well, don’t do it again, Nenad!” Others would be along the same line, criticizing me for my stupid joke. Suppose I answer:

“Yes, but your belief was true, you should appreciate it a lot by your own lights!”

This is even worse. It looks like the worth of merely true belief is rather minimal. And it looks that by making you accept the true belief that Kolinda is the winner, I did you a disfavor.

Moral one: true belief is valuable, but implanted alone it has a minimal value!

The impression can be strengthened:

We generally don’t regard stable arrangements as a series of one-shot deals: a good relationship is not a two thousand and one-night stand, a stable home is not a series of many 24-hours lasting improvised shelters. But with knowledge, it is even more dramatic. The one-shot offer itself does not make sense. Acceptability and reliability go together in a package deal.¹¹ I shall call the moral of the election story the “package deal argument” (See Carter et al. 2013).

I have been telling the story in terms of propositional knowledge, but it can be retold in terms of objectual curiosity and knowledge, dear to Inan. So, in the story retold, you are interested in who the new president of Croatia is. You have an inostensible description of him/her, namely “the new president”. What you want is a more ostensible infor-

¹¹ The type of combination is widespread, way beyond the mere intrinsic e-value of truth. Imagine you would value a lot having a nice drink. And you are offered a glass, you drink it and enjoy it. Next day you are told that it could have been poison. You would not thank the person for the nice drink, although the drink is what you basically value.

mation, let's say the name. (with all the problems that go with it, listed and brilliantly analyzed by Inan in 2012:142 ff, in connection with the name "Kigali"). Now, with the practical joke I actually gave you the right information, it's Kolinda. Still, you are not satisfied, after you hear about my actual ignorance at the time of giving the info. What is needed is the package deal: *ostensible information with some guarantee of reliability*. I cannot defend the fully isolated true belief (except going the Martin Luther WAY: here i stand and believe, ich kann nicht anders!).

So, here is my proposal: combine the package deal argument with the failure of the coffee thought experiments. The resulting picture will be the following:

Truth is the primary goal, but mere true belief is not the fundamental bearer of e-value. Rather, the bearer is a relatively undemanding, minimalist kind of knowledge. Curiosity follows the same pattern: a rational cognizer wants truth plus supporting structure.

Mere true belief is only minimally valuable for the curious cognizer. I told you the name of the winner, you got the true belief, by pure luck. Truetemp got one by insertion into his brain. How valuable, epistemically speaking, is it for you and for Truetemp respectively? Not much; very little has been given to you and to him. (You have right to be offended at my playing games with you, Truetemp at tampering with his brain, for very little in terms of *epistemic* gain!). So this is the typical epistemic value of true belief without supporting structure. It is not impressive. Plato already knew it: such true beliefs are like Socrates's *daidaleia*, moving statues-robots, utterly defenseless, and ready to run away (*Meno* 97a–98b). Mere true belief cannot be rationally sustained in the face of a slightest bit of contrary evidence. For example, I believe (truly) it is not raining, but I have no supporting structure for my belief. A mere drop of water on my window, say from my neighbor's hose, makes me change my mind, and the true belief is gone. But also, my change of mind is in a sense less than rational. In contrast, if I have a supporting structure (I can see no clouds in the sky) the rational defensibility is there. Now, is rational defensibility merely practical and instrumental? Why would it be? Why is this not epistemic?

If you already have an intuition that the additional element of stability and defensibility does add epistemic value, you can use a Modus Tollens: the additional element cannot add epistemic value unless it is itself epistemically valuable. It does add epistemic value. Therefore, the additional element is epistemically distinctly valuable.

Mere true belief (as well as mere correct ostensive information) cannot be rationally accepted in isolation from a supporting structure.

However, any efficient supporting structure introduces further epistemic goods (justification, reliability, anti-luck guarantees), thus upgrading the original true belief.

Mere true belief (as well as mere correct ostensive information) can be nei-

ther defended, nor rationally sustained through time, due to the isolation. (see Carter et al. 2013)

Mere true belief cannot be rationally sustained in the face of a slightest bit of contrary evidence (The Meno insight). Therefore:

Mere true belief (as well as mere correct ostensive information) is not rationally stable.

Mere true belief (as well as mere correct ostensive information) is only minimally valuable for the curious cognizer.

Epistemic goods come in package deals.

Rational stability is an epistemic, not merely a practical property (or status).

Let us leave open how massive the supporting structure should be. For our purposes a molecular, not holistic structure is enough. The Tru-temple analogy suggests that the structure should contain an indication of origin, some indication of circumstances (perceptual, testimonial, memory-based belief). All this might help to account for the value problem. Let me just note the direction of solution, leaving the details for another occasion. First, showing that knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief, which we did. Second, showing that knowledge is more valuable than that which falls short of knowledge. Justified true belief without some indication of reliability is not a satisfactory package deal.¹² Finally showing that knowledge is more valuable than that which falls short of knowledge not merely as a matter of degree but of kind. A very modest proposal: the special status comes from the fact that (minimal) knowledge is the first, or the basic kind of grasping the truth that has all the requisite qualities.¹³

Let me put my cards on the table in matters of the source of e-value of various candidates: the intrinsic e-value of true belief derives from the desire for truth, the intrinsic e-value of justified true belief derives from the need for reflective certainty, and the ability to defend one's belief and transmit it if needed. The need for reflective certainty, I submit, is epistemic as is the need for the ability to defend one's belief and transmit it if needed (social epistemic). The e-value of knowledge derives from all the preceding elements plus defensibility and stability (achievement is optional). It is probably the first satisfactory package that gives one, from the first person perspective the epistemically stable supporting structure. Understanding is the next one; its intrinsic e-value derives from its richness and cognitive relevance and role in manipulating causes. All this would demand a lot of arguing; I have to stop here.

¹² I leave for some other occasion the discussion of the view, due to Kvanvig, according to which knowledge knowledge is not the first inquiry stopper, whereas the gettierized justified true belief already is.

¹³ All this should be argued for on the bases of various proposed accounts of knowledge. I've been stressing stability. But similar considerations hold for other proposals. Consider D. Pritchard's recipe for knowledge: virtue + anti-luck. The virtuous origin (like the old style justification) secures the rationality of forming and keeping alive the belief. The anti-luck component caters for the stability.

So much for beliefs and curiosity in general. But what about truly foundational beliefs (if there are any); where does package deal come from in their case? For instance, Wittgenstein's hinges? A possible answer is that they are presumably widely shared in the epistemic community ("shared" in several relevant senses), and their special status accompanies them as part of their package.

Next, what about the sub-personal level? I assume the story is roughly similar. Our cognitive modules trace the origin and credentials of various inputs. A normally functional cognitive apparatus is able to distinguish sub-personally imagined from sub-personally perceived contents. Let me borrow a pair of terms from Sosa (2015: 67 ff). He talks about biological-functional vs. intentional, noting that on the biological level the proper function of the human belief-system is to represent reality-as-it-is: the representation should be as accurate as possible given the costs. On the intentional level the proper function links beliefs to the truth-goal. My own preference is to think that the intentional is continuous with the biological (Dretske, Millikan), but I will not be dogmatic here. A broad parallelism will be enough. On the sub-personal level our cognitive mechanisms search epistemic stability-defensibility as much as on the personal level. So, there is no principled problem.

I assume that similar considerations are valid for Inan's ostensible/non-ostensible contrast as they are for propositional beliefs. You might be offered an ostensible replacement ("China") for your initial non-ostensible one ("the country in which Wuhan is located"), and the replacement might be correct. Still it does not help much, if you don't have a stable and reliable infrastructure supporting the replacement. If you have one, say, "I got it from my Chinese student, whose documents testify that he studied in Wuhan; so, presumably he is reliable about its location", the ostensible characterization is epistemically valuable.

4. *Conclusion: The centrality of curiosity*

In this paper I have tried to do two things concerning the value of truth and knowledge, and their relation to curiosity. First, and most importantly, to address the Euthyphro's dilemma concerning the order of determination: does curiosity bestow value upon truths and graspings of truths or is it the other way around? Second, to offer a sketch concerning the bearer(s) of epistemic value, and to adjudicate between purely truth-centered proposals, and wider options, including properties like reliability, stability and justifiedness.

Let me focus upon the first task. The paper argues for a response-dependentist account of intrinsic epistemic value of true grasping (belief, knowledge): intrinsic curiosity is the value-bestowing epistemic virtue. In short: the value is normally experienced as being a property of a state of affairs to be grasped. However, value naturalism suggests that it is not an experiencer-independent property of the state of affairs.

Hopefully, the value is not merely a fiction. Therefore, by principles of charity and by inference to the best explanation, being epistemically valuable in an objective sense is being such as to cause the response of intentionally experiencing epistemic e-value in under suitable circumstances. Our graspings of propositions and objectual characterizations are epistemically valuable iff a person, endowed with at least normal cognitive capacities and at least some general knowledge, and familiarity with the domain of p , (or, alternatively, the person's somewhat idealized counterpart) would be stably intrinsically curious about p (either whether p is true, or about truths in connection with p , or both). Similar conditions hold for objectual curiosity. We have tried to address a number of objections to this view, and we hope to have offered at least beginnings of a right response. We concluded that curiosity is the foundational epistemic virtue that bestows epistemic value to its targets. Now, I would like to try connecting the claims to my previous work on curiosity.

I have tried elsewhere to defend the following claims: first, that intrinsic curiosity is an epistemic virtue. Second, that it organizes and mobilizes other virtues, both abilities related and morality-related ones. Obviously, curiosity is *not* an ability, it is a *motivating* truth-seeking virtue, a choice-related feature of the mind, of the sort similar to generosity and courage. These virtues are normally praised by thinkers like Zagzebski who stress the motivating role of virtues. Curiosity also helps integrating other moral-like virtues in the picture and accounting for them. They are of two kinds. Either they directly aid curiosity, like open-mindedness does, perhaps preventing the cognizer's mind to get clogged by worthless old stuff. Or, they have to do with other values (e.g. originality with the value of being new in an interesting way) and other kinds of virtue, above all moral virtues (e.g. generosity). One should see them as hybrids, partly moral, partly purely epistemic. This fits the intuition that they have high moral relevance, as well as the assumption that they favor reaching purely epistemic goals. This preserves both *primacy of truth-goal and the traditional and ordinary understanding of virtue as a motivating feature*. The result would be an integrated virtue-based view. What about cognitive capacities or capacity-virtues, like, for instance, well-functioning and well-integrated perception and rational intuition, the kind of virtues mentioned by Sosa and Greco inside their very definitions of knowledge? Are they really virtues? Yes, they are, in their own modest way and the truth-camp philosopher should not worry. However, they are not motivating virtues. They are *executive* virtues. They lead the agent to the epistemic goal set primarily by her inquisitiveness, pure or practical.

The proposal perhaps merits to be characterized as an *integrated virtue-based view*, since it is strongly aretaic, integrates motivating and executive virtues, and aims at seamlessly integrating the typical pursuits of virtue epistemology with the traditional business of episte-

mology. The character-virtue tradition and the truth-centered one can be married in a quiet and civilized fashion, without forcing any shotgun wedding between them. Combined with the present claim about the response-dependent nature of epistemic value, the proposal becomes even stronger: curiosity is *the central and the foundational* epistemic virtue. It is foundational since it bestows epistemic value, and central since it organizes other epistemic virtues.

The second issue is the one of the fundamental bearer of epistemic value. Truth is central for human cognitive-epistemic effort. I have argued, briefly and all too briefly, that truth is the primary goal, but that mere true belief is not the fundamental bearer. Rather, the bearer is a relatively minimalist kind of knowledge. Mere true belief cannot be rationally accepted in isolation from a supporting structure. However, any efficient supporting structure introduces further epistemic goods (justification, reliability, anti-luck guarantees), thus upgrading the original true belief. Keep in mind how little epistemic value commands the mere true belief (or mere correct ostensible presentation) without the supporting structure. And how much more, intuitively seen, is provided by justification and knowledge (and their objectual correlates). And note that the surplus comes from them alone, not from the minimal e-value of true belief.

Mere true belief can be neither defended, nor rationally sustained through time, due to isolation. Mere true belief cannot be rationally sustained in the face of a slightest bit of contrary evidence (the Meno insight). Therefore, mere true belief is not rationally stable. Minimal knowledge is, and this accounts for value problem in its various guises.

On the side of objectual curiosity, dear to Inan, we have similar candidates for the bearer of epistemic value beside mere correct ostensible presentation (concept), namely justified correct ostensible presentation and justified correct ostensible presentation with reliable underpinning, not to speak of understanding as a further candidate. As in the case of propositional belief, here epistemic goods come in package deals.

Let me reiterate: curiosity is *the central and the foundational* epistemic virtue. I hope this idea gives a general epistemological framework that would be very friendly to research, like Inan's on the inner nature and proper definition of curiosity. I have learned a lot from his book and papers, and I hope that we shall continue the fruitful and inspiring discussion.

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