

A TRIAL SEPARATION BETWEEN THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE THEORY OF
JUSTIFIED BELIEF

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1. An unfortunate assumption

In his 1963 article, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"¹ Edmund Gettier devised a pair of counterexamples designed to illustrate that knowledge cannot be adequately defined as justified true belief. The basic idea behind both of his counterexamples is that one can be justified in believing a falsehood P from which one deduces a truth Q, in which case one has a justified true belief in Q but does not know Q. Gettier's article inspired numerous other counterexamples, and the search was on for a fourth condition of knowledge, one that could be added to justification, truth, and belief to produce an adequate analysis of knowledge.

Some epistemologists proposed that for a true belief to be an instance of knowledge, not only does the belief have to be justified but in addition the justification must be nondefective, where a justification is nondefective if (roughly) it does not justify any falsehood. Others proposed that the justification must be indefeasible, where a justification is indefeasible if

¹ Edmund L. Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis*, XXV (1963), 121-3.

(again, roughly) it cannot be defeated by the addition of any true statement. However, a secondary and very different kind of response to Gettier's counterexamples was to wonder whether something less explicitly intellectual than justification, traditionally understood, is better suited for understanding knowledge. Epistemic justification is traditionally associated with being able to generate reasons in defense of one's beliefs, but in many instances of knowledge, one does not seem to be in a position to provide anything like a defense of one's beliefs.

D.M. Armstrong and Alvin Goldman were among the earliest proponents of a causal theory of knowledge, which require, in place of justification, that there to be an appropriate causal connection between the fact that makes a belief true and the person's having that belief.² Their proposals neatly handled the original cases described by Gettier but ran into other serious problems. Accounting for knowledge of mathematical truths, general facts, and truths about the future proved especially difficult. Nevertheless, their general approach captivated many epistemologists, in part because it fit well with the view of knowledge implicit in the emerging naturalized epistemology movement, which stressed that knowledge is best conceived as arising from one's complex causal interactions with one's environment. To assume that knowledge always requires one to have a justification is to intellectualize the notion to an unacceptable degree. Some kinds of knowledge, for example, highly theoretical knowledge, might involve justification, but other kinds typically do not, for example, simple perceptual knowledge. Our perceptual equipment collects and processes information from our environment and adjusts

² Alvin Goldman, "A Causal Theory of Knowing," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 64 (1967) 357-372; D.M. Armstrong, *Belief, Truth, and Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

our opinions accordingly, and does so without deliberation except in unusual cases.

Thus, in the eyes of many philosophers, although the causal theory of knowledge had its defects, it also had the virtue of shifting the focus away from questions of our being able to justify our beliefs intellectually and towards questions of our being in an appropriate causal or causal-like relation with our external environment. The philosophical task, according to this way of thinking about knowledge, is to identify the precise character of the relation. A simple causal relation between the fact that makes a belief true and the belief itself won't do and, thus, some other causal-like relation needs to be found.

Various proposals have been made, but reliability accounts of knowledge have turned out to have the widest appeal, and again Alvin Goldman has been a leading proponent. Contrary to what he had proposed earlier, Goldman now argued that for a person's belief to count as knowledge, it is not necessary that the belief be caused by the fact that makes it true, although this will often be the case. However, it is necessary that the processes, faculties, and methods that produced or sustain the belief be highly reliable.³

³ Alvin Goldman, *Epistemology and Cognition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

Reliability theories of knowledge led in turn to new accounts of epistemic justification, specifically, externalist ones. Initially, reliabilism was part of a reaction against justification-driven accounts of knowledge, but an assumption drawn from the old epistemology tempted reliabilists to reconceive justification as well. The assumption is that by definition justification is that which has to be added to true belief to generate knowledge, with some fourth condition added to handle Gettier-style counterexamples. Goldman had already argued that knowledge is reliably produced true belief. Relying on the above assumption, he further concluded that epistemic justification must also be a matter of one's beliefs being produced and sustained by reliable cognitive processes. Because a cognitive process is reliable only if it is well suited to produce true beliefs in the external environment in which it is operating, this is an externalist account of epistemic justification. By contrast, more traditional accounts of epistemic justification, for example, foundationalism and coherentism, are internalist accounts, which emphasize the perspectives of individual believers

Reliabilism and kindred proposals have sparked an enormous literature on the relative advantages and disadvantages of externalism and internalism in epistemology.⁴ Most of this literature assumes that externalists and internalists are defending rival theories and that, hence, both cannot be right. An alternative and more interesting reading of the dispute, however,

⁴ For a summary and discussion of the relevant issues, see William Alston, *Epistemic Justification* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), especially chapters 8 and 9.

is that they are not, or at least need not be, competitors at all. Rather, they are principally concerned with different issues.

Externalists are principally interested in understanding the relationship that has to obtain between one's beliefs and one's external environment in order for those beliefs, when true, to count as knowledge, but in carrying out this project, they see themselves as also offering an explication of epistemic justification, because justification, they stipulate, is that which has to be added to true belief in order to get a serious candidate for knowledge. Internalists, on the other hand, are primarily interested in understanding what is required for one's beliefs to be justified, but in carrying out their project, they see themselves as also providing the materials for an adequate account of knowledge, because they too assume that justification is by definition that which has to be added to true belief to get knowledge, with some condition added to handle Gettier problems.

It is not surprising that both internalists and externalists commonly use the language of justification to report the conclusions of their projects, given that some of the most influential figures in the history of epistemology have argued that a single notion can be used to capture what is most important in knowledge as well as what is most important in internally defensible belief. Descartes, for example, urged his readers to believe only that which is internally beyond any possibility of criticism, by which he meant that which is altogether impossible to doubt. However, he also thought by doing so his readers could be altogether assured of acquiring knowledge.

Descartes's search for an internally defensible procedure that would provide an external guarantee of knowledge proved not to be feasible, but the lesson is not that either the internal or external aspects of Cartesian project has to be abandoned. The lesson, rather, is that there are different, equally legitimate projects for epistemologists to pursue but that these projects need to be distinguished. One project is that of exploring what is required to put one's own internal, intellectual house in order. Another is that of exploring what is required for one to stand in a relation of knowledge to one's environment. It is easy to conflate these two projects, given the assumption that the properties that make a belief justified are by definition such that when a true belief has these properties, it is a good candidate for knowledge. This is an unfortunate assumption, however. It prompts externalists and internalists to see themselves as providing rival accounts of epistemic justification, whereas a more charitable interpretation is that they are using the terms "justified belief" and "rational belief" to report the conclusions of two very different projects. Moreover, the assumption distorts both the theory of knowledge and the theory of justified belief. For the theory of knowledge, it creates a predicament: either embrace an overly intellectual conception of knowledge, which overlooks the fact that people cannot provide adequate intellectual defenses for much of what they know, or engage in awkward attempts to force back into the account some duly externalized notion of justified belief, because the definition of knowledge is thought to require it. The assumption's impact on the theory of justified belief is equally regrettable: it places the theory of belief in service to the theory of knowledge. If it is stipulated that the properties that make a belief justified must also be properties that turn true belief into a good candidate for knowledge, an account of justified belief can be regarded as adequate only if it

contributes to a successful account of knowledge. The theory of justified belief is thus divorced from everyday assessments of the rationality and justifiedness of opinions, which tend to focus on whether individuals have been responsible in forming their opinions rather than on whether they have satisfied the prerequisites of knowledge.

The corrective is for epistemologists, at least at the beginning of their enterprise, to be wary of the assumption that knowledge can be adequately understood in terms of justified true belief plus some condition to handle Gettier problems. By the end of the epistemological enterprise, after accounts of justified belief and knowledge have been independently developed, interesting connections between the two may have emerged, but it ought not simply be assumed from the start that there is a simple, necessary tie between them. Relaxing the tie between the two frees the theory of knowledge from overly intellectual conceptions of knowledge, thus smoothing the way for treatments that acknowledge that people are often not in a position to provide a justification for what they know, and it simultaneously creates a space for a theory of justified belief that is not cordoned off from the kinds of assessments of each other's beliefs that we actually make and need to make in our everyday lives.⁵

The assumption that the conditions that make a belief justified are by definition conditions that turn a true belief into a good candidate for knowledge is thus needlessly limiting. It discourages the idea that there are different, equally legitimate projects for epistemologists to pursue.

⁵For more details on this latter benefit, see Richard Foley, "The Foundational Role of Epistemology in a General Theory of Rationality," in A Fairweather and L. Zagzebski, eds. *Virtue Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

One project is to investigate what has to be the case in order to have knowledge. An externalist approach is well suited to this project, and justification, which is most naturally construed as an internalist notion, plays only peripheral role in such an account. A distinct project, also important, is concerned with what is involved in having justified beliefs, that is, beliefs supported or supportable by reasons, and knowledge is at best linked only indirectly and contingently with this account. There is no necessary, conceptual link between being justified in one's opinions and being in a position to have knowledge.

2. Sosa on knowledge and justification

Ernest Sosa has been at the center of virtually every major issue and dispute in recent epistemology. So, it is no surprise that he has deep and challenging views about the relationship between justification and knowledge. Like most contemporary epistemologists, he sees a close link between the project of giving an account of epistemic justification and that of giving an account of knowledge, but he is far more sensitive than most to the pressures that tend to split the projects apart. I will be examining Sosa's attempts to dissipate these pressures, relying especially on three centrally important essays from his book, *Knowledge in Perspective*: "Reliabilism and Intellectual Virtue," "Knowledge and Intellectual Virtue", and "Methodology and Apt Belief."⁶ My conclusion is that despite his efforts and concessions, Sosa has

⁶Ernest Sosa, "Reliabilism and Intellectual Virtue," in *Knowledge in Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 131-145, hereafter, RII; "Knowledge and Intellectual Virtue", 225-244, hereafter KIV; "Methodology and Apt Belief," 245-256, hereafter, MAB.

not gone far enough in emphasizing the distinctness of the projects. But first, his views.

Sosa defends an intellectual virtue approach to both knowledge and epistemic justification. According to Sosa, the core characteristic of an intellectual virtue is that it helps maximize one's surplus of truth over error (KIV,225) A complete characterization of intellectual virtue might well also include its tendency to produce other desiderata in a belief system, for example, generality, coherence, and explanatory power, but the key, according to Sosa, is reliability:

What makes a faculty intellectually virtuous? Its performance or powers, surely? If so what is required in a faculty is that it not lead us astray in our quest for truth; that it outperform feasible competitors in its truth/error delivery differential. (KIV, 227)

Intellectual virtues are embedded in cognitive faculties, and Sosa distinguishes between transmission faculties and generative faculties. As the names suggest, the former produce beliefs from already formed beliefs, while latter produce beliefs from other kinds of inputs, for example, experiences. External perception and introspection are generative faculties, while memory is transmissive. In Sosa's view, reason is both: rationalist intuition (recognizing simple necessary truths) is generative while rationalist deduction is transmissive. The distinction between transmission and generative faculties is relevant for assessing the virtuousness of a faculty, because the appropriate differential between truth and error for a transmissive faculty is not its truth/error differential *simpliciter* but rather its truth/error differential when provided with true inputs.

Sosa stresses that in appraising the virtuousness of a faculty, it is important to distinguish mistakes that are primarily internal in origin from those that are primarily external in origin. Mistakes of the former kind are more closely associated with a lack of epistemic justifiedness than mistakes of the latter kind. Take perception, for example. The key to a perceptual faculty being epistemically virtuous is for its internal mechanisms to be sufficiently well calibrated with the external environment to produce beliefs that accurately reflect the presence or absence of some correlated range of properties in the external environment. Breakdowns in these internal mechanisms that have the effect of decreasing the faculty's ability to reflect the environment accurately result in a corresponding decrease in its ability to produce epistemically justified beliefs. Thus, Sosa remarks:

Someone prone to frequent illusions or hallucinations of mainly internal origin cannot be credited with good visual perception in an epistemically most relevant sense. (KIV, 230)

However, when the normally reliable internal mechanisms generate inaccurate beliefs because of some unusual feature in the external environment, the beliefs may still be justified:

...the falsehood of a perceptually justified belief may go unreflected in the subject's perception because of external abnormalities that he could not possibly have grasped. In such circumstances his perceptual false belief shows no defect or misconduct in the subject, and may be perceptually justified. (KIV, 232)

Thus, briefly stated, Sosa's view is that both epistemically justified beliefs and knowledge are to be understood as the products of intellectual virtues, where intellectual virtues are faculties, or combination of faculties, that maximize the differential of truth over error in environments that are normal for the individuals in questions. I will return to the issue of an environment being normal for a subject, because focusing on abnormal situations is one way of illustrating why the project of understanding epistemic justification is distinct from the project of understanding knowledge, but here first is how Sosa himself summarizes his view (with my emphases added):

What powers or abilities do then enable a subject to know or at least to acquire epistemic justification? They are presumably powers or abilities to distinguish the true from the false in a certain subject field, to attain truth and avoid error in that field. One's power or ability must presumably make one such that, *normally at least, in one's ordinary habitat, or at least in one's ordinary circumstances when making such judgements*, one would believe what is true and not believe what is false, concerning matters in that field." (KIV, 236)

Sosa describes three kinds of cases that create difficulties for any view, such as his own, that seeks to understand epistemic justification and knowledge in terms of the reliability of the faculties that generate and transmit beliefs, and he makes adjustments in his account to try to handle these difficulties.

The first kind of case is that of someone who suffers an abnormality that somehow makes him clairvoyant, unbeknownst to himself. By hypothesis, his beliefs about even the remote future are reliably produced, but even so, Sosa asks "how plausible would it be to suppose him justified in his clairvoyant beliefs" if he lacks inductive or any other evidence of the reliability of these beliefs? (KIV, 237)

A second kind of case, which raises the opposite problem, is the victim of a Cartesian evil demon:

If his experience and reasoning are indistinguishable from those of the best justified among us, can we in fairness deny him the justification that we will claim for ourselves? Yet if we do grant him such justification, then unreliable processes do yield much belief that is in fact justified... (KIV, 237)

A third kind of case involves faculties that are ordinarily highly reliable (but still fallible) but that operate improperly in a particular case, that is, operate in a way that would usually be unreliable. Nonetheless, because of abnormal circumstances, they generate a true belief.

Would the belief then fall short of sound epistemic justification, and not be a true instance of knowledge? What might be missing? Perhaps some closer connection between the belief and its truth? Perhaps these cannot be so independent as when they come together only by lucky accident... (KIV, 238)

In anticipation of the tension that I want to explore, Sosa remarks that these three kinds of cases pose problems not so much for a theory of epistemic justification as intellectual virtue, as for the combination of such a theory of justification with a conception of knowledge as justified true belief. (KIV, 239)

How does Sosa try to deal with the tensions that these cases create for the assumption that the project of understanding epistemic justification is a part of the project of understanding knowledge? With respect to the first kind of case, that of the clairvoyant, Sosa suggests that justification requires not only that the belief in question be caused by a faculty or process that is intellectually virtuous and, hence, reliable, but also that there be no equally reliable faculty or process in the subject's repertoire whose use by him in combination with the faculty or process that he actually does use would not have yielded that same belief. (KIV, 237)

A *prima facie* problem for this suggestion is that the more impoverished the repertoire of the clairvoyant's cognitive faculties, the more likely it is that the clairvoyant will have an epistemically justified belief and knowledge. Consider a "normal" clairvoyant, that is, a clairvoyant whose other faculties and methods resemble those of most other humans and, thus, whose "alternative methods would of course include the recall and use through reasoning of relevant evidence previously unused though stored in memory, including evidence about the reliability of one's pertinent faculties" (KIV, 237-8) If we suppose that the use of these alternative methods would have undermined the clairvoyant's beliefs about events in the distant future, then these beliefs, according to Sosa's suggestion, need not be justified. On the other hand, if we imaginatively begin to strip away the clairvoyant's other

faculties, creating an impoverished repertoire of faculties, and then consider analogous situations in which the clairvoyant has beliefs about the distant future, it looks as if at some point the situation will become such that, according to Sosa's account, the clairvoyant's beliefs would flip into being epistemically justified, because there will no longer be alternative faculties and methods at his disposal to undermine them.

Although this is perhaps a surprising result, I will not comment further on it, because it is not directly relevant to the central tension I want to explore. Besides, there is another case that Sosa uses to isolate what seems to him key in an account of epistemic justification.

Superstitious S believes whatever he reads in the horoscope simply because on a day in August it predicted no snow. Tricky T intends to offer S a lemon of a used car and plants the following in the horoscope under S's sign: "You will be offered a business proposition by T. The time is ripe for accepting business propositions." Does S know that T will offer him a deal? T planted the message and would not have done so if he had been going to offer S a deal. So it is not just a lucky guess nor is it just a happy accident that S is right in thinking that a deal is forthcoming, given his daily use of the horoscope....One thing seems clear: S does not know in such a case. What S lacks, I suggest, is justification. His reason for trusting the horoscope is not adequate --- to put it kindly. (KIV, 239)

How does Sosa understand the kind of epistemic justification that he finds lacking in this case?

A being of epistemic kind K is prima facie justified in believing P if and only if his belief of P manifests what, relative to K beings, is an intellectual virtue, a faculty that enhances their differential of truth over error. (KIV, 239)

However, Sosa immediately makes a key qualification having to do with issue of normal circumstances:

What interests us in justification is essentially the trustworthiness and reliability of the subject with regard to the field of his judgement, in situations normal for judgements in that field. That explains also why what does matter for justification is how the subject performs with regard to factors internal to him, and why it does not matter for justification if external factors are abnormal and unfavorable so that despite impeccable performance S does not know. What we care about in justification are the epistemic endowments of the subject, his intellectual virtues. (KIV, 240)

Within Sosa's epistemology, it is the qualification about "situations normal for judgements in that field" that allows victims of a Cartesian evil demon to have epistemically justified beliefs. The victims lack knowledge of their environment as a result of the demon's deceiving activities, but they do not necessarily lack epistemically justified beliefs despite the fact that

their faculties in the demon controlled environment are not reliable. This is possible, given Sosa's intellectual virtue approach to epistemic justification, because the circumstances are abnormal. In normal situations, these same faculties are reliable, and it is their reliability in normal situation that determines whether or not they are virtuous.

Notice, however, that although this qualification does allow subjects to have justified beliefs in a world where a demon occasionally deceives them, it does not allow them to have epistemically justified beliefs in a world where deceit is the norm. In particular, imagine a demon world in which not only is it the case that the demon deceives subjects with great regularity but is also such that the demon would regularly deceive subjects in most close possible worlds as well. Given the plausible assumption that normal situations are those that are statistically frequent or at least frequent at close possible worlds, the perceptual faculties of the inhabitants of this kind of demon world are not virtuous, according to Sosa's definitions. Yet, for its inhabitants, such a world may be subjectively indistinguishable from this one.

I will return to this issue again in a moment and examine Sosa's attempt to address it, but I need first to note that Sosa makes an important additional qualification that is also relevant to the tension in question. He distinguishes two general varieties of knowledge, animal knowledge and reflective knowledge:

One has animal knowledge about one's environment, one's past, and one's own experience if one's judgements and beliefs about these are direct responses to their impact -- e.g., through perception

or memory -- with little or no benefit of reflection or understanding. One has reflective knowledge if one's judgement or belief manifests not only such direct response to the fact known but also understanding of its place in a wider whole that includes one's belief and knowledge of it and how these come about. (KIV, 240)

According to Sosa, both animal knowledge and reflective knowledge require a belief that is true and epistemically justified, where justification is understood as having its source in intellectual virtue. Nonetheless, he regards the two kinds of knowledge as requiring a corresponding split of epistemic justification into two concepts: justification proper and a broader notion of justification that he calls 'epistemic aptness.' Justification proper is one way, but not the only way, in which a belief can be apt. Justification proper involves the subject having reasons in support of his belief, whereas aptness does not require this. The former, which is closely associated with reflective knowledge, is an internalist notion. It is reason-based and is accessible via reflection. However, Sosa insists that it is the broader notion of aptness, rather than the narrower notion of justification proper, that is necessary for knowledge:

Apt then is perhaps what a belief must be to qualify as knowledge, in addition to being true (and un-Gettierized). One way a belief might be apt, moreover, is by being justified, which means it has the support of reasons (implicit if not explicit). But it is left open that there be other ways for one to believe aptly: it is left open, for example, that some simple memory beliefs be apt though lacking any support by reasoning (and in

that sense lacking justification). ... Gettier showed long ago that justified true belief is not sufficient for knowledge. On the basis of [an internalist, reason-based] conception of justification, it would now be clear that justified true belief is not so much as necessary for knowledge. (MAB, 255)

Thus, Sosa concedes that epistemic justification proper is not the only way for a true belief to become a good candidate for knowledge. In particular, epistemic justification proper is not necessary for animal knowledge.

3. The distinctness of justification and knowledge

Sosa rejects half of what I have been terming "the unfortunate assumption" that there is a conceptual link between knowledge and epistemic justification, but he does not reject the other half. He acknowledges that epistemic justification is not a necessary condition of knowledge, but he hangs onto the assumption that an adequate account of epistemic justification must explicate justification in terms of properties that turn true beliefs into knowledge absent Gettier problems. This latter assumption, although perhaps only half as unfortunate as the full assumption, is nonetheless still unfortunate.

To see why, consider again the problems that a deceiving demon creates for Sosa's accounts of epistemic justification and knowledge. He agrees that the demon's victim can have epistemically justified beliefs, noting that "if his experience and reasoning are indistinguishable from those of the best

justified among us, can we in fairness deny him the justification that we will claim for ourselves? " (KIV, 237) However, this intuition is in tension with the assumption that epistemic justification turns true belief into knowledge absent Gettier problems. A mischievous demon might allow his victim to have occasional, isolated true beliefs, but such beliefs, even though true, are not good candidates for knowledge. Sosa's strategy for addressing this tension is to insist that a faculty can be virtuous, and as such generate epistemically justified beliefs, and yet not be reliable in abnormal external circumstances, such as those present when a demon is deceiving the subject.

The problem with this strategy, as I briefly mentioned earlier, is that what is normal is function of what is actual. If the world is pretty much as we conceive it to be, and we then imagine introducing a demon who occasionally deceives subjects, Sosa's strategy works well enough. On the other hand, if we imagine that the demon deceives not just a few people on a few occasions but rather all people with great regularity, the tensions within Sosa's account arise with as much force as ever. They do so because, by hypothesis, normal external circumstances are saturated with deceit, and, thus, perceptual faculties such as ours are not virtuous by Sosa's standards. Accordingly, the perceptual beliefs produced by them are not epistemically justified. However, this result is at odds with the intuition that the demon's victims can have epistemically justified beliefs.

Sosa tries to finesse this problem by suggesting that justification be relativized to an environment:

Relative to our actual environment A, our automatic experience-belief mechanisms count as virtues that yield much truth and justification. Of course relative to the demonic environment D such mechanisms are not virtuous and yield neither truth nor justification. It follows that relative to D the demon's victims are not justified, and yet relative to A their beliefs are justified. (RII, 144)

In this passage, Sosa relies on the assumption that our actual environment is one in which deceiving demons are not the norm. With this assumption in hand, he asserts that although the victim's faculties are not reliable relative to the demon environment D and, hence, not virtuous in that environment, these same faculties are virtuous relative to the actual environment A and, correspondingly, the beliefs they produce are justified relative to A. According to Sosa, it is in this relativized sense that the victim of the demon can have epistemically justified beliefs even when being deceived.

Whatever bite this strategy has, however, derives from the assumption that our environment is pretty much as we conceive it to be. If for the sake of the testing Sosa's account we suspend this optimistic assumption and instead assume that our actual environment is one in which a demon regularly deceives people, the same problems rise to the surface once again. Under this hypothesis, Sosa's relativization strategy no longer yields the desired result, because it is no longer true that relative to the actual environment A the victim's faculties are reliable. By hypothesis, the faculties in question are every bit as unreliable in our actual environment as they are in

the victim's environment. Consequently, the beliefs of the victim are not products of faculties that are reliable relative to the actual environment and, hence, the beliefs they produce are not justified even in a relativized sense.

To be sure, it is possible to designate yet some other possible environment, distinct from the environment of the victim and distinct also from our actual environment, and then assert that the victim's faculties are reliable relative to this third environment and that, accordingly, his beliefs are justified relative to this environment as well. But this is an uninteresting result, since for virtually any kind of faculty, there is some conceivable environment E such that the faculty is reliable relative to E. So, if there are no restrictions on picking out the environment, pretty much any kind of faculty, no matter how strange, will turn out to be virtuous in this relativized sense, and pretty much any belief will turn out to be justified in a corresponding relativized sense.

Perhaps Sosa can insist, however, that not just any environment is relevant. For example, perhaps the only relevant environments are those closely similar to what we take to be our actual environment. The claim, on this suggestion, would then be that the victim's faculties are virtuous relative to environments closely similar to what we take our actual environment to be and that, as a result, his beliefs are justified relative to these same environments. On this approach, a major issue is who the "we" is supposed to be. People in the community of the person making the evaluation? People in the community of the person being evaluated? Most people currently alive? Most people who have ever lived? Or yet some other group?

It is hard to see how there can be a principled answer to such questions, but even if there were, there is a more fundamental problem with this approach. Namely, whatever is meant by "we," this approach represents an abandonment of Sosa's reliabilism, which is supposed to constitute the heart of his virtue approach. After all, "we" can have deeply mistaken beliefs about our environment, however the "we" is defined. Thus, a faculty can be virtuous relative to environments closely similar to what we take to be our actual environment and yet be deeply unreliable in what is in fact our environment, and deeply unreliable as well in other close possible environments. But if so, such faculties do not produce beliefs that are good candidates for knowledge in our actual environment. They produce good candidates for knowledge only in environments very unlike our actual environment.

No doubt there are other ways of trying to tinker with Sosa's account to try to avoid these tensions, but a better response is to root out the source of the tensions, which is the assumption that there is a conceptual tie between epistemic justification and knowledge. Sosa is correct to sever half of the commonly assumed conceptual connection between the two. He concedes that epistemic justification is not a necessary condition of knowledge. However, the other half of the connection also needs to be severed. It is not a necessary condition of epistemic justification that it turns true beliefs into knowledge, absent Gettier problems. One of the lessons to be learned from the demon cases and the like is that one's beliefs can be epistemically justified even when they are so thoroughly mistaken that the occasional true ones are not good candidates for knowledge. The assumption that epistemic justification, absent Gettier problems, turns true

belief into knowledge inevitably distorts the project of trying to understand what is involved in having epistemically justified beliefs. The remedy is to jettison the assumption and instead to develop an account of justification without feeling a need to smuggle into the account constraints aimed at forging a necessary link between epistemic justification and knowledge.

The specific account of epistemic justification I favor is one that understands epistemic justification in terms of the subject not being susceptible to intellectual self-criticism. If one's opinions conform to one's own deepest intellectual standards, in the sense that they can withstand one's own most severe critical scrutiny insofar as one's goal is to have accurate and comprehensive beliefs, then those opinions are epistemically justified. This is a notion of epistemic justification that allows victims of an evil demon to have justified beliefs even when deception by the demon is the norm and, hence, even when their beliefs are produced by faculties that are not reliable in the actual world or in close possible worlds.⁷

My principal purpose here, however, is not to defend a particular account of epistemic justification but rather to illustrate the corrupting consequences of the assumption that there is a conceptual tie between epistemic justification and knowledge. The assumption distorts the project of trying to understand epistemic justification, and it also distorts the project of trying to understand knowledge. As a final illustration of how it does so, return to Sosa's case of Superstitious S. According to Sosa, S

⁷ See Richard Foley, *Intellectual Trust in Oneself and Others* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), especially Chapter Two.

lacks knowledge in this case, and the reason he lacks knowledge is that his belief is not epistemically justified. More precisely, given Sosa's distinction between apt belief and justified belief, S lacks knowledge because his true belief is not epistemically justified and, moreover, it is not made apt by any other means.

Sosa is employing a strategy here that has become familiar in epistemology since Gettier. The strategy is to describe cases in which a subject intuitively lacks knowledge and then to employ the assumption that knowledge and justification are conceptually connected to draw conclusions, indeed often strong conclusions, about knowledge, epistemic justification, and the relation between them. The strategy can be understood as a kind of epistemology game. Call it "the Gettier game." The game starts with a case in which a subject has a true belief but intuitively seems not to have knowledge, and the play of the game is governed by the rule that justification is that which has to be added to true belief in order for the belief to count as knowledge, with perhaps some fourth condition added to handle Gettier problems. The goal of the game is to pinpoint, within the constraints imposed by this rule, the precise defect that explains why the subject lacks knowledge. A solution to the game can be one of three sorts. First, one can claim that although the subject's belief is true, it is not plausible to regard it as epistemically justified. Second, one can claim that although it is plausible to regard the subject's belief as epistemically justified, it lacks a special fourth condition (for example, nondefectiveness or nondefeasibility) that has to be present in order for a true justified belief to be an instance of knowledge. Third, one can claim that although at first glance it might seem plausible to regard the subject's belief as justified, the case illustrates why it is necessary to amend the traditional

notion of epistemic justification; once these amendments are introduced (for example, by insisting that a belief is justified only if it is reliably generated), one is in a position to explain why the subject lacks knowledge, namely, the subject's belief is not justified in the amended sense.

My recommendation is not to play the Gettier game but rather a different and much simpler game. My game starts identically, namely, with a case in which a subject has a true belief but intuitively seems not to have knowledge, but it is governed by a different rule: look for other true beliefs that the subject lacks and that can plausibly account for why the subject lacks knowledge. I claim that this game always has a solution.

For example, why does Superstitious S's true belief that T will offer him a business proposition lack knowledge of this proposition? Sosa says that the explanation is the S lacks justification, but a simpler, more straightforward, and universally generalizable explanation is that he lacks so many surrounding true beliefs that he does not have an accurate, overall appreciation of his true situation. He lacks true beliefs about the unreliability of horoscopes, about T's having planted his horoscope on the day in question, and about many other aspects of his situation. As a result, he does not have a sufficiently accurate and comprehensive grasp of the topic at issue to have knowledge of it. He may also lack justification, as Sosa suggests, but there is no need to cite his lack of justification in explaining why he lacks knowledge. His lack of an adequate "picture" of his true situation is enough to explain his lack of knowledge.

Or consider Alvin Goldman's barn case.⁸ You are driving in the country and stop in front of a barn. Unbeknownst to you, the surrounding countryside is filled with barn facsimiles. The facsimiles are so detailed that if you had stopped in front of any of them, you would have been fooled into thinking you were looking at a real barn, but by luck you have stopped in front one of the few real barns left in the area. You have a true belief that you are looking at a barn but you lack knowledge. Why is this? Is it because you have been lucky, or because the process that caused your belief would have been unreliable in close counterfactual situations, or because your justification is not indefeasible? All these may be true of you, but the best explanation for why you lack knowledge despite having a true belief is the most obvious one, namely, that you lack other, relevant true beliefs. You are unaware of the barn facsimiles in the area and, moreover, the barn story has been told in such a way as to highlight that this is an important lacuna in your belief system.

So, according to the game I am recommending, in any case in which we from the outside think a subject lacks knowledge despite having a true belief, it should be possible to identify some significant aspect of the situation such that we from our external vantage point can see that the subject lacks true beliefs about that aspect of the situation. My claim, to repeat, is that this game always has a solution. In particular, my claim is

⁸ Alvin Goldman, 'Discrimination and Perceptual Knowledge,' The Journal of Philosophy 73 (1976), 771-791.

that in the enormous literature generated since Gettier's article, with its vast number of cases describing a subject who has a true belief P but intuitively lacks knowledge, in each and every one of these cases it is possible to cite an important feature of the situation about which the subject lacks true beliefs and where this lack plausibly accounts for the intuition that the subject lacks knowledge.

One way of conceiving this claim is to think of it as dropping out of the approach recommended by indefeasibility theorists once the requirement that justification is necessary for knowledge is abandoned. Indefeasibility theorists buy into the assumption that justification is necessary for knowledge, and so, they are committed to the Gettier game. However, when confronted with cases in which the subject intuitively lacks knowledge despite having a justified true belief, they say, as I want to say, that the lack of knowledge is to be explained by the subject's lacking relevant true beliefs. But because they presuppose that justification is necessary for knowledge, they hook up the lack of true beliefs with the justification requirement. The subject lacks knowledge, according to them, because the missing true beliefs would defeat the subject's justification for the target belief. However, once the link between justification and knowledge is severed, as it should be in any event given that in many instances of knowledge subjects are not in a position to offer anything like defenses of their beliefs, a simpler and more elegant explanation is possible. The subject's lack of knowledge is to be explained by a lack of true beliefs about some significant aspect of the situation.

I believe this claim can be adequately defended, but for purposes here, my aim is more limited. I am less interested in making the full case for the

above claim than in showing that epistemology is better off without the assumption that there is a conceptual connection between epistemic justification and knowledge.