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THE CONCEPT OF EPISTEMIC JUSTIFICATION

by

David Allen Truncellito

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1999
As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by David Allen Truncellito entitled The Concept of Epistemic Justification and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Keith Lehrer

Date 8/16/89

Christopher Maloney

Date

Joseph Tolliver

Date

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copy of the dissertation to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

Keith Lehrer

Dissertation Director  Keith Lehrer

Date 8/16/89
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ABSTRACT

7

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

9

I. Introduction ........................................ 9

I.1 An aside regarding the Gettier problem .................. 10

I.2 Disagreements about epistemic justification .............. 11

II. The concept of epistemic justification .................. 17

II.1 The project of conceptual analysis .................... 20

II.2 The need for a formal analysis of the concept of epistemic justification ............ 27

III. Extant accounts of the concept of epistemic justification ................. 32

III.1 Formally inadequate approaches .................... 33

III.2 Conceptually inadequate approaches ................. 35

III.2.i BonJour ..................................... 36

III.2.ii Steup ...................................... 37

III.2.iii Chisholm .................................. 37

III.2.iv Pollock .................................... 39

III.2.v Goldman ..................................... 40

III.2.vi Lehrer ..................................... 41

III.3 Alston's analysis of the concept ................... 42

IV. A look ahead ........................................ 44

IV.1 A road map for the current work ................... 45

IV.2 The Janus-faced nature of epistemic justification ................. 50

IV.3 A few caveats to the reader ....................... 52

## CHAPTER 2: THE RELATION BETWEEN JUSTIFICATION AND TRUTH

54

I. Goal-directedness and justification .................. 54

II. Justification and truth: intuitive considerations ................. 57

II.1 General remarks ................................ 57

II.2 A prima facie case ................................ 61

II.3 The analogy with ethics .......................... 65

III. Internalism and the isolation objection .......... 67

IV. Non-truth-linked accounts of justification ................. 74

IV.1 Strawson ........................................ 76

IV.2 Pollock .......................................... 82

IV.3 Lycan ............................................. 84

V. Conclusion ......................................... 85
ABSTRACT

What do we mean when we say that a belief is justified? What justifies a belief? These are two very different questions. An answer to the first question is an attempt to offer a **conceptual analysis** of justification, an explication of the meaning of the term. An answer to the second question, on the other hand, is a **substantive account** of epistemic justification, a set of conditions under which a belief is justified. I argue that one's substantive account of a given notion should only be attempted after one has arrived at an analysis of that concept.

After distinguishing between a conceptual analysis and a substantive account, I proceed to offer an analysis of the concept of epistemic justification. The analysis begins by noting three essential features of epistemic justification: truth, goal-directedness, and normativity; the correct analysis, then, must capture the relations between these components.

I begin by discussing the relation between justification and truth, and argue that the two must be conceptually linked; specifically, the analysis of justification must invoke truth-directedness. I then undertake a discussion of rival theories of truth, as that debate importantly influences the project of epistemology.
The analysis I ultimately offer is "Janus-faced"; it invokes normativity in two distinct ways. My hope is that this analysis will help guide us to the correct substantive account of epistemic justification; such is the goal of the larger project of which this dissertation is the first stage.
Chapter 1
Introduction

I. Introduction

It is, and has been since ancient times\textsuperscript{1}, a commonplace in epistemology that knowledge is more than mere true belief.\textsuperscript{2} In order for S to know that p, that is, the truth of p and the fact that S believe that p are necessary, but are not jointly sufficient. Some third condition has also been widely maintained to be a necessary condition on knowledge; this condition has generally been referred to as epistemic justification.\textsuperscript{3} Since one can arrive at a true belief as the result of a lucky guess, or wishful thinking, or some other process which intuitively is not appropriate to knowledge, epistemologists distinguish between knowledge and mere true belief by maintaining that knowledge is justified\textsuperscript{4} true

\textsuperscript{1} Plato was perhaps the first author to make this point, which he discusses at length in his \textit{Theaetetus} and \textit{Meno}.
\textsuperscript{2} For a notable exception, see Sartwell (1991) and (1992).
\textsuperscript{3} There have been some accounts which deny that justification is necessary for knowledge, such as causal accounts (see, e.g., Goldman (1976)). However, these accounts nonetheless maintain that some third condition, beyond truth and belief, is required for knowledge. As such, it will not do an injustice to such accounts to include them in this discussion under the general umbrella of accounts which maintain that true belief does not constitute knowledge.
\textsuperscript{4} While I will have occasion to refer to other kinds of justification besides epistemic justification, when I use the terms "justification", "justified", or their cognates without qualification in this work -- which I will generally do for
belief. That is, in order to qualify as knowledge, a true belief must be arrived at by processes which are epistemically licensed or approved, or via good reasoning, or on the basis of good evidence, or what have you. So, while true belief does not suffice for knowledge, justified true belief is generally supposed to.

I.1 An aside regarding the Gettier problem

In his famous 1963 paper, Edmund Gettier convincingly argued that justified true belief is not, in fact, sufficient for knowledge. Further, it seems that any account of justification which is fallibilist — i.e. which maintains that some justified beliefs might be false — is subject to the "Gettier problem". But one important lesson of Descartes' Meditations is that the correct account of justification must be fallibilist. So, any plausible account

the sake of brevity -- I will mean to refer to epistemic justification.

5 I am being intentionally obtuse in my language here. The reason why will soon enough become clear.

6 That is, the problem of how to provide jointly sufficient conditions for knowledge, given that justified true belief is not sufficient.

7 Descartes maintained that certainty or indubitability is necessary for knowledge. But, as a result, Descartes unwittingly generated grist for the skeptics' mill: his account is notoriously subject to the "Cartesian Circle" objection, with the result that he cannot account for our knowledge of the external world. If we do have such knowledge, then the correct account of knowledge -- and, thus, of justification -- must require something less than certainty, i.e. must be fallibilist.
of knowledge must supplement its account of justification
with some fourth condition which, taken together with
justification, truth and belief, is sufficient for knowledge.

For current purposes, I shall be concerned only with
justification and not with knowledge, and accordingly I shall
ignore concerns about the Gettier problem. This is not to
imply that the Gettier problem is not an important problem —
indeed, I think that my analysis might provide a solution to
the problem — but only that it will not be my focus herein.
Rather, I wish to focus on justification, as it has been an
important focus of epistemological analysis for many years,
both before and after the publication of Gettier's paper;
and, more importantly, because the issues raised by Gettier
do not seem relevant to the heart of the matter which I shall
address. Accordingly, if I speak of justification as the
difference between knowledge and (mere) true belief, I do not
mean to downplay the significance of the Gettier problem to
an analysis of knowledge, but rather to begin to isolate the
property (viz. epistemic justification) which will be the
focus of the current inquiry.

1.2 Disagreements about epistemic justification

What, then, is epistemic justification? This question
is central to nearly any epistemological endeavor. If
justification is a necessary condition of knowledge, then any
complete theory of knowledge must provide an answer to the question. And it is striking that there is such broad disagreement among contemporary epistemologists as to the nature of epistemic justification. Indeed, it seems that the field has reached a stalemate of sorts, with unresolved disputes along several dimensions.

Most infamous, perhaps, is the dispute between "internalists" and "externalists" regarding justification. Internalists maintain that the justificatory status of a belief is strictly a function of the believer's mental states. The intuition behind such a position is that, in arriving at a belief, the only information available to an agent is encapsulated within her belief corpus; she has no recourse to anything but her other beliefs in determining what new beliefs to adopt. It follows, the argument continues, that the only reason(s) she could have for believing what she does must be drawn from among her other beliefs. But then, the internalist concludes, these are the only candidates for contributors to the justificatory status of the new belief. While a traditional form of internalism holds that it is only the agent's other beliefs which are relevant to the justification of the belief in question, some

8 I suppose that one could offer an account of knowledge without also offering an account of justification. However, the two notions are so closely connected that failure to offer an account of justification is likely to render one's account of knowledge largely uninformative.
internalists have allowed that non-doxastic states can and do contribute to the justification of some beliefs.\textsuperscript{9} And some internalists have argued that these internal states need not be conscious in order to contribute to justification.

Externalists about justification\textsuperscript{10}, on the other hand, maintain that at least some of the factors which contribute to the justification of an agent's belief outstrip her internal mental states. The intuition behind this sort of view is as follows: an agent's belief corpus might be isolated from reality; that is, it might be comprised solely of false beliefs.\textsuperscript{11} So, an appeal to the agent's other beliefs might be irrelevant to the way the world actually is, that is, to the truth of the matter regarding the believed proposition.\textsuperscript{12} But, then, the argument continues, such an appeal cannot yield justification. Only by making some

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{9} See, e.g., Pollock (1986).
\item \textsuperscript{10} Since it is generally agreed that truth is a necessary condition for knowledge, and since it is also generally agreed that the truth of a proposition is external to the agent's mental state, there is no room for internalism about knowledge; the correct theory of knowledge is externalist, even if the correct theory of justification turns out to be internalist.
\item \textsuperscript{11} Pollock (in his (1986), p. 76, note 6) claims to be responsible for the "isolation argument". While he claims that the argument fails to refute internalist theories, it nevertheless does seem to provide the initial intuitive force behind most externalist accounts of justification.
\item \textsuperscript{12} I shall have much more to say about the connection between justification and truth in subsequent chapters, especially chapters 2 and 4.
\end{itemize}
appeal to reality, i.e. by considering factors external to the agent's belief corpus, can justification be attained.

As I have characterized the positions, externalism and internalism are mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive of theories of justification. However, we can imagine a range of externalist theories, ranked in accordance with the relative degrees of importance they attribute to internal and external factors with regard to justification. At one extreme are accounts which maintain that justification is solely a function of external factors, and that internal factors play no role whatever in the justification of an agent's beliefs. Simple reliabilism\(^\text{13}\), for instance, maintains that a belief is justified if and only if it is produced by a reliable belief-generating process. A more sophisticated externalism would countenance both internal and external factors as relevant to justification.

The disagreement between internalists and externalists is so severe as to have led some theorists to suggest that there are really two distinct notions of justification at play. That is, rather than disagreeing with one another as to the correct account of justification as such, internalists and externalists are instead merely concerned with distinct concepts. However, such a stance seems unsatisfying; for, certainly, internalists and externalists do seem, at least

\(^{13}\) Examples include Armstrong (1973) and Goldman (1976).
prima facie, to be discussing the same thing. It would be preferable to resolve their disagreement if such is possible, rather than throwing up one's hands and conceding that there was never really any disagreement after all. Moreover, it is not at all clear that the matter has been investigated sufficiently to warrant such a conclusion.

In addition to the internalism-externalism debate, there are other disagreements among accounts of justification. While I have been discussing justification as the difference between knowledge and mere true belief, for instance, others maintain that justification is primarily concerned with helping agents determine what to believe. Pollock (1986) distinguishes between "two potentially different concepts of justification", namely "the 'belief-guiding' or 'reason-guiding' sense of 'justification'" and "'what is required for knowledge'." Pre-theoretically, though, one would have thought that there is a single sense of justification. I will discuss this at some length in the next chapter; for now, I simply wish to flag the fact that the disagreement has been stated in the literature.

In addition to the disagreements mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs, there are other disagreements as to the nature of epistemic justification. Is the justificatory

14 See p. 10. Pollock does, indeed, go on to argue (in the appendix) that these are two distinct senses of justification.
status of an agent's beliefs supposed to be available only to that agent, or only to others, or to all? While most theorists agree that justification is a normative notion, this is indeterminate between deontological, evaluative, and consequentialist accounts; all have been seen in the literature. Further, many accounts attempt to "naturalize" justification, that is, to explain away its normative elements by arguing that they are reducible to or supervenient upon naturalistic facts; some theorists, on the other hand, maintain that justification essentially includes an irreducibly normative element, such as "reasonableness".

It is my hope that each of these disagreements can be resolved. However, it is my contention that, to do so, one must take an approach which has not been seen in the literature, at least not sufficiently so to settle these disputes. In the next section, then, I shall distinguish between two distinct projects one might undertake regarding justification, and shall suggest that the pursuit of one of these -- namely, the one which has been largely neglected to date -- is the appropriate means to a resolution of these and other disputes regarding justification.

15 This is generally cast in terms of "first-person" v. "third-person" justification; the labels mean to indicate the point-of-view from which the justificatory status of an agent's belief is available.

16 Most notably, Chisholm (esp. in his 1966 and 1977; his 1989 seems to tend more towards naturalism) and Lehrer.
II. The concept of epistemic justification

The question I seek to address in this project is, on the face of it, relatively straightforward: namely, what do we mean when we talk of epistemic justification, e.g. when we say that a belief is justified? One answer, as I have suggested above, is that justification is the difference between (mere) true belief and knowledge; or, if you like, in more modern parlance, it is that which converts true belief to knowledge. However, this is but a negative construal of justification: it tells us only that it is the residual between knowledge and true belief. Furthermore, the concept of knowledge is as ill-defined as is that of justification, so to define justification in terms of knowledge is to fall short of the goal. We need a positive construal of justification which is independent of our construal of knowledge. This is not to say, of course, that we will ignore the concept of knowledge as we seek to define justification, but rather that we will not be satisfied if our end result is a definition whose definiens makes direct reference to knowledge; this should strike us as (at least very close to) circular and uninformative.

But this is not the only, nor even the most problematic, shortcoming of this answer to the question "What is justification?" I suggested in the last section that the many disagreements as to the nature of justification arise asa
result of the fact that there are two alternative approaches to answering the question\textsuperscript{17}, and that most theorists have failed to take the approach which I shall argue to be preferable. Let me begin to distinguish between the two approaches by way of an historical example.

From the time of Descartes until the twentieth century, it was assumed that justification has a foundational structure. That is, it was asserted that some subset of an agent's beliefs constitutes the foundation for the rest of her beliefs; a belief is justified, then, if it is either a member of this foundation, or if it is based in the appropriate way upon beliefs which themselves are members of the foundation.\textsuperscript{18} The proponent of such an account, of course, must provide two further details: namely, the criteria for membership in the doxastic foundation, and the nature of the "basing" relation between the foundation and the remainder of the belief corpus. Descartes, for instance, thought that only beliefs about one's own mental states comprised the foundation, and that the basing relation between foundational and non-foundational beliefs is that of logical implication. Until the twentieth century, much of

\textsuperscript{17} There are likely many more than two alternative approaches, but I shall restrict my discussion to the two which are most obvious, and which I take to be most relevant for the purposes of philosophical investigation.

\textsuperscript{18} As I have stated the view -- and as most foundationalists have -- foundationalism is an internalist theory of justification.
the debate in the epistemological literature consisted in an attempt to provide an account which would answer to these two requirements.

Foundationalism was eventually challenged via the introduction of coherentism, which denies that there is a privileged subset of one's beliefs which constitute a foundation. A consequence of foundationalism is that the justificatory path of any belief can be traced via a linear argument, with each premise a step closer to the foundation than the previous one and ending with premises which are the contents of foundational beliefs; any premise in such an argument must itself be a justified belief. Coherentism, on the other hand, denies that justification must be linear in this fashion, and allows for mutual support among beliefs as a contributing factor to justification.

Note, however, that foundationalism and coherentism are rival pictures of the structure of justification. And it is unfortunate that debates along these lines -- viz. debates concerning the structure of justification -- have monopolized the literature. For, to tell us only about the structure of justification is to fail to tell the whole story. Just as I can tell you that a building has a foundational structure -- that some part of the building constitutes its foundation, and that the other parts rest upon this foundation -- without telling you what constitutes a building, I can tell you that
justification has a foundational structure without telling you what constitutes justification. Indeed, the history of the discussion of justification seems to betray an important oversight. It would be preferable to first determine what justification is -- what we mean by "justification" -- and then proceed to investigate the structure of justified belief's among an agent's corpus. Indeed, it is hard to imagine how one could hope to adequately answer the question of the structure of justification prior to answering the question of the nature of justification.

We must seek another approach to the question of epistemic justification. We must seek to explicate the concept of epistemic justification, to provide an analysis of what justification is. Only then can we discuss other incidental features of justification, such as its structure. Let me attempt to clarify.

II.1 The project of conceptual analysis

The analysis of concepts is the foremost project of analytic philosophy; indeed, this is why it is termed analytic philosophy. However, there are several different projects one might have in mind when one refers to the analysis of concepts. I shall attempt here to identify several of these projects, and to indicate their place in the philosophical enterprise as a whole. Subsequently, I shall
argue that one of these projects ought to be undertaken prior to the others, and shall relate the more general discussion to the concept of epistemic justification.

I should begin this discussion by distinguishing between simple and complex concepts. A complex concept is one whose parts — i.e. constituent elements — are themselves concepts (simple or complex); a simple concept has no parts as such. So, for instance, the concept <bachelor> can be dissected into two parts: <unmarried> and <male>; these parts can then themselves be subjected to further analysis. The former concept (viz. <bachelor>), then, is at the intersection of the latter two. But a concept such as <red>, it seems, does not have parts; rather, it is a simple concept. The analysis of a simple concept requires more than merely a decomposition into parts, and will thus generally be more difficult to carry out. In the following, I shall be concerned with the analysis of simple concepts.

One sort of project one might have in mind when one endeavors to undertake conceptual analysis might be called the extensional project. Such a project would attempt to

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19 I am indebted here to Steup (1996), pp. 26-7. However, Steup argues that simple concepts cannot be analysed. I disagree with him on this point, and maintain that some (though not all) simple concepts can, in fact, be analysed. Indeed, I take my project to be the analysis of a simple concept. This disagreement may be due to no more than a terminological difference between Steup and myself, but I shall not pursue the point further at this time.
enumerate, one by one, the objects which fall under the concept in question. For instance, one might attempt to clarify the concept \(<\text{red}>^\circ\) by indicating all of the red things in the world. While it would not necessarily be incorrect to do so -- indeed, all and only the indicated objects (viz. the red things in the world) fall under the concept \(<\text{red}>\). However, this project is subject to two significant shortcomings.

First, it deals with particulars rather than with universals. Concepts are often taken to be universals, that is, general properties. Such properties might be shared by a large number of individual objects, but are nonetheless distinct from the objects themselves. Accordingly, we should prefer an analysis of concepts the result of which is in general terms. But a cataloguing does not achieve this; rather, it merely offers a collection of individuals. One way to understand the problem with such a project is to imagine an individual who does not possess the concept \(<\text{red}>\), and is presented with a catalogue of all of the red things in the world. He might very well, through no fault of his own, fail to grasp the concept \(<\text{red}>\) when presented with such a catalogue. For, his only recourse, presumably, would be to attempt to abstract away from or generalize over these

\[20\] In the remainder of the current work, I shall use angle brackets to indicate names of concepts.
objects to determine what it is that they have in common. But, of course, they have many things in common; for instance, they are colored, they are solid, they are visible to him. He would not be to blame if he were to take any of these properties (or, for that matter, one of a host of other possibilities) to be the concept <red>. Indeed, he would not even be to blame if he were to fail to take anything at all to be the concept <red> after examining each object thus catalogued. For, without prior possession of the concept, an abstraction or generalization to some shared property might be conceptually impossible for him to perform!

A deeper, and perhaps related, problem with such a project is that it fails to get at what is really important, namely the underlying concept itself. If we are attempting to analyze a concept, then the correct object of inquiry is the concept itself, rather than the objects which instantiate it. And such concepts are abstract; they do not exist in the natural world.\(^{21}\) As such, the correct procedure of conceptual analysis takes place in the realm of thought. No catalogue of physical objects, however complete, can suffice for conceptual analysis.\(^{22}\)

\(^{21}\) Armstrong, for one, might disagree. However, the important point is that concepts cannot be perceived via the senses, as contrasted with physical objects. 
\(^{22}\) Of course, the same point holds, \textit{ceteris paribus}, for concepts which apply only to mental objects, such as <belief>, or to abstract objects such as <prime number>. 
Another project, which avoids these shortcomings, is the attempt to indicate in more general terms which objects fall under a particular concept. This project often results in a set of individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions which specify which objects fall under the particular concept in question. So, rather than individually catalogue each of the objects to which the concept applies, this project provides a set of conditions which can be used to determine, for any given object, whether it falls under that concept.

However, this approach also fails to appropriately get at the concept in question. For instance, the concept <human being> can be given either of the two sets of necessary and sufficient conditions:

\[ x \text{ is a human being iff } x \text{ is a featherless biped} \]
\[ x \text{ is a human being iff } x \text{ is chordate and } x \text{ is rennate} \]

The fact that there are two non-identical sets of necessary and sufficient conditions suggests that this is not the correct way to analyze a concept. Indeed, it is merely an empirical accident that each of these sets of conditions happens to pick out all and only the human beings in the

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23 Steup (1996) terms this sort of project "criteriological analysis" (pp. 28-30).
world. It could have been the case, though, that there were other (non-human) beings which satisfied either set of conditions; if this were in fact the case, that set of conditions would not pick out all and only the human beings in the world. We might say, then, that the provision of necessary and sufficient conditions does not hold up under counterfactual scrutiny: while it may be true in the actual world, it will fail to be true in some possible but non-actual world, i.e. in some counterfactual scenario.

This shortcoming is symptomatic of a deeper problem with such an attempt at conceptual analysis. Namely, it fails to tell us about the concept itself, but again only tells us about the objects which fall under the concept. Unlike a catalogue, it does so in general terms, rather than merely enumerating each of the relevant objects individually; nevertheless, it fails to directly address the concept per se as opposed to the objects in its extension.

Each of these projects, which are directed towards the objects falling under a concept rather than the concept itself, fails in an important way to reveal the essence of the concept in question. We might term such projects extensional analyses or substantive accounts, and contrast them with intensional or formal analyses. This latter sort of analysis is concerned with the concept itself, rather than with the objects which fall under it. We could say that the
goal of a formal conceptual analysis is to uncover the meaning of the concept being analysed.

When we put the point this way -- that is, in terms of meaning -- we can clarify our objection to criteriological analysis in terms of the analytic-synthetic distinction. We can say that the goal of conceptual analysis is a formulation which is not just true but analytically true. So, the analyses of <human being> offered above, while true (i.e. true in the actual world), proved unsatisfying because they are not analytically true. Indeed, this explains why they are subject to counterexamples in counterfactual scenarios. But a formal analysis, i.e. an analysis of the meaning of the concept, will, if true, also be analytically true; for, analyticity is a matter of the meanings of the terms involved, so that only an analysis in terms of meanings (and/or logical relations) can be analytic.

I have suggested that an analysis of a concept should be in general terms rather than in terms of a catalogue of

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24 Quine, in his "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", has famously argued against the tenability of such a distinction. However, I remain among those (perhaps a minority) who are unconvinced by Quine's arguments, and direct the interested reader to Grice and Strawson (1956) for a defense of the distinction against Quine's attacks. In any case, the intuitive idea behind the distinction is clear enough, I think, for current purposes. Ultimately, my project will not turn importantly on the tenability of the analytic-synthetic distinction.

25 I have been concerned solely with correct analyses, so that an analysis which is subject to counterexamples in the actual world is beyond the scope of the current discussion.
individuals, should be aimed at the concept itself rather than the objects which fall under that concept, should be true in counterfactual scenarios as well as in the actual world, and should aim at the meaning or essence of the concept so as to be analytically true. In the next section, I shall attempt to relate these considerations to the concept of epistemic justification, and to adduce some support for a formal analysis, rather than a substantive account, of that concept.

II.2 The need for a formal analysis of the concept of epistemic justification

The substantive, or extensional, project of developing criteria for when a belief is justified is not without value. Indeed, such a project might be all that is available to us. It might turn out to be the case that the concept of epistemic justification is not, after all, susceptible of analysis; if this is the case, then we find ourselves as epistemologists with little recourse but to focus on the substantive project. However, there are some considerations which lead me to believe this is not yet the case.

First, it seems that if it were indeed the case that a conceptual analysis is not forthcoming, the literature would contain more failed attempts at such an analysis, or, at least, more mention of the difficulty or impossibility of
such an analysis. Instead, though, what we see in most discussions of justification is a quick nod to the concept itself which is quickly left behind in lieu of the development of a substantive account. In the following section, I shall discuss some representative works from the literature, and shall attempt to show that each fails to take seriously the project of conceptual analysis.

It also strikes me that the absence of an analysis of the concept of epistemic justification provides an explanation of the current state of the literature. As I have discussed earlier, there is much disagreement within epistemology as to the nature of justification. However, all of this disagreement takes place at the substantive level. This phenomenon has sometimes been explained in terms of the (purported) fact that there are multiple concepts of justification afoot, and that the disagreement is thus merely apparent. I think that this explanation contains some truth, but prefer to construe the point differently. Rather, it seems to me, there is a single concept of epistemic justification; pre-theoretically, this surely seems to be the case. However, my preferred explanation is that the concept has not yet been made sufficiently clear as to allow for a successful substantive account of justification. Accordingly, epistemologists have begun with an inchoate concept of epistemic justification, which they have used to guide their
substantive work. But when faced with difficult cases, or with counterexamples to their accounts, they lack recourse to a conceptual analysis as a theoretical guide. This -- a single inchoate concept, rather than a number of rival concepts -- has led to the disparity among substantive accounts of justification.

It is my contention, then, that we must refrain from offering a substantive account of epistemic justification until we are clear as to just what it is of which we are offering an account. That is, we must first arrive at a clear explication of the concept of justification. What is distinctive of my project, then, is that I work primarily at the conceptual level, and that all of the considerations I shall adduce will be conceptual rather than substantive. (Some epistemologists might maintain that the concept of justification is not susceptible to analysis; in this work, though, I shall attempt to prove them wrong.)

However, it is a further consequence of this approach, I believe, that some light will be shed upon the substantive level in the process; that is, my conclusion(s) at the conceptual level will be informative once we return again to the substantive level and attempt to offer an account of justification, and many of the disputes we have seen time and

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26 E.g. Steup.
again in the contemporary literature will be, if not resolved, at least clarified.

Again, the substantive account is an important goal — indeed, perhaps the primary goal, ultimately — of the study of justification. However, we must proceed towards that goal in the fashion which is most likely to lead us to the right conclusions. That path, then, begins with conceptual analysis. Before moving on, let me digress into a brief technical discussion about the project of analysis.

What I seek is an equivalence of the following sort:

S's belief that p is justified iff ...

where the right-hand side is filled in such a way as to render the statement a complete analysis of the concept. That is, I hope to discover the essence or meaning of "justification". One might immediately object to my formulation for the following reason: the analysans is not <justification> or <justified> simpliciter, but rather something more complex. The objection is that this would obscure the project of conceptual analysis by failing to focus on the concept of justification itself. To this objection, I have several responses.

First, every case of epistemic justification is a case of a justified belief; that is, epistemic justification is a
property only of beliefs. So, whenever justification is afoot, it will be the case that some S has a justified belief that p.\textsuperscript{27} As such, it seems that we can use this fact to our advantage. Although I want my analysis to remain at the conceptual level rather than the substantitive, it will be helpful to focus on the bearers of the property of justification in order to get at the nature of the property itself. Discussion of properties in abstraction from their bearers is often more difficult than discussion of properties in terms of their bearers, and seems especially unnecessary when there is but a single type of object which can bear the property in question.\textsuperscript{28}

Second, the goal of the current project is to appropriately guide and constrain a substantive account of justification. And such an account will surely be best construed in terms of justified beliefs. This is what we have

\textsuperscript{27} Or, alternatively, that S is justified in believing that p. As far as I am concerned, the following equivalence holds:

\begin{equation}
S \text{ is justified in believing that } p \iff S\text{'s belief that } p \text{ is justified}
\end{equation}

That is, I take it that the difference between describing S as justified in a particular belief, and describing S's belief itself as justified, is merely a matter of terminology. For a detailed discussion of this matter, though, see Mylan Engel, "Personal and Doxastic Variants of Epistemic Justification and Their Roles in the Theory of Knowledge", Ph.D. thesis (1988), University of Arizona.

\textsuperscript{28} Indeed, this seems in keeping with the analysis of many properties. Consider, e.g., attempts to analyze colors ("S is red iff ...").
predominantly seen in the literature, and not surprisingly; for, justification is meant to be a condition on knowledge, and this fact does and should inform our theorizing about the former concept.

Third, it is my hope that the current project will be a useful contribution to the epistemological literature. As such, it seems preferable to use terminology and procedures which are familiar to that literature whenever it is possible to do so without loss of accuracy. Indeed, in the very next section, I shall be comparing the sort of analysis which I seek with accounts currently available in the literature, and homogeneity of superficial structure will greatly facilitate such an undertaking. Let me turn, then, without further ado, to that discussion.

III. Extant accounts of the concept of epistemic justification

I have suggested that we should seek an explication of the concept of epistemic justification before turning to a substantive account. I have also suggested that the literature is surprisingly lacking in detailed discussion of the concept or attempts to provide a conceptual analysis. In this section, then, I present a representative sample of approaches from the literature. Note that this is meant to be just that -- representative -- rather than exhaustive.
The goal of this section is to build a base of inductive evidence for my claim that the concept of epistemic justification has not yet been sufficiently explicated. Note also that I will discuss one attempt — viz. William Alston's "Concepts of Epistemic Justification" — which I think is on the right track, although it ultimately falls prey to several shortcomings.

III.1 Formally inadequate approaches

I have suggested that a conceptual analysis take the form of a definition. That is, the analysandum should not appear in the analysans itself, on pain of circularity. This rules out certain approaches to the conceptual project which might otherwise seem promising. Consider, for instance, Scott Sturgeon's paper "Truth in Epistemology". Sturgeon's piece begins with the following statement:

The precise theoretical connection between epistemic justification and truth is not initially obvious. That there exists such a connection is normally either taken for granted, or it is "established" via some remark to the effect that what makes epistemic justification epistemic is this connection to truth. The relevant issues remain latent in the literature. I hope to rectify this situation so as to better understand the role of truth in epistemology.\(^29\)

It seems that Sturgeon is about to offer a conceptual analysis of epistemic justification; further, he has

\(^{29}\) p. 99.
suggested that the analyses will make reference to truth in some important way.\textsuperscript{30} Alas, when Sturgeon offers a candidate for what he calls "the truth connection", i.e. "a particular sort of connection between ... justification and truth"\textsuperscript{31} a few pages later, it is of the following form:

\begin{align*}
S \text{ is justified in believing that } p \iff S \text{ is justified in believing that } p \text{ is true}
\end{align*}

As Sturgeon goes on to note, this formulation has two readings, one of which is trivial and one of which is "arguably false". However, my current objection to such a formulation is that it is of the wrong form. In order to sufficiently explicate the concept of justification, we must find a formulation in which the terms "justification" and its cognates fail to appear in the analyses. So, for instance, if we think that there is a connection between justification and truth, we should seek a formulation of the following sort:

\begin{align*}
S \text{ is justified in believing that } p \iff \ldots \text{ true } \ldots
\end{align*}

\textsuperscript{30} This insight is also central to the current project; see especially Chapters 2 and 4.
\textsuperscript{31} P. 100. I should note that Sturgeon does not, in the end, endorse this statement of the truth connection. Nonetheless, I find his focus on this formulation to be informative.
where the ellipses are filled in without reference to justification. It may indeed be the case that a discussion such as Sturgeon's will provide insight into the concept of justification. However, we want to capture such insights in an analysis of the concept, and it seems that the sort of formulation Sturgeon considers in his paper is not easily amenable to the project of conceptual analysis. We might say that approaches such as this one, in spite of their other potential benefits, are formally inadequate for the purposes of an analysis of the concept of epistemic justification. Let us consider some approaches which, at the very least, avoid this shortcoming.

III.2 Conceptually inadequate approaches

It is not uncommon to see an introductory discussion of the theory of knowledge fall short when it comes to a discussion of the concept of justification. The author often makes a few general and vague remarks before moving on, leaving the reader without much more than the fact that justification is a necessary condition on knowledge, and perhaps that it is a normative notion. This often exhausts the discussion of justification at the level of conceptual analysis; the remainder (i.e. the majority) of the discussion of justification consists in the development of a substantive account.
Consider, for instance, the discussion concerning justification as a component of knowledge, in BonJour (1985):

...I must be adequately justified in believing that the tree outside my window is a Douglas fir. Part of what this means is reasonably obvious, at least in broad outline. My belief, if it is to be justified, cannot be a mere guess or hunch or arbitrary conviction. It cannot be merely a product of wishful thinking or something I read on the slip from a fortune cookie. Instead, there must be some sort of reasonably cogent reason or ground or warrant for my belief that the tree is a Douglas fir. But what exactly such a reason must involve will require further consideration later.32

BonJour's remarks are fairly typical of those in the first chapter of a text on knowledge. He makes some general remarks about justification, along the lines of my discussion at the outset of this chapter. These remarks, though, are far from sufficient for the purposes of a conceptual analysis; at best, they seem to scratch the surface by stating a few of our common-sense intuitions about the difference between justified and unjustified beliefs.33 It then postpones further discussion until later. Of course, what is to come later is squarely rooted at the substantive level; BonJour never really returns to an analysis of the concept of justification.

32 pp. 4-5.
33 It should also be noted that BonJour seems already to be begging the question in favor of an internalist conception of justification, by way of his reference to "some sort of reasonably cogent reason or ground or warrant".
In his epistemology textbook, Matthias Steup devotes an entire Chapter to "The Concept of Epistemic Justification". And in the very first paragraph of that Chapter, Steup tells us "In this chapter, we shall focus on defining the meaning of that concept [i.e. epistemic justification]." However, he doesn't make a good deal of progress in his attempt. He begins by noting that "The concept of epistemic justification, most philosophers would agree, is a normative one." But this leads him into a discussion of several possible construals of normativity, which digresses into discussions of evidence, doxastic voluntarism, truth-conducivity, and probability. While these discussions are beneficial, especially to the target audience of the textbook (i.e. newcomers to the theory of knowledge, primarily undergraduates and others with relatively little background in philosophy), the initial promissory note is never cashed in. Steup never returns to the task of defining the concept of justification, but only adduces multiple considerations which are of varying value to the attempt to develop such a definition.

In the first edition of his Theory of Knowledge, Roderick Chisholm revisits the question of the Theatetus: "What is the distinction between knowledge and

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34 Steup (1996), Chapter 4.
35 Ibid., p. 69.
36 Ibid.
true, or right, opinion?" But I have characterized epistemic justification, as have many epistemologists, as just this difference. So, Chisholm is, in fact, asking about the nature of justification. His answer, however, is not terribly revealing. He tells us that the evident is the difference between knowledge and mere true belief; and defines the evident as follows:

And a proposition $h$ may be said to be evident for $S$ provided (1) that $h$ is reasonable for $S$ and (2) that there is no proposition $i$ such that it is more reasonable for $S$ to believe $i$ than it is for him to believe $h$.  

Chisholm's formulation is famously complex, and not at all intuitive. However, what is most problematic is that the notion of reasonableness is left unexplicated. While Chisholm does define "$h$ is reasonable for $S$", he does so in terms of reasonableness itself: "A proposition is reasonable...if believing it is more reasonable than withholding it." I shall follow Chisholm in maintaining that there is an essential and irreducible normative component to epistemic justification; as such, it is clear that the correct construal of justification will need to make

37 Chisholm (1966), p. 5.
38 Chisholm's use of the term "evident", as we can see, plays the same role as does the term "justified" for many philosophers, or "warranted" for some.
39 Ibid., p. 22.
40 Ibid.
reference to some normative term, and that ultimately some normative term (either the one invoked by the conceptual analysis, or another in terms of which it is itself defined) must be left as primitive. However, Chisholm's notion of reasonableness is so close to the notion of justification as to leave the latter concept effectively unanalyzed. Indeed, other than a greater emphasis on the fact that justification is a term of epistemic appraisal, the analogues of this discussion in the second and third editions of Chisholm's book remains largely unaltered.\(^2\) We should hope for an explication of the concept which, although it may contain some primitive concept(s), also provides some deeper analysis of justification in terms of said concept(s). We should expect that some terms must be left as primitive and unanalysed\(^4\); however, if the primitives employed in the analysans are no better understood than the analysandum, the analysis will be largely uninformative.

III.2.iv Pollock In his epistemology text, Pollock bypasses the problem of conceptual analysis altogether, and only tells us that justification is a normative notion. He then proceeds to develop an account of epistemic norms, which is clearly a substantive account rather than a conceptual


\(^4\)Failing, that is, an endorsement of some version of meaning holism.
analysis.\textsuperscript{43} And, to make matters worse (and as I mentioned in section I.2 above), Pollock allows in his opening discussion that there might be two distinct concepts of epistemic justification; I had suggested that this opinion is the artifact of a failure to arrive at a sufficient analysis of the concept of justification.

\textbf{III.2.v Goldman} In his (1986), Goldman admits that, although it is central to the project of epistemology, "It should be acknowledged that there is much vagueness in the (epistemic) use of 'justified'. No unique conception of justifiedness is embraced by everyday thought or language."\textsuperscript{44} This is related to the remark I offered above, and suggests that Goldman will attempt to remedy this situation by offering a unique and complete analysis of the concept. Indeed, he continues thus: "these [several distinct accounts of justifiedness] from a close-knit family; so there seems to be a core idea of justifiedness, which my theory will seek to capture."\textsuperscript{45} However, Goldman then turns immediately to a development of his substantive account of justification; so, while his account might in some sense "capture" the "core idea" of justification, it does not take the form of a conceptual analysis.

\textsuperscript{43} Pollock (1986), pp. 7-8.
\textsuperscript{44} Goldman (1986), p. 58.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., pp. 58-9.
Keith Lehrer, in his (1990), makes a similar distinction to the one I have offered between a conceptual analysis and a substantive account, although he puts the point in terms of the meaning of a term versus the conditions for its applying.\footnote{Lehrer (1990), pp. 5-6. I think that Lehrer's distinction is nearly identical to mine.} However, he only applies this distinction to the concept of knowledge, and not to that of justification. Indeed, with regard to this latter, he has only the following to offer: "When we say that s is completely justified, we shall mean that if his acceptance is based on adequate evidence, then he is completely justified by the evidence he has in accepting that p."\footnote{Ibid., p. 12.} This merely tells us that justification is a matter, in some sense or other, of being based on adequate evidence; this is surely correct as far as it goes, but will not suffice as a complete analysis of the concept of justification.

As this formulation occurs in the introductory chapter of his book, Lehrer offers the standard promissory note: "We offer some clarification of what is meant [by justification] here, but the analysis of this notion must be left to later chapters."\footnote{Ibid.} But this clarification, unfortunately relies heavily on the primitive notion of reasonableness. Thus, if we are to understand Lehrer as offering an analysis of the
concept rather than a substantive account\(^49\), he is vulnerable to the same objection as was leveled against Chisholm. I think that Lehrer's account tells us more than does Chisholm's, and so the fact that he relies on the same primitive in his analysans is not as troubling for Lehrer's account as for Chisholm's; nonetheless, it is sufficiently troubling to render his account unsatisfactory as an analysis of the concept.

III.3 Alston's analysis of the concept

I hope that the remarks of the previous section have fostered some sympathy for my claim that an analysis of the concept of epistemic justification is absent from the literature. It is typical to offer only some vague and incomplete remarks about justification as a component of knowledge, to postpone further discussion until a later chapter, and then to resume the discussion at the substantive rather than the conceptual level. However, while it is the norm to fail to undertake such an analysis in a satisfying fashion, I would be remiss to neglect to mention at least one attempt which seems (singularly, to the best of my knowledge) to undertake the project of an analysis of the concept of epistemic justification to some degree of satisfaction. I

\(^{49}\) I am not sure that he does so, but one could perhaps read his formulation as an attempt at conceptual analysis.
refer to Alston's paper "Concepts of Epistemic Justification".

The motivations for Alston's project are very similar to the motivations for the current project. He writes:

But it is usually not at all clear just what an epistemologist means by 'justified', just what concept the term is used to express. An enormous amount of energy has gone into the attempt to specify conditions under which beliefs of one or another sort are justified; but relatively little has been done to explain what it is for a belief to be justified, what that is for which conditions are being sought. 50

It appears that Alston has made the same distinction as I have drawn between conceptual analysis and substantive account, and suggested that the former should be undertaken prior to the latter, as I have suggested. Indeed, there are a number of similarities between his project and mine. However, I want to delay a more detailed discussion of Alston's paper until Chapter 4, in which I introduce what I take to be the correct analysis of the concept of epistemic justification. Let me here just express the worry that Alston is really taking part, to a large extent, in the substantive debate(s), though he couches his discussion in terms which give the appearance of the conceptual project. I also think that Alston's initial formulation (to which he refers as "Je") is satisfactory as far as it goes, but his

50 P. 57, original emphasis.
later versions are misguided. Again, I shall offer arguments to this effect later. For current purposes, it is worth noting that Alston's project is the only promising attempt in the literature to explicate the concept of epistemic justification; and, while there is much of value in Alston's discussion, it ultimately falls short of the mark. Nonetheless, Alston has highlighted the importance of the distinction which I am emphasizing in the current work; accordingly, his efforts will be an important guidepost for my analysis, as will be made clear in Chapter 4 below.

IV. A look ahead

I have argued that, before we (epistemologists) attempt to offer a substantive account of justification, we must first provide an explication of the concept of epistemic justification. Further, I have suggested that such an analysis is not forthcoming in the literature (except for Alston's attempt, which, I shall argue, ultimately fails). It is the task of the current project, then, to provide such an analysis, or at least to take steps in such a direction. Let me here offer the reader a preview of the remainder of this work, which will serve to place the following chapters into the larger context of the work as a whole. Note that these remarks will be made largely without argumentation at
this point; arguments in support of the claims I make below will be offered in subsequent chapters.

IV.1. A road map for the current work

My efforts to explicate the concept of epistemic justification will be primarily driven by two observations. First, there is a deep conceptual link between epistemic justification and truth. Indeed, this may be definitive of epistemic justification; for, there are many kinds of justification, each directed towards a different end (justification is, at least in part, an instrumental feature of its bearers). Accordingly, we can characterize each kind of justification in terms of its associated end. For example, moral justification is associated with the good, and prudential justification is associated with utility. Similarly, epistemic justification is associated with truth.

Truth -- or, to be more precise, true belief -- is the goal of our epistemic practices. But, as we have already seen, true belief does not suffice for knowledge. Justification is also required, and the role of justification is to ensure that true beliefs are not arrived at via luck, wishful thinking, or methods or practices which are otherwise unlicensed, epistemically speaking. Just how justification is supposed to play this role is a question I will not

address just yet. However, it is clear that there is some close conceptual link between justification and truth, as justification applies to beliefs only when truth (i.e. true belief) is sought in the right way. It is difficult to see how this could be if there were no connection whatsoever between truth and justification. So, the correct explication of the concept of epistemic justification, it seems, will make reference to truth.

I do not take this to be a terribly deep insight into the concept of epistemic justification. Nonetheless, some theorists have argued, contrary to what I have just suggested, that the correct formulation of justification need not make any reference to truth. So, I need to offer some arguments in support of my claim that there is a close conceptual connection between justification and truth. Such is the task of Chapter 2.

Once I invoke the notion of truth, I must take a detour into metaphysics, and discuss the nature of truth itself. For, while I shall argue that there is a deep conceptual connection between justification and truth, the two are not identical. But some theorists, namely epistemic theorists of truth, have argued for a position according to which truth and justification are (nearly) identical. This view comes in different forms -- for instance, the identification of truth with ideal justification, or justification in the limit, or
justification under ideal epistemic conditions. I argue that it is important to the project of contemporary epistemology, however, that truth and justification be distinct concepts. Indeed, in order that justification be a fallibilist notion, it must be possible for these two concepts to pull apart, such that a belief can be justified but false, or true yet unjustified.\(^{52}\) As such, I will need to present arguments, from the standpoint of contemporary epistemology, against epistemic theories of truth.

There are also theorists -- namely, a certain brand of deflationists -- who argue that truth is not a property at all, and that any references to "truth" in our language can be eliminated. But such a position also seems fatal to the epistemological project: if truth is the goal of our epistemic practices, and there is no such property as truth, then our epistemic practices seem to be rendered aimless; at the very least, they seem to be left without a unified goal. So, I shall also need to argue for at least a minimal realism vis-à-vis truth. After having made the argument for the connection between justification and truth in Chapter 2,

\(^{52}\) This latter is, essentially, tantamount to the claim that mere true belief does not suffice for knowledge. For, if it is impossible for a belief to be true yet unjustified, and if justification is the difference between true belief and knowledge, then it follows that all true belief qualifies as knowledge.
then, I shall turn to epistemological arguments for realism about truth in Chapter 3.

What, then, is the exact nature of the connection between justification and truth? I have suggested that they are not related via identity, and I shall argue for this claim, among others, in Chapter 3. Indeed, the exact nature of the relation is rather difficult to formulate, and an account of such is absent from the literature. A discussion of this relation, as it will turn out, leads to my second observation regarding justification, namely that justification is a normative notion. Again, I do not take this to be an original claim -- indeed, it is nearly universally held among epistemologists. However, I shall suggest that we must take this observation quite seriously, and that doing so will importantly constrain our efforts to explicate the concept of epistemic justification.

Specifically, I shall argue that the correct explication of the concept of epistemic justification must contain a normative element. Epistemic value, I shall argue, is an essential part of the concept of epistemic justification. As such, it is somewhat surprising that the overwhelming trend in the literature today is to "naturalize" justification. While naturalism and normativity are certainly not mutually exclusive, there is a tension between the two. In any case, it is curious that most epistemologists prefer, or seek, an
explication of epistemic justification which makes no reference to normative terms, but rather reduces them away, leaving only naturalistic terms in the explicandum. I shall again be suspicious of such attempts, and shall hope to place the burden of proof on this score with the naturalist.

In Chapter 4, then, which constitutes the substantive core of this project, I discuss the relation between justification and truth, suggest that the correct explication of the former concept essentially requires reference to some normative element, and attempt to offer such analysis. In so doing, I also shall have something to say about epistemic value.

Having argued that justification is conceptually linked not only to truth but to epistemic value in Chapter 4, I proceed to say something about reasons. I shall suggest that reasons are the bearers of epistemic value, and shall discuss the ontological status of reasons, as well as the way in which they are capable of bearing epistemic value. While what I shall have to say on this topic will be a bit sketchy, it will constitute the beginnings of an account of justification. That is, I hope to provide some insight into the way in which we might begin to move from an explication of the concept of epistemic justification to a substantive account of justification, with the results of the former endeavor serving to guide and constrain the latter.
It is the combination of these two insights — i.e., that epistemic justification is a normative notion, and that it is closely tied to truth — which will drive much of what follows. However, what I take to be distinctive about my project is the level of analysis at which it takes place.

I shall be working at the conceptual level; that is, rather than attempting to offer an account which tells us which beliefs are in fact justified, or a decision procedure by which we can distinguish between justified and unjustified beliefs, I shall attempt to offer an analysis of the very concept itself.

When we reflect upon the two observations adduced above, we notice that they are both general facts about the concept of justification, rather than about any particular justified belief. As such, it seems that one must take note of these observations at the conceptual level, rather than attempting to first develop a substantive account of justification. Indeed, just as these observations will constrain and inform a conceptual analysis of epistemic justification, so will such an analysis constrain and inform a substantive account.

IV.2 The Janus-faced nature of epistemic justification

I have suggested that one of the advantages of developing the correct formal analysis of epistemic justification will be the resolution of disagreements at the
substantive level. Let me elaborate, for I think that the way in which this comes about will be distinctive of the analysis I attempt to offer. Specifically, I shall argue that epistemic justification is a "Janus-faced" concept.

Each of the disputes to which I have made reference takes the form of a dichotomy, with the opposing disputants on either side -- internalism versus externalism, for instance, or naturalism versus non-naturalism. But I want to suggest that such dichotomies only serve to further confuse the matter of justification. Rather, I shall argue, we must do away with these dichotomies, for in each case, it will be misguided to fall into either camp. That is, I want to suggest that there is some merit to both internalism and externalism, to both naturalism and non-naturalism. But this is not quite right, for it seems to endorse the formulation of these dichotomies, even if to fail to endorse either side of each. Rather, I want to suggest that the dichotomies themselves are ill-advised. Justification, I shall argue, has both internalist and externalist components, for instance, but the concept is incoherent without either one or the other. The internalist and externalist features of justification are deeply intertwined with one another, so that no dichotomy exists at all. The same shall be true for each of a number of other dichotomies in the epistemological literature: the formulation of such a dichotomy, I shall
suggest, leads the debate astray in an unfortunate fashion. We must acknowledge each of the aspects of the concept of justification, and the way in which they interrelate, in order to properly grasp the concept. Once we do so, but only then, we will be better able to develop a correct substantive account; such an account, though, will likely not be comparable to most accounts currently on offer.

IV.3  A few caveats to the reader

A few caveats to the reader: I shall not attempt to develop a substantive account of epistemic justification; I take such to be the task of a subsequent project. Rather, I view the task of the current essay to be the laying of the preliminary groundwork which such a task presupposes (and, as I shall have attempted to show, which has been lacking in the epistemological literature). Only by getting clear on the concept of epistemic justification can we properly proceed to the development of a substantive account. Then, and only then, can we proceed, being sure to keep our analysis in mind as we attempt to develop an account which satisfies the concept of justification. It is the failure to take the former task seriously, I contend, which is primarily responsible for the vast disparities vis-à-vis the various attempts at a substantive account which have been proffered.
Also, I shall not attempt to say too very much regarding epistemic value. While I shall argue that the concept of epistemic justification is essentially normative in part, and that this normativity is a function of epistemic value, I shall not have a great deal to say about epistemic value itself. I shall suggest that reasons are the bearers of epistemic value, and shall have something to say about reasons. However, as with any account which countenances a normative component, I acknowledge that I shall ultimately need to posit a primitive normative element.

Again, though, it is the task of subsequent work to say more about this normativity. In the current project, my goal will be merely to argue that there is an essential and irreducible normative component to epistemic justification. Of course, while this may seem, at first glance, a relatively weak (and perhaps nearly trivial) thesis, it in fact carries with it rather important consequences. For, if I am right, then any attempt to naturalize epistemology (and, specifically, epistemic justification) -- and such attempts dominate the current literature -- will have missed the mark somewhat. Such a result would have important ramifications for the way in which we epistemologists continue our work. It is my hope, then, to place some constraints, however, minimal, on our attempts to offer an account of justification.
Chapter 2

The relation between justification and truth

As was discussed in the previous chapter, the goal of the current project is an analysis of the concept of epistemic justification. In the end, the analysis will invoke three essential features; these are goal-directedness, truth, and normativity. In Chapter 4, I shall offer the complete analysis of epistemic justification, and it is there that I shall introduce normativity into the analysis. In this chapter, then, I shall discuss the relation between justification and truth; specifically, I shall argue that the latter is an essential component of the former. First, though, I want to say a bit about the third element, viz. goal-directedness.

I. Goal-directedness and justification

I take it that any concept of justification -- e.g. epistemic justification, moral justification, economic justification, pragmatic justification -- essentially depends

\[53\] Actually, the final analysis will reference normativity twice, and it may turn out that the two instances of normativity refer to two distinct normative concepts. But I will set aside that worry until Chapter 4.

\[54\] As before, I shall sometimes refer simply to "justification" when I have in mind epistemic justification. Context should make it clear, in such instances, that I have in mind the concept of epistemic justification rather than justification simpliciter.
upon goal-directedness. That is, an action (or belief, desire, etc.) can only be justified relative to some goal or other. To determine whether an action is justified, we must determine to what end that action was performed; then we can proceed to evaluate that action vis-à-vis that end. To put the point another way, justification is primarily of instrumental value, in that it is always measured against some other (and, presumably, greater) end.

For instance, if someone asks whether she would be justified in robbing a bank, we must ask what end she is aiming to attain. If her goal was to attain a sum of money, then the action is justified; if her goal was to do what is morally right, then her action is unjustified. To put the point another way, we can say that her action is economically justified but morally unjustified; we can evaluate the justificatory status of an action along several dimensions, insofar as the actor is working towards several ends.

The same can be said of belief. A belief might be justified in one respect but unjustified in another. For instance, the mother of a son who has not returned from war might be epistemically justified in believing that he has died — the evidence in support of that belief is substantial — but prudentially justified in believing that he is alive — the hope, however slim, that he will someday return would bring her some comfort, and coping with the realization that
he has been killed would be far too difficult for her. Again we evaluate justification along several dimensions, depending on the ends towards which the belief in question might be adopted.

One might argue for some sort of all-things-considered notion of justification, such that when an action (belief, desire, etc.) is performed, we can sum over all of the various ends which are relevant and determine whether the action is justified tout court. This notion of justification simpliciter, however, would need to be defended. Further, it is not clear that there is not an overarching end underlying the notion of justification simpliciter. In any case, for current purposes, we need not concern ourselves with this possibility: we are often interested in the justificatory status of an action vis-à-vis a particular goal, independently of its justificatory status towards any other goal or goals or its all-things-considered justificatory status. Indeed, epistemic justification is just such a case: while we realize that beliefs are, and rightly should be, adopted for a variety or reasons, we are often concerned with the question of whether a belief is epistemically justified, without consideration of its justificatory status along other dimensions.

What, then, is the goal towards which beliefs are (taken to be) directed when we evaluate them in terms of epistemic
justification? As I shall argue in the remainder of this chapter, the relevant goal is truth. That is, when we evaluate a belief to determine whether or not it is epistemically justified, the relevant goal towards which this belief is directed is truth. As I have suggested above, beliefs might be adopted as a means towards satisfaction of other ends -- e.g. economic gain, happiness, well-being -- but these are irrelevant to the epistemic justificatory status of those beliefs.

II. Justification and truth: intuitive considerations

II.1 General remarks Let me begin by simply noting that most epistemologists will take this point to be relatively uncontroversial, even if they agree about little else with regard to epistemic justification. To consider a few examples, here is Keith Lehrer, whose account of (personal) justification is often taken to be paradigmatic of coherentism and of internalism: "There is a special kind of acceptance requisite to knowledge. It is accepting something for the purpose of attaining truth and avoiding error with respect to the very thing one accepts. More precisely, the purpose is to accept that p if and only if p."55 Here, Lehrer is making the point I made above: while we may adopt a belief (Lehrer's use of the term "acceptance" can here be

55 Lehrer (1990), p. 11.
interchanged with "belief" without harm) for a variety of purposes, the relevant goal with respect to knowledge, and thus the relevant goal for epistemology, is truth.\(^{56}\) And Alvin Goldman, reliabilist and externalist, tells us something quite similar: "true belief is a prime determinant of intellectual value, and in particular, a critical value for justifiedness"; indeed, Goldman tells us that this claim is "unremarkable".\(^{57}\) As one final testament, William Alston, in his "Concepts of Epistemic Justification", defines the "epistemic point of view" as "the standpoint of the aim at maximizing truth and minimizing falsity."\(^{58}\) And these authors are not alone: there is widespread agreement that truth is the relevant goal when it comes to determining whether a belief is epistemically justified, even though this agreement is accompanied by broad disagreement as to the exact nature of the relationship between justification and truth.

However, this agreement is not universal; there are some, as I shall discuss later in this chapter, who deny that epistemic justification need be truth-linked. Further, the goal of the current project is to develop an analysis of the concept of epistemic justification, rather than a substantive account. While it is my hope that the conceptual analysis

\(^{56}\) The goal of avoiding error can be understood, I think, as a corollary or a companion to the goal of attaining truth, rather than a distinct goal as such.

\(^{57}\) Goldman (1986), p. 98.

\(^{58}\) See pp. 84-5.
will help to place constraints upon our subsequent development of a substantive account, it would be a mistake to argue from substantive accounts directly to a conceptual analysis. That is, it would be wrong to note that all or most substantive accounts of justification invoke truth, and thus to conclude that the conceptual analysis must also invoke truth. To be sure, some of the argumentation which will follow will look to substantive accounts; however, in doing so, I shall always have an eye turned to the conceptual level, and the arguments I offer and the conclusion I draw will be at that level. Indeed, since I suggested in the previous chapter that there are no extant attempts to completely develop an analysis of the concept of epistemic justification, it is incumbent upon me to begin by arguing that there is indeed a conceptual connection between justification and truth. Again, while this claim might not seem controversial to most, we shall see below that some substantive accounts seem not to have accounted for this aspect of the conceptual analysis; but if my analysis of the concept turns out to be correct, then the correct substantive account must be consistent with it, and indeed must properly reflect the concept.

So, then, in this chapter, I shall argue that there is an essential connection between epistemic justification on the one hand and truth on the other. Without saying too much
about the nature of that connection — the complete analysis, to be offered in Chapter 4, will make that clear — I can say a few things here.

A conceptual analysis is, at least formally, similar to a definition. We can conceive of the concept being analysed as the definiendum, and the analysis itself as the definiens. If we conceive of the project in those terms, then, the claim of this chapter is that the concept of truth will occur in the definiens; that is, we will have an analysis of the following form:

\[ S's \text{ belief that } p \text{ is justified} = \text{df } \ldots \text{truth}\ldots ^{59} \]

While the remainder of the definiens needs to be filled out, this is an important first step towards a complete analysis. And I mean this claim to be non-trivial; that is, it is meant to say something about the essence of the concept of epistemic justification. So, it will not be possible, I shall maintain, to provide an analysis of the concept which

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59 Since epistemic justification applies to beliefs, it is unproblematic, and convenient, to offer a conceptual analysis (or, almost equivalently -- the difference has been elucidated in Chapter 1 -- a definition) in this form rather than defining justification on its own. We could equivalently, though more wordily, define justification as "a property of beliefs which applies to a belief when and only when \ldots"; I will prefer the formulation used in the text, as it is both simpler to state and more familiar to existing discussions of justification.
does not refer essentially to truth (or to some synonym); to omit the connection to truth is to be mistaken about the concept of epistemic justification. Further, this is not meant to be a trivial claim in the way that, say, a holist about concepts might take it to be. That is, I am not just suggesting that these two concepts are related because any two concepts are related, or that any concept is related to the concept of truth in some way. Nor am I arguing that they merely share a family relation (although that might be an interesting argument). Rather, I mean to suggest that the two are essentially connected; specifically, an invocation of the concept of truth, I shall argue, is essential to arriving at the correct concept of justification.\footnote{Note, however, that the converse is not true; indeed, the goal of Chapter 3 is to argue against the converse claim, and thus to avoid circularity in our analysis of justification.}

That said, let me offer some intuitive considerations to support the claim that justification and truth are related in this essential way; later in the chapter, I shall offer several lines of argument in support of this claim.

\textbf{II.2 A prima facie case} One might simply argue that there are, as we have noted above, a number of ends towards the satisfaction of which a belief might be adopted, and that picking out epistemic justification is simply a way of indicating that knowledge is the intended goal: "That's what makes it \textit{epistemic} justification, after all." While this is
not much of an argument, it is at least suggestive. For, if epistemic justification is conceptually related to knowledge -- and, it is nearly universally agreed that justification is a necessary condition on knowledge\textsuperscript{61} -- then truth seems to be the only available candidate for the relevant end.

If knowledge is roughly justified true belief\textsuperscript{62}, then it seems reasonable that the relevant goal in determining whether a belief is epistemically justified should be justification, truth, belief, or some combination. But justification cannot be the relevant goal: to say that a belief is justified if and only if it is justified is to do no more than to utter a tautology. Nor can belief be the relevant goal: to say that a belief is justified if and only if it is a belief is not only misguided but false: there must be some beliefs which are unjustified in order that the notion of justification be meaningful. This leaves us with truth as the component of knowledge which is relevant to epistemic justification. However, it would be too hasty to maintain that a belief is justified if and only if it is true. For, this identifies justification with truth,

\textsuperscript{61} I will discuss Crispin Sartwell's arguments to the contrary in Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{62} There needs to be a fourth condition to avoid Gettier-type cases, but it is unlikely that the satisfaction of this condition is the relevant aim when we are discussing epistemic justification. Indeed, since a belief can be justified but still fall prey to Gettier-type cases, it seems clear that satisfaction of this condition cannot be the relevant goal here.
rendering the former notion superfluous (presumably, justification is not simply a synonym for truth). And, this ignores what is an important fact about justification and truth -- they are independent, albeit related, conditions upon knowledge; a belief can satisfy one without satisfying the other. We would expect that there be some connection between the satisfaction of these two conditions -- for instance, we might expect that a belief which satisfies the justification condition is more likely, on average, to satisfy the truth condition\textsuperscript{63} -- but this is just to say that the two concepts are related. However, that relation must not be the identity relation. Rather, it would seem that justification must be analysed in terms of truth, lest the connection to knowledge be severed completely. Other concepts -- goal-directedness seems a promising candidate -- must be invoked to comprise the relation between justification and truth, of course; but the foregoing seems to establish, at least \textit{prima facie}, a conceptual connection between justification and truth.

I do not take this argument to be conclusive; it merely purports to provide some initial motivation for the claim that justification and truth are conceptually related.\textsuperscript{64} It

\textsuperscript{63} More on this later, though.
\textsuperscript{64} Note that I am \textbf{not} arguing that truth and justification must be conceptually related merely because they are both necessary conditions of knowledge. Two concepts A and B could be necessary conditions of some further concept C.
could be the case, for instance, that there is no such direct connection between knowledge and epistemic justification, other than the latter's being a necessary condition of the former. But this at least seems unlikely -- we expect that, if A is a necessary condition of B, then A and B are conceptually related -- and the onus is upon the proponent of such a claim to establish it.

A further consideration derives from a working construal of epistemic justification. As a first pass,\textsuperscript{65} we might say that a belief is epistemically justified if and only if that belief is based upon good reasons or sufficient evidence. Without worrying about the basing relation, what constitutes a good reason, or how much evidence is sufficient -- I will eventually supersede this rough analysis of justification with a more thorough analysis, and thus need not worry about refining this rough formulation -- let us look a bit more closely at what it tells us. What is it to maintain that a belief is held for good reasons, or, alternatively, that one has good reason to believe that p? Presumably, this is elliptical, and is to say that one has good reason to believe

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without A and B being conceptually related. Consider, for example, that being featherless and being bipedal are both necessary conditions on being human, but that there is no conceptual connection between being featherless and being bipedal.
\end{flushright}

\textsuperscript{65} Of course, this is merely a first pass, and an insufficient one at that; the difficulty in arriving at a more satisfying formulation highlights what I take to be the importance of the current project.
that p is true. Surely, we could fill in the ellipsis in a number of different ways -- good reason to believe that p is likely to bring about happiness is believed, that p is widely believed among one's peers, that p is melodic -- but each of these is clearly irrelevant to epistemic justification. The same can be said of sufficient evidence: to have sufficient evidence to believe that p is to have sufficient evidence of the truth of p, i.e. to have sufficient evidence that p is true. Again, this is not meant to be a conclusive argument -- one might, I suppose, take issue with the notion that justification is a matter of good reasons or sufficient evidence -- but it does lend further intuitive support to the notion that truth is the relevant goal when we are discussing epistemic justification.

II.3 The analogy with ethics Further support for the claim that truth is the relevant goal when considering epistemic justification comes from an analogy between epistemology and ethics. The two have been compared for some years, and with good reason. Consider, then, the following comparison.

Just as the good is the objective of our actions vis-à-vis ethics, the true is the objective of our actions vis-à-vis epistemology. The parallel can be continued by examining the history of ethics. Before Kant, consequentialism was in

66 Most notably in this century by Chisholm and Firth.
vogue, but consequentialism was shown to be subject to some fairly obvious counterexamples. These are cases in which the objective is reached, but in a way which is somehow illegitimate. The conclusion to be drawn is that it is the intention, not the result, which is morally relevant. That is, since it is possible for one to produce good consequences without any accompanying good intentions, we must consider more than just the outcome in determining whether an action is moral. Of course, this is not to say that the outcome is irrelevant -- indeed, if the good is the objective of ethics, then we will expect the outcome to be relevant as well as the intention -- but just that it is not the only relevant consideration. In fact, we might expect the correct characterization of the appropriate sort of intention to be somehow indexed to the good. The first substantial attempt to articulate this observation in the form of a moral principle was that of Kant, and as we know, his formulation is rather complicated. We might have initially expected the formulation of morality in terms of intention to be as straightforward as that in terms of objective. But such was not, alas, the case.

In epistemology, it is also generally agreed that the objective is not the sole relevant consideration. Plato noted that true belief does not suffice for knowledge, since one can arrive at true belief as the result of luck, or
wishful thinking, or some other inappropriate process. So, to count as knowledge, a belief must be arrived at in the right way, or as the result of some sanctioned method, or through the appropriate sort of reasoning, or what have you. As a result, we have a notion of epistemic justification, which is a necessary condition on knowledge. And, just as the good is the objective of our moral practices, truth is the objective of our epistemic practices. So, to continue the analogy with ethics, whether a belief is true is not the only relevant consideration; we must consider whether a belief is justified. However, we will expect the formulation of justification to make reference to truth in some integral way, just as the notion of ethical justification makes reference to the good.

III. Internalism and the isolation objection

The previous section was an attempt to provide some prima facie motivation for my claim that the concept of epistemic justification is essentially related to that of truth. In this section and the next, I shall offer two lines of argument which are meant to bolster this claim. Let me begin, then, with a discussion of strict internalist theories.

First, I should say a few words about the debate between internalists and externalists, a debate which takes place
primarily at the level of substantive accounts. It is my contention that this debate is the unfortunate result of a failure on the part of epistemologists to arrive at a complete analysis of the concept of epistemic justification. Instead, working with an inchoate analysis, theorists were led in several different and disparate directions, yielding the plethora of theories of justification currently on offer in the literature. It is my hope that the debate will be dissolved upon an appreciation of the correct formulation of epistemic justification; such is a large part of the motivation for this project.\textsuperscript{67} Further, it is my contention that the internalist/externalist dichotomy is an unfortunate way to undertake a discussion of justification; I think we need to take a new approach to the question. More on this later, though.

While I have suggested that much of the debate between internalists and externalists takes place at the substantive level, I believe that it is partially a conceptual matter as well; indeed, some commentators have suggested that internalists and externalists do not agree, but rather are discussing two distinct concepts (we might call them justification\textsubscript{i} and justification\textsubscript{e}), which suggests that the disagreement is at the conceptual level. As we have seen,\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{67} In the next stage of the project, I intend to employ the conceptual analysis arrived at here to begin to develop a substantive account of justification.
the line between conceptual analysis and substantive account is not always a sharp divide. However, it is clear that the two are related; as I have suggested, a conceptual analysis can and should constrain a substantive account of the concept therein analysed. However, the relation can also work in the other direction: a result at the substantive level can influence our conceptual analysis. However, we must be careful when moving in this direction, as certain substantive considerations are not appropriate at the conceptual level.68

But one consequence of a strict internalism -- a view, that is, which maintains that the only factors relevant to justification are factors in the mind of the epistemic agent -- seems relevant to the analysis of the concept of justification. This may be because the consideration is itself a conceptual consideration, or it may be because the result occurs systematically in all substantive accounts which are strictly internalistic. Because of the close relation between conceptual analyses and substantive accounts

68 Indeed, here is a more complete diagnosis of the state of the literature (with special regard to the internalism/externalism debate): working with an inchoate analysis of the concept, theorists allowed examples and intuitions to shape their substantive accounts, and then read their substantive accounts back into the concept. This mistake has caused some to suggest, as mentioned above, that there are multiple concepts of epistemic justification, and others to suggest that no correct analysis can be found. It is my contention, however, that there is a single concept of epistemic justification, and that the multitude of accounts before us can be whittled down to a single account once we arrive at the analysis of this concept.
accounts, these may be two ways of explaining the same state of affairs. Indeed, I think that the situation is as follows: this systematic failure of internalist accounts suggests that such accounts fail to reflect an essential component of the concept of epistemic justification. But any account which fails to adequately and accurately reflect the concept of which it is an account will go wrong, and such is the fate of internalist accounts. So, it seems clear that this result is relevant at the conceptual level; whether the result is itself conceptual (rather than substantive) or merely entails a fact at the conceptual level seems unimportant for the purposes of the current discussion.

Let us turn, then, to the matter at hand. A strict internalism is subject to the "isolation argument". To motivate the argument, consider an agent who has no veridical contact with the external world — a brain in a vat, say, or a person without the use of her senses. Such an agent would be isolated from reality in the sense that there is no principled reason why her beliefs should be true; those which turn out to be true happen to be so only as a matter of luck. We certainly do not want to say of this agent that

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69 See Pollock (1974); note that Pollock had abandoned his support of this line of argument by the publication of his (1986), in which he argues that we are not, as a matter of, isolated from reality.
70 Note that the isolation objection is mainly directed at empirical beliefs.
any of her beliefs, including those which are true, are justified. This is because they fail to be connected to the world in the right way, roughly speaking. Note that this is the case even if it is not the agent's fault, as in the case of the brain in the vat, that she is isolated from reality in this way. 71

What ramifications does this have for our project? Consider the following description of the situation described above. Because the agent's belief-formation processes are completely isolated from reality, and thus from the truth of the matter regarding those propositions she believes, they will only be true, if at all, as a matter of luck. There is no systematic connection between her beliefs and the external factors which render those beliefs true or false. It is because of this lack of a connection, this isolation, that we withhold justification from the agent. So, in order to rectify her epistemic situation, she must establish some connection between her belief-forming processes and the external world; that is, she must deliver herself from isolation. Only then will we be inclined to claim that (at least some of) her beliefs are justified.

What consequences does this have for our analysis of the concept of epistemic justification? Consider what we have

71 Lehrer and Cohen have argued that brains in vats can have justified beliefs. I shall discuss their argument at greater length in Chapter 4.
found: an agent's beliefs cannot be justified if she is isolated from reality, but might be justified if she is not isolated from reality. This seems to suggest that there is a correlation between justification and connection to reality, in the following way: any account of justification which is to consistently deliver the right results must take account of this observation. That is, the correct account of justification must posit a connection between justification and reality. But "reality", at least as we have been using the term here, is simply the truth of the matter with regard to the propositions believed by our epistemic agent. So, there must be some connection between justification and truth; without some connection to truth, an agent cannot be justified in her beliefs. Thus, without some reference to truth, a substantive account of justification cannot be correct. And since this fact applies to all substantive accounts without exception, it has an important consequence at the conceptual level: without invoking truth, our analysis of epistemic justification will not be correct. So, it must be the case that the correct analysis of the concept of justification is essentially connected to the concept of truth.

One might object at this point that one's beliefs can indeed be justified if one has been epistemically responsible, i.e. if one has done the best one could under
one's epistemic circumstances, however unfortunate. While I shall discuss this line of argument in a different context when I discuss Lehrer and Cohen in Chapter 4 (this line of argument is very similar to the one they offer), I should say something about it here. To say that one has done the best one could is nonetheless to admit the goal of truth as relevant to the matter of epistemic justification. For, to do the best one could is, presumably, to do whatever is within one's power with regard to obtaining one's ends. Indeed, we usually talk about one doing the best one could precisely when, and because, one has failed to meet one's goal(s); ideally, though, one would have, with a little luck from external circumstances, achieved that end. This is not to deny that the goal is important, but only to underscore the fact that one can be justified, in some circumstances, without achieving one's goal -- indeed, even in circumstances in which it is in principle impossible for one to achieve one's goal (as in the case for the brain in the vat). While I shall argue against this suggestion in Chapter 4, it will suffice here to note that the notion that we should do our best is indexed to some goal; even if that goal is unattained or unattainable, it is our pursuit of that goal which is relevant to justification. In the case of epistemic justification, then, it is the pursuit of truth which
matters, even though the belief in question might be doomed to falsity.

So, we might slightly revise our formulation, as follows:

S's belief that p is justified iff S's belief that p is truth-directed...

It is not just the goal of truth which is relevant, but the pursuit of that goal, when discussing epistemic justification. So, we might say that justification is essentially "truth-linked", with the qualification that the link is via the pursuit of truth and not the attainment of truth. However, at the conceptual level, this link is strong enough to ensure that truth plays a prominent role in our analysis.

IV. Non-truth-linked accounts of justification

In this section, I want to present a somewhat different line of argument in support of the claim that justification and truth are essentially linked in the way we have been

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One might think that a connection to truth via truth-directedness rather than via the actual attainment of truth renders the isolation argument irrelevant. That is, one might think that the pursuit of truth can be carried out even if one is, say, a brain in a vat. I shall address this worry at length in Chapter 4.
discussing. I want to consider three theorists who, contrary to the popular trend of maintaining a truth connection in one's account of justification, have (seemingly) severed the connection between justification and truth, but in a way which is perhaps not subject to the isolation argument. I shall argue, concerning each of these theories, that in order to be made plausible as an account of justification, it must at least tacitly make reference to truth. The argument, in each case, can be understood to take the form of a dilemma: either the account does indeed assert, at least tacitly, a truth connection; or, alternatively, the account is unsatisfactory or defective in some way. 

Again, I will argue from this systematic result at the substantive level that we should draw a conclusion at the conceptual level. The reason is similar to that of the previous section: if no substantive account can be rendered plausible without reference to truth, this suggests that an account which accurately reflects the concept of justification must invoke truth. So, in what follows, I shall address in turn the writings of P.F. Strawson, John Pollock, and William Lycan.

73 So, it might be the case that, in the end, these authors would agree to the need for a truth connection.

74 Note that we might read Lehrer and Cohen as suggesting that truth and justification are not (essentially) connected in the way I am arguing. However, as mentioned in note 19 above, I shall defer discussion of this piece until Chapter
IV.1. Strawson  In the final chapter of his Introduction to Logical Theory, P.F. Strawson delves into epistemology, and presents what we might call an inductivist account of epistemic justification. He writes, "For, it is generally proper to inquire of a particular belief, whether its adoption is justified; and, in asking this, we are asking whether there is good, bad, or any evidence for it."\textsuperscript{75} And evidence, he has already told us, is a matter of two factors: coherence with the rest of our beliefs -- "the question of how it fits in with the rest of our everyday general convictions and with accepted scientific theories"\textsuperscript{76} -- and inductive support.\textsuperscript{77} Given that justification is, for Strawson, a matter of evidence, and that evidence is in turn a matter of coherence and induction, has Strawson acknowledged the need for a connection between truth and justification? Mere coherence, as has been discussed above, is subject to the isolation argument; if Strawson is to maintain a truth connection, it must be via induction. So, let us turn to his discussion of induction.

Strawson spends a fair amount of time discussing the matter of induction, and its justification (he puts the word "justification" in scare quotes, suggesting at one point that

\textsuperscript{4} where it will be more relevant and at which point I can more properly treat the piece.
\textsuperscript{75} P. 257., original emphasis.
\textsuperscript{76} P. 245
\textsuperscript{77} See p. 246.
justification really only applies to beliefs, not to processes.) He is writing in the context of a debate as to whether induction can ever be a rational process, and whether it can ever be defended as such. The worry at hand is that any argument which purports to provide a justification of induction must itself rely on induction, which would thus render said argument circular. To this end, for example, Strawson discusses Hume's uniformity principle, which Strawson calls "the supreme premise of inductions." He concludes, with Hume, that no such principle exists -- a formulation such as "Nature is uniform", he tells us, is too vague to be useful, while any sufficiently precise formulation will fail to be sufficiently general. The upshot, Strawson tells us, is that "the impossibility of framing a general proposition of the kind required is really a special case of the impossibility of framing precise rules for the assessment of [inductive] evidence." That is, it is not just the search for some uniformity principle which is doomed to failure, but also the more general search for a justification of induction.

78 See pp. 248ff.; such is the reason for the italicized portion of the above-quoted passage.
79 P. 251.
80 See p. 251-2.
81 P. 251.
After considering another failed attempt at justifying induction\textsuperscript{82}, Strawson is prepared to move on: "Let us turn from attempts to justify induction to attempts to show that the demand for a justification is mistaken."\textsuperscript{83} As his discussion of the two failed attempts to justify induction have shown, induction is not merely a species of deduction, so the demand for a justification of induction amounts to the question whether induction is reasonable: "What other sense could we give to the demand? It is sometimes expressed in the form of a request for proof that induction is a reasonable or rational procedure."\textsuperscript{84} And, as Strawson notes, we can ask a variant of this question with regard to a particular belief rather than to the procedure of induction: "it is generally proper to inquire of a particular belief, whether its adoption is justified."\textsuperscript{85} But to ask such a question, Strawson tells us, is to betray a fundamental misunderstanding; to ask whether the application of inductive standards is justified is akin to asking whether the law is legal; the question is either meaningless, or its answer is an analytic truth.\textsuperscript{86} Indeed, Strawson concludes the chapter by telling us that induction simply is rational: "...the

\textsuperscript{82} Namely, the attempt to show that larger sample sizes yield greater probability of truth for the inductive conclusion; see pp. 252-6.
\textsuperscript{83} P. 256.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{85} P. 257; original emphasis.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
rationality of induction...is not a fact about the constitution of the world. It is a matter of what we mean by the word 'rational' in its application to any procedure for forming opinions about what lies outside our observations or that of available witnesses."

Given all of this, let us return to the question at hand: does Strawson admit to a conceptual connection between justification and truth? It seems that the answer to this question will depend upon our interpretation of what Strawson has told us about the rationality of induction. First, let us assume that there is no connection whatever between rationality and truth. Perhaps to be rational is to conduct one's intellectual practices in the fashion appropriate to members of one's species, say, but that there is no reason to believe that rationality is truth-linked or even truth-directed. Then, Strawson's account remains subject to the isolation objection; justification is a matter of coherence and induction, but neither of these can provide the requisite connection. We saw this in the case of coherence above, so I will not rehearse that argument here. And induction fares no better on this reading of Strawson; for, induction is simply stipulated to be rational, while rationality fails to be indexed to truth at all.

87 pp. 261-2.
To put the point another way: the meaning we apply to the term "rational", or to any other term, for that matter, need not entail that there is any connection between rationality and truth. So, even if it does follow from our philosophical semantics that "Induction is rational" is something like an analytic truth, and it is also correct to maintain that justification is a matter of inductive support, we still lack a connection between justification and truth. On this interpretation, then, there is no connection between justification and truth, but only between justification and rationality. But then we must ask: what is the benefit, epistemically speaking, of rationality? We will want some argument to suggest that rationality is truth-conducive, or at least truth-directed, in some relevant way. So, perhaps we should consider an interpretation of Strawson's inductivist account which assumes such a connection between rationality and truth.

There are two ways in which we might do this. First, we might extend the argument by suggesting that rationality is our best tool when it comes to seeking truth; a rational belief-forming process, e.g., is more likely to yield true beliefs than is an irrational process. However, this clearly extends the link in the direction in which I have been arguing: justification depends on induction, which is a matter of rationality, which is truth-directed. It is
unclear what Strawson would say about this, for it seems to amount to a defense of induction — induction, according to this line, is justified because it is truth-directed. The important point to note is that, if Strawson grants this connection, then he in fact does not deny a connection between justification and truth, and we ultimately do not disagree.

Alternatively, we could urge Strawson to maintain a line he suggests earlier in the chapter but then abandons. Strawson tells the familiar story about induction: it is a source of good evidence insofar as the inductive sample is sufficiently large and sufficiently varied.  This claim is cast in terms of past observed instances, and thus clearly invokes truth as well as truth-directedness: referring to past observations is to refer to known truths about the world, and concerns about sample size and breadth suggest that we want the conclusion of our inductive inference to be more rather than less likely to be true. Again, then, attributing this line to Strawson is to place him in the camp of those who maintain that there is, as I have been arguing, a connection between justification and truth.

So, at first glance, Strawson's inductivist account of justification might appear to deny a conceptual connection between justification and truth, by virtue of suggesting that

88 p. 246.
justification is a matter of induction and that induction is, as a matter of analytic truth, a rational procedure. However, we are immediately led to ask whether there is any connection between rationality and truth. If so, then we have the connection we sought; if not, we must scratch our heads and wonder why we should care that a particular procedure is rational.

IV.2. Pollock In his *Contemporary Theories of Knowledge*, John Pollock distinguishes between two senses of justification: that which when added to true belief yields knowledge (setting aside Gettier worries for the time being), and a reason-guiding or belief-guiding sense; he takes the latter to be the main (although not exclusive) focus of his theorizing about justification. It is a matter of "right reasoning", and is determined by epistemic norms — not the norms we actually have, but the correct norms. Without concerning ourselves with the content of these norms, we can see that they will have to be truth-related in some sense or other.

In order for a set of norms to adequately guide our reason, they must guide it in some direction or other, towards some goal or other. It is unclear what it would be to guide reason if there were not some goal with reference to which it were being guided. And the obvious candidate, I

89 See especially pp. 10, 125.
want to suggest, for this reference point is the goal of truth. The only other plausible candidate would be something like rationality, but we have already discussed rationality and its link to truth in our treatment of Strawson. Again, if justification is a matter of rationality, and the isolation argument is to be avoided, then rationality must be truth-linked, at least via truth-directedness.

Of course, Pollock would not disagree with the need for a link to truth. He thinks that the isolation argument is not a concern, because he espouses a version of "direct realism", according to which we are as a matter of fact connected to the external world via perception. This connection provides a truth link; for Pollock's nondoxastic version of foundationalism, percepts form the foundation for our belief corpus. But if our percepts have the needed link to truth, this can then be transmitted to our beliefs. So, perhaps the only difference between Pollock and me, for current purposes, is that he isn't worried about the need for a truth connection because he thinks we get it for free. In any case, the same can be said for Pollock as for Strawson: at first glance, his account does not countenance a connection between justification and truth. In Pollock's case, the connection is, instead, between justification and reason-guiding. But when we press on the nature of this connection, we find that, to render the account plausible, we
must take there to be, ultimately, some connection between justification and truth after all.

IV.3. Lycan Lycan's account of justification is one he calls "explanationism": the view that "all justified reasoning is fundamentally explanatory reasoning that aims at maximizing the 'explanatory coherence' of one's total belief system."90 Roughly, then, for Lycan, justification is a matter of being the conclusion of a good inference to the best explanation. But there are two reasons why we take such an inference to be a good argument: either its conclusion is (likely to be) true, or it has predictive power and thus allows us to successfully manipulate our surroundings and thus to survive. Lycan has denied the need for a link to truth, and thus prefers the second line of support for abductive inferences.91 However, it seems clear that this line tacitly relies on a truth connection.

The line of argument here should be familiar by now: in order for a belief to have predictive power, it must be connected to the actual truth of the matter in some way; compare this to arguments for induction. A belief which is not grounded in past truths is unlikely to help us to predict future truths, at least in any reliable fashion. Similarly for survival and manipulation of our environment: these are

90 P. 128.
91 See his reference to predictive power on p. 147, as well as his evolutionary argument on pp. 143ff.
primarily a matter of having true beliefs. While it will not always be the case that true beliefs are the most helpful, this will most often be the case. Indeed, when one claims that one's theory has predictive power, or that it has pragmatic value, this is usually supported by an argument for the truth of that theory.

Once again, we see an account which appears to deny a truth connection, but then see that appearances can be misleading. Either Lycan's posited connection between justification and explanation is conjoined with a connection between explanation and truth (or, at least, truth-directedness), or else we must wonder why explanation is epistemically valuable.

V. Conclusion

Having argued here that justification is essentially linked to truth, I need to explain the nature of that connection. Such is the project of the final chapter, in which I argue that this connection is a matter of two distinct kinds of normativity. However, first I must say something more about truth; for, if truth is defined in terms of justification, we are caught in a circularity, and this will have negative consequences for the project of

92 See my discussion of pragmatic theories of truth in Chapter 3.
epistemology as currently conceived. We must, then, demonstrate that truth is not defined in terms of justification, and in fact that it is a realist notion (in a sense of realism which I shall explain); such is the task of Chapter 3.
Chapter 3

An Epistemological Argument for Realism about Truth

In the previous chapter, I argued that there is an essential conceptual relation between the concepts of epistemic justification and of truth. However, such an argument presupposes a particular conception of truth. Namely, it presupposes a realism about truth; that is, the view that truth is a substantive property. In this chapter, then, I shall sketch and defend a realism about truth, viz. Alston's minimal realism, as presented in his (1996). After making some preliminary remarks, I shall present the main rival theories of truth, and offer arguments against each before turning to a discussion of realism about truth. There, I shall discuss several varieties of realism, and shall argue that among these, Alston's theory is sufficient for the purposes of epistemology.

I. Introduction

"That one could have a theory of truth which is neutral with respect to epistemological questions...would have seemed preposterous to a nineteenth-century philosopher."

--Hilary Putnam, from his John Locke Lectures

And so it seems to this twentieth-century philosopher. While the debate within the study of the theory of truth itself may not be decisive between rival theories\(^94\), the theory of truth cannot be studied in a vacuum. Truth is relevant to many philosophical endeavors; as such, what we have to say about truth may well influence, inform, or otherwise constrain what we have to say in these other domains. This seems especially true in epistemology — we might define the goal of our epistemic practices as true belief.\(^95\) And within epistemology, truth has important connections to justification, or so I have argued in the previous chapter.

If I am right, then we might expect that one's theory of truth and one's theory of justification will importantly constrain one another; specifically, if truth is a component of justification, then what we have to say about truth will constrain what we have to say about justification.\(^96\)

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\(^{94}\) There especially seems to be a standoff of sorts between correspondence theorists and deflationists, with a substantial number of theorists in each camp. It seems, further, that the debate has been reduced to a clash of intuitions; I am not optimistic that a resolution will be reached in the foreseeable future.

\(^{95}\) This claim, as stated, is too vague. I shall refine this claim in section III.2 of this chapter. See also Chapter 2.

\(^{96}\) That is, the concept of justification involves reference to the theory of truth, as I have argued. Note that this relation is not symmetric: the concept of truth does not essentially involve reference to the concept of epistemic justification. Thus, while our theory of truth may constrain our theory of justification, the converse does not hold.
nature of this constraint could take several forms; what I have in mind is something like the following. We want our explication of the concept of justification to be such that the concept is rendered meaningful: its explication must not be vacuous, or circular, or otherwise uninformative. But, since this explication will involve reference to the concept of truth, we must investigate the nature of this latter concept to ensure that such meaningfulness is preserved. What appears to be a substantive, non-circular analysis of the concept of justification may be rendered otherwise once we have further explicated the concept of truth.

I.1 Realism about truth

Both for the purposes of my project, viz. an analysis of the concept of justification, and for epistemology more generally, it will turn out that we need a realist conception of truth. My arguments for this claim will come in the form of an argument from elimination; I shall consider the leading available alternatives, and shall bring epistemological considerations to bear against each, leaving only realist theories of truth as sufficient for the purposes of epistemology. However, let me first try to get a bit more clear as to what I mean when I characterise a theory of truth as realist.
I am concerned here that my introduction of the dichotomy between "realist" and "non-realist" theories will open a can of worms which I would do better to leave unopened. I do not wish to engage in a detailed discussion of realism; the literature on realism, and on the relations between realism and truth, is complex and subtle. However, it is also, fortunately, largely tangential to the current project. I only introduce the notion of realism because it is in keeping with the traditional taxonomy in the theory of truth, and because I presume that at least superficial sense -- which I hope will suffice for my purposes -- can be made of the distinction between realism and non-realism.

By a "realist" conception of truth, I mean a conception which renders truth as mind-independent. That is, truth is a property which holds or fails to hold certain objects, i.e.

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97 This is not quite right, since truths about mental states are sometimes mind-dependent. However, this is because these mental states are referenced as part of the content of the truth-bearers in question. From the point of view of a third party, i.e. an agent other than the one whose mental state is the relevant one, truth is mind-independent and objective. That is, such an agent cannot influence the truth of the matter by virtue of what she thinks. Indeed, even the agent whose mental state is in question can only do so by changing the content of said mental state; note, though, that this is akin to changing the property of some physical object. Such a change will, of course, change certain truths; however, the point is that, given some fixed state of the world, the truths will be fixed in a way which is independent of what anybody thinks -- this is what I mean when I claim that truth is supposed to be mind-independent.
truth-bearers, independently of what you or I or anyone else believes to be true. Just as a circular object is circular even if I, or you, or for that matter the entire community, take it to be triangular, a true belief is true regardless of whether anyone takes it to be true. So, it is possible for everybody to be mistaken about the truth-value of a particular truth-bearer; indeed, there are likely truth-bearers about which nobody has any belief as to its truth-value; nonetheless, these truth-bearers are not truth-valueless.

We might put this point another way by suggesting that the property of truth is meant to be objective rather than subjective, i.e. given or pre-determined rather than imposed upon reality by us as cognitive agents. This point can be best made, perhaps, from the perspective of epistemology. Let us, then, consider why it is that truth is taken to be a condition on knowledge.

I.2 The epistemological need for realism about truth

This fact seems to make most sense when we assume some sort of realist theory of truth, such as a correspondence theory. While I will argue for, rather than assume, a realist theory of truth in this chapter, such an assumption

98 I shall have more to say about truth-bearers in section I.3 below.
here allows me to put the point most straightforwardly and intuitively; so, let me temporarily assume a realism about truth which is roughly of the nature of a correspondence theory.

Such a theory maintains that truth is a relational property, in which one of the relata is a belief (or the content of a belief) and the other relatum is some part of the world (a fact, or a state of affairs which obtains, or some such). If this is the nature of truth, then it is clear why epistemologists concern themselves with true beliefs: we want our beliefs to be correct or accurate, where this correctness or accuracy is indexed to the external world. Indeed, the problem of knowledge is often cast in terms of knowledge of the external world. And this construal is made especially intelligible (not surprisingly) when we take truth to depend upon a relation between our beliefs and the external world.

So, it seems that a realism about truth which is sufficiently robust to capture some relation to the external world is assumed, at least tacitly, by the project of epistemology. As such, it is striking that few epistemologists address truth beyond its role as a necessary

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99 I am speaking loosely here, of course, but recall that correspondence theories are notorious for their vagueness in describing the latter relatum. I shall address correspondence theories in greater detail in section IV of this chapter.
condition on knowledge, let alone argue for realism about truth. One notable exception, who bears some discussion here, is Alvin Goldman.

Goldman devotes Chapter 7 of his *Epistemology and Cognition* to a discussion of truth and a defense of a realist theory of truth.\(^{100}\) As he notes, Goldman is especially concerned to avoid circularity in his construal of epistemic justification, since his reliabilism defines justification in terms of the ratio of true beliefs to all beliefs produced by a cognitive process.\(^{101}\) Indeed, Goldman begins the chapter thus: "The notion of truth is important for almost every epistemology, but it is central to my epistemology for special reasons."\(^{102}\) While most accounts of justification invoke the notion of truth at least indirectly, Goldman is unable to formulate his reliabilism without reference to truth. As such, he must be sure that the notion of truth does not itself make reference to justification, on pain of circularity. We might view Goldman's worry, then, as a special case of the worry with which I introduced this section.

\(^{100}\) Goldman also discusses truth at length in Chapter 2 of his *Knowledge in a Social World*.

\(^{101}\) This formulation leaves out many of the nuances of Goldman's account, of course, but these are beside the current point, viz., that truth -- and, further, a realist notion of truth -- plays an ineliminable role in his construal of justification.

\(^{102}\) P. 142.
However, Goldman's discussion of truth differs from mine in two important respects. First, he is only concerned to show that truth is not an epistemic notion; indeed, this seems to be what he takes realism about truth to be: "I have defended the realist position that [truth] is wholly nonepistemic." So, for instance, Goldman does not consider theories of truth which are neither epistemic nor realist, such as deflationism might be.

Goldman's arguments for realism about truth are located squarely within the metaphysical arena. And this suggests the second difference between our respective approaches.

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103 Ibid., p. 151 (original emphasis).
104 Indeed, in his (1999), Goldman suggests that either correspondence or deflationism, or some combination of the two, is sufficient for the purposes of epistemology, even a "verific" or truth-based epistemology such as his own.
105 It is not clear that deflationism is not a realist account of truth, but it is at least plausible to assume that it is. For, deflationists maintain that truth is not a property at all; so, a fortiori, it is not a real property. (Of course, similar reasoning argues that deflationism is not a non-realist theory of truth either, depending on our construal of "non-realist". We might do best to consider deflationism to be a third category, in addition to realist and non-realistic theories. For further discussion, see section III below.)
106 There is a third difference, perhaps, between Goldman's approach and my own. Namely, he attempts to make plausible some version or other of a correspondence theory, in spite of the problems associated with attempts to offer a complete formulation of such a theory. However, I instead will argue that Alston's minimal realism suffices for epistemological purposes. Goldman, of course, wrote his book ten years before Alston's was published, so this option was not available to him; I suspect, though, that he would share my endorsement of a theory such as Alston's as sufficiently realist. Indeed, see section IV.3 below.
For, my arguments will be epistemological. That is, rather than enter the fray within the theory of truth, I will present arguments from the epistemological point of view. That is, my arguments will hinge upon the fact that truth is a central concept in the theory of knowledge, and that the concept of truth must accordingly be so construed as to play the role required for the purposes of epistemological theorizing. So, I will be able to avoid the primarily metaphysical debate about the nature of truth -- a debate which, as I have suggested, seems particularly vexed -- by virtue of the fact that, since truth and knowledge are related concepts, the theories of truth and of knowledge will also be interrelated to some extent.

In the remainder of this chapter, then, I shall present epistemological arguments against several varieties of non-realism about truth. These arguments, combined with the intuitive facts adduced in this section, will support my claim that epistemology requires some version of realism about truth. However, before turning to these arguments, I should offer some brief remarks concerning truth-bearers.

I.3 Truth-bearers

Truth-bearers, as the name suggests, are those objects that bear, or are susceptible of bearing, the property of truth. Of course, truth-bearers can also bear the property
of falsehood; a more accurate, if more cumbersome, designation might be "truth-value-bearers". While objects of several types can serve as truth-bearers, there are three types — propositions, sentences, and beliefs — which most frequently play the role of primary truth-bearers in theories of truth. The primary truth-bearer in a theory is that type for whose tokens truth is directly defined. For instance, a theory might take propositions to be the primary bearers of truth, in which case its definition of truth would likely take the following form:

The proposition that $p$ is true iff ...

Sentence-truth and belief-truth would then be defined as derivative of proposition-truth, as follows:

The belief that $p$ is true iff the proposition that $p$ is true.

A sentence which expresses the proposition that $p$ is true iff $p$ is true.

Other theories might take beliefs or sentences to be the primary bearers of truth, defining the other types of truth
as derivative. However, I need not concern myself here with the question of primary truth-bearers, since the truth of different types of truth-bearers is so interdefinable. So, I shall speak of both propositions and beliefs as truth-bearers, and shall assume propositions to be primary; however, this assumption is meant to be defeasible, and none of my arguments shall be dependent on the primacy of one type of truth-bearer over the others.

Indeed, it seems that there is an ambiguity (albeit an innocuous one) in the term "true belief". It could mean "true belief (simpliciter)", in which case the belief is the truth-bearer; or, alternatively, it could mean "belief in a true proposition", in which case the proposition is the truth-bearer. The reason that this ambiguity is not troublesome is related to the fact that, from the epistemological point of view, I need not worry about which type of truth-bearers is primary. That is, there is a close relation between the proposition that p, S's belief that p, and a sentence which expresses the proposition that p; namely, any one of these will be true when and only when the others are as well. This fact, combined with the interdefinability of proposition-truth, sentence-truth, and

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107 E.g. "The proposition that p is true iff p is the content of a true belief" or "The proposition that p is true iff S is a true sentence and p is the proposition expressed by S".
belief-truth, allows epistemologists to downplay the matter of which type of truth-bearers is primary.

II. Rival conceptions of truth: non-realist conceptions

There have been many attempts to characterize truth in non-realist terms, so that the truth of a particular proposition is indexed to some relation between that proposition and cognitive agents, rather than to some relation between that proposition and the world. Here, I will not attempt to discuss all such accounts, but will instead restrict my attention to the two most widely defended sorts of non-realism about truth: pragmatic theories and epistemic theories.\(^{108}\) I begin with pragmatic theories.

II.1 Pragmatic theories of truth

The family of theories commonly referred to as pragmatic theories of truth share a formulation of the following sort:

\[ S's \text{ belief that } p \text{ is true iff } S's \text{ belief that } p \text{ is } U \]

\(^{108}\) For a more comprehensive discussion of alternative theories, I refer the interested reader to Kirkham (1992).

\(^{109}\) Alternatively, one might attempt a construal of the form

\[ p \text{ is true iff } S's \text{ belief that } p \text{ is } U. \]

However, such a formulation is, if not equivalent to that offered in the text, sufficiently similar for current purposes.
where $U$ represents some function of the utility of $S$'s believing that $p$. $U$ might, for instance, refer to any of the following properties: yielding positive utility for $S$ (or, yielding more utility for $S$ than its negation); yielding, on average, positive utility (greater average utility than its negation) for all persons; yielding positive expected utility for $S$ (or for all persons).

The primary objection leveled against pragmatic theories of truth is that it may sometimes be useful to believe what is false. The standard example is that of Jones, who believes that his flight is scheduled to leave at 5:41 pm when it is in fact scheduled to leave at 5:14 pm. As a result, Jones misses his flight, which later crashes, killing all passengers. Clearly, Jones derived greater utility from missing his flight than he would have from having boarded the aircraft. However, Jones has a false belief about the departure time of his flight, so it follows that truth and utility are not identical. Such an objection, however, seems to beg the question against a pragmatic theory by tacitly assuming a realist theory of truth: indeed, this is what drives the intuition that Jones' belief is false. As such, I shall not rely on such an objection, but shall instead turn to objections from the perspective of epistemology.
Note that a pragmatic account will generally take beliefs to be the primary bearers of truth; while we can speak of the usefulness of holding a particular belief for a particular agent, it is unclear how a sentence or a proposition could be useful independently of its being believed. We could, of course, attempt to define sentence-truth and proposition-truth derivatively, but this leads to a problem on certain ways of filling out the account. Consider the formulation as completed with (something akin to) the first candidate for U:

\[
S'\text{'}s\ \text{belief that } p \text{ is true iff } S'\text{'}s\ \text{belief that } p \text{ yields positive utility for } S.^{110}
\]

It is a direct consequence of this formulation that \( p \) might be true for some agents but false for others, or true for the same agent at some times but not at others. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to define sentence-truth and proposition-truth as derivative of belief-truth. More importantly for current purposes, epistemologists tend to

\[110\] Perhaps we should prefer the following formulation:

\[
S'\text{'}s\ \text{belief that } p \text{ is true iff } S'\text{'}s\ \text{belief that } p \text{ yields greater utility for } S \text{ than would } S'\text{'}s\ \text{(counterfactual) belief that } \neg p.\]

I employ the formulation in the text for the sake of simplicity; it captures the features of this latter formulation which are relevant for current purposes.
assume that a particular proposition is either true for all agents at all times, or false for all agents at all times. Otherwise, we would be unable to prescribe a uniform set of epistemic standards which applies universally to all agents.

Such a definition of truth would, to be sure, allow for some sort of universal standard for belief, but it seems that such would not be epistemic standards. Instead, epistemological theorizing would be subsumed by practical reason. The identification of truth with utility would result in the collapse of believing what one takes to be true with believing what one takes to be useful. But this would threaten the very existence of epistemology as a distinct field of inquiry! Consider Pascal's Wager, which depends on the distinction between what we might call evidential reasoning and prudential reasoning. If a pragmatic theory of truth were correct, such a distinction would be merely apparent.

II.2 Epistemic theories of truth

My greatest concern, as an epistemologist who has argued that truth plays a role in justification, comes from so-called epistemic theories of truth. These are accounts which offer a formulation of the following sort:

\[ p \text{ is true iff } p \text{ is } E \]
where E is some epistemic property, such as "ideally justified", "justified at the end of inquiry", "justified for a standard observer in ideal condition", or "warrantedly assertible". Each of these properties makes direct reference to justification, and so a theory of truth along these lines would render my analysis of justification circular. I do not want to worry about the specific formulation here, but it is worth noting that the property E should be picked out so that the same proposition is true for all people at all times (cf. my discussion of pragmatic theories of truth above). So, for instance, E should be indexed to all agents, or to the scientific community or some other group, rather than to a particular agent.

This suggests another problem for epistemic theories of truth, which can be nicely cast in epistemological terms. That is, it is possible, on such an account, that some p and q be identical in meaning, and yet that p is true while q is false. This sort of scenario would arise, for instance, if the agent(s) referenced on the right-hand side of the formulation of truth failed to realize that p and q mean the same thing. If this were the case, then the agent(s) might have ample justification for p without noticing that this is also sufficient justification for q. But truth should be a property which either holds or fails to hold of both of a
pair of meaning-identical propositions, contrary to this result.

We might encapsulate this objection by noting that justification (as well as belief, knowledge, and other epistemic terms) generates opaque contexts. That is, a formulation of the following sort:

S is justified in believing (S believes, S knows) that p may not retain its truth value when p is replaced by a term (here, a proposition) q which has the same meaning. This is because S might not be aware that p and q have the same meaning, and thus is not justified in believing that q even though she is justified in believing that p. Consider, for example, the following pair of propositions:

p. ABC is a triangle.
q. ABC is a plane figure whose internal angles sum to 180 degrees.

S might be able to recognize triangles without knowing much about their geometrical properties, thus allowing her to justifiably believe p but not q.

To put the point another way, "that p" generates opaque contexts, and thus is not always susceptible to substitution
of identicals. As such, the following state of affairs is possible:

(1) S is justified in believing that p.
(2) S is not justified in believing that q.
(3) p and q are identical in meaning.

But, on an epistemic account of truth, substitution of identicals for (1) and (2) yields:

(1') It is true that p.\footnote{Perhaps (1) and (2) need to be reformulated to suit the account of truth in question; however, the point remains the same, \textit{ceteris paribus}.}
(2') It is not true (is false) that q.\footnote{I do not want to address here the notion of falsity and its relation to truth. I especially want to avoid the question of bivalence, \textit{viz.} of whether "It is not true that p" and "It is false that p" are equivalent, for the time being.}
(3) p and q are identical in meaning.

And this seems to yield a direct contradiction; identical statements \textit{a fortiori} will have the same truth-value.

However, truth does not generate opaque contexts; so

It is true that p
will, on the other hand, be susceptible to such substitution. So, if there is some q which means the same thing as p, then we can always substitute q for p within a more complex proposition or sentence while retaining the truth-value of the whole. So, the state of affairs described by (1'), (2') and (3) is, as we would expect, impossible.

Crispin Wright puts the point slightly differently. In his (1992), he notes that "a state of information may be neutral -- may justify neither [the] assertion nor [the] denial [of certain statements]" But this would mean that such statements are neither true nor false. However, except for vague or ambiguous statements, which we can set aside for current purposes, any statement will be such that it is either true or false. So, while I have put the point in terms of identicals diverging in truth-value, Wright casts it in terms of truth-bearers turning out to have no truth-value at all. In either guise, the point is that truth and justification (or warrant, or any other term of epistemic appraisal) will sometimes diverge in extension, and thus cannot be identified with one another.

114 Wright is considering the formulation in which E is "warrantedly assertible". Wright also assumes bivalence (cf. note 20 above).
115 Or, which is to say the same thing, will express either a true proposition or a false proposition.
A more serious objection, from the epistemological point of view, is that an identification of truth and justification would not permit these two properties to be distinct. This is closely related to an objection which is often raised against such accounts; however, in the context of the theory of truth itself, it may seem question-begging. To simply assert that truth and justification are distinct is not to refute epistemic theories, but merely to deny them. However, remember that I am concerned to provide epistemological objections to non-realist accounts of truth. Accordingly, it is appropriate to consider the task of epistemology, and to realize that it is important to that project that truth and justification be distinct. This is seen by their being construed as two conditions on knowledge rather than just one. Indeed, we might cast the project (or, at least, a central project) of epistemology as an attempt to provide an answer to the question "What is the difference between knowledge and mere true belief?" in terms of an account of justification. But note that, if some epistemic account of truth is correct, the question becomes a trivial one; there would be no difference at all, for all true belief would trivially be justified true belief. It would be impossible for a belief to be true yet unjustified, or justified but false. So, there would be no difference between a true belief formed as a matter of luck and one formed as a result
of what we take to be appropriate belief-forming procedures. It is not an exaggeration to say that, if this were the case, then epistemology as we know it would appear to be greatly misguided.

Two more objections to such theories of truth can be made. First, note that the primary motivation for epistemic theories of truth has itself been epistemological. The worry is that a non-epistemic or realist theory of truth would lead to skepticism. For, the argument goes, while we have access to our mental states, we have no direct access to reality as such; all perception is mediate rather than immediate. It follows that we can never "check" our beliefs against the world to determine whether they correspond to reality in the right way. But then we have no way to distinguish our true beliefs from our false beliefs. Even worse, we might have no true beliefs at all; skepticism ensues. I have two replies to this line of argument.

First, the argument doesn't seem to stand on its own. It requires some questionable assumptions about the nature of perception, without which it loses whatever force it may seem to have. For instance, it assumes that perception cannot deliver any knowledge about the external world; this is why skepticism is thought to be looming so near. Second, 

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116 For more detailed arguments to this effect, the reader is directed to Alston (1996), chapter 3.
skepticism, I take it, is a viable possibility, and should be encountered and dealt with accordingly within the arena of epistemology. It would be quite surprising if it turned out that the thousands of years of debate about skepticism could have been deflected by a definition of truth. But this is just what epistemic theories of truth are meant to do -- if truth is an epistemic property, then skepticism -- at least, a radical or global skepticism -- is rendered impossible. Skepticism very well might turn out to be false, but it is at least an open question as to whether it is; we cannot simply define our terms so as to render it so.\textsuperscript{117}

As a final objection to epistemic accounts, we might wonder just what property of justification is employed in the various formulations of such accounts.\textsuperscript{118} Without further argument here (although I hope that the arguments of the previous chapter are compelling to some), I simply note that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to define epistemic justification without reference to truth. But it is clearly epistemic justification which is central to these accounts. It seems, then, that such accounts might not even be tenable, let alone correct.

\textsuperscript{117} Relatedly, it might turn out that we have no way of telling which of our beliefs are true, but this is not a legitimate objection against a particular account of truth.

\textsuperscript{118} Michael Lynch asks this question, albeit in a somewhat different context, in Chapter 5 of his \textit{Truth in Context}. 
III. Rival conceptions of truth: deflationism

A distinct section of this chapter has been devoted to my discussion of deflationism for several reasons. First, it is not clearly a non-realist theory of truth (see note 13 above). Indeed, the debate in the theory of truth predates the introduction of deflationist theories, so that realist and epistemic theories were taken to be jointly exhaustive of the landscape; but deflationism doesn't neatly fit into either camp. However, deflationism does share some important features with realist theories -- most importantly, a commitment to the T-schema. This has led Michael Williams, for one, to classify deflationism as minimally realist.\(^{119}\)

More importantly, though, I take it that deflationist theories of truth are the greatest concern for the epistemologist who argues for an important connection between justification and truth. As such, I shall offer separate treatment of such theories. Let me begin by getting clear on what I mean by "deflationism".

III.1 Deflationism defined

\(^{119}\) See his "Do we (epistemologists) need a theory of truth?" However, note that Williams seems to embrace the realist-epistemic dichotomy, so we should perhaps not read too much into his classification of deflationism as realist. However, he answers the question posed in the title of his paper in the negative (he takes deflationism to be, ultimately, a non-theory), so I must address his arguments; I shall do so in section III.5 below.
Properly speaking, deflationism denotes a family of theories of truth rather than a unique theory. These theories, though, share a common core; namely, an adherence to the instances of the T-schema, and a denial that there is anything more to truth than what the T-schema tells us. Hence the name "deflationism": since the T-schema is so uninformative as to the nature or essence of truth, such theories seem to have deflated the concept of truth by denying it an essence or nature at all. So, for instance, such theories deny that there is a single property which all "true" propositions share.\textsuperscript{120}

Since instances of the T-schema often take the form

"p" is true iff p\textsuperscript{121}

\begin{notes}
\textsuperscript{120} I use scare quotes around the word "true" because this is not the way a deflationist would put the point. However, this way of expressing the claim nicely captures, I think, the intuitive point. Another way of putting this point is that deflationism is an error theory of sorts (cf. Lynch, p. 116).
\textsuperscript{121} One might espouse a theory of truth which is no more than a commitment to the following version of the T-schema:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{l}
p is true iff p
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

But this will immediately run into trouble. For, there is nothing which can be substituted for "p" on both sides of an instance of this schema which yields a grammatical sentence. Consider, e.g., the following:

Snow is white is true iff snow is white.

The left-hand side of this formula is ungrammatical. Further, as Heidelberger has noted, no quick fix will suffice either. Consider the following, which is nonsensical:
deflationist theories have often been referred to as "disquotational" theories; to determine whether a sentence is true, we disquote the name for that sentence, yielding (trivially) the conditions under which the sentence is true.\textsuperscript{122} It had also been referred to as a "redundancy" theory\textsuperscript{123}: the use of the word "true", on this account is always redundant. For, whatever is expressed by an utterance of "p is true" could have been equally well expressed by an utterance of "p".

Most current versions of deflationism supplement this account somewhat. Realizing that some instances of "is true" are not so neatly disquoted away, these theories attempt to account for these instances in another fashion. Consider the following sentences:

(4) Everything John says is true.

(5) The last thing Mary said was true.

The proposition that p is true iff the proposition that p

So, the version of the T-schema which deflationists employ must be one in which quotation, or some other meta-linguistic device, appears.

\textsuperscript{122} Note that such theories must take sentences to be the primary bearers of truth-value.

\textsuperscript{123} Cf. Ramsay, Strawson, Heidelberger.
(4) is often translated by proponents of such accounts as:

(If John says that p1 then p1) and (If John says that p2 then p2) and ...

and (5) is usually rendered as:

(The last thing Mary said was p1, and p1) or (The last thing Mary said was p2, and p2) or ...

Thus, deflationists generally maintain that, inter alia, truth is a logical device for infinite conjunctions and disjunctions.

To consider another augmentation of simple disquotationalism, a prosentential theory\textsuperscript{124} maintains that, just as our language contains pronouns (and proverbs, etc.), it contains prosentences. Consider the following exchange:

Tom: Grass is green.
Dick: That's true.

Dick's utterance, contrary to its surface structure, is taken to be a prosentence -- that is, a single semantic unit, with no internal structure -- standing in for "Grass is green".

\textsuperscript{124} See Grover, Camp and Belnap (1975).
For my purposes, these emendations can be safely ignored. My worries are, instead, about the nature of truth rather than the occurrence of the predicate "true" in natural language; in other words, my concerns are ontic rather than semantic. I am concerned to argue that there is, in fact, a robust property of truth. The general motivation behind deflationism's concern that all utterances of the word "true" be eliminable from our language is that there is no real property to which this predicate refers; such predicates, though, are superfluous. That is, the semantic nature of deflationist theories is driven by an underlying ontology.

So, when I refer to deflationism hereafter, I shall have in mind a simple disquotationalism. However, I shall have to say something as well about Paul Horwich's theory, as it is often taken to be a paradigm version of deflationism but is not itself a simple disquotationalist account. The next two sections, then, raise two sorts of epistemological objections against simple deflationism. I then devote a section to a consideration of Horwich's view, and finally say a few words about Williams' paper.

III.2 Truth as the goal of our epistemic practices

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125 I do think, though, that the formulation of justification at which I shall arrive shall contain an instance of "true" which is not easily substituted away.
We might characterize our epistemic practices — that is, those practices which are susceptible of epistemic appraisal, and which relate to our quest for knowledge — as the pursuit of truth. To make this point more precise, we seek true beliefs (that is, beliefs in true propositions), at least with regard to those propositions we consider (i.e. we don't seek to believe every truth). Sartwell expresses this observation, which is almost a truism, thus: "It is widely held that our epistemic goal is achieving true beliefs and avoiding false ones about propositions with which we are epistemically concerned."\textsuperscript{126} Again, Lehrer tells us, "...the sort of acceptance requisite to knowledge is precisely acceptance concerned with obtaining truth and avoiding error with respect to the very thing accepted...The sort of acceptance that is a condition of knowledge is acceptance aimed at truth".\textsuperscript{127} Putting the point this way magnifies the teleological nature of our epistemic practices: they are aimed or directed at truth (at true belief). Truth, we might say, is the goal of our epistemic practices.

However, this claim — that truth is what we aim at as we undertake our epistemic practices — does not comport well with deflationary theories of truth, for the following reason. Such theories deny that there is a substantive

\textsuperscript{126} Sartwell (1992), p. 172.
\textsuperscript{127} Lehrer (1990), p. 20 (emphasis added).
property of truth at all. For instance, as I have suggested above, such theories might suggest that truth is nothing but a logical device for infinite conjunction and disjunction. But surely this is not the goal of our epistemic practices -- rather, we are aiming at correct beliefs about the world. So, while the truth predicate might indeed play a role as such a logical device -- I am inclined to think that it does -- this cannot be its only role\textsuperscript{128}, at least not from the standpoint of epistemology.

For if this were the case, then it would be incorrect to say that our epistemic practices aim at truth, since the truth predicate does not refer to any real property whatever. Perhaps the deflationist can rephrase our statement by saying that the goal of our epistemic practices is to believe $p$ if $p$, and to avoid believing $p$ if not-$p$, for any $p$ which we consider or ought to consider. While this sort of statement might salvage the goal of our epistemic practices, it is subject to further problems, which I shall discuss in the next section. However, it seems, intuitively, that our epistemic practices have a unified goal, rather than a specific local goal for each proposition we consider. While we are indeed concerned with myriad propositions over the course of our epistemic lives, we presumably approach each with the same goal in mind and in similar fashion. Indeed,

\textsuperscript{128} Cf. Field (1986).
it would seem senseless to group these particular practices together under a single rubric if there were no goal or property which they shared. But, according to deflationism, there is nothing which all "true" propositions have in common, since truth is not a property; but it follows, then, that there is nothing which unifies our epistemic practices.129

III.3 The general character of justification

In the last section, I argued that there seems to be a unified goal towards which our epistemic practices aim, and that without a robust property of truth, it is difficult to see what might unify these practices. This problem can be seen to be even more severe when we turn to a discussion of justification. For, we want our analysis of the concept of justification to be made in general terms -- indeed, this is necessary something to be a conceptual analysis (as opposed to a substantive account, such as a list of criteria or conditions).

But it seems that there is no way to provide a general formulation of epistemic justification without reference to truth. I suggested in the previous section that the deflationist might characterize the goal of our epistemic

129 Crispin Wright makes a similar point; see his (1992), pp. 29-31.
practices along the lines of believing \( p \) if \( p \) and refraining from believing \( p \) if not-\( p \) (again, for those propositions which we consider, or which are relevant to us, or what have you). But this does not lend itself to a construal of justification. I argued in section II.2 of this chapter that truth and justification are not identical, so the following is false:

\[ S \text{ is justified in believing that } p \iff p \]

Something must be added to the right-hand side, and this supplementation must allow us to accurately characterize the concept of justification in a general fashion. That is, the right-hand side must be amended in some way or other.\(^{130}\) So, for instance, an infinite list would not satisfy our purposes. While it is the goal of the next chapter to explore the nature of the relation between justification and truth and to offer a positive account of that relation, I here only want to adduce considerations against deflationist theories. So, let me consider how such a formulation might begin to be completed.

The following formulation seems at least plausible:

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130 I do not, however, mean to suggest that truth is a necessary condition of justification, and that this formulation merely requires the addition of one or more other necessary conditions.
(6) S is justified in believing that p iff S has good reason to believe that p is true

Again, I do not mean to endorse this formulation as such, but it does seem to provide the right sort of additional conceptual apparatus to the right-hand side. Note, though, that this formulation is unacceptable to the deflationist, as it contains the word "true". How might the deflationist construe a version of (6)? Consider the following:

(6') S is justified in believing that p iff S has good reason to believe that p

This formulation does not suffice, however, as a characterization of epistemic justification. For, there are a variety of good reasons for believing that p — moral reasons, or prudential reasons, for instance. But epistemic justification is meant to be distinct from moral and prudential justification. The goal of our epistemic practices is truth, while that of our moral and prudential practices are the good and utility, respectively. But the following will not serve to remedy the problem incurred by (6'):
(6'') S is justified in believing that p iff S has epistemically good reason to believe that p

For, the question immediately raised by (6'') is: what is an epistemically good reason? And this cannot be answered without reference to truth. We seem to have merely pushed the problem back a level, but have failed to eliminate it.

I could repeat the above argument, substituting other locutions on the right-hand side of (6), (6'), and (6''). However, the problems seen above are symptomatic of a general problem, which would apply in these cases as well. Namely, epistemic justification is indexed to the goal of truth; we might say that it applies to practices which are truth-directed. But in order to capture the notion of truth-directedness (or, ceteris paribus, x-directedness for any x), we must make reference to truth itself.¹³¹ Failure to do so will prevent us from expressing the goal-directedness of the concept of justification, but this feature is essential to that concept. Accordingly, we cannot disquote away the truth predicate if we hope to offer a correct formulation of the concept of epistemic justification.

III.4. Horwich's view

¹³¹ Field makes a similar point, in terms of the need for a property of truth to make sense of explanations of success. See his (1986), section V.2.
Horwich states his "minimal theory", which he claims "aims for a maximally deflationary theory of truth"\textsuperscript{132}, in terms of propositions rather than sentences. Specifically, if we take \(<p>\) to stand for "the proposition that p", Horwich provides the following schema

\(<p>\) is true iff \(p>\)

and tells us that the infinitely many instances of this schema exhaust his theory of truth. So, there appear to be some differences in form between Horwich's view and the disquotationalist view. However, in principle, Horwich seems to say the same things that the disquotationalist does. For instance, he tells us that "In fact the truth predicate exists solely for the sake of a certain logical need. . .we may wish to cover infinitely many propositions (in generalizing) and simply can't have all of them in mind."\textsuperscript{133}

However, Horwich seems to want to have it all. He claims that his account "does not deny that truths do correspond -- in some sense -- to the facts."\textsuperscript{134} But his account nonetheless is a deflationary account, by his own admission. For instance, neither does it assert that truths correspond to the facts. Horwich's approach to truth is to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{132} Truth, p. 12.
\item \textsuperscript{133} Ibid., pp. 2-3.
\item \textsuperscript{134} Ibid., p. 110.
\end{itemize}
say as little as possible about it as necessary; specifically, he wants to avoid any ontological commitments as to the nature of truth. However, as the above arguments have attempted to show, epistemology requires a realist ontology of truth, such that our epistemic practices can be understood in terms of attempting to match up our beliefs with the world in some sense or other. Accordingly, despite its apparent difference from disquotationalism, Horwich's theory seems subject to the objections raised in the final two sections.

III.5. Williams

Very little work has been done to address the question of whether deflationism serves the purposes of epistemology as well as does a realist theory of truth. A notable exception, which merits discussion here, is Michael Williams' (1986) paper, "Do we (epistemologists) need a theory of truth?" As I mentioned above, Williams answers this question in the negative, as he takes deflationism to be a non-theory. There are some parallels between Williams' approach and the arguments of this chapter: Williams considers the debate between epistemic theories of truth (specifically, coherence theories) and realist theories of truth (specifically, correspondence theories; this debate is primarily an epistemological debate (cf. section II.2 above). However,
Williams' perspective on this debate differs significantly from mine. Williams notes that the proponents of both epistemic and realist theories of truth tend to defend their respective views by appealing to problems with the rival view, rather than by eliciting direct considerations in support of the view they espouse. But with the entrance of deflationism as a candidate for the correct theory of truth, these arguments by elimination no longer are valid, since neither type of theorists offers, in Williams' opinion, arguments against deflationism. "[T]he intuitive argument against epistemic accounts of truth is not automatically an argument for the correspondence theory. At best it rules out identifying truth with an epistemic property and so can be accepted by a deflationist, who does not make any such identification either."\(^{135}\) That is, while correspondence theorists and epistemic theorists have been attacking each other, they have failed to realize that none of them is able to raise troubling objections against deflationism. Indeed, Williams turns their arguments on their heads; he suggests that epistemic theorists have sufficiently argued against realist theories, and realist theorists against epistemic theories, leaving only deflationist theories standing. "A general point has emerged. Correspondence theorists tend to argue for their theory by pointing to the untenability of the

\(^{135}\) P. 224.
alternative. Coherence theorists do the same. Both beg the fundamental question: why not settle for a deflationary account of truth?"^136

I would be eager to hear Williams' response to the arguments offered in this section, and am inclined to think that he might be receptive to them. Failing that, though, I maintain that Williams has not sufficiently defended deflationist theories from the epistemological perspective (which, perhaps, was never his goal) -- such a defense, as would a defense of the theories Williams attacks, requires positive and direct support. However, I think that Williams is not concerned to undertake such a project, but merely to suggest that a theory such as deflationism stands in relatively good stead when compared to a full-blown correspondence theory or to an epistemic theory. But Williams is not, in the end, committed to deflationism as such, but rather to an account which shares its virtues: "as my preliminary remarks have hinted, ...a deflationist can share many of the criticisms correspondence theorists make of coherence theorists and vice-versa. He can do so because he is committed neither to fleshing out the idea of truth as correspondence nor to showing that truth is at bottom some kind of epistemic notion."^137 I think that, accordingly,

^136 P. 226
^137 Ibid.
Williams would likely approve of Alston's minimal realism, which shares the virtues of deflationism Williams has just described. But more on Alston in a moment.

I have offered some considerations in favor of realist theories of truth by adducing some considerations from the epistemological point of view and using these considerations to rule out competing theories. In the next section, then, I turn to a discussion of realist theories themselves.

IV. Varieties of realism about truth

I have been suggesting that the theory of truth might not need any associated ontology when considered on its own terms, but that the essential connection between epistemic justification and truth, which we discover when attempting to analyze the former concept, ushers in this need. We might put the point as follows: the (instances of the) T-schema are likely necessary for a correct construal of truth, but not sufficient. What more needs to be added? I have argued from the epistemological perspective that it is some relation between beliefs (or other truth-bearers) and the world which must be added to our conception of truth. That is, we need a realist ontology. But deflationist theories, by virtue of their silence with regard to the matter, are compatible with any ontology, including anti-realism, idealism, and relativism, and thus cannot serve the purposes required by
epistemology. Let me, then, consider several versions of realism about truth, beginning with the correspondence theory.

IV.1 The correspondence theory

The correspondence theory of truth is deceptively simple to state. Roughly, it is the following view:

p is true if p corresponds to reality (the facts, some obtaining state of affairs, the world)

However, we fill in the right-hand side, we are presented with truth as a matter of a relation between truth-bearers and reality. Intuitively, this is correct; furthermore, it very nicely serves the purposes of the epistemological project. However, we have already seen a hint of a problem for the correspondence theory, which many have taken to be fatal. Namely, what exactly is it to which true propositions correspond? Some have doubted that the world is carved up into proposition-like bits; if not, do all true propositions correspond to the same thing? If we speak of facts or of states of affairs, we fare no better, for we must offer an ontological account of these mysterious entities. So, while the intuitive idea is quite straightforward, any attempts to clarify the second relatum of the correspondence relation
faces immediate difficulties, and it is not likely that these can be overcome.

And the troubles continue for the correspondence theorist. For, the correspondence relation itself also stands in need of explication, and it is just as difficult to find here as it was in the case of the second relatum. These obstacles are largely responsible for the rise in popularity of deflationist theories. Such theories attempt to capture the intuitive force of the correspondence theory while avoiding its ontological problems. Unfortunately, they find a great tension in attempting to do so, and eventually abandon the ontological commitments altogether.

IV.2 Alston's minimal realism

Recently, there has been an attempt -- a successful one, to my mind -- to retain the realist aspect of the correspondence theory while avoiding its ontological problems. I refer, of course, to Alston's minimal realism as presented in his (1996). Alston's view is also rather simple to state:
A statement (proposition, belief...) is true if and only if what the statement says to be the case actually is the case.\textsuperscript{138}

I do not here have space to reproduce Alston's arguments. However, I do wish to emphasize two important features of the view. First, although its statement may seem at first glance to be similar to that of deflationism, Alston's account is sufficiently robust in its realism for our purposes. This is evidenced, for instance, by Alston's reference to truth-makers: "What is the case is the truth maker. What is true is the truth bearer. And this is precisely the realist conception of truth. To bring this out is to bring out the content of that concept."\textsuperscript{139} Second, it avoids the problems with cashing out any mysterious terms. Alston's arguments, of course, are rather sophisticated, and I do not wish to rehearse them here. However, it seems promising that Alston's view can, by virtue of these two features, sufficiently serve the purposes of epistemology. I will assume such a theory, or something like it, as operative for the purposes of the current project.

\textsuperscript{138} Alston (1996), p. 5. Alston calls this "an initial formulation", as he ultimately settles on propositions as the primary bearers of truth. This yields a somewhat more complex formulation, which I think the current discussion can do without.

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., p. 52 (original emphasis).
IV.3 Goldman's *descriptive success* theory

Before moving on, it is worth pausing to consider one last discussion of truth. Alvin Goldman is notable in the serious consideration he has continually given to truth, something which epistemologists often fail to do. Of course, this is closely tied to the fact that truth plays a more central role in his account of justification than it does in most; nonetheless, Goldman is emphatic that epistemologists must take truth seriously and examine it closely.

In his *Knowledge in a Social World*, Goldman offers his "descriptive success" theory:

\[
\text{(DS) An item X (a proposition, a sentence, a belief, etc.) is true if and only if X is descriptively successful, that is, X purports to describe reality and its content fits reality.}^{140}
\]

Immediately after introducing (DS), Goldman draws comparisons between his theory and Alston's minimal realism. Insofar as Goldman's and Alston's theory are similar -- and they seem to be, to a large degree -- I am content with either one of them, and see no reason to decide between them for current purposes. My only worry with respect to Goldman is that he...

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suggests that deflationism might be sufficient for the purposes of epistemology: "Actually, it might be argued that the epistemological project of the book is compatible even with full-fledged deflationism."¹⁴¹ I cannot agree with him in this regard. However, Goldman quickly moves on after making this point, and states: "Officially, I shall proceed on the assumption that some form of the correspondence theory is correct."¹⁴² So, we seem to be sufficiently in agreement with each other and with Alston to suit me.

V. Conclusion

I have defended a version of realism about truth, which I take to be necessary to a conceptual explication of epistemic justification. I should note that I do not need to argue that truth is definable¹⁴³, only that it is a realist property. Indeed, I think that Alston's theory falls short of definition, and yet it nonetheless gives us all that we need for epistemology. However, there is more to the concept of justification than just truth. Specifically, as I suggested in section III.3 above, we need to say something about the nature of the relation between truth and justification. Such, then, is the topic of chapter 4.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 68.
¹⁴² Ibid.
¹⁴³ Cf. Frege, Davidson (1990) and (1996), Heidelberger.
Chapter 4

Epistemic Value:
On the Connection between Justification and Truth

In Chapter 2, I argued that there is an essential conceptual connection between truth and epistemic justification. In this chapter, I want to consider the nature of this connection. So, the task of this chapter is to arrive at a formulation of the following form:

S's belief that p is justified iff ... truth (truth-directed) ...

with the ellipses filled in appropriately. I shall begin, in the first section, by considering several possible ways of rendering this analysis complete, and shall offer arguments against each. This will indicate the general form that the correct formulation should take, viz. that epistemic value must enter the picture. This amounts, roughly, to an acknowledgment of the normative character of justification.

In section II, then, I introduce and discuss the notion of epistemic value, and attempt to relate truth and value to arrive at a partial analysis of the concept of justification. However, since most substantive accounts of justification are non-normative, my claim that epistemic value is essential to
justification needs further defense. Accordingly, I argue that some normative component is irreducibly a part of the analysans. That is, any account which denies the need for some normative component in the analysis of justification is incorrect. Note that this is not to say that naturalism in epistemology is a misguided project, since some versions of naturalism are compatible with normativity. Many construals of naturalism do not allow room for normativity, and my analysis will render these unacceptable; but I see no problem, at least on these grounds, with an account which is both naturalistic and normative. I shall attempt, thus, to remain neutral as to the question of naturalism, but instead shall focus on the (closely related) question of normativity.

At that point, I shall need to consider Alston's attempt at an analysis of the concept of justification, since it is rather similar to the result I obtain at the end of section II. However, I suggest that the analysis of that section is only a partial analysis. As such, my arguments against Alston will serve to motivate what more needs to be added to complete the analysis. In section III, then, I discuss Alston's arguments in his "Concepts of Epistemic Justification", and in section IV I offer what I take to be a complete analysis.

This last claim requires some qualification, though. For, as I have suggested, one of the components of the
analysis I offer will be the normative notion of epistemic value. In the current project, I shall not completely explicate this notion, but instead shall focus on its role in the analysis of epistemic justification. To some extent this is in keeping with non-naturalistic accounts of justification, which take some notion of epistemic value to be primitive. Nevertheless, in a future stage of this project, I hope to be able to say more about epistemic value; I do not want to merely offer an analysis of justification in terms of some synonymous or nearly synonymous term, as this would fall short of the task of explication. At present, I offer a promissory note. I also shall have something to say in the final section of this chapter about epistemic value; there, I shall argue that reasons are the bearers of epistemic value, and shall have something to say about the nature and status of reasons.

I. The connection between justification and truth: failed attempts

It might be suggested that there is nothing more to epistemic justification than mere truth. That is, perhaps the correct formulation is as follows:

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144 Most notably, Chisholm and Lehrer.
S's belief that p is justified iff S's belief that p is true

This would render knowledge as merely true belief; the justification and truth conditions would collapse into one another, so that any case of true belief is a case of justified true belief. Crispin Sartwell\[\textsuperscript{145}\] has argued in a way which might suggest such a formulation. Properly speaking, Sartwell argues that knowledge is merely true belief, and that justification is not a condition on knowledge. He is careful to note that justification is an interesting and important evaluative notion\[\textsuperscript{146}\], but is nevertheless "not part of the theory of knowledge."\[\textsuperscript{147}\] However, I have been taking justification to be, roughly, the difference between knowledge and true belief\[\textsuperscript{148}\]. If there is no such difference, and if justification is essentially related to truth, as I argued in Chapter 2, then we seem to be left with an identity between justification and truth. Whether this follows directly from Sartwell's arguments may not be entirely clear, but it is at least a reasonable extension of his view, and one worth considering. So, let us turn to Sartwell's arguments for his position.

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\[\textsuperscript{145}\] See his (1991) and (1992).
\[\textsuperscript{146}\] See, for instance, Sartwell (1991), section IV.
\[\textsuperscript{148}\] Again, setting aside Gettier cases for the moment.
Sartwell's primary argument is, roughly, of the following form:

1. Knowledge is the goal of our epistemic practices.
2. The goal of our epistemic practices is true belief.
3. Therefore, knowledge is (merely) true belief.

Sartwell's argument, contrary to initial appearances, is not valid. First, he construes knowledge as our goal in individual cases of belief, and this seems mistaken. Knowledge seems to be a global goal rather than a goal in the case of any particular belief. Our goal with regard to any particular belief is truth (i.e. true belief); however, we are concerned to be able to reach this goal consistently and repeatedly. That is, we want our successes -- our true beliefs -- to be reasoned in some way, rather than merely isolated incidents. So, considering our epistemic practices as a whole, our goal is a body of knowledge -- that is, a body of true beliefs which were arrived at in an appropriate fashion. So, knowledge is not, contra Sartwell, our goal with regard to any particular belief; indeed, it is hard to make sense of such a claim. Rather, knowledge is the goal of our epistemic practices as a whole. We do, of course, assess particular beliefs as instances of knowledge or non-knowledge, but that is a matter of evaluation. So, we might
put the point thus: our goal, epistemically, is a body of knowledge, but we assess our success vis-à-vis this goal on a belief-by-belief basis.

Here is one way to state the problem which Sartwell's argument brings to light: if we focus exclusively on the objective of true belief, we will as a result ignore the way in which this belief is arrived at; but this leads to a collapse of the distinction between justification and truth. Knowledge reduces to true belief, and it becomes impossible for a true belief to be unjustified or for a justified belief to be false. But this is contrary to our intuitions regarding justification. If follows, then, that justification is not merely a function of truth; it must also be a function of something else. That is, the analyses must make reference to some other concept or concepts in addition to truth. Specifically, as I shall argue, we need to have some reason to think we're believing truths, so we must seek the right belief-forming procedures.

I have also discussed this matter in Chapter 2. There, I argued that truth-directedness is essential to the concept of justification; that is, justification is an instrumental notion. This is an important insight, one which will motivate much of what follows in this chapter. But a formulation which identifies justification with truth does not allow us to capture this instrumental character. Rather,
it identifies the instrumental concept with its goal; that is, it focuses only on the goal and not on the means of attempting to achieve that goal. So, justification must be distinct from truth, as the former is a means to the latter end.

So, justification is conceptually connected to truth, and yet the two are conceptually distinct. What, then, is the exact relation between the two concepts? Let us recall the lesson of Descartes' *Meditations*, viz. that we are fallible epistemic agents. In his quest for certainty, Descartes unwittingly fell prey to the skeptical arguments which he offered in the First Meditation because he thought that he could refute them. But the notorious "Cartesian Circle" objection demonstrates that certainty is too high an epistemic standard. Since we have a good deal of knowledge, but a relatively small number of beliefs which are certain, epistemic justification must be a matter of something less than certainty; the correct account of justification must be fallibilist. This observation reflects our awareness of the fact that our best epistemic efforts sometimes will fall short of the mark. This follows almost directly from the observation that truth and justification are distinct concepts. I say "almost directly" because it is at least a logical possibility that all and only true beliefs are justified. However, since I am here developing an analysis of
the concept of justification, it must be distinct from truth, even if the two turn out, as a matter of empirical fact, to be co-extensive.

So, how might we incorporate this fallibilism into our analysis of justification? We need to supplement the analysans with something other than truth; in doing so, we must respect both the fact that we are fallible -- and, therefore, that justification will sometimes fall short of the goal of truth -- and that justification is a positive appraisal, so that justified beliefs are more likely to attain the goal of truth than are unjustified beliefs. So, justification might be conceived as a matter of likelihood or probability of attaining the goal. This would yield something like the following:

\[
S's \text{ belief that } p \text{ is justified iff } S's \text{ belief that } p \text{ is probably true}
\]

However, whatever its other merits, this leads to difficulties concerning probability. For, it is unclear what such a probability statement amounts to. Presumably, the probability of any particular belief token's being true is either one or zero. Perhaps, then, what is meant is that

\[149\]

For a nice discussion of this and related matters, see Pollock (1986).
p is of some type, such that the tokens of this type have a sufficiently high probability of truth. This leads to concerns as to which type is the appropriate type, since p will be a token of infinitely many belief types. Further, the ontology of types and tokens remains less-than-sufficiently understood. However, perhaps these difficulties can be resolved; in any case, we do not want to abandon what might be the correct analysis (or, at least, a correct partial analysis) of justification at the conceptual level because of substantive worries such as these.

Perhaps, then, we would do better to consider a slightly different formulation:

S's belief that p is justified iff S's belief that p is likely to be true

For the moment, let us leave the notion of likelihood unexplicated, but note that it is unclear that it wouldn't ultimately rest upon considerations of probability, thus returning us to the morass from which we were hoping to escape. Nonetheless, there are problems with this formulation as well. For, it could be the case that none of our beliefs are true, or, even worse, that none of our beliefs are likely to be true. For instance, we might be deceived by the Cartesian evil demon. Nonetheless, it seems
that we can still apply a principled distinction between justified and unjustified beliefs in such cases. Consider, for example, two brains in vats, each of which forms the same belief, one as the result of deduction and the other by the flip of a coin.

However, there is a more significant problem with an attempt to analyse justification in terms of likelihood of truth. While this sort of formulation does seem to be somewhat right-headed -- we do, after all, want justification to be a positive evaluative term, such that beliefs which possess the property of justification stand in better stead vis-à-vis the goal of justification than do those which lack it -- it misses an important part of the motivation for this desire. Namely, we are not just concerned that our justified beliefs are likely to be true, we are concerned with the reason(s) why they are likely to be true. If it turns out to be a matter of luck, say, that some of our beliefs are more likely to be true than others, we don't want to endow this former set of beliefs with a positive epistemic status. Such status can only be earned if there is a principled reason for the likelihood of the truth of these beliefs.

We can see this by considering an attempt at a substantive account of justification, viz. a simple version of reliabilism. Consider the following:

150 I shall discuss this claim further in section V below.
S's belief that $p$ is justified iff S's belief that $p$ was produced by a reliable process\textsuperscript{151}

Here, reliability is a simple matter of the truth ratio of the beliefs actually or possibly produced by a given process. If the ratio of true beliefs to total beliefs generated by a particular process is sufficiently high, we say that the process is reliable.

Remember that we mentioned above that justification is meant to differentiate between true belief and knowledge in such a way that true beliefs arrived at as a matter of luck do not count as knowledge. This formulation does not seem to fit that bill, though; for, it does not require that S have knowledge, belief, or even any reason whatsoever to believe that the process which generated her belief that $p$ is in fact reliable. The mere fact of its reliability -- compare this to the mere fact of the likelihood of a belief's being true in the previous formulation -- is enough to confer justification, even if the agent has no reason to believe that this fact obtains. But, as I have been suggesting, goal-directedness, which is at the heart of any notion of justification, must be pursued in an appropriate fashion.

\textsuperscript{151} To my knowledge, no author espouses such a simple version of reliabilism. However, the core of most reliabilist accounts embodies something like this formulation, and I am concerned here with the main thrust of such accounts rather than the details.
Just as we do not morally commend the individual whose action has unintended positive consequences, we do not epistemically commend the agent whose belief has unintended likelihood of truth.

Each of the above formulations, then, has attempted to augment the elliptical formulation with which this chapter began in a way which acknowledges our fallibility as epistemic agents. However, in doing so, the emphasis has been strictly on the outcome of our epistemic practices. That is, the relevant considerations have been the frequency or likelihood of a particular belief's being true; the emphasis has been on the end in question, rather than the means to that end. Perhaps we need to go beyond such considerations, which are merely consequential, to something more. The analogy with ethics might again be instructive here. We have seen that consequentialism won't suffice in epistemology; that is, arriving at the right result (viz. true belief) doesn't suffice for knowledge. We need something more than true belief in order to attain knowledge; this is the primary motivation behind the efforts of epistemologists to arrive at an account of justification. But if the point of justification is to supplement the consequentialist end of true belief, it seems that the supplementation must be in terms of something deontological, or otherwise normative.
I suggested at the beginning of Chapter 2 that normativity is a component of the concept of epistemic justification. We can see now just why this is: as we concern ourselves with goal-directedness, it is reasonable to consider both the goal or end and the means taken towards that end. In the case of epistemic justification, the goal is truth and the means is our belief-forming practices. So, our analysis of epistemic justification should make reference to both the goal of truth and the way in which we conduct ourselves in pursuit of that goal. To put the point another way, truth is the component of knowledge which ensures that we get the right result; justification is the component of knowledge which ensures that we get the right result in the right way.

Rather than focusing solely on the goal of truth, then, let us consider the method of seeking truth. As a first try, then consider the following:

\[ S's \text{ belief that } p \text{ is justified iff } S \text{ arrived at the belief that } p \text{ as a result of aiming at truth} \]

or

\[ S's \text{ belief that } p \text{ is justified iff } S's \text{ belief that } p \text{ is truth-directed} \]
This formulation takes into account S's goal or aim in her epistemic practices; it considers more than the truth, or likelihood thereof, of her beliefs. We have seen that the concept of justification must invoke some concept other than truth, and I have suggested that truth-directedness might be the link between justification and truth. This formulation, then, encapsulates that observation without adding any further conceptual apparatus. It seems that this is the right conceptual connection between justification and truth; rather than attaining truth, or being likely to attain truth, epistemic justification is concerned with our striving towards truth.

However, this formulation seems to be too permissive. For, surely, S might be aiming at the truth through illegitimate practices, perhaps through no fault of her own. We are concerned to ensure that justification is not the result of luck or otherwise unsanctioned practices; however, this formulation does not take into account the way in which S aims at truth. Merely aiming at truth will not suffice; if justification is to be a positive term of appraisal, then it must only apply to beliefs which are formed via sanctioned attempts to attain the goal of true belief; it cannot be the case that all beliefs which are aimed at truth are justified.

I want to argue that any such formulation — i.e., any formulation which fails to consider the way in which S aims
at truth -- will fail to capture the concept of epistemic justification. But this formulation seems to be correct as far as it goes: we do want to acknowledge truth-directedness as a necessary condition on justification. That is, while not all beliefs aimed at truth will be justified, it is certainly true that no beliefs which fail to be aimed at truth will be justified. So, we have at least a partial analysis; we must now supplement it in the right way.

I have suggested that the relevant further consideration is the practices we follow in forming our beliefs; that is, the way in which we strive towards the goal of truth. Roughly, then, something like the following must be right:

\[ S \text{'s belief that } p \text{ is justified iff } S \text{ arrived at the belief that } p \text{ by seeking truth in the right way} \]

II. Epistemic value: the connection between justification and truth

I have suggested that the connection between justification and truth (or, properly speaking, truth-directedness) must be in terms of approaching the goal of truth in the right way. Most substantive accounts of justification have been offered as attempts to explicate this notion of "in the right way", and most try to reduce it to naturalistic terms; indeed, naturalized epistemology has been
in vogue for the last quarter-century or so. However, I am here concerned to offer a conceptual analysis, so I will not address the debate between naturalists and non-naturalists. It might turn out that an account of justification can be offered in strictly naturalistic terms; what is important, though, is that it stay true to the correct conceptual analysis of justification. And that analysis, I shall argue, essentially invokes a notion of epistemic value.\footnote{152 Actually, as we shall see below, it invokes two (perhaps distinct) notions of epistemic value.}

The foregoing suggest the following prima facie case for inclusion of a normative component in our analysis of justification. Justification has to do with the right way of conducting our epistemic practices; further, it seems that the very idea of any notion of justification is normative. So, we have the combination of the goal of truth with a way of achieving it; the two must interact. Each is (equally?) important to justification: it must be aimed at the right goal in the right way. The naturalistic move, then, is half-right; the right goal is truth, which is both external and naturalistic. But the right way of achieving a goal is irreducibly normative. That is, at the level of conceptual analysis, we must respect the observation that justification is a term of approbation, and that approbation accrues to beliefs which are arrived at via approved processes. We need
not say, for the sake of conceptual analysis, which processes are the right ones --- indeed, this is paradigmatically a task at the substantive level --- but we must capture the notion that there is a distinction between right and wrong processes, and that this distinction is essential to the concept of justification.

I should note here that I will not say much about epistemic value in the current work. Some normative fact will need to remain unexplained, at least for current purposes. When I eventually turn to the stage of the project in which I attempt to produce a substantive account of justification, I will have more to say about epistemic value, and to which beliefs it accrues. But, for current purposes, I shall not have much to say about epistemic value. It is likely that it will need to remain an unexplained primitive (as suggested at the beginning of this chapter); just as there are non-normative primitives, there must be normative primitives. However, it should not be a source of worry that I define epistemic justification in terms of some normative primitive term (especially if this is, as I have suggested, unavoidable). For, the two terms are far from synonymous, as should be clear from the conceptual relation between the two.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ This will become increasingly clear once I have presented the complete analysis.
In any case, I shall have something to say about epistemic value in the final section of this chapter. For now, though, let me offer a suggestion, which will be mostly relevant at the substantive level but which, I hope, will shed some light on the notion of epistemic value (and perhaps demystify it a bit). I suspect that, in the actual world, epistemic value reduces to some non-normative property (or set of properties). Further, it reduces to some non-normative property in every possible world. However, there is no reason to think that it must reduce to the same property in every possible world. That is, in any possible world, the normative facts may actually simply be a subset of the non-normative facts, but when we discuss the concept of epistemic value across possible worlds, non-normative terms will not suffice. Of course, this view is currently unsupported; as I have mentioned, I will not attempt to further defend it here. In any case, the truth or falsity of this view does not alter the fact that the concept of epistemic justification is essentially linked to some normative concept.

III. Alston's "Concepts of Epistemic Justification"

I have been arguing for the need for an analysis of the concept of epistemic justification, pointing to the dearth of

154 And, indeed, any concept of justification.
attempts to do so in the literature. However, one noteworthy such attempt bears discussion here, namely that of William Alston in his "Concepts of Epistemic Justification". This is especially important, because Alston comes close to endorsing the partial analysis I have offered above, viz.

\[ S's \text{ belief that } p \text{ is justified iff } S \text{ arrived at the belief that } p \text{ by seeking truth in the right way } \]

A discussion of the similarities and differences between Alston's formulation and my partial formulation will suggest, I think, the way in which I should attempt to complete my analysis. Let us, then, turn to Alston's paper.

Alston considers a wide variety of possible analyses of justification, discarding them one by one. He eventually offers the following as a plausible candidate:

\[ S \text{ is } J_e \text{ in believing that } p \text{ iff } S's \text{ believing that } p, \text{ as } S \text{ does, is a good thing from the epistemic point of view.}^{155} \]

A few notes: the subscript \( J_e \) is meant to indicate that this is an evaluative notion of justification; Alston contrasts this with a deontological notion. The epistemic point of

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155 p. 70.
view, according to Alston, "is defined by the aim at maximizing truth and minimizing falsity in a large body of beliefs."¹⁵⁶ So, while his formulation is not identical with what I have offered (in particular, he needs to tell us more about what he means by "is a good thing"), there are affinities: both make reference to the goal of truth, and both include a normative component. However, Alston notes the following worry: his formulation renders justification without a link to truth. "[W]hat reason is there for taking \( J_e \) to be independent of truth? I think the answer to this has to be in terms of the 'internalist' character of justification. When we ask whether \( S \) is justified in believing that \( p \), we are, as we have repeatedly been insisting, asking a question from the standpoint of an aim at truth; but we are not asking whether things are in fact as \( S \) believes."¹⁵⁷

This is quite illuminating. To apply Alston's observation to my partial formulation, it could be the case that an agent is aiming at truth in the right way but that the world isn't the way she takes it to be. If this is the case, though, there is no reason to think that her justified beliefs (according to this analysis of justification) are in any better epistemic stead than her unjustified beliefs --

¹⁵⁶ p. 59.
¹⁵⁷ p. 71.
she might be a brain in a vat, for instance. Alston, rather than attempting to solve this problem directly, appeals further to the internalistic feature of justification he has noted; indeed, Alston tells us that "I don't see any way of remedying these defects other than by introducing an 'internalist' constraint." However, I wish to avoid appeals to internalism in my analysis of justification, both because I believe (as I have previously mentioned) that the debate between internalists and externalists is misguided, and because I take it that that debate takes place primarily at the level of substantive accounts, and thus is largely irrelevant to the project of conceptual analysis.

But there is another, more straightforward reason why I shall diverge from Alston in completing my analysis; namely, I think that the problem he has raised suggests a more obvious solution. It is this solution which I wish to explore in the following section.

IV. A second normative component

The worry that Alston has brought to our attention is that things might not be the way an agent takes them to be, and that this is relevant to justification. I agree with Alston: if justification is meant to mark those beliefs which

158 Introduction to his (1989), p. 4. He discusses this further in the passages following the above-quoted text from his (1985).
stand in better epistemic stead than others, and if it is also an evaluation of the way in which we aim at truth, then there must be some reason to think that the practices which we take to be most conducive to the end of truth in fact are most conducive to that end. That is, things must be more or less as we take them to be, such that our best efforts -- or, at least those efforts which we deem able to construe justification upon beliefs -- do, as a matter of fact, have greater epistemic value than those practices which we do not sanction epistemically.

To put the point simply, then, in order for a belief to be justified, we must conduct our epistemic practices in the right way, and the external world must cooperate. This is not to say that the world must be exactly as we think it is, or that the world need be the way we desire it to be. Rather, the point is that, if we are epistemically responsible in forming our world view, and the world actually fits our description of it\textsuperscript{159}, we can arrive at justified beliefs; failing either of these factors, though, our beliefs will be unjustified. Our beliefs are most likely to be true, and are most worthy of epistemic appraisal, if one does what one should and the world is the way it should be. This suggests the following analysis:

\textsuperscript{159} The fit need not be exact, of course; an approximate match between our beliefs about the world and the truth of the matter will usually suffice.
S's belief that p is justified iff S arrived at the belief that p by seeking truth in the right way, and the world is the way it should be.

Further, I want to argue that this additional clause introduces another dimension of normativity into our analysis. To see this, let me consider Goldman's notion of normal worlds, which plays an important role in the account of justification offered in his *Epistemology and Cognition*. This notion is akin to the notion of the world being as it should be, which I have been discussing here. Goldman takes his account, as do many others, to be paradigmatically naturalistic and non-normative. I shall argue, though, that the notion of normal worlds he employs is, at least tacitly, a normative notion, and that it corresponds to the added clause in my formulation. This will support my contention that the correct analysis of justification is twice normative. Let us turn, then, to Goldman's notion of normal worlds.

In his presentation of reliabilism, Goldman introduces normal worlds to address the matter of which cognitive processes are to be counted as reliable, and thus as

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160 It should be noted that Goldman had abandoned the notion of normal worlds by the publication of his (1992).
justification-conferring. His answer is that the relevant processes are those which are reliable in normal worlds, which he defines as "worlds consistent with our general beliefs about the actual world." So, for instance, we take it that deduction is a reliable process but that clairvoyance is not; it is our beliefs about the reliability of these processes which is relevant to Goldman's account of justification. And these beliefs are in turn based upon more general beliefs about the world; roughly, we take it that perception is an accurate means by which to gain knowledge about the world, that the world follows certain natural laws, and that, for the most part, things are the way they seem. Thomas Reid discusses such a set of his desiderata under the heading "First Principles of Contingent Truths", in his Essays on the Intellectual Powers: for instance, that memory is reliable, that things are as we perceive them, that we have some freedom over our actions, that reason is not fallacious, that other minds exist and can be known, that nature is uniform and thus induction is reliable. While I do not necessarily want to espouse each of these principles, the general point is made clear: a normal world is one in which things are roughly as they seem, for the most part. In

162 PP. 266ff.
normal worlds, then, we will be justified if we conduct our epistemic practices appropriately.

But this seems to suggest that reliability isn't the key notion in Goldman's account; rather, it is reliability in normal worlds. As Goldman tells us, "Rightness of [justificational] rules -- and hence justifiedness -- displays normal-world chauvinism." But this chauvinism, I want to suggest, is closely allied to the notion of the world being the way it should be. This is because of the way Goldman has defined normal worlds, viz. by reference to our beliefs about the way the world is. But what shapes these beliefs? It seems that we tend to believe that the world is, epistemically speaking, the way we want it to be. We assume, for instance, that skeptical hypotheses are false, and that our relation to the world is such that we are able to have a great deal of success in our efforts towards fulfillment of the goal of true belief. But, then, normal worlds are just those worlds in which things are the way we think they should be (epistemically speaking). And this is a normative consideration: it suggests that there are ways the world could be which are preferable to others for the purposes of the pursuit of truth. That is, there are epistemically better and worse ways for the world to be. This might explain, for instance, the distaste epistemologists and

163 Ibid.
Others share for skepticism: skepticism can be construed as the denial that the world is as it should be, i.e. as the claim that the world is lacking in a certain kind of epistemic value. In denying skepticism, we must argue that the world in fact does bear this value, and that is why we are able to attain justified beliefs (and knowledge). But given this consideration, it seems that the notion of the world being as it should be is an essential component of the concept of justification.

V. The Janus-faced nature of epistemic justification

So, I have offered an analysis which contains two distinct normative components: one adhering to epistemic agents, and one to the external world. We might say, then, that epistemic justification is "Janus-faced"; there are two distinct but related sides to the concept. Each refers essentially to a kind of epistemic value, but in different ways.\textsuperscript{164} This suggests a new approach to the problem of developing a substantive account of justification. The debate between internalists and externalists has led most theorists towards one camp or the other. However, by recognizing the Janus-faced nature of justification, we can transcend those battle lines, and acknowledge that both

\textsuperscript{164} I want to leave open for now the question of whether these are the same kind of value or whether they are different in kind.
internal and external factors are relevant to justification, albeit in distinct ways. We cannot ignore the fact that we must conduct our practices in the right way; so, there is an internal normative component to the concept of justification. Nor can we ignore the requirement that the world cooperate; this provides an external normative component to justification.

This view is not free from objection, of course. Let me here briefly consider one possible line of objection. First, note that some authors have suggested that if something is beyond one's control, it is permissible. So, for instance, we shouldn't blame the envatted brain for forming beliefs which have no chance of being true. This further suggests that we can be justified in our beliefs if we couldn't have done any better. But this seems wrong. If an agent can't help but act irrationally, her actions are still deemed irrational; if someone is unable to control his urge to steal, we still consider the stealing to be wrong (though we might be less likely to blame him for it). Similarly, if the best I can do, epistemically speaking, is quite poorly, we will maintain that my beliefs fail to justified, even if I have no control over my circumstances, and thus am unable to do anything to improve my epistemic

165 Including, among others, Hume, Reid, and, among contemporary authors, John Pollock.
situation. If we take seriously the instrumental (i.e. goal-directed) nature of justification -- which, I have argued, is essential to the concept -- then we must withhold justification from beliefs which are not well aimed towards that goal. But, as I have been arguing, for a belief to be well aimed towards the goal of truth requires that the epistemic agent and the external world be in harmony. She must do what she needs to do, and the world must do what it needs to do as well. Only via the combination of these two factors can a belief attain justification. (Note that this line of argument suggests that "ought" might not imply "can" in epistemology.166)

What do we say, then, if the world is not as it should be? Can we make no distinction between justified and unjustified beliefs? Continuing the above line of objection are Lehrer and Cohen, who have suggested167 that a brain in a vat or a victim of an evil deceiver can, in fact, have justified beliefs. I want to maintain, as we have seen, that no beliefs are justified in such cases -- skeptical hypotheses such as envatted brains and evil demons describe paradigmatic cases of the world's failing to cooperate. However, I think I can explain why Lehrer and Cohen argue as

166 Keith Lehrer has suggested, in personal conversation, that "ought" implies 'can'" is a kind of supervenience principle.
they do, and can also make sense of their efforts to distinguish between justified and unjustified beliefs in the demon world.

Lehrer and Cohen present their argument in the context of an argument against reliabilism. As such, they are keen to emphasize the internal factors of justification. To index their discussion to my formulation, they are focusing on the first element of normativity, but ignoring the second. This is not surprising; as I have suggested, caught within the throes of the internalism-externalism debate, most authors have failed to consider the possibility of that justification is Janus-faced. Accordingly, Lehrer and Cohen deny, perhaps unwittingly, the need for the world to be as it should be in order for our beliefs to be justified.\textsuperscript{168}

Their attempts to salvage the justified-unjustified distinction in the demon world, I believe, are the result of misplaced intuitions. When we think about the demon world, we are likely to index our thinking, especially with regard to internal factors about the agent in question, to normal

\textsuperscript{168} I should note, though, that Lehrer's own account of justification, though often misconstrued as such, is not an internalist account. Rather, Lehrer combines internal and external elements: "There must be a match between what one accepts as a trustworthy guide to truth and what really is a trustworthy guide to truth." (Lehrer(1990), p.150) What one accepts is an internal factor, and what really is trustworthy is an external factor. Indeed, in personal conversation, Lehrer has noted that he sees affinities between his "match" theory and my own Janus-faced analysis.
worlds -- the force of a demon-world hypothesis is that the world has changed while the agent has not. So, we appeal to intuitions (or to a theory, in some cases) about which beliefs are justified and unjustified in normal worlds, and carry these results over to the demon world. This move is not completely misguided; while beliefs in the demon world, I maintain, cannot be justified, there is still something to be made of this distinction. For, we can evaluate an agent's beliefs with respect only to the first kind of epistemic value. We could then say that agents who aim at truth in the right way accrue this value, while those who fail to do not. This distinction -- we could call it a matter of epistemic rationality, or something similar -- will indeed carry over from our thinking about normal worlds to our thinking about demon worlds. So, we can maintain the distinction Lehrer and Cohen seek in the demon world, while nonetheless denying that brains in vats and victims of evil deceivers can have justified beliefs.

VI. Reasons: bearers of epistemic value

In conclusion, let me say a few things about the first kind of epistemic value. These comments are meant to be largely suggestive in nature; this discussion will be resumed in a later stage of this project. It is my proposal that reasons are the bearers of epistemic value, such that someone
who has aimed at truth in the right way will have done so in virtue of having good reason(s) for forming the belief in question. What, then, are reasons? I an only say a bit here, but I prefer to make some brief comments rather than saying nothing at all about epistemic value. At the very least, the following might give the reader an idea as to how the later stages of this project might proceed.

A reason is, most generally, a means by which to form a new belief. It is that which one offers by way of explanation when asked why one believes a particular proposition. As such, many things can acts as reasons: experience, perception, entailment relations between propositions previously believed and the new belief. However, reasons are non-doxastic. Reasons are not beliefs; rather, reasons license the formation of a belief, often on the basis of other beliefs. But the intermediary in this basing relation is not itself a belief, on pain of regress. Remember Lewis Carroll's famous paper about Achilles and the Tortoise. The tortoise drives Achilles into an infinite regress by insisting that each reason Achilles offer be recast in the form of a belief. To avoid this regress, it

169 We might use a rough analogy to arguments, and suggest that reasons are to existing beliefs as inferences are to premises, and that the newly formed belief is analogous to the conclusion of an argument.
must be the case that reasons are not doxastic. While I do not want to say much more here about what reasons are, I can say that they are internal, value-bearing, non-doxastic states which play a crucial role in our belief-forming practices. Again, though, a more detailed analysis will have to wait.

One more observation about reasons and epistemic value, which may seem obvious but is nonetheless worth stating explicitly: which reasons bear epistemic value and which do not is a matter of external fact. That is, although reasons are internal states, the fact that they bear or lack value is an external fact, one to which an agent might not have access.\(^\text{171}\) Surely, we want to be able to determine which of our reasons are good reasons and which are not, so that we can do our best to conduct our belief-forming practices in the right way. And I think that we can, at least usually, succeed in doing so, although we must be careful to avoid an infinite regress along the lines of the KK principle in explaining how this can be. This is not the current concern, but I do hope elsewhere to be able to explain how we can have relatively good access (related to, and dependent upon, but

\(^{171}\) I am indebted to Todd Stewart for suggesting parallels between this observation and one made by Alston in his "An Internalist Externalism", although that piece is an attempt to present a substantive account of justification rather than a conceptual analysis.
nonetheless distinct from, introspection) to the epistemic value of our various reasons.

So, my analysis posits two kinds of epistemic value, one of which is borne by the world and one of which is borne by my reasons. Each must accrue sufficiently in order that my beliefs are justified; further, while one is internal and the other external, the fact of the matter as to whether each accrues is in each case external.

VII. Summary and conclusion

I have suggested that we must distinguish between an analysis of the concept of epistemic justification and a substantive account of epistemic justification, and have further suggested that the former should be offered prior to an attempt to develop the latter. In this work, then, I have attempted to provide such an analysis, invoking truth-directedness and two elements of normativity. I have suggested that epistemic justification is a matter of one's conducting one's epistemic practices in such a way as to be aiming at truth in the right way in a cooperative world; justification requires that the world and the agent each do their part in the right way. This Janus-faced analysis, I have suggested, will shed new light on the attempt to develop a substantive account of justification. The next stage of
the project, then, is to undertake that attempt, armed with the analysis offered herein.
REFERENCES


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