# Veritism, Values, Epistemic Norms
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## 1. Introduction
Stephen Grimm observes that "[a]mong contemporary epistemologists, perhaps the most prominent way to make sense of our epistemic evaluations is in teleological terms" (Grimm 2009, 243). Specifically, many epistemologists take it that what has fundamental value in the epistemic domain is truth -- or, more properly, true belief. From this, the teleological account of epistemic appraisal to which Grimm refers naturally follows: other epistemic goods besides true belief -- justification, evidence, reasons, and so on -- have epistemic value because they are appropriately related to that *telos*.[1] (There is, of course, significant disagreement as to what the appropriate such relation is, exactly.)

Such a truth-oriented approach to understanding epistemic value and assessments is a core theme of *Epistemology and Cognition*, and indeed of Alvin Goldman's epistemological writings as a whole. Thus, in the former work, we're told that "[t]he central epistemological concepts of appraisal…invoke *true belief* as their ultimate aim" (1986, 3), that "true belief is a prime determinant of intellectual value" (*ibid.*, 98), and that the appropriate criteria of epistemic rightness are all truth-linked (*ibid.*, 116). In later works, the same underlying idea, now dubbed 'veritism', is defended: "the cardinal [epistemic] value, or underlying motif, is something like true, or accurate belief" (2012, 52); and various intellectual virtues (2002) and public institutions and practices (1999) are assessed according to how well they promote that end.[2] Goldman also, of course, espouses a specific truth-linked theory of justifiedness – viz., process reliabilism. But veritism, and the attendant teleological approach to epistemic value and valuations, are detachable from reliabilism, and are viewed with sympathy by many who don't endorse the latter view.[3]

One much-discussed challenge to veritism is the 'value' or 'swamping' problem – the problem, that is, of explaining why, given veritism, knowledge would be more valuable than mere true belief (or, for that matter, Gettiered JTB). This paper concerns a different and more fundamental challenge to the veritistic teleological view that Goldman, and many others, find attractive. This is the challenge of explaining why true belief has the status of fundamental epistemic good, and why the relevant norms and appraisals have normative force – why they have a claim on us, and why we should care about them.

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[1] This teleological account of epistemic valuations must be distinguished from 'the teleological view of belief' – i.e., the view that "the regulation of belief – the formation, maintenance, revision and rejection of beliefs – is literally directed at an aim, goal or telos [e.g., truth], and it is in virtue of this that the states so regulated count as beliefs" (McHugh and Whiting 2014, 703).

[2] The formulations of veritism given by Goldman vary. Above, true belief is said to be the *cardinal* epistemic virtue. Elsewhere, veritism is said to be the view that true belief is "all that matters" in inquiry (Goldman and Olsson 2009, 24). In still other places, as we'll see, Goldman states: "the core epistemic value is a high degree of truth possession on topics of interest" (Goldman 2002, 61).

[3] For a sampling of epistemologists of diverse epistemological views who endorse the truth-oriented teleological approach, see (David 2001, 152).

Specifically, this paper considers Hilary Kornblith's suggestion that epistemic norms have a practical basis – that their normative force stems from the fact that observing them helps us to achieve our various goals. This view, I'll argue, provides a plausible answer to the second of the questions just posed – namely, why epistemic norms and appraisals have a claim on us. But it does not explain, and is not meant to explain, why true belief has the status of fundamental epistemic good. An answer to that question may come from familiar semantico-conceptual analysis, for example, or from the idea that belief as such is governed by a 'norm of truth'. However, just as Kornblith's account presumes, and requires, the essentially veritistic character of epistemic assessment, the latter ideas may require supplementation by Kornblith-style reflections on the practical value of true belief if they're to explain why the relevant norms and appraisals have directive force. In this way, and contrary to how matters are often presented, a Kornblith-style appeal to practical considerations, and the idea (for example) that belief as such is governed by a 'norm of truth', may be interestingly complementary.

That's where we're headed. We'll begin, however (Section 2), by considering some popular ways of thinking about the veritism and epistemic value, Goldman's among them, and the dilemma Grimm thinks confronts teleological views that ignore the social value of true belief. Section 3 introduces Kornblith's view that epistemic normativity has a practical grounding. Sections 4 and 5 respond to objections to Kornblith's argument and position and – not coincidentally – differentiate between it and 'instrumentalist' accounts of epistemic norms. It is also argued here that Kornblith's view allows us to solve Grimm's dilemma without appealing to social-moral considerations. However (Section 6), as suggested above, while practical considerations may be an essential part of the story, they don't fully explain epistemic norms and their basis. In addition, Kornblith's proposal appears to take the essentially veritistic character of epistemic assessment for granted. However, this undercuts the proposal only if the truth norm itself, or a purely semantic account, has immediate implications for how epistemic agents should conduct themselves; and it's just not clear that it does.

## 2. Grounding the teleological view – a dilemma, and Grimm's proposed solution
In thinking about why true belief has the status of fundamental epistemic good and why the relevant norms and appraisals have a claim on us, a natural thought is that it's simply a conceptual or definitional matter that truth is the epistemic end, that the central epistemological concepts are truth-linked, that justification is an evaluative concept with positive valence, and so on. As Kornblith notes (1993, 359-61; 2002, 140-42), in *Epistemology and Cognition* Goldman seems to be offering just such a semantic underpinning to epistemic norms and normativity – *this* stage of the epistemological project is, for Goldman, rooted in the conceptual-analytic methods of traditional epistemology.[4] As he elsewhere puts it: "…[e]xamining folk epistemic concepts…reveal[s] how truth (true belief) is a primary basis for epistemic evaluation and epistemic achievement" (Goldman 2007, 22). The result, Kornblith says, is that on

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[4] While in *Epistemology and Cognition* these methods are cast as *a priori*, as Kornblith notes (1993, 362-63; 2002, 144-45), in subsequent works Goldman treats the investigation into our concepts as empirical. This difference does not affect the present discussion.

Goldman's (1986) account "[n]ormative force seems to derive from semantic considerations alone" (Kornblith 1993, 361; 2002, 142).

However, as Kornblith and Stephen Stich (1990) point out, this isn't terribly satisfying. Epistemic norms, as Kornblith thinks of them, are directives – they prescribe ways in which we ought to form beliefs, conduct ourselves as inquirers, and so on; these are matters about which we do and should care, "and an account of the source of epistemic norms must explain why it is that [we] should care about such things" (Kornblith 1993, 363; 2002, 145). But a purely semantic grounding for epistemic normativity seems to just push the problem back; for why should we care about the concepts – hence, the epistemic standards -- that we actually have (1993, 361-63; 2002, 142-45; cf. Hazlett 2013, 257, 267-69)?

Notably, though, Goldman elsewhere makes it clear that he does *not* see epistemic value and normativity as having a wholly linguistic-conceptual basis. Responding to Stichean worries about the supposedly chauvinistic character of analytic epistemology, with its attempt "to identify epistemic value by analyzing normative epistemic terms found in everyday language", Goldman says: "I doubt that anyone endorses epistemic standards *on the grounds* that they are one's own; presumably they are invoked because they mark out something valuable, either intrinsically or extrinsically" (1991, 189).

For the veritist, of course, what such standards mark out are various truth-linked properties and phenomena; and what's valuable, "either intrinsically or extrinsically", is true belief. Thus, Goldman:

> "Believing truths often helps a person achieve practical goals. Realizing practical goals, such as food, shelter, and mating, typically promote biological ends….
> ….[However,] [p]eople do not desire true belief merely as a *means* to survival, or the achievement of practical ends. Truth acquisition is often desired and enjoyed for its own sake, not for ulterior ends." (1986, 98)

> "Our interest in information has two sources: curiosity and practical concerns. The dinosaur extinction fascinates us, although knowing its cause would have no material impact on our lives. We also seek knowledge for practical reasons, as when we solicit a physician's diagnosis or compare prices at automobile dealerships." (Goldman 1999, 3; cf. 69)

So, while conceptual or semantic considerations may play an important role in our epistemological theory, just as important in understanding epistemic normativity is the value of true belief – practical or instrumental value and, thanks to our sheer curiosity, 'intrinsic' or final value. The problem, however, is that while the teleological view as thus far developed treats true belief *per se* as having final epistemic value, there are very many true beliefs – concerning utterly trivial matters, say (see e.g. Goldman 1999, 88-9) -- which seem neither instrumentally useful nor the sort of thing that any reasonable person would be curious about. As Grimm puts it, "It hardly seems to be the case that finding out how things stand with respect to just any subject is intrinsically worthwhile, even from a purely epistemic point of view" (2009, 250). Just because that's so, many

philosophers – including Goldman, in places – opt for a *restricted* view of the epistemic end: "the core epistemic value is a high degree of truth possession *on topics of interest*" (Goldman 2002, 61).[5] The problem now, however, is that the position appears not to be generous enough: uninteresting and unimportant though some truths may be, surely beliefs on *all* matters are epistemically assessable; and surely there's something epistemically wrong about believing falsely, say, or against the evidence, even on uninteresting or useless matters, and even when doing so has superior practical value. But the restricted teleological account seems unable to explain why this is so – why, that is, useless or otherwise uninteresting beliefs would be appropriate candidates for epistemic appraisal (Grimm 2009, 250). In short, then, the unrestricted teleological view is just implausible on its face; and the restricted teleological view sacrifices the universality of epistemic assessment – i.e., the fact that epistemic norms apply to all beliefs.[6]

According to Grimm, what this shows is that "the teleological view – at least, as it is popularly understood – is mistaken" (2009, 243). Positively, he thinks that we can salvage a more plausible version of the teleological view by "shifting away from the standard first-person question about the value of true belief…and by moving instead towards a more communal or social view of the value of truth" (*ibid.*, 257-58). "[T]he practical concerns of others are remarkably plastic and unpredictable" (*ibid.*, 259); what's useless or uninteresting for one person might be quite otherwise for another. "And as a potential source of information for others, we have an obligation to treat *any* topic or any question with due respect" (*ibid.*). The value of true belief, then, is as a common good, like clean water. On this view, Grimm says, "epistemic normativity would seem to be explicable in terms of a deeper, and more obviously moral, sort of normativity: namely, the sort of normativity that derives from our obligation to help others carry out their projects and concerns (broadly understood)" (*ibid.*, 262).[7] So, thinking of "our broader role in the information economy" (*ibid.*, 259) enables us to make sense of "the unrestricted value of true belief" (*ibid.*, 257) and to preserve the universality of epistemic assessment.

While, for Grimm, epistemic normativity is explicable "in terms of a deeper, and more obviously moral, sort of normativity", it bears stressing that the latter, moral obligation arises from our common interest in carrying out our projects, whatever they may be. Further, and relatedly, in developing his preferred account of "the unrestricted value of true belief", Grimm has us move away from thinking about epistemic value on a case-by-

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[5] Goldman notes (*ibid.*, n. 5) that the role of interests is acknowledged in his (1999, Section 3.5). It is also implicit in his 1986 discussion of *power* – "the capacity to produce true belief in answer to a high ratio of questions one wants to answer or problems one wants to solve" (1986, 27). Speed too (*ibid.*, 124) is an interest-sensitive measure, inasmuch as its relevance to epistemic matters arises from practical constraints and concerns.

[6] Grimm (2009), on whom I'm relying here, gives an especially clear statement of this dilemma; Kelly (2003) and Hazlett (2013), e.g., contain similar arguments.

[7] Compare Horwich: "It is presumably because most truths are useful in practical inference – and not merely to those individuals who discover those truths, but also to all the rest of us to whom they are communicated -- that our society, simplifying for the sake of effectiveness, inculcates a general concern for truth for its own sake" (2006, 351).

case (belief-by-belief) basis – i.e., from asking, of specific beliefs, whether they concern useful or otherwise interesting matters. As we'll see shortly, however, if we are mindful of these two points – that we each have various and varied goals we wish to pursue; and, relatedly, that we shouldn't restrict ourselves to a case-by-case understanding of the value of true belief[8] -- it becomes apparent that the appeal to specifically social (/moral) considerations is not required for addressing the problem Grimm identifies: a broader view of our own cognitive-practical situation provides, all by itself, a plausible underpinning for the veritistic teleological view.

## 3. A Practical grounding for epistemic normativity
A clear example of a *non*-veritistic teleological approach to epistemic evaluation is provided by Stich's (1990, 1993) 'pragmatist' view. According to Stich, there is nothing special about truth, and no reason to take it to be the epistemic goal. In fact, for pragmatists, there are no special cognitive or epistemological values at all – "[t]here are just values" (1993, 9). Good reasoning is a matter of effectively promoting your goals -- whatever things, for you, have intrinsic value -- *whatever they are*.

Stich's account makes it clear why one would care about the outcomes of epistemic assessments – they're in service, after all, of things one values intrinsically (1990, 132). However, as both Kornblith and Goldman observe, it's not clear why such 'all-in' assessments should count as *epistemic*. "Isn't epistemic evaluation, like many other kinds, more plausibly viewed as directed by only certain concerns and not others?" (Kornblith 1993, 368; 2002, 152). As Goldman puts it, the mere fact that such assessments concern cognitive systems, or beliefs, doesn't make them epistemic, "any more than a sculpture's being a work of art makes an appraisal of its utility as a paperweight an aesthetic appraisal" (Goldman 1991, 193; cf. Goldman 2002, 67-68). "Indeed," Kornblith says, "it seems to me that the natural way to describe Stich's pragmatic view is to say that it is eliminitivist about epistemic evaluation: there is nothing distinctively epistemic about the kind of evaluation Stich proposes" (Kornblith 1993, 368-69; 2002, 152).

Just as seriously, however, there is the point that a thoroughly pragmatic account can't deliver the goods, and its failing in the way that it does points to a better view. According to Stich, "the pragmatist project for assessing reasoning" proceeds by determining one's goals – what one wants to achieve -- and then identifying the reasoning strategies that others have successfully employed in achieving those same goals (Stich 1993, 9-10). But it's hard to see how this is to be done unless one has some reliable cognitive systems or strategies in place. Thus, even if happiness, say, rather than true belief, is what one really

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[8] Compare Sosa: "Perhaps we need a more indirect approach. Perhaps our ideal of truth is one that bears directly not on true beliefs but on truth-conducive practices" (2001, 53-4). In his most recent thoughts on 'the value problem', Goldman too calls for an enlarged perspective in addressing evaluative questions of interest to epistemologists: "certain important epistemic values (for example, knowledge and justifiedness) turn out to have [an] historical kind of value"; "[a] token process inherits epistemic value not only 'directly' from the output belief it produces, but also (and primarily) from the type of which it is an instance" (2016, 217).

values, in order to effectively pursue that goal one will need some (reasonably[9]) reliable way of determining how best to achieve it. Further,

> "[p]recisely because our cognitive systems are required to perform evaluations relative to our many concerns, and to perform these evaluations accurately, the standards by which we evaluate these cognitive systems themselves must remain insulated from most of what we intrinsically value, whatever we may value." (Kornblith 1993, 372; 2002, 158)

So, whatever else one cares about, one has an interest in – one should care about -- having a cognitive system (or systems) that produces true beliefs reliably and in evaluating, not just individual beliefs, but our various systems and methods for producing them, in terms of their reliability. "And this," as Kornblith says, "is precisely what epistemic evaluation is all about. Truth plays a pre-eminent role here" (*ibid.*).

## 4. Objections to the argument

Before considering how the view just sketched enables an attractive response to the dilemma Grimm has posed, it's worth dealing with objections that target Kornblith's argument itself. Thus, for example, Jonathan Kvanvig challenges the idea that only a system that reliably produces true beliefs will be effective in helping us achieve our ends, whatever they may be. Kvanvig's concern is to show that "the value of truth is not in its capacity to further other interests we might have, but is rather intrinsic to truth itself" (2003, 40). To that end, he argues that 'empirical adequacy' – i.e., adequacy to the course of experience, such that any untruth will remain undetectable – "may be sufficient for our practical concerns" (*ibid.*, 41).

But is that right? No doubt, in a given case a merely empirically adequate belief may help me achieve my goal. But the issue is how far the phenomenon generalizes. Consider, for example, victims of deep-seated delusions: the falsity of their beliefs may be forever hidden (to them), and those beliefs may enable them to 'make sense' of their experience; but it's hardly obvious that those delusory beliefs will be sufficient to their practical concerns. (In some cases, their well-being requires institutionalization.) On the whole, it seems that merely empirically adequate beliefs are instrumentally valuable only when embedded within a generally reliable system.

Veli Mitova offers a different, though related, challenge to Kornblith's argument. According to Mitova, the most common path to 'a pragmatic justification of epistemic norms' is the following:

> (1) Observing epistemic norms is optimally conducive to getting true beliefs.
> (2) Having true beliefs is optimally conducive to attaining the things we value.
> (C) So, observing epistemic norms is optimally conducive to attaining the things we value. (2008, 142)

But the argument is unsound, Mitova argues. Specifically, it's false (premise (2)) that

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[9] There are various constraints and trade-offs here.

"having true beliefs is optimally conducive to attaining the things we value". For notice: some of our beliefs, like my belief about where to get groceries, are 'indirectly goal-attaining' – they help us get what we're after by playing a role in action; and these ones, plausibly, need to be (mostly) true. But some beliefs contribute to our well-being directly, and regardless of whether they are true. For instance, my belief that I'm likable might make be feel good all by itself, and so contribute to my well-being, whether or not it's true. And, for each of us, *some* of the 'directly goal-attaining beliefs' that would leave us best off will be false (*ibid.*, 143). So,

> "…while one's whole belief system must feature plenty of true beliefs, it cannot be the case that all of one's beliefs should be true for the most optimal attainment of one's goals. Rather, there must be for each of us a precise mixture of true and false beliefs, which will be better at getting us the totality of things we value than an all-true system. Call this precise mixture the BEST-set. The BEST-set is instrumentally superior to the all-true set…." (*Ibid.*, 144)[10]

So, if your concern is simply to get the things you value, you should prefer 'the BEST-norms' – i.e., those norms that issue, for you, in your BEST-set of beliefs. And, "[n]eedless to say, BEST-norms, unlike our epistemic norms, are not truth-aiming. Rather they prescribe procedures for believing in such ways as to optimize overall success at goal attainment" (*ibid.*).

Mitova thoughtfully considers some possible responses to this objection, and so ways of shoring up the above argument. A more direct response, however, is that Kornblith doesn't claim that having true beliefs is optimally conducive to attaining the things we value – as far as his argument goes, there may indeed for each of us be a 'BEST-set' of beliefs that is instrumentally superior to the all-true set. Kornblith's concern, however, is with systems of belief-production and the assessment thereof; and his principal claim, in effect, is that reliable systems and reliability-oriented methods of assessment are a "primary good" in Rawls' (1971) sense: along with such things as health, clean water, and certain and civil and political rights, reliable cognitive systems[11] are among the realistic conditions of success in life, however one conceives of the latter (cf. Nozick 1993, 68; see too Foley 1992, 17-18; Goldman 1999, 73-5). Whereas, a cognitive system that's custom-tailored to a specific individual – so, a set of 'BEST-norms' -- is not a real psycho-biological possibility (cf. Lycan 1991, 202); and there is, in any case, no non-trivial way of specifying in advance what the 'BEST-norms' for a given person are.

## 5. Untoward consequences? Comparison with other views
A number of philosophers have claimed that Kornblith's view has certain unacceptable consequences. To begin here, consider an example presented by David Papineau, whose

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[10] Compare Lycan (1991) on the set of 'grue' beliefs for a given individual.

[11] Here and below, 'reliable cognitive systems' stands in for *reliable systems of belief formation and (reliable) reliability-oriented assessments of such systems, belief-forming strategies, and beliefs.* Note too that while Kornblith speaks of systems, a distinction between native systems and acquired methods (in the manner of Goldman 1986; e.g., 93) might be salutary; but this doesn't affect the present discussion.

views on epistemic assessment are often lumped together with Kornblith's:

> "Consider people who aim deliberately to mislead themselves. Suppose an elderly man realises that he is likely to be upset if he learns about the real probability of his developing cancer, and so arranges to avoid any evidence that might undermine his sanguine belief that this probability is low." (1999, 24)

One natural thing to say about such a case is this: it's perhaps reasonable, or at least excusable, that the relevant *pro tanto* epistemic obligation is taking a back seat to the subject's practical concerns; but epistemically speaking, he *is* doing something (epistemically) wrong. According to Papineau, however, this isn't clear at all:

> "Why should we suppose that the elderly man …[is…] in any sense obliged to comport [his] beliefs to the evidence? It doesn't seem to me that [he is] violating any prescriptions at all by adopting [his] entirely sensible strateg[y]." (*Ibid*., 25; cf. 2013, 67-8)

Insofar as one agrees with Papineau here, that would support his recent contention that "there is no distinct species of normativity attaching to the adoption of beliefs" -- that all prescriptions occurring in connection with the adoption of belief "arise from consideration of moral value, or personal value, or possibly aesthetic value, and not from any distinct species of doxastic value" (2013, 64). Insofar as one is attracted to the veritistic-teleological outlook described at the outset, however, one will regard such claims as mistaken and take it be to a weakness of Kornblith's view if it aligns with Papineau's. But Papineau's view clearly differs from Kornblith's. Like Stich, Papineau is an instrumentalist about the assessment of beliefs – a belief (or believing) is right or wrong, good or bad, only relative to one's specific interests, goals, or desires. Whereas, again, Kornblith argues on practical grounds that one has an objective interest in epistemic evaluation and, further, that for such evaluation to be effective it must be insulated from one's other interests. The latter requirement, in turn, means that the epistemic domain must have a certain sort of *autonomy* – that epistemic assessment be a *distinct form* of evaluation, that epistemic reasons or rationality *not reduce* to practical or instrumental reasons/rationality, and that epistemic rightness *not* be a function of non-veritistic (e.g., practical) factors. To think that examples such as Papineau's can be used to expose a weakness in Kornblith's view, then, is to mistake a practical or instrumentalist *grounding of epistemic normativity* with pragmatism or instrumentalism about the (content of the) *epistemic norms themselves*[12] -- which is, again, really just to deny that there are any genuinely epistemic norms.

With these points in mind, consider Matthew Lockard's recent criticism of Kornblith. As Lockard sees it, the difference between Kornblith's view and Papineau's is that Papineau's is 'case-based' whereas Kornblith's is 'rule-based'.[13] Lockard notes that "a

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[12] This confusion is perhaps abetted by Kornblith's claim to be providing an "instrumental account of epistemic value" (1993, 375, n. 11), which is ambiguous between these two very different ideas.

[13] As Lockard notes (2013, 1714, n. 14), in his reply to Kelly (2003), Leite (2007) describes a

rule-based form of epistemic pragmatism[14] is not committed to the idea that epistemically rational beliefs are always conducive to the attainment of one's contextually dominant ends" (2013, 1714). However, Lockard argues that the view still has unacceptable consequences. For suppose that…

> "…the elderly man *knows in advance* that he will be worse off if he forms beliefs about his medical condition in accordance with the evidence….When he succumbs to the evidence and believes that he has contracted the dreaded disease,…it is most natural to regard him as epistemically rational. But doing something that one *knows* will be inimical to the achievement of one's contextually dominant ends is the paradigm of instrumental irrationality. It is hard to see how rule-based forms of epistemic pragmatism can accommodate the intuition that one can be epistemically rational in forming beliefs in ways that one knows will frustrate the attainment of one's contextually dominant ends." (2013, 1715)

Agreed: "doing something that one knows will be inimical to the achievement of one's contextually dominant ends is the paradigm of instrumental irrationality". Again, though, this is a problem for Kornblith's account only if, on it, 'epistemic rationality' *just is* instrumental rationality – only if, on it, there *is no* distinctively epistemic mode or dimension of evaluation, but only instrumental assessment, of either a case- or rule-based kind. But that, we've seen, is not the view. Of course, practical considerations – your specific interests, needs, and so on -- can affect which matters are (for you) worth investigating and/or having true beliefs about; and there are practical *constraints* on inquiry too (e.g., Cherniak 1986; Harman 1999; Kelly 2003, 635-37; Kornblith 1993, 368, 373; 2002, 152, 158-159). But the suggestion that the evaluation of a given belief, or of whether one is being epistemically rational, should itself be in terms of one's interests – whether in a case- *or* a rule-based way -- clearly runs counter to the requirement that the relevant mode of assessment be insulated from one's interests.

That Kornblith's view has untoward consequences has been suggested as well by Allen Hazlett, who couches the worry in terms of the view's inability to explain the universality of epistemic assessment. According to Hazlett, if Kornblith is right and it's for practical reasons that one should care about truth, then "eudaimonically worthless true beliefs [i.e.,

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form of epistemic instrumentalism modeled on rule utilitarianism that is, he thinks, immune to Kelly's critique. While Lockard's objection may be effective against the view Leite describes, for reasons given here I think that Kornblith's view is importantly disanalogous to rule utilitarianism. Adapting Lockard's statement of the basic rule-utilitarian idea, it's not Kornblith's view that "the [epistemic] status of [a belief] is determined by whether it was performed in compliance with rules that generally tend to [promote the attainment of one's ends]" (Lockard 2013, 1714). If there's a parallel to be drawn with rule utilitarianism, it's at the level of specifically epistemic (i.e., truth-related) goods and assessments: on the reliabilist view that Goldman and Kornblith endorse, the epistemic status of a belief is a function of its being produced by generally reliable processes-types. (Goldman is explicit about the "rule consequentialist" structure of the view (1986, 103; 2015a), and in the latter work warns against certain misunderstandings.)

[14] By 'pragmatism' Lockard means the view that "norms of epistemic rationality…derive from your desired ends, though from no *particular* end, epistemic or otherwise, that you want to achieve" (2013, 1712).

beliefs that make no difference to one's well-being, or the furtherance of any of one's goals]…will lie outside the scope of appropriate epistemic reasons attribution" (2013, 141) – i.e., they won't be epistemically assessable.[15]

Hazlett's worry, of course, is a variation on Grimm's earlier argument against standard teleological views. In Grimm's terms, Hazlett sees Kornblith as offering a restricted teleological view, on which the epistemic value -- hence, the epistemic assessability -- of a belief depends upon its being eudaimonically relevant. As we saw, it was at this just point that Grimm urged a shift in focus from "one's personal goals and concerns and towards our broader role in the information economy" and a consideration of epistemic normativity "in terms of a deeper, and more obviously moral, sort of normativity" (2009, 262).

As suggested previously, however, and as should now be clear, the appeal to specifically social (or moral) considerations is not required for addressing the problem Grimm identifies: Kornblith's version of the teleological view already affords a response. Unlike the teleological views Grimm discusses, the view under consideration makes no initial assumption that true beliefs, as such, are valuable for their own sake. (Like precious jewels: 'the more the better!'[16]) Rather, true belief has primarily instrumental value. This in turn gives us an interest in reliable and reliability-assessing systems and methods. Because these must be insulated from our (other) interests, the universality of epistemic assessment is secured: the relevant systems and methods will apply equally to all beliefs, including beliefs about practically useless and/or uninteresting matters. And if true belief *does* have the status of epistemic end, any true belief will, as such, have final (non-instrumental) epistemic value.[17] Many true beliefs will lack any value beyond that, however; and the general practical orientation of the present view makes it natural to see why many such beliefs just aren't worth wanting. Whereas, if we begin with the idea that true beliefs as such are valuable, in addition to threatening the universality of epistemic assessment (Section 2), any such concession is apt to look like a real, even desperate, shift.

Of course, the desire for truth is not a philosopher's fiction: just as epistemic norms themselves "incorporate true belief as an autonomous value", at the individual level "[t]ruth acquisition is often desired and enjoyed for its own sake, not for ulterior ends" (Goldman 1986, 98). And when we do care about getting the truth on some matter for its own sake, this can be a source of additional (non-instrumental, final) value, since it is, in general, a good to achieve one's aims. Again, though, we don't have to think that it's such a desire, or the inherent value of true belief, that grounds epistemic normativity, or

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[15] See Kelly (2003) for an earlier statement of this type of worry about 'instrumentalist' views of epistemic rationality.

[16] I owe this way of putting the idea (which she doesn't endorse) to Elizabeth Fricker.

[17] That true belief has final epistemic value is of course compatible with its not being the only thing that does. (Sosa (2007), e.g., suggests that apt belief has it too.) Kornblith stresses that his central point is that truth must play a *pre-eminent* role (1993, 372; 2002, 158); and Goldman, as we saw, often frames veritism as the view that true belief is the *cardinal* or *core* epistemic value or virtue.

that a merely practical – and *a*social -- basis cannot secure the desired universality of application.


## 6. Bindingness and constitutive norms
Still, a practical grounding of epistemic normativity might seem to cast it in the wrong light in some fundamental way – either because, contrary to the arguments of the previous section, it can't really do justice to the kind of authority such norms possess, or because it to attempts to locate the basis of epistemic normativity in the wrong kind of place.

Thus, for example, it's often said (e.g., Kelly 2003, Engel 2013a, Siegel 1990, Grimm 1999) that epistemic norms are 'categorical', or that the relevant assessments have 'categorical normative force' -- that they are, as Thomas Kelly puts it, "binding on any rational agent, regardless of the goals or ends which he or she happens to hold" (Kelly 2003, 616; cf. 621). Whereas, Kornblith says, his account makes epistemic norms "a variety of hypothetical imperative: they tell us how we should acquire our beliefs if we meet certain conditions" (1993, 359; 2002, 140).

However, Kornblith's putting things this way is misleading. And, in any case, for a couple of reasons it's doubtful that considerations of categoricity *per se* are helpful here.

First, while the statement, 'If you have some goals/desires, seek the truth', is conditional, it merely mentions, and does not express, an epistemic norm; the relevant norm – the injunction, 'Seek the truth!' -- is not conditional. Thus, even if the value of true belief is primarily instrumental, and even if the binding force of the injunction to seek truth (e.g.) is conditional upon one's having some goals/desires, if we're limiting our attention to the epistemic, 'seek truth' is categorical, and the *epistemic* value of true belief is not instrumental at all.[18] As we saw above (Section 5), it's an implication of the view under consideration that the sphere of epistemic assessment must be autonomous – hence, that epistemic norms revolve around truth as final epistemic good, just as veritism has it. As Ernest Sosa says, in pondering the question of how being justified can add to the value of a true belief,

> "Truth may or may not be intrinsically valuable absolutely, who knows? Our worry requires only that we consider truth the *epistemically fundamental* value, the ultimate explainer of other distinctively epistemic values." (2007, 72; cf. 2004)

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[18] Kelly (2003, 622-23) anticipates the suggestion that "[t]he apparently categorical character of epistemic reasons might actually be an artifact of the universality of the relevant goals." He thinks this isn't a promising line, since "there is simply no cognitive goal or goals, which it is plausible to attribute to people generally, which is sufficient to account for the relevant phenomena" (2003, 623). Kornblith makes the latter point himself (1993, 367; 2002, 150). His account anchors the relevant universality in the fact that it is in each person's *interest* to have a reliable system. (Perhaps the appeal to interests would strike Kelly as a poor fit with naturalism, a critique of which is bound up with his criticisms of 'epistemic instrumentalism'. But that's another issue.)

Of course, one might worry – as does Grimm (2009, 253-57), in considering Sosa's version of the teleological view -- that focusing on truth's being fundamental *in the epistemic domain* doesn't explain the apparent *bindingness* of epistemic norms – the fact that "the end of realizing the truth enjoys a special kind of status when it comes to the evaluation of belief" (Grimm 2009, 256).[19] Indeed, Kornblith (2001) expresses just this sort of concern about Richard Feldman's (2000, 2001) suggestion that epistemic 'oughts' are "role oughts" – i.e., oughts that result from one's playing a given role (teacher, cyclist, believer). For there are plenty of roles, and hence plenty role oughts, which we don't think give rise to genuine obligations (e.g., assassin, addict, slave) -- even when, as Feldman says of "the role of a believer," the role in question "is not one that a person has any real choice in taking on" (2001, 88).[20] Whereas, we've already seen why epistemic norms and a concern with truth *would*, on practical grounds, enjoy the special status that they do. As well, we've seen why truth or reliability is not just one more factor to consider in deliberating about what to believe (cf. Engel, 2013a, 36; Kelly 2003, 619-20), not least because any such deliberation, to be effective, would itself require giving epistemic assessment a kind of priority.

Second, as Peter Railton puts it, "[t]o show that a norm or reason is non-hypothetical is not to show that it is utterly without condition. It is only to show that it would necessarily apply to any agent as such, regardless of her *contingent personal* ends" (2003, 298; emphasis added).[21] However, on the view we're considering epistemic norms *are* non-hypothetical in this sense: they are not binding only on those who have some specific goal. (Again: they couldn't be, since it's part of the view that the relevant systems and assessments be *insulated from* one's interests.) Epistemic norms are binding, rather, conditional upon one's having *some* goals or desires, a condition that all normal humans meet; so, the relevant norms are "universal" – they apply to all (Kornblith 1993, 372; 2002, 157). Their bindingness is conditional, as we might say, upon one's being an *agent* (i.e., a creature with goals or desires) -- just as, for Kant (1785), the categorical imperative is binding *conditional upon one's being rational*. What's at issue here, then, cannot be the bare fact that a given norm, or the binding force thereof, is somehow 'conditioned'.

What is plausibly at issue is what the relevant such conditions are. As we just put it, on

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[19] Cf. Pritchard and Turri: "Sosa often compares the epistemic domain to other domains of evaluation where the fundamental good of that domain is not finally valuable. So, for example, the fundamental goal of the 'coffee-production' domain may be great tasting coffee, but no-one is going to argue that great tasting coffee is finally valuable. Perhaps the epistemic domain is in this respect like the coffee-production domain?" (2009, § 9).

[20] "[T]he fact that we have no choice about being believers has nothing to do with why it is that we should do it right. Many people are forced into horrible roles; they are put in positions over which they have no choice….If role oughts simply 'describe the right way to play a certain role,' then, qua role ought[s], they carry virtually no normative force" (Kornblith 2001, 237-38).

[21] Compare Kelly: "An instrumental reason is a hypothetical reason, in the sense that it depends for its existence on the fact that the individual for whom it is a reason possesses a certain goal or goals" (2003, 621).

Kornblith's view epistemic norms such as the injunction to seek the truth apply to *agents* – that is, to subjects who have desires (cognitive or otherwise); and they so apply because pursuit of the relevant goals creates an objective interest in adhering to such norms. According to some, however, epistemic norms are grounded in features *internal to* the relevant cognitive-epistemic phenomena: as expressed by Adam Leite, the idea is that "we are subject to [such norms] merely as believers" (2007, 464).

One way to go about exploring and assessing the latter idea[22] would be to imagine what Paul Boghossian calls "a pure believer" -- that is, "a creature who only has views about how things are" (2003, 42). Such a creature does not act, does not have goals, cognitive or otherwise; it does not deliberate, pose questions to itself, wonder about how things are, and so on; it *just* believes. According to some, a 'pure believer' such as this would be bound, no less than an agent, to form beliefs in certain ways and not others – for instance, it "(epistemically) should not believe that p in the face of what [it] regards as overwhelming evidence to the contrary" (Leite 2007, 464).

Now, I think that there are good methodological grounds for handling our intuitive reactions to such imaginary cases (insofar as we have them) with a great deal of care, especially when they concern creatures so very different from ourselves. Arguably, those reactions, and what lies behind them, are as much a subject for theoretical exploration as are the issues on which they're meant to shed light.

Fortunately, we don't need to rely on such imaginary cases. We can simply consider belief itself – what it *is*. According to many, when we do so we find that, quite apart from any considerations of value, practical or otherwise, belief as such is governed by certain norms. We find, in particular, that belief 'aims at the truth' (Williams 1973). Non-metaphorically, the now-familiar idea is that truth is the *constitutive standard of correctness* for belief. Thus,

> The Truth Norm, (T): A belief is correct just in case the proposition believed is true.

And if (T) *is* the fundamental epistemic norm, one governing belief *qua* belief,[23] that would surely seem to spell trouble for the idea that epistemic norms have an entirely practical grounding.

By way of sharpening the worry, notice that Kornblith's own discussion seems to presume, and indeed to require, something like (T). (This is something we suppressed in canvassing other worries about the view, the idea being to isolate where the *real* problem-spots might lie.) For example, recall what Kornblith (like Goldman) says about

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[22] In this paragraph and the next, I've been much helped by discussion with Hilary Kornblith.

[23] There are plenty of issues being glossed over here – whether the relevant norm is truth rather than, say, knowledge; whether the relevant norm is *constitutive*, and so on. (For an introduction to such issues, see McHugh and Whiting 2014.) Here, I'm assuming that truth provides the relevant standard, and that (T) is both constitutive of belief and genuinely normative (see below). I assume these things so as to fashion the strongest and most direct worry about Kornblith's account.

Stich's 'pragmatic' view: namely, that it seems to be a kind of *eliminativism* about epistemic assessment: "there is nothing distinctively epistemic about the kind of evaluation Stich proposes," Kornblith says (1993, 369; 2002, 152). Why not? Presumably, because a purely pragmatic evaluation has no concern for truth as such. Likewise, it is presumably because they are not appropriately truth-related that, in spite of whatever practical benefits they bestow, certain cognitive biases and the (false) beliefs to which they give rise are not in Kornblith's view epistemically correct.[24] Whereas, having argued that one has an interest in having reliable cognitive systems, and in evaluating such systems in terms of their reliability, Kornblith says: "this is precisely what epistemic evaluation is all about. Truth plays a pre-eminent role" (1993, 372; 2002, 158).

As we saw above (Section 5), it's an implication of the requirement that the relevant systems and assessments be insulated from one's interests that the sphere of epistemic evaluation must be autonomous. What we are now seeing is that Kornblith appears to be taking for granted a particular means of picking out the epistemic -- hence, of what is/isn't an appropriate criterion of epistemic rightness -- that's independent of practical considerations. Specifically, he appears to assuming the veritistic idea that what makes the relevant form of assessment epistemic is that it is in terms of truth. But this, the worry goes, is more or less to assume that truth is what makes for *correctness* of belief, which is what (T) says.

Of course, it's precisely this sort of idea – that epistemic evaluation is essentially truth-oriented, e.g. -- that Goldman thinks is supplied by the semantico-conceptual analysis characteristic of traditional epistemology (see Section 2). And Goldman (2005, 2015b) has been critical of Kornblith's attempt to carry out an epistemology without relying on any such resources – an epistemology that's "empirical all the way down" (Kornblith 1995, 243). But regardless of whether it's supplied by specifically semantic/conceptual means, by more metaphysical reflections on the nature of belief,[25] or by something else again, it would appear that Kornblith needs there to be an essential connection between beliefs (the *objects* being assessed) and truth (the relevant *telos*) in order to help fix his subject matter (*epistemic* assessment), the question for him being *what 'grounds' the normativity of the latter*.[26]

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[24] See, for example, Hazlett's discussion of the benefits of self-enhancement bias (Ch. 2) and a charitable disposition towards friends (Ch. 3). Such biases may well piggyback, and rely for their efficacy upon, a generally reliable cognitive system. (E.g., about self-enhancement bias, Hazlett notes that as compared with delusional beliefs, the relevant "false beliefs are said to be 'tethered to reality'" (2013, 55); further, the bias is "'selective', involving inaccuracy only about certain domains and only in certain contexts" (*ibid.*, 57).) The present point, however, is that such biases and the beliefs to which they give rise are not themselves normatively correct.

[25] Some defenders of (T) hold that it has a conceptual basis, others do not. See McHugh and Whiting (2014) for discussion and sources.

[26] Cf. Papineau (2013, 71): "From the perspective of my opponents…my account of belief-involving prescriptions starts too late. I take the existence of beliefs for granted, and then consider how various kinds of familiar value -- personal, moral, aesthetic -- might attach to the avoidance of false belief.  But [my opponents] will object that there wouldn't be any beliefs to attach such values to in the first place, were it not for the *prior* doxastic norms which constitute beliefs." For a statement of just this type of concern, see e.g. Engel (2009, 189-90).

However, while such reflections might show that Kornblith's account, as stated, is incomplete – while they might show that one needs a notion of the epistemic end, and so of epistemic rightness, that's prior to considerations of desirability (value, goodness) -- it's not clear that they show that the account is mistaken. For it's not clear that the truth norm, any more than a purely semantic account (Section 2), or a consideration of the 'oughts' that flow simply from one's occupying a given role (above), supplies an answer to the question Kornblith is concerned with – namely, 'why we should care' about epistemic norms and the assessments they underwrite.

Granted, if our concern is to identify the constitutive norm governing some thing (activity, etc.), it's surely wrong to insist that a correct account thereof answer the question, 'Why should we care?' (cf. Jenkins 2007, 270). Thus, it's no strike against my account of why it's okay to move a rook in this way, but not in that, that it leaves my audience indifferent. As we've seen, however, Kornblith's concern is with understanding why epistemic *directives* have a claim on us – with what grounds the prescriptive force of the injunction to seek the truth; why it is that an unjustified belief is one that should be given up; why we should apportion our beliefs to the evidence; and so on. *This* is the sort of thing he has in mind in speaking of epistemic 'norms' and 'normativity'. (It's also the sort of thing Grimm is looking to understand, and the sort of thing that Goldman appears to want to explain by appeal to the intrinsic and extrinsic value of true belief; Section 2.)

However, there's plenty of controversy as to whether anything prescriptive follows directly from the truth norm. Some (e.g., Shah 2003, Shah and Velleman 2005, Boghossian 2003, Gibbard 2005) think that it does. But many disagree, and not just because it's unclear what a plausible such prescription might be (see Bykvist and Hattiangadi 2007, McHugh 2012). According to some (e.g., Thomson 2008, Papineau 2013, Dretske 2001),[27] (T) is altogether devoid of normative force. But even among those who regard (T) as genuinely normative, many see it as embodying a kind of normativity that's not prescriptive, and that does not itself have immediate implications for how believers should conduct themselves.

While there are differences in how the latter type of view is expressed, the general idea is that (T) is an *evaluative* norm (McHugh 2012, Fassio 2011) – it says, of a given belief, that it is correct *qua* belief only if true, not whether it is a belief that one ought to have. Insofar as (T) itself generates any 'oughts', these apply "not to actions but to states" (Chrisman 2008, 358). They are, in Castañeda's (1970) terms, *ought-to-be*'s rather than *ought-to-do*'s (Chrisman 2008, 358; Engel 2013b, 208) – for instance (Fassio 2011): given that *S* believes that *p*, it ought to be that *p*. (T), then, is "best understood as a thesis about when beliefs can be truly described as being *ex post* or *retrospectively* 'correct', not as a thesis about when it is *ex ante* or *prospectively* right or fitting to believe a proposition" (Wedgewood 2013, 130); it "does not give us any prescriptive -- or even

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[27] Bykvist and Hattiangadi (2007) argue for this as well, but their discussion assumes that the normative is the prescriptive.

permissive – guidance" (Engel 2013b, 208).[28] A similar result is obtained by thinking of (T) in teleo-functional terms: a belief is 'correct' just in case it's true, because it is the function of beliefs and the systems that produce them to "achieve the representational good, truth" (Burge 2003, 506). Thus viewed, epistemic norms, and perhaps (T) as well, are "natural norms of function fulfillment and normal functioning" (Graham 2012, 462; cf. Graham 2014; cf. too Jarvis 2012). They do not prescribe actions for believers.[29]

So, even if one accepts (T), there are live alternatives to regarding it as prescriptive.[30] And if it isn't – if the relevant judgments of correctness possess, in Gideon Rosen's phrase, "intrinsic practical neutrality" (2001, 621) – then the truth norm, though perhaps genuinely normative (because evaluative), is not an epistemic norm in Kornblith's sense (i.e., a directive, or ought-*to-do*) and so is not in competition with Kornblith contention that the latter have a practical grounding. That such ideas -- constitutive norms, a practical grounding of "normative force" – are, or may be, perfectly compatible is something that's overlooked in many discussions. (No doubt, this is in part because people too often use 'normative' (/'norm') – or 'reason(s)', or 'rationality' – in such a way as to foreclose the possibility that there may be more than one type or dimension of normativity (/norms) in play.[31])

A further suggestion – assuming, again, that (T) does not itself have immediate implications for how we should conduct ourselves -- is that the approaches in question are not just consistent but complementary. Granting the existence of an evaluative norm

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[28] Elsewhere, Engel compares (T) to Broome's (2007) 'rational requirements': they "are *not* normative in the sense in which they lead to prescriptions: they are normative only as constituent norms of the most general kind" (2013a, 47). One thinks as well here of Harman's (e.g., 1999) well-known discussion of rules of implication: even if there's some good sense in which they are norms, they are not rules of inference.

[29] To be clear: neither Graham nor Burge is directly addressing the nature or status of (T). I'm extrapolating from what they do say.

[30] One might think that there is a simple route from (T) to something prescriptive: "Engagement in a goal-directed practice commits me to the value of the goal I so pursue. Likewise, if my believing is cognitively correct just when what I believe is true, then if I am engaged in inquiry, that is, *I am trying to figure out what to believe*, then I am normatively committed to my doxastic practices being governed by (TG) [the principle, *It is prima facie good that, relative to the propositions one might consider, one believes all and only those that are true*]" (Lynch 2009, 230). This of course recalls the idea of 'role oughts'. But, like the latter, it does not account for the fact that we think that some practices are ones that one ought to care about or engage in, others not, though "the trivial connection principle", as Lynch (*ibid.*) calls it, would appear to apply equally to all. Nor, as we saw, does an appeal to the non-optionality of a given practice itself resolve this concern.

[31] So, for example, it's not clear whether Kelly is correct that the existence of any kind of 'normative substrate' underlying considerations of (e.g.) practical utility – a normative conception of evidence (2007, 466ff.), say, or the idea that there is an 'aim of belief' (2003, 631-2) -- will vitiate the 'instrumentalist''s account. The following statement of Cowie's is also potentially misleading: "According to intrinsicalists, there is a *brute epistemic* value in believing in accordance with one's evidence. According to instrumentalists [among whom, he counts Kornblith; 2014, 4005], by contrast, the value of believing what one's evidence supports is, at bottom practical" (2014, 4005).

that sets truth as the relevant standard, certain things (true beliefs, reliable processes, etc.) will be normatively 'correct' in the sense specified by (T), and other things (false beliefs, unreliable biases, etc.) will not. The question remains as to why we have an interest in correctness, so understood. And, in the same way that Kornblith needs some essential connection between beliefs and the truth in order to help fix his subject matter, an appeal to practical considerations represents one very natural way in which to move from the merely evaluative norm to familiar epistemic prescriptions. For instance, in articulating the genuinely normative (though non-prescriptive) character of (T), as he sees it, Conor McHugh writes:

> "Doxastic regulation [forming, maintaining, revising, etc., doxastic attitudes] is not an activity that we merely happen to engage in. Rather, it is essential to our nature as intentional, moral and rational agents. Acting in the world requires you to have a representation of how the world is, so that you can select and guide the behaviour that will bring the world in line with how you want it to be." (2012, 23)

If we add to this the observation that only accurate such representations are liable to serve this role reliably and guide successful behavior, we're on the verge of an account of why norms invoking considerations of the 'correctness' of belief would have the prescriptive force that they do.[32]

To take another example, in addressing the question of what sorts of rules of action (ought-to-do's) might be 'implied' by constitutive epistemic norms such as (T), Matthew Chrisman says:

> "I suspect that our epistemic ideals will come from our natures as information tracking and transmitting beings, which is tied up with our natures as social beings. It is part of instituting and maintaining the social structures in which these ideals are ideals that we evaluate and react not only to each other's actions but also to each other's ways of being. These evaluations and reactions help to shape the way we are and, since the way we are is intimately tied to the way we will act, also how we will act. In such a situation, I think there is good reason to suppose that the doxastic oughts that derive from the ideals of being good information tracking and transmitting beings will be categorical rules of criticism that imply interpersonal epistemic rules of action." (2008, 366-67)

Like Grimm's positive suggestions above (Section 2), Chrisman's thoughts here have an obvious social orientation. But, as with Grimm's suggestions, the factors said by Chrisman to underlie "interpersonal epistemic rules of action" – viz., considerations of "our natures as information tracking and transmitting beings", and a concern with "instituting and maintaining the social structures in which [our epistemic] ideals are ideals" -- are hardly entirely non-practical.

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[32] Just as, as McHugh says, "If choosing a heart, you would certainly be well advised to choose one that showed signs of fulfilling its function" (2012, 23). Why? Because you have an obvious stake in the matter.

There is also of course the question of *why we have* beliefs – states, the constitutive standard of correctness for which (suppose; see n. 23) is truth. Here too, broadly practical considerations come to the fore. For whether or not one favors a teleo-functional handling of (T), surely teleo-functional thinking is the way to go in understanding why we have beliefs. Natural biological functions are as they are in part because of their contribution to the good of the organism.[33] Thus (simplifying greatly), it's because its doing so benefits the organism that the function of the heart is to pump blood; and that's also why we have hearts. In the same way, it's because their being true helps creatures navigate the world that beliefs are *for* representing what is the case; and that's also why we have such states – we have them because having them helps us get by. And that is also, as suggested above, why we have an interest in having reliable systems of belief-production and effective means of evaluating such systems in terms of their reliability. Coarsely put: the reason you have the relevant states is the same reason you should care about epistemic evaluation, veritistically understood, and about doxastic 'correctness'.[34] There is a nice consilience here.[35]

One might still wonder which of the relevant notions – the truth norm, say, or our practical interest in the epistemic – has priority. But surely the right answer is that they have different types of priority: in terms of the metaphysics of epistemic rightness, as it were, (T), or some more recognizably Goldmanian semantico-conceptual starting point, has priority; in terms of the grounding of epistemic norms, understood as directives about which we do and should care, practical considerations have priority. There's no need, and no good reason, to insist that one is 'really' more important or fundamental than the other.

## 7. Conclusion

We began with the observation that most contemporary epistemologists think of epistemic evaluations in teleological terms -- specifically, they think that what has fundamental value in the epistemic domain is truth (true belief), with other things being assessed in relation to this end. Our question has been why true belief has the status of fundamental epistemic good, and why the relevant norms and appraisals have a claim on us. The suggestion here has been that Kornblith's account of epistemic normativity as grounded in practical considerations is not vulnerable to certain objections. We've also seen, however, that it's able to avoid such objections in part because it is not meant to explain the existence and value of familiar practices of epistemic assessment *ex nihilo*. Rather, it explains why those practices, and the properties on which they fix, are things

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[33] As Graham explains, a plausible account of natural functions includes a benefit or welfare condition: "A function of X in S is Z iff: (1) X does Z in S, (2) Z benefits S, and (3) X exists in S because Z benefits S (X is the product of a feedback mechanism involving the beneficial character of Z to S)" (2014, 20).

[34] Compare Ichikawa and Jarvis on "the feedback mechanism that keeps cognition adhering to the rules of rationality" because such adherence serves a person's interests (2013, 40).

[35] A consilience that extends to Goldmanian observations as to the general contours of the relevant concepts – why they would be truth-oriented, why we'd regard justification as a good thing, etc. – as well as to our social practices' encouraging good (truth-conducive) epistemic behavior in the manner discussed by Grimm (2009), Chrisman (2008), and Graham (2015), e.g., and the importance of which Goldman (1999) has stressed. These things too are of a piece with, and not competitors to, the present ideas.

we do and should care about. In doing so, the account makes free use of the idea that truth is what's of fundamental value in the epistemic domain. That it takes this core veritistic idea for granted might be seen as a vindication of Goldman's insistence upon the need for some conceptual investigation in the initial stage of epistemological theorizing, or of the idea that belief is governed by a norm of truth. Even so, Kornblith's position is undercut only if the truth norm itself, or a purely semantic account, has immediate implications for how epistemic agents should conduct themselves; and it's just not clear that it does. The suggested moral, then, is a conciliatory one: a full understanding of epistemic normativity -- where the norms come from, why they have the authority that they do, and so on -- will need to draw from multiple resources: neither semantic considerations, nor constitutive norms, nor practical considerations alone, for example, can do all the work.[36]

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