Two for the show: Anti-luck and virtue epistemologies in consonance

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Abstract This essay extends my side of a discussion begun earlier with Duncan Pritchard, the recent author of *Epistemic Luck*. Pritchard's work contributes significantly to improving the "diagnostic appeal" of a neo-Moorean philosophical response to radical scepticism. While agreeing with Pritchard in many respects, the paper questions the need for his concession to the sceptic that the neo-Moorean is capable at best of recovering "'brute' externalist knowledge". The paper discusses and directly responds to a dilemma that Pritchard poses for virtue epistemologies (VE). It also takes issue with Pritchard's "merely safety-based" alternative. Ultimately, however, the criticisms made here of Pritchard's dilemma and its underlying contrast of "anti-luck" and "virtue" epistemologies are intended to help realize his own aspirations for a better diagnosis of radical scepticism to inform a still better neo-Moorean response.

> *"Who will unravel this tangle? Nature confutes the sceptics, and reason confutes the dogmatists…[such that a person] can neither avoid these two sects, nor yet hold fast to either one of them!"*

> Blaise Pascal, *Pensees*[1]

1 Introductory remarks

Over the past few years and culminating in his remarkable book *Epistemic Luck* (2005), Duncan Pritchard has worked on various aspects of the problem of radical

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[1]Pascal's *Pensees* #434, my own translation.

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scepticism, and in particular on improving the "diagnostic appeal" of a neo-Moorean response to the sceptic.[2] Pritchard shows his readers convincingly how discussions not *just* over scepticism directly, but also over an indirectly-connected panoply of Gettier, lottery, closure, etc., problems currently popular in mainstream analytic epistemology, often treat epistemic luck vaguely or ambiguously. Still more to the point, these discussions misstate the motivations for radical scepticism, by focusing more around "veritic" than around "reflective" epistemic luck; so for philosophers who engage them in order to confront the sceptical challenge, these issues can become stumbling blocks rather than footholds. Pritchard sees philosophers creating certain unnecessary stumbling blocks for themselves especially through individual and communal adherence to what he calls the "Epistemic Luck Platitude" (hereafter ELP). The "robust" version of this platitude avers a blanket incompatibility of knowledge and luck; while deeply unsound in this form, Pritchard shows how explicit or tacit loyalty to it underlies many of our analytic practices and discussions.

Some years ago I wrote about epistemic luck as a virtue epistemologist prior to encountering Pritchard's work.[3] While agreeing with Pritchard in what has been said thus far and much else in regards to his neo-Moorean approach to scepticism, the encounter solidifies my sense of luck (ethical or epistemic) as a natural focus of study in virtue theory. Yet this outcome will be ironic for him, since it chafes against a direct challenge to the motivations of virtue epistemology (VE) that Pritchard claims to flow out of his book's study of epistemic luck. These differences may have a metaphilosophical aspect over and above their epistemological ones, since it seems certainly the case that interest in *moral* luck and a resurgence of virtue (or areteic) ethics have been substantially coextensive over the past several decades. While some epistemic analogues both of moral luck and of virtue-based ethical theory have made significant inroads in contemporary analytic epistemology, the ability of philosophers to respond satisfactorily to the challenge of scepticism would be enhanced by carrying these analogies further. Or so I argued in "*Felix* Culpa" (2003), but this second and far fuller response to Pritchard's work on radical scepticism reflects my view as now informed by the reading of his stimulating book.

The main argumentative thesis of the paper is that what Pritchard calls the diagnostic appeal of his account of the motivations for radical scepticism would be significantly enhanced had he added that there is a *second* major epistemological "platitude" that should be exploded at the same time as we explode the ELP. This second, equally uncritical and debilitating commitment among epistemologists, is to what will here be termed the Platonic Definition Platitude (hereafter PDP). If ELP is the unqualified assumption that knowledge-possession is incompatible with epistemic luck, then PDP is the similarly unqualified assumption that the two-fold goal of "philosophical" (*qua* anti-sceptical) analysis of knowledge is its *complete definition*, preliminary to showing that that definition allows creatures like *ourselves* to know most of the things we think we know.

By a complete definition is meant the attempt to non-circularly state a completely general as well as counter-example free set of necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge. Just as Pritchard examines what purposes are thought to be served by

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[2] See Axtell (2003) for the first response, which was to Pritchard (2003). See also Pritchard (2002) for more about recent work on radical scepticism.

[3] Axtell (2001a). My view also acknowledged Internalism and Externalism as directed towards distinct kinds of luck, and argued an epistemic "compatibilist" position on that basis.

holding what he calls the "robust" version of ELP, I want to question the purposes thought to be served by allegiance to a robust version of PDP.[4] With an eye towards radical scepticism, my main source of concern is the wisdom behind the intention of using Platonic definition *as a bulwark against radical scepticism.* Sections 1 and 2 develop the basic claim that we should disavow PDP for many of the same reasons of philosophical advantage that lead Pritchard to think that we should disavow ELP. While it should be made clear that Pritchard's continued commitment to PDP isn't here taken to be *any stronger* than that of most other contemporary epistemologists, it will be argued that we can find such a commitment evident in his writings. It is discernable, firstly, in the conspicuous absence of recognition, within his diagnosis, of a certain important *kind* of scepticism: the distinctively "philosophical" kind which Stroud (2004a, 2004b) and Fogelin (2004) both write extensively about. After arguing this in Sect. 1, Sect. 2 argues that the same dubious commitment to PDP is also apparent in the more glaring misdiagnosis Pritchard gives of the motivations for VE.

The general upshot of these early sections is that we will be better off in our debates with the radical sceptic by inviting the dialectical repositioning that results from abjuring both platitudes *together.* Later sections extend this claim by responding to a specific dilemma that Pritchard's poses to dilemma for VE, explaining why disabusing ourselves of the twin platitudes—the one about the blanket incompatibility of luck with knowledge and the other about Platonic definition of knowledge being the goal of analysis—might be seen as serving Pritchard's own ends by allowing improvement to the neo-Moorean argument. Pritchard doesn't well account for the fact that the neo-Moorean position and a safety principle are already part of the position of epistemologists such as Ernest Sosa and John Greco, whom he criticizes. In the last section of his book, Pritchard expresses deep doubts about whether the neo-Moorean argument as he develops it can be successful in recovering from the shadow of scepticism more than a "'brute' externalist knowledge". This concession may be one that flows from his adherence to the "merely safety-based" form of epistemological externalism that he develops, and a sharper thesis running through both parts of the paper is that it needn't be made: neo-Mooreans can better rebut the sceptical challenge if they preserve the resources of VE and maintain, as Pritchard does not, its distinctive "compatibilist" stance on the relationship between those interests in explanation we typically label as "internalist" and "externalist".

2 From the Sampson principle to PDP

This section briefly pursues one particular concern about the diagnostic appeal of Pritchard's account of the motivations for radical scepticism. That concern is that his diagnosis can't be correct or even close to correct, if it overlooks a type of radical scepticism prominent in the literature. I refer to *philosophical* scepticism, and will want to show that Pritchard's overlooking it reveals the extent to which he is committed to the robust version of PDP.

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[4] The two platitudes are in fact intimately connected on my view. It is because the ELP serves the goal of Platonic definition, as witnessed especially in search of a Gettier condition free from counterexample, that we witness as T. Williamson puts it, "the more or less ad hoc sprawl that analyses have had to become" (2000, p. 31). Williamson also argues that knowledge cannot be analyzed into a complete set of necessary and sufficient conditions, and that the post-Gettier literature strongly suggests that there is no good reason to expect non-circular necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge in terms of truth, belief, and other factors.

Fogelin (2004) writes of what he calls the "Samson Principle", and how it frames a central tenet of the neo-Pyrrhonism that he himself accepts. This is, "The suggestion…that the epistemological enterprise, when relentlessly pursued, not only fails in its efforts, but also, Samson-like, brings down the entire edifice of knowledge around it". (2004, p. 164) The Sampson Principle is strongly seconded by Stroud (2004a), who writes that Fogelin's "updated Pyrrhonism", like his own, is "a form of *philosophical* scepticism. That is, it is a sceptical or negative response to something that arises *in philosophy*" (2004a, p. 175; *italics in original*). It arises Stroud says, especially in "philosophical epistemology", that

> …tries to account for human knowledge of the world in general, or at least for as much of it as can be accounted for in completely general terms. It is the attempt to explain how…our beliefs about the world are in general justified or warranted or well supported on the basis of the grounds we have for holding them. (p. 175)

To further explain this as a key characteristic of his updated Pyrrhonism, Stroud goes on to say that the Agrippan Trilemma is invoked not against *all* belief, but rather "against the epistemological enterprise of showing how our beliefs in general are justified on the assumed basis". (p. 175) The 'assumed basis' as Stroud uses this term mentions no analysis of knowledge *in particular*, which we must think makes his intended target something closer to a 'platitudinous' commitment associated with an anti-sceptical import attached to a fully general definition of knowledge.

Pritchard's account therefore seems suspect to the extent that he misses the importance of *philosophical* scepticism to some of the best-known proponents of neo-Pyrrhonism today. But the same thought should suggest that Pritchard pays too much deference to PDP and in so doing commits the dialectical mis-step alluded to earlier. Now philosophers may of course hold themselves to be primarily interested in "conceptual analysis", that is, in pursuing a complete set of (individually necessary and jointly sufficient) general conditions in order to gain greater clarity regarding terms such as knowledge and justification. But while the interest in conceptual analysis might be thought initially independent of an anti-sceptical benefit, our epistemic practices themselves testify to the strong ties holding between them. One may be initially interested in general conditions on knowledge for the sake of concept clarification, employing a sceptical interlocutor only in order to 'push oneself'; but when being unable to provide an exception-free definition comes to be taken as indication of a failed analysis, then the thinker is shading quickly into the pursuit of Platonic definition as a bulwark against radical scepticism.

This kind of subtle shading in PDP from something that seems innocuous to something that is in fact highly debilitating is an obvious aspect of ELP as well, and further testifies to the symmetries between them. The PDP has its "dissatisfied" in addition to its "robust" version, just as Pritchard shows us ELP does.[5] In this case the dissatisfied or disappointed version is simply the argument that the recurrent failure of epistemologists to provide Platonic definition of knowledge is tantamount to the triumph of scepticism. Even subtle shading from conceptual analyses to anti-sceptical bulwarks seems to be motive enough for our neo-Pyrrhonists to counter-act the philosophers'

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[5] I emphasize more strongly than Pritchard does that the sceptic is committed to a version of the EL platitude as well: Not of course the "robust" version associated with anti-sceptical thought, but what we may view as its alter-ego, its disappointed or "dissatisfied" foil. I will show how the sceptic is committed to a "dissatisfied" form of the PD platitude as well.

robust version of PDP with arguments that support its (equally platitudinous) mirror image, the dissatisfied version. It is useful to remind ourselves then that the converse of interest in conceptual analysis is *disinterest* in conceptual analysis, while the converse of commitment to robust versions of ELP and PDP is commitment precisely to the dissatisfied versions of each platitude *as a key motivation behind radical scepticism*. It is clearly strong anti-sceptics who hold each of their *robust versions*, and when it is ELP that is held in this way Pritchard says that it supports "infallibilism", and so also drives forward the well-known infallibilist arguments for radical scepticism. This is quite right, but seems also to connect with and even to damn the motivation for epistemologists to produce an "infallibilist analysis" of knowledge such as Pritchard himself seeks, i.e., one on which the conditions *in addition* to true belief are intended to *entail* the truth of the target belief. Even a tacit adherence to robust PDP has a similar inflammatory effect than an endorsement of robust ELP: for nothing more inflames the sceptic's incredulousness, than hearing once again from his "philosophical friend" that the promissory notes he was issued are fulfilled at last in his newest analysis.

Pritchard's lesson of disabusing ourselves of uncritical acceptance of the ELP, so as to get away from the Gettier problem's tunnel-vision on veritic luck and move on to more subtle investigation of *different kinds* of luck and their differential bearing on knowledge-possession, is extremely valuable. But PDP seems to be just as deeply ensconced in analytic epistemology as ELP. When Pritchard fails to address "philosophical" scepticism as a key motivation of the sceptic, and ends with the final position of offering (with apologies) a "pragmatic" *rather than* an "epistemological" response to radical scepticism (Chapter 9), the consequences are obvious: This can only serve to confirm to Stroud or Fogelin that he like so many others who practice analysis of knowledge and engage the Gettier-game for its anti-sceptical value, has only succeeded in bringing his citadel of knowledge down around him.

The argument is not that it is terribly difficult to provide the sceptic with a 'general understanding' of the human capacity to know, but rather that we do ourselves a grave disservice to *assimilate* giving a philosophically satisfactory response to scepticism with providing a Platonic definition of knowledge as characterized above. We wouldn't constantly 'fail' that task of non-circular Platonic definition if it were one that could be reasonably declined, and that is where the present criticism of Pritchard begins. For he is one of many who might have faired better in their response to radical scepticism had he heeded Michael Williams' (2005, p. 214) point that if there are a plurality of epistemic aims, or a plurality of ways in which justification might arise, then "the sceptic's hyper-general questions may be deeply flawed".

Pritchard is right that in order to make better headway, we first need to get more bang for the buck out of a study of epistemic luck and how it is related to analysis of knowledge on the one hand, and to motivations for radical scepticism on the other. But in seeking to show that there is more to this than he allows, I am led to argue that despite his achievement Pritchard falls just exactly *one platitude short*. If epistemologists are intent on practicing analysis of knowledge for its value as a bulwark against scepticism, then Pritchard's rebuke of ELP still constitutes a step forward: It allows us to acknowledge the distinctive *kind* of epistemic luck that most impassions the sceptic—reflective luck—and therefore to replace our constant pre-occupation with veritic luck (in the Gettier problem and its offshoots) with issues that directly engage the more genuine (and more potent) sceptical concerns. I imagine Pritchard, claiming to have solved the Gettier-problem at long last by his modalized safety principle and

thereby advanced the quest for Platonic definition, metaphorically striking the chord, its *'One* (platitude) *for the Money'!* But if instead we would be witness to a transformation in the theory of knowledge such that the anti-sceptical philosopher no longer confirms the Sampson Principle against his own best intentions, then I hold we must choose to strike a second chord, crooning that its '*Two for the Show'!*

3 Virtue responsibilist externalism: A declaration of independence

Epistemic luck plays the central role in a dilemma Pritchard puts to virtue epistemologies both of a "reliabilist" (Ernest Sosa's virtue perspectivism; John Greco's agent reliabilism) and of a "neo-Aristotelian" character (Linda Zagzebski's "moral model" or "pure virtue theory"). In this section his challenge to the motivations behind VE is examined and a response to it is begun. Pritchard thinks the motivations for VE are placed "on ice" as a result of his distinction between veritic and reflective luck, and subsequent division of everyone in terms of it. One horn of his dilemma is addressed to each, with the first horn addressed to the reliabilists:

> If one has externalist intuitions about knowledge, then one should seek a mere safety-based theory of knowledge that will, no doubt, be supplemented by a further explanatory story concerning the epistemic virtues and cognitive faculties that explains how agents gain safe beliefs that are not veritically lucky (p. 198).

The dilemma thus far depends upon characterizing externalist VE as concerned exclusively or primarily with the exclusion of veritic luck, though that as we will see may stem from his own bifurcation of explanatory interests, rather than theirs. But let's first set the full dilemma before us by stating its second horn:

> [I]f one has internalist intuitions about knowledge, then one should seek an internalist safety-based theory of knowledge that will, no doubt, be supplemented by a further explanatory story concerning the epistemic virtues that explains how agents gain safe and internalistically justified beliefs that are neither veritically nor reflectively lucky. Either way, one is left with a non-virtue-theoretic account of knowledge and, far from motivating the virtue-theoretic position in this regard, reflection on the role of epistemic luck merely highlights the juncture at which the virtue epistemological thesis goes awry. (p. 198)

By "virtue epistemological thesis" we should be clear that Pritchard addresses this dilemma specifically to those who place an *areteic* condition into their analyses of knowledge; it challenges just the contention that the concept of intellectual virtue belongs *inside* analysis of knowledge. For the sake of clarity and development, let's refer to any such defence of an *areteic* condition as "Strong VE". Virtue reliabilists like Greco and Sosa have championed Strong VE, and Zagzebski (1996) has as well, though from a perspective she describes as non-reliabilist and which Pritchard describes as internalist. I will later make my own argument for Strong VE by relating it to "mixed externalism", or as can be more simply and elegantly put, to "epistemic compatibilism". But the point here is that Pritchard leaves the door open (and elsewhere appears sympathetic) to "Weak VE", if that describes a thesis that virtue-theoretical

concepts maintain an epistemically central role insofar as they provide explanatory stories that run *supplemental* to philosophical analysis proper. Between analysis of knowledge and such attendant explanatory chores Pritchard, whether justifiably or not, maintains a sharp distinction.

Pritchard's notion of "an internalist safety-based theory of knowledge" is another thing that appears problematic in his statement of the dilemma, and so bears closer scrutiny. We aren't menaced with a sharp horn if the point is unclear, one might say; but in saying that it catches Zagzebski and other "neo-Aristotelians", Pritchard seems to mean two things: the first is that because her view is one that supports the 'fuller sense' of cognitive achievement involved in reflective knowledge that he associates with epistemic internalism, "We should expect the motivation for most virtue epistemologies of this sort to be susceptible to the same diagnosis"; secondly, Pritchard means that Zagzebski can produce a self-consistent analysis of knowledge only if she adopts his safety principle (thereby fully eliminating veritically lucky knowledge), and then insists further upon "the necessity of adding via the focus on the epistemic virtues alone, an internal epistemic condition to the view" (p. 195).[6] By this second claim Pritchard appears to mean that neo-Aristotelian VE necessarily becomes formally internalist because it asserts 'additionally' something very much like a *general* condition demanding exclusion of reflective luck (luck from the first-personal perspective) at any and all points along the high-low or reflective-brute spectrum of human knowledge. The reasoning seems to be that virtue epistemologists of this stripe will routinely reject the "sufficiency" for knowledge of analyses that lack such an additional condition, which when included render it internalist.

But if adding such a general internalist condition is not a demand shared by the form of Strong VE advocated here, then these and related points can be used to argue that its motivations *aren't* susceptible to the same diagnosis as Pritchard applies to Zagzebski. So the task before us is set: like a Spanish *forcado* we are challenged to face the charging horns of a bull and vault directly between them, landing still back upon our feet if we do so with any grace. Pritchard's dilemma constructs a divide between externalist and neo-Aristotelian VE, and says that everything on the former side of that divide essentially aims to incorporate "a role for responsibility by demanding internalist justification," which means in his diagnostic approach that they are simply motivated by the impossible desire to exclude reflective luck. Those on the other side are concerned only to exclude veritic luck. I grant that it is easy to confuse the concern with personal justification cashed out in terms of motivation and responsible modes of inquiry, with the demands that internalists and sceptics make for the exclusion of reflective luck; perhaps none of us have been immune to such confusions. I share the numerous criticisms of Zagzebski that she 'thickens' her conception of intellectual virtue in such a way as to demand internalist justification, though it is of course an inconsistency rather than an overt "motive" on her part to do so since she explicitly

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[6] Here is the full quotation:

"We should expect the motivation for most virtue epistemologies of this sort to be susceptible to the same diagnosis, in that their underlying concern regarding agent reliabilism is that whereas the reliabilist element of the view deals with veritic epistemic luck…it won't capture the fuller sense in which knowledge is a cognitive achievement of the agent. This 'fuller sense' of cognitive achievement involves, of course, not just the elimination of veritic epistemic luck but also the elimination of reflective epistemic luck—hence the necessity of adding, via the focus on the epistemic virtues alone, an internal epistemic condition to the view" (p. 195).

presents her view as "mixed externalism."[7] Such an inconsistency, however, is slim grounds for Pritchard to base his claims about the motivations of even her form of VE, let alone those of the virtue responsibilists. He largely overlooks the focus on proper motivations and quality of effort to procure evidence in their accounts of epistemic responsibility, something that quite a number of writers have correctly pointed out that access internalism itself tends to be blind to. Because internalists often describe justification in terms of a time-slice view of what reflectively good reasons for belief the agent has by her 'own lights,' they often ignore altogether the crucial "responsibilist" focus with the quality of that agent's evidence-gathering and effort.[8]

To check the footing before our *forcado* makes his vault, it should also be pointed out that in framing the dilemma Pritchard employs the standard *stipulative* definitions of internalism and externalism, wherein they are mutually exclusive and exhaustive accounts of the *same epistemic concept.* Yet I've always thought that one of the selling points of VE in all of its versions is that it empowers what Foley (2004) calls "more interesting readings" of the dispute: that instead of being competitors in the standard sense, the interests in explanation that we (mis?) label internalist and externalist "intuitions" are better construed revisionistically as concerned with different issues, or again with different aspects of a common set of issues. If stipulative definitions fail to capture what is really at issue between actual disputants, their usefulness fades quickly and they become roadblocks to inquiry. Pritchard should perhaps attend to Dewey when he writes,

> [T]he conviction persists … that all the questions that the human mind has asked are questions that can be answered in terms of the alternatives that the questions themselves present. But in fact intellectual progress usually occurs through sheer abandonment of questions together with both of the alternatives they assume?an abandonment that results from their decreasing vitality and change of urgent interest. We do not solve them: we get over them. Old questions are solved by disappearing, evaporating, while new questions corresponding to the changed attitude of endeavor and preference take their place. (1970, p. 402)

So if it is a useful exercise to take internalism and externalism as ultimate categories into which various forms of VE can be tossed, we need an argument for this, especially where, as in this case, the figures Pritchard discusses are all quite explicit supporters of epistemic compatibilism. In lieu of such argument, invoking the power of stipulative definitions borders upon a merely dismissive treatment of their views.[9]

An antidote to this might be to extend our alternative taxonomy, and I would frame it in terms of competing Conflict, Independence and Integration models of the relationship between the pertinent interests in explanation. Once we see that all three of these models are represented in the post-Gettier literature, it becomes

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[7] Greco (2003) is quite correct in criticism of Zagzebski that while the moral model is well-suited to an account of understanding, "it is a mistake to generalize from such concerns to an account of knowledge, *per se,*" since it results in conditions on knowledge that are too strong and thereby invite skepticism.

[8] Goldman points out that the construal of internalism as a matter of the subject's "having reasons" (by his own lights) for his belief is inconsistent with this focus on conscientious *effort* in ethics. Kornblith and Montmarquet hence view virtue responsibilism as consistent at best with only specially qualified forms of internalism.

[9] Indeed as seems apparent, the virtue epistemologists as epistemic compatibilists really care only for some *remainder* of the old internalist/externalist debate, most notably the relationship between epistemic reliability and epistemic responsibility in human knowledge.

obvious that unquestioned employment of the standard definitions of internalism and externalism actually favours the proponents of one of these models in particular, the Conflict model. This is so because the Conflict model among those who manifest it in their writing, such as Bernecker (2006), explicitly rejects the thesis of epistemic compatibilism.[10]

If what we call the internalist/externalist debate manifests these three different models, Pritchard may well want to join Bernecker in arguing explicitly in favour of Conflict; but again we should not allow his stipulative definitions to beg the substantive issues of those holding one of the two compatibilist models, "Independence" and "Integration". Isn't it clear that the virtue epistemologists are epistemic compatibilists, and that this is to a great extent the distinctiveness of their approach? Sosa (2004) calls internalism and externalism, and coherentism and foundationalism "two false dichotomies", and Greco and Zagzebski, whatever their other differences, both emphasize that the "mixed" character of VE is philosophically crucial rather than detrimental to its ability to respond to the sceptical challenge.[11] Strong VE can now be seen as associated with strong compatibilism, i.e., with an Integrationist stance, and in my own case quite explicitly so since I hold that our prospects of giving a satisfactory philosophical response to radical scepticism are inextricable from our ability to maintain the philosophic stability of epistemic compatibilism. But even discounting that claim, it should be apparent from what has been said that Pritchard's fault in ignoring a concern for personal justification even among virtue reliabilists stems at least in part from his own expressed temptation towards the view that knowledge is *nothing but* safe true belief.

Pritchard's dilemma is drawn in terms of a distinction between forms of VE taken as exhaustive, with others besides the figures discussed judged "susceptible to the same diagnosis." Although we have cast doubt on the sharp dichotomy between externalist and internalist VE on which it is based, I still intend to present a full response by articulating motivations for a "responsibilist" VE with the right stuff to pass 'between the horns', *even if* it were right to say that it presents a genuine problem for other forms of VE. Those we can call the "virtue responsibilist posse"[12] have substantially different concerns about extant forms of virtue reliabilism than those that Pritchard attributes to Zagzebski. As a prime example, if the requirement of specifically acquired or reflective virtue is what makes Zagzebski an internalist in Pritchard's view, this is something the virtue responsibilists have been explicit critics of her over (Axtell, 2001a, b; Baehr, 2006a; Battaly, 2001), arguing that it works to the detriment of the responsibilists' concern to lay the foundations for a unified research program for the reflective virtues. In my own papers, the responsibilist orientation reflects a special but non-exclusive concern with active epistemic agency, and with the "zetetic context" of an agent's reflective and investigative activity; to engage these interests in intellectual responsibility and the quality of zetetic activity, even insofar as they do naturally bring up questions about cognitive achievement in knowledge,

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[10] We should add quickly however that rejection of compatibilism can easily stem from internalism as well, so that the Conflict model can be motivated by internalists quite as much as by externalists like Bernecker.

[11] For a further development of this argument, see Axtell (2007a, b).

[12] When I speak of the posse, I have in mind not only those who adopt the terms explicitly, but those who seem to me (somewhat vaguely I concede) to bear its stamp, authors such as Jason Baehr, Heather Battaly, Kelly Becker, Lorraine Code, Juli Elfin, Catherine Elgin, Chris Hookway, Charlotte Katzoff, Adam Leite, James Montmarquet, Robert Roberts, and Jay Wood.

does not for that reason imply commitment to some general internalist condition on knowledge.[13]

Yet if I am right that my "responsibilist externalism" is a version of Strong VE with substantially different motivations than those Pritchard attributes to Zagzebski, then Pritchard can be counted on to object that it avoids the second horn only to impale itself on the first. His argument against the motivations for virtue epistemologies of Sosa and Greco's *reliabilist* orientation now catches up to our would-be *forcado,* unless this new responsibilist externalism can equally-well distinguish its motivations from those of extant forms of virtue reliabilism. It was to this horn of the dilemma I earlier responded in "Felix Culpa", arguing that there is little more to Pritchard's charge that virtue reliabilisms are "radical", than that he thinks the safety principle can go it alone in "a *merely* safety-based theory", in contrast to Sosa and Greco, who do not.[14] But if we are to allow for the sake of argument that Pritchard does present a problem for the virtue reliabilists such that 'grabbing' this first horn isn't useful after all, then more needs to be said regarding how a responsibilist externalism might set itself apart from 'reliabilist VE' just as it did from 'internalist VE'.

Greco's term "agent reliabilism" seems congenial enough to responsibilist interests in explanation, since neither of his two terms needs to be taken as primary. Yet admittedly VE's short history has been one in which "faculty virtue theory" has remained largely unconversant with "reflective virtue theory". A reliabilist focus on causal conceptions of epistemological grounding works best with what Pritchard describes as 'brute' externalist knowledge, and comports with the idea that knowledge must either be 'easy' or 'impossible'. Conceiving knowledge as a spectrum, causation doesn't come to an end when we move further up the scale from animal to reflective knowledge, yet our ability to *speak* to the issue of process-reliability must quite apparently become curtailed. So surely it is too easy for us to say that things like divergent interests in explanation and selectivity biases towards cases at different ends of the spectrum of human knowledge can explain the continuation of *something like* the internalist/externalist debate even within VE. Whether the Conflict model gets motivated from the one side or the other, the philosophical systems, even if starting out as little more than professional biases, soon enough grow tentacles to present themselves as far more endemic incompatibilities.

To persuasively preach the *via media,* then, virtue responsibilists must make clear the philosophic advantages of epistemic compatibilism, asserting as its precondition the fulfilment of what we can call the *comfortable home demand.* This demand is that their own broadly normative interests in explanation find legitimacy and support within a naturalistic account of human action, knowledge, and understanding. It has a substantial and fairly direct analogue in metaethics. While responsibilists can be epistemic internalists *or* externalists, those of the latter sort will comport with *reliabilist* externalism only on condition that it is able to meet this comfortable home

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[13] Concerns which virtue responsibilists share with Zagzebski include wanting conditions on knowledge "that are both theoretically illuminating and practically useful" (1996, p. 264); also in her taking the term *knowledge* broadly, "to cover a multitude of states, from the simplest case of ordinary perceptual contact with the physical world, requiring no cognitive effort or skill wherever, to the most impressive cognitive achievements" (p. 264). See Elfin (2003) for a virtue responsibilist development of these themes.

[14] Becker (2006 forthcoming) has cogently argued that some forms of the safety principle implicitly entail a kind of reliability while other forms avoid counter-examples only when combined with reliabilism.

demand. While the externalist turn in epistemology currently presents obstacles to the continued recognition of the conceptual relevance of active agency and "motivation" to knowledge possession, the virtue responsibilist is an optimist who thinks these roadblocks will prove only temporary. But optimism is strained if the internalist/externalist debate is only re-hashed within VE as Pritchard appears to hold; and indeed, my own impatience with reliabilist externalism meeting the demand is compounded by recent criticisms such as those of Bernecker to extant forms of virtue reliabilism.[15] Bernecker (2006) rejects Sosa's and Greco's virtue-based analyses of knowledge in just the sense that Greco (2005) describes VE as having a distinctive character as "mixed theory".[16] Perhaps then, as Bernecker has put it, the "general lesson to be learned from the critique of virtue perspectivism is that internalism and externalism cannot be combined by bifurcating justification and knowledge into an object-level and a meta-level and assigning externalism and internalism to different levels".[17]

This means that potentially there *is* a deeper dialectical breach between responsibilist externalism and epistemologies of a reliabilist sort. Perhaps approaches such as those of Sosa, and Greco cannot meet the comfortable home demand because the virtue reliabilists' own home is a house-divided. The "two-level" structure of Sosa's virtue perspectivism appears, not incidentally, as perhaps the most widely-voiced criticism among contributors to the recent *Ernest Sosa and his Critics* collection, and Bernecker pushes quite similar concerns against Greco (despite Greco's (2004) own criticism of Sosa's requirement of epistemic "perspective" for reflective knowledge). Must the virtue responsibilists, then, find the resolve to step two-footed into this dialectical breech in order to maintain their own optimism over the prospects of epistemic compatibilism? There is much that might be said on both sides of this issue, and I think we can simply leave it as an open question whether responsibilist externalism needs to distinguish itself very sharply from the virtue reliabilisms in order to respond satisfactorily to Bernecker's concerns and to Pritchard's dilemma.

To summarize, if reliabilist forms of VE cannot support epistemic compatibilism because they construct roadblocks to inquiry into the reflective virtues and fail the comfortable home demand, then it would be consistent with my view to further separate my responsibilist externalism from them by arguing that their problems stem from stronger remaining loyalties to the EL and PD platitudes. This means that even if Bernecker's criticisms of Sosa and Greco are on target, one needn't share his pessimism about the prospects of the compatibility thesis itself. Unless epistemic compatibilism is judged dead in the water, another answer can be made: that the 'torch' of epistemic compatibilism in the sense of Sosa's initial profound vision of VE as an approach to reconcile foundationalism and coherentism, externalism and internalism, passes on from its reliabilist to its responsibilist wing. But put in this way, perhaps there is a serious dilemma for reliabilist VE even if it is not the one Pritchard

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[15] See Baehr (2006a, b), Bernecker (2006), and Foley (2004).

[16] See also Greco (2004) for his own criticism of Sosa. See Baehr's (2006b) responsibilist criticism of virtue reliabilism that bears some overlap with Bernecker's objections.

[17] A fuller response to Bernecker is coming in Axtell (2007b). See Leite (2004) for criticism of the "spectatorial theory" assumed in certain forms of reliabilist externalism, criticism that suggests overlap with Dewey and other pragmatists like Sandra B. Rosenthal on the "spectator theory".

suggests: This more subtle dilemma is whether its proponents can answer the charges of the instability of a "bi-level" analysis of knowledge, on the one hand, and yet meet the responsibilists' demand of a 'comfortable home' for reflective virtue theory and epistemic normativity, on the other.

One might also consider at this point that the attempt to secure an epistemically central role for the character virtues has led a number of self-described virtue responsibilists to turn towards "Weak VE," wherein the study of the virtues is still taken to be central in epistemology, though relocated *outside* of analysis of knowledge proper. Weak VE sidesteps Pritchard's dilemma for Strong VE, constituting a safe and saving relocation for the study of what Baehr calls the "character" virtues. So it would be a mistake to say that a responsibilist orientation in epistemology *entails* my own endorsement of Strong VE. Weak VE still reflects a kind of epistemic compatibilism, but of the Independence rather than the stronger Integration kind. It accepts, perhaps, Foley's repeated call for a "trial separation" between the theory of knowledge and the theory of justified belief. Among Independence-minded authors, the top candidates for a relocated theory of the reflective virtues today appear to be (a) an account of how we *gain* safe belief as opposed to what knowledge is (Pritchard; Umbers); (b) a theory of rational/justified belief (Foley) (c) a theory of knowledge *attribution* (Reed)*;* or (d) a theory of 'epistemic value pluralism' where it is falls under an account of "understanding" or some other epistemic goal distinct from knowledge (Fairweather; DePaul).

If I dissent from all of these Weak VE or Independence-minded forms of compatibilism, it is because such compartmentalization strategies are oftentimes unstable and ill-adaptive ways of dealing with a problem. One worry is that the study of the faculty virtues and of the reflective virtues will be pushed into separate closets rather brought together, and another is that these proposals, not having scepticism in view, appear indifferent to the project of re-tooling the neo-Moorean argument as a response to radical scepticism. So perhaps we could stop here, alleging to have described a responsibilist externalism not susceptible to the diagnosis Pritchard gives of other extant versions of Strong VE. But given the admittedly hard line being marked out, Pritchard may demand a fuller explanation of underlying 'motivations.' Secondly, if epistemic compatibilists propose moving away from preoccupation with veritic luck and the Gettier game, they had better have "replacement topics" to offer. And thirdly, the integrationist ideas of responsibilist externalism that have been highlighted stand at odds with certain assumptions commonplace in mainstream analytic thought, so that my stance likely requires a sharper critique of 'analysis as usual' than proponents of Weak VE might concur with. I prefer to voice such a sharp critique, joining Leite (2004) in criticism of what (with shades of Dewey) he refers to as a "spectatorial" conception of knowledge, than to countenance what appears to me as attachment among many epistemologists today to a fallaciously sharp dichotomy between knowledge and action.

In addition to suggesting the nature of such a critique, Sects. 4–6 also provide an opportunity to mediate between Pritchard's anti-luck or *tucheic* condition on knowledge and the *areteic* condition of Strong VE. Section 4 initially resorts to Plato's technique of telling a *mythos* to help bring into life a idea that can then be explored philosophically. In our case it is a story about where anti-sceptical philosophy has been focused, and what might result for debates between sceptical and anti-sceptical philosophers from the dialectical repositioning that follows upon discarding both the PD and the EL "platitudes".

4 Has the Gettier game become philosophical *Jumanji*?

The Gettier problem arose in the mid-1960's as a challenge to the JTB model of knowledge, and the search for a "fourth condition" on knowledge led quickly in an externalist direction. Externalist theories of justification were established when philosophers began to take notice that the kinds of conditions best suited to responding to Gettier's challenge were ones where, as Greco (2004) puts it, "etiology matters". The etiology or causal history of a belief being something known from a third-person perspective, it follows that *not all* of the conditions necessary and sufficient to epistemicize true belief need be ones internally available to the agent upon reflection.

The externalist turn in epistemology therefore invites "mixed" theories, but does not of itself necessitate them. Some externalists opted for just three general conditions, replacing subjective and objective justification with a singular term such as "warrant" that has a suitably *monolithic* connotation. These forms of pure as opposed to mixed externalism are easily associable with the most radical versions of the Conflict model. Brandom (1998) well explains the abandonment of epistemology's traditional normative tasks in favour of 'eliminative' or 'pure' externalisms:

> The primary insights of externalist reliablism lead to a 'temptation' to suppose that the concept of reliability of belief-forming processes can simply replace the concept of having good reasons for belief—that all the explanatory work for which we have been accustomed to call upon the latter can be performed as well or better by the former. (p. 373)

Those who reject this temptation will likely find themselves critics of the 'Gettier-game', its preoccupation with luck 'upstream' of agency, and its incentive towards infallibilist analyses of knowledge. Although the critics of debates over the Gettier problem are a diverse lot, they are sometimes painted with the same brush-stroke as tender-minded reactionaries uncomfortable with a more rigorous and scientific conception of epistemology's central tasks. What might aid the critics of the Gettier-game and its allied style of philosophizing is if they were to try just a bit harder to express the *kind* of game it has become, and the reasons why training in it as exemplary of good philosophical analysis has in recent decades done little but to re-enforce sympathies with radical scepticism.

The tag line for the board-game version of *Jumanji,* based on an award-winning children's book, is '*A Game for Those Who Seek to Find… a Way to Leave Their World Behind'.* As the book's author only slightly differently puts it, "a game especially designed for the bored and restless" (Van Allsburg, 1981). It's a story that begins with children who find an old and unusual board game stuffed into a tree-hollow in a park. They take it home and open the box. Inside they discover the ornate bone dice, the elaborate jungle-themed board, and of course the beautiful, enticing golden city of *Jumanji* that lies at its endpoint. Of course they read on the box its engraved first rule, that "*Once you begin, you must finish the game*". But represented by the author as moved to alleviate their own *ennui* more than anything else, they start play without taking seriously the potential implications for them of the game's rules.

This proves unwise; things do not go as expected in 'normal worlds.' In the film version, with the first child's roll of the dice he is immediately pulled into the Jungle, where his own most worrisome inner imaginations, his own subliminal Children of the Night as it were, take shape as natural calamities or as fictive but formidable adversaries that would hunt him to extinction. A person may be stranded in the Jungle for

years, as this boy comes to be, but for however long it takes once the game has been commenced, it must continue until someone—anyone—makes that special role of the dice to land them upon the golden city. Then, shouting out its magical name will permit the children to finally bring to an end the game that has aroused but also tormented them; only then, as well (or so they believe), will their 'real' world, their *normal world*, finally be restored. This is another reason why once entered upon, those who started the game *must* play on to a finish; it is why in our story the boy who becomes caught in the jungle for twenty-four years until freed by the roll of other children who have since stumbled across the box, immediately conscribes this younger generation of its victims to follow through with the primary directive, "*You must finish the game*". And isn't it also why we can anticipate that the game-players, when they think the game over, will attempt, however vainly, to vouchsafe the continuation of their restored normal world by closing its case tightly, and rushing to find some deep hole or dark tree hollow into which the game can be stuck way, '*safe*'?

5 Strategizing a "thin concept rescue" of the game's stranded players

I allege that insofar as they presuppose commitment to PDP, the implied rules of the Gettier-game are strongly analogous to those of a game of philosophical *Jumanji*. But what I now want to ask is what we might offer to counter-act its allure; what alternative practices and motivations for those neo-Mooreans or others who want to 'bring their real world back'? For philosophically, it is our own freewheeling acceptance of the two platitudes that drags anti-sceptical epistemologists into such a mug's game. Having once rolled the dice on giving a "complete" and "completely general" definition of knowledge, the possibility of re-gettierization (indicated by logical gaps where epistemic luck can intervene to pull truth and justification apart) is bound to be perceived as devastating.

But if there are readers sympathetic to the claim that adherence to PDP is a dialectical mis-step for anti-sceptical philosophers, as of yet little impression has been provided as to how analysis of knowledge might proceed apart from it. So adventure surely awaits those who find that our little *mythos* aptly depicts practices and tacit motivations in the Gettier game. If these sojourners are to charge themselves with effecting rescue of their philosophical friends stranded in the jungles of philosophical *Jumanji,* then they must consign themselves to the fact that there is no alternative but to roll the dice and enter upon the game.

So pick up the old bones; James is right that there isn't an experiment or textbook that may not be a mistake. It's only by risking our whole persons from one hour to the next that we live at all! But let's hold the dice awhile to talk strategy, lest the game merely make more of us its victims. We need firstly to resist the temptation of falling back upon the two platitudes, of course, but we need a more positive strategy as well, and I will now argue that the virtue responsibilists have one. This section discusses proposals made by Battaly (2001) and Williams (2000), and then in the final section a bit of flesh is added to the golem of my own fashion, the DATA analysis (for *doxastic, alethic, tucheic* and *areteic* conditions), in order to argue that it is at least the *kind* of analysis of knowledge we should hope to establish in post-ELP/PDP practice.

It will aid us enormously if we can establish a contrast between a "minimal set" of conditions that one hopes to be nevertheless individually necessary and jointly

sufficient for knowledge, and a "thin set" of conditions. These are alternative goals, in part because in the latter the conditions aren't intended to guarantee sufficiency for knowledge as they must when analysis of knowledge is under the sway of the PDP. Its proponents are those who hold that the notion of 'epistemizing justification' doesn't exhibit the degree of unitary essence needed for it to be susceptible of Platonic definition. To elaborate, well-acknowledged family-relations concepts (like "religion") are ones that are standardly allowed can be picked out by *different combinations* of factors with very little required in the way of common denominators between them. Battaly (2001) suggests this is true of the concept of justified belief as well: "The meaning 'justified belief' does not determine which combination of conditions… is necessary for its application, or which, short of the whole, is sufficient".

Battaly's claim that internalists and externalists are somewhat unconsciously thickening a thin concept of justification, I would maintain, is an entirely complementary way of putting Pritchard's own claim that they are somewhat unconsciously directing themselves to the exclusion of different kinds of epistemic luck. The latter is merely the manner in which the former becomes manifest in the literature. Her recommendation is to have us analyze justification in terms of a thinly-stated *areteic* condition, but one backed up by a broad list of *possible* meanings relating to subjective and objective justification—items ranging perhaps from simple 'aptness' at the lower end of the scale, to reflective sensitivity to potential defeaters to our inquisitive efforts and methodologies at the high end. Each meaning of justification may characterize a combination of factors sufficient to epistemize an agent's true belief in *some* epistemic context. But to support this possibility, Battaly says we need to rely upon the ability of "thin concepts" to bring needed *flexibility* to our analyses: the best and perhaps only feasible way to approach concepts that have such a plethora of conditions of application is to treat their analysis like "a roughly drawn sketch that can be completed in different ways".

Perhaps because she follows William Alston in parts of her argument, Battaly limits her claim to "justification" and "intellectual virtue" being naturally construed as thin concepts. I doubt there are sound reasons to prevent extending this claim to "knowledge" as well. To attempt stating general conditions on knowledge guaranteed to be sufficient for knowledge at all points along *any* high/low spectrum can now be seen as paradoxical, and we can give it a name: *the paradox of 'general sufficiency'*. Avoiding this paradox is crucial for anti-sceptical philosophers; but doing so implies letting go of certain essentialisms and thoroughly rethinking whether we have really understood what Gettier's challenge is.

The irony about those reluctant to let go of the search for a fully general account of sufficient conditions is that they are failing to see the incompatibility between their essentialism about knowledge and the externalism they purport to espouse: for hasn't it has been a very upshot of the externalist turn in epistemology that what lists we make of forms of epistemizing justification will be quite miscellaneous? Externalists who want to remain self-consistently such would be better served to stand with Williams (2000), who holds that a major lesson of the externalist turn is the replacement of the "Prior Grounding" model (hereafter PGM) with a "Default and Challenge" model (hereafter DCM) of discursive obligations.[18]

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[18] Williams defines the PGM as comprised of four interconnected theses (2000, p. 147):

"(PG1) *No Free Lunch Principle*. Epistemic entitlement—personal justification—does not just accrue to us: it must be earned by epistemically responsible behavior. (PG2) *Priority Principle*.

To develop this last claim, Williams' DCM is one that takes challengers as well as claimants to be saddled with justificational obligations. In an environment where the DCM was both genuinely embraced and consistently employed, Battaly's concern for the flexibleness of our conditions on knowledge, and subsequent turn to "thin concept" analysis for key epistemological terms, would be seen as a quite practical proposal. Moreover, if the DCM is, as Williams argues, what self-consistent externalists must endorse, then the virtue epistemologists might be seen as enabling this when they say that the concept of intellectual virtue is useful because it can be 'bent' either way, towards reliabilist or responsibilist connotations. Thin concept analyses and the DCM—these two proposals, in short, are made for one another, and even if reliabilist VE and Zagzebski's pure virtue theory both sometimes neglect this, our responsibilist strategy will try to take full advantage of it.

We have now learned that philosophical *Jumanji* is in large part generated by epistemic externalism insufficiently detached from the internalist underpinnings of the PGM. By marrying our two proposals we have now put in place an overarching strategy of "thin concept rescue" for those held captive by it, and it is time to finally make our roll, attempting to put this strategy into effect. In the final section of the essay a brief sketch of the "DATA analysis" must serve as the attempt.

6 Attempting rescue: A sketch of the "data" analysis

DATA is my proposal for a four-condition analysis where the *doxastic* and *alethic* conditions (i.e., ones to discriminate true belief), of what Williams calls the "standard analysis" are bolstered by a thin *areteic* condition (demanding aetiology out of an intellectual virtue), and a thin *tucheic* (or anti-luck) condition. Modifying an analysis that Riggs (1998) stated some years ago to include an independent *areteic* condition, the DATA analysis might be put this way:

S knows that p only iff:

Doxastic	(1)	S believes that p
Alethic	(2)	p is true
Areteic	(3)	S's belief that p is grounded in an intellectual virtue of S
Tucheic	(4)	the conjunction of (1), (2), and (3) is not a matter attributable to luck

The kind of analysis suitable to us after eschewing ELP and PDP is one that takes knowledge to be a range-concept. We have supplied the sketch for such an analysis by 'marrying' the thin-concept proposal of Battaly to the Default and Challenge model of our dialogical obligations to the sceptic, and I have elsewhere argued that this marriage substantially magnifies the anti-sceptical force of each of these two proposals, taken separately (Axtell, 2007b). So in the DATA account above, truth, virtue, and luck are all represented in a merely formal or 'deflated' manner such that while their individual necessity is asserted, their collective sufficiency for knowledge as repre-

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Footnote 18 continued

It is never epistemically responsible to believe a proposition true when one's grounds for believing it true are less than adequate. (PG3) *Evidentialism.* Grounds are evidence: propositions that count in favour of the truth of the proposition believed. (PG4) *Possession Principle* For a person's belief to be adequately grounded…the believer himself or herself must possess (and make proper use of) evidence that makes the proposition believed (very) likely to be true."

sented by the "iff" clause has only the status of formal presumption: what I intend that clause to imply is that fulfilment of the *areteic* and *tucheic* conditions is indeed necessary for knowledge, and but that their joint sufficiency to 'epistemize' true belief is something only to be cashed out in the context of particular, motivated challenges to the truth of the agent's belief being of proper epistemic credit to her *as* an agent.

DATA is thus penultimately fallibilist, allowing us to maintain, as players of philosophical *Jumanji* apparently cannot, that infallibilism is no part of Gettier's legacy. That *prima facie* sufficiency is all that the "iff" clause should be taken to imply, seems to me nothing more than to accept the logical implications of Williams' proposal to adopt the DCM. When faced with such a challenge to epistemic credit or related concerns of knowledge attribution, this model imposes an obligation on the part of attributors to thicken their formal conditions in order to state the explanatorily salient features of the case. But to state *general* sufficient conditions on knowledge is to commit to the "universalizability" of those conditions (Vahid, 2001), and universalizability becomes lethally seductive under the pall of the combined ELP/PDP, leading us directly into the *paradox of 'general sufficiency.'* That paradox is avoidable on the present approach.

If we can distinguish what is legitimate in the demand for a "general understanding" of our capacity for knowledge from the paradoxical demands that flow from robust adherence to the EL and PD platitudes, then we can reasonably decline the sceptic's hyper-general demand for a set of *thick* conditions universalizable across all points along the knowledge spectrum. We avoid the temptation to continue playing that game by accepting that, as a range concept, what appears sufficient for knowledge for cases on the low end of the knowledge spectrum can't be universalizable as sufficient for knowledge at the high end, and similarly that what appears necessary for the justification of reflective knowledge can't be universalized as necessary at the low end of the spectrum. The 'thinness' of our terms allows us to say that the *areteic* condition can be met by the instancing of even basic faculty virtues, allowing us to attribute epistemic credit to the agent in a minimal though sufficient sense, since active agency itself is present in only a minimal sense. Our Default and Challenge model of our dialogical obligations to a sceptical interlocutor doesn't require of us that it be otherwise.

DATA's inclusion of both *areteic* and *tucheic* conditions is not merely a recommendation for compromise between Pritchard and the virtue epistemologists he criticizes, though it does call into question in a very direct way why "anti-luck" epistemologists like Engel, Riggs, and Pritchard, and "virtue" epistemologists like Sosa, Greco, and Zagzebski, typically take their accounts to be mutually antagonistic. It is an alternative with distinct advantages, wherein instead of seeing these as alternative "anti-luck" and "virtue-based" analyses, we come to regard them as *agent-based* accounts where *areteic* and *tucheic* conditions can serve distinct even if overlapping functions of support. It is natural enough, I suppose, to see the reduction to three conditions as advantageous, but it should also be pointed out that the 'minimum set' goal for philosophical analyses is typically driven by robust adherence to the Platonic Definition platitude, and is somewhat at odds with the 'thin set' goal of an agent-based epistemology set within the context of the DCM. The latter stresses the importance of the flexibility of our account in facing motivated challenges that may come at any point along the knowledge spectrum. Especially given that the anti-luck philosophers think that there are cases virtue epistemologists don't handle well, and vice versa, why should we rush to reduce our conditions to three? Putting them together will seem to players of

philosophical *Jumanji* as making the account necessarily 'too strong,' just as anti-luck and virtue epistemologists today each see each other's accounts as 'too weak.' But this is to miss the distinctive advantages of the present proposal, which indeed largely sets those kinds of worries aside. What is directly pertinent instead is the flexibility of one's analysis to deal with a range concept, including and especially the manner in which having multiple conditions allows us to better sort out the normative from the descriptive aspects of agent evaluation.

Thin and thick descriptions can both be seen as helpful in analysis of knowledge, though in quite different respects. I would suggest that it is these differences as much as those between kinds of epistemic luck that need to be understood if the anti-sceptical force of the neo-Moorean argument is to be enhanced. In respect to radical scepticism, DATA's advantage comes in the repudiation of the PGM in favour of the DCM. Thus to tie DATA further into a neo-Moorean argument, one might argue that the *formal* analysis attempts to provide the sceptic the 'general understanding' he demands, without accepting his "hyper-general" questions or motivating his 'disappointed' versions of the two epistemological platitudes.

In respect to particular or domain-specific challenges, its advantage comes in how its 'twin thin' *areteic* and *tucheic* conditions allow for the effective sorting of the descriptive and normative aspects of our evaluation of a particular agent in a particular context.[19] DATA, one might say, turns Janus-faced in the face of the unavoidable problem of relating naturalism and normativity to our philosophic chores. There is no paradox here; unlike the *paradox of 'general sufficiency',* the having and relating of our normative and descriptive posits is unavoidable, and native to the philosophical enterprise itself. To do it well is our only free option, so that it may behoove us to contrast a *positive* condition calling for the instancing of intellectual virtue with a *negative* one calling for the exclusion of specific kinds or effects of epistemic luck. The contrast reaffirms the mutual independence of these conditions, and the myriad of ways in they might be *materially* satisfied in the states of actual epistemic agents.

An *areteic* condition when met by the instancing of a faculty virtue provides a naturalistic ground for agent evaluation not directly present in certain other analyses of knowledge, such as counter-factual and indefeasibility analyses. Requiring it reminds us that we need to examine agents and not just propositional contents. Some will argue that including powers and faculties among the virtues stretches the notion of a virtue, or that the instancing of such faculties, even if reliable, is no basis to attribute "credit" to the agent (Lackey, this volume). But let us stretch the concept just as thinly as we can, and we can still maintain as Sosa does that reflective reason is always a "silent partner" in our distinctively *human* mode of knowledge, so that even if the vast majority of interaction with our environment reflects what may be deemed 'low-grade' knowledge, it isn't really passive in ways that should have ever tempted us to assimilate it with knowledge of a merely 'brutish' sort.

A *tucheic* condition also seems like a good candidate for a necessary condition on knowledge, to the extent that there clearly are types of epistemic luck that are knowledge-precluding, and others that may not be, yet are nevertheless epistemically undesirable and thereby still caught up with the sceptical challenge. So I agree with Riggs, 2007, DOI: 10.1007/s11229-006-9043-y who describes the role of a *tucheic* condition as providing help in clarifying "the conceptual connections among a family of concepts that include credit, responsibility, attribution, and luck"; indeed given the

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[19] For a virtue-responsibilist treatment of religious scepticism, see Axtell (2006a).

normative status of this family of concepts, I agree with Riggs that we not only need such an anti-luck condition, but need it to be a "distinct" or independent one. Riggs like myself seems content to take it thinly, waiting as it must upon further research for "a more determinate rendering" of the various kinds of epistemic luck and their benign or malign effects upon human epistemic agency (1998, p. 282). But that a *tucheic* condition typically serves a more overtly normative role than that of the *areteic* condition indicates to me again that aside merely from the desire for reduction and simplicity, there is little reason why they need to be seen as competitors. In lieu of specific arguments to the contrary, the defender of our 'thin concept' rescue plan can continue to maintain that this is a false dichotomy, and that the two conditions instead function "in consonance."[20]

But one key objection to our approach is likely to be that by leaving sufficient conditions on knowledge a merely *prima facie* affair, we commit ourselves to accepting certain sharp limitations on the analysis of knowledge. In response let me say that one reason we fall short of the ideal of Platonic definition is indeed principled: the *paradox of general sufficiency* is irresolvable and must therefore be avoided. This we addressed by criticism of the Platonic Definition Platitude itself, pointing out that analogously to the Epistemic Luck Platitude, its "robust" version is mirrored by a "disappointed" version that becomes a key motivation to the neo-Pyhrronian's "philosophical scepticism." But another and simpler reason is that we haven't *finished* learning about the aetiology of reliable human belief, nor about the kinds of luck that may impugn the epistemic credit typically due us for the truth of our beliefs—indeed that we're just *beginning* in the present century to address these questions in a naturalistically sound way. As Dewey correctly pointed out, "The place for an accurate definition of a subject is at the end of inquiry rather than at its beginning" (1989, p. 9). That project will challenge epistemologists to turn away from preoccupation with the Gettier problem and other "veritic" luck concerns, and to significantly expand epistemology through attention to the "reflective" intellectual virtues and vices, and the complex ways in which factors of motivation and the quality of habits or methods of inquiry contribute to an agent's success or failure.

Far from being a pessimistic conclusion, then, we have every reason to think that the important questions about when our twin conditions are materially satisfied, and about what it is that *ties together* various instances of knowledge at the high and low ends of the knowledge spectrum, are ones that epistemologists can make significant progress with, even if they cease to address them in the essentialistic and hyper-general way in which the sceptic wants to pose these questions.

It was argued earlier in this paper that for the kind of transformation needed to put anti-sceptical philosophy on better footing, "It takes two for the show"—a rejection of what Pritchard calls the Epistemic Luck platitude, but also of a Platonic Definition platitude with equally deleterious effects upon epistemological practice today. I can in conclusion only imp myself, harping that line again. For we have taken a stance unique in the literature, first by supporting the *areteic* condition with the Default and Challenge model that Williams argues all self-consistent externalists should adopt, and second by arguing that when taken 'thinly,' we can stop thinking of *areteic* and *tucheic* conditions on knowledge as competitors, and instead avail ourselves of the

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[20] It is worth pointing out that reflective virtues like "intellectual self-trust" are quite normative and perhaps 'folk-psychological.' Could it be that at the high end of the spectrum, the natural and normative status of the two conditions is reversed, such that the anti-luck condition becomes the naturalistic ground of our attribution of particular virtues to the agent?

resources that each brings to the table. DATA, and more generally the 'responsibilist externalism' we have argued for is a version of Strong VE, yet its motivations seem irreducible to those Pritchard refers to in framing the dilemma for VE that has been a central focus in this paper.[21]

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