

WHY DO TRUE BELIEFS DIFFER IN EPISTEMIC VALUE?

*Xingming Hu**Abstract*

Veritism claims that only true beliefs are of basic epistemic value. Michael DePaul argues that veritism is false because it entails the implausible view that all true beliefs are of equal epistemic value. In this paper, I discuss two recent replies to DePaul's argument: one offered by Nick Treanor and the other by Kristoffer Ahlstrom-Vij and Stephen Grimm. I argue that neither of the two replies is successful. I propose a new response to DePaul's argument and defend my response against a possible objection.¹

We may evaluate a thing from different perspectives. For example, we may evaluate it from a moral, aesthetic, or an epistemic point of view, etc. A thing that is valuable from an aesthetic point of view might be not valuable from a moral point of view. A thing that is valuable from a moral point of view might be valueless from an epistemic point of view.

The present paper is concerned with epistemic evaluation. That is, how do we evaluate a thing from an epistemic point of view? Before answering this question, a few preliminary distinctions are in order. First, we may make a distinction between intrinsic value and non-intrinsic value. A thing is intrinsically valuable just in case it is valuable as an end.² If a thing is valuable merely as a means of getting something of intrinsic value, then it is non-intrinsically valuable. Second, we may make a distinction between basic intrinsic value and non-basic intrinsic value. A thing is of basic intrinsic

¹ For helpful feedback on earlier drafts of this paper, I am grateful to Nathan Ballantyne, Michael DePaul, Stephen Grimm, Chris Rice, and Donghua Wang.

² There are two conceptions of intrinsic value: (1) the value that an object has 'in itself,' independently of all other objects; (2) the value that an object has 'as an end,' not merely as a means to a further end. J. S. Mill (1861/2002) and G.E. Moore (1903/1993) seem to think that (1) and (2) come to the same thing: the value that an object has as an end is the value that it has in itself. However, some philosophers such as Korsgaard (1983) and Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000) argue that (1) and (2) are different and that 'intrinsic value' simply means (1) while (2) should be called 'final value' instead. But not all philosophers think 'final value' is a better name for (2). For example, Kagan (1998) insists on calling (2) 'intrinsic value' though he also agrees that (1) and (2) are different. In this paper, I side with Kagan.

value just in case it is intrinsically valuable *not* merely because some proper parts of it are intrinsically valuable. Suppose A and B are both intrinsically valuable. Then their conjunction, A&B, might also be intrinsically valuable. The intrinsic value of A&B might just be the sum of the intrinsic value of A and that of B. In that case, A&B would not be something of basic intrinsic value because its intrinsic value can be fully explained in terms of the intrinsic value of A and that of B, that is, A&B is intrinsically valuable merely because its two proper parts are intrinsically valuable.³

It seems that the two distinctions – the one between intrinsic value and non-intrinsic value and the one between basic intrinsic value and non-basic intrinsic value – can both apply to epistemic evaluation. Anyway, that's what I shall assume: some things are intrinsically valuable while others are merely non-intrinsically valuable from an epistemic point of view; among the things of intrinsic epistemic value, some are of basic intrinsic epistemic value whereas others are not. Given these distinctions, in order to evaluate a thing from an epistemic point of view, we must first identify the things of basic intrinsic epistemic value.

In general, what things are of basic intrinsic epistemic value? According to many philosophers such as Ernest Sosa (2001), Alvin Goldman (2002) and William Alston (2005), only true beliefs are of basic intrinsic epistemic value. Call this view 'veritism.' In light of veritism, following one's evidence, for instance, is of non-intrinsic epistemic value because it is an effective means to get true beliefs. But it is not of intrinsic epistemic value because it is not a true belief, nor is it constituted of any true belief. In contrast, knowledge is intrinsically valuable from an epistemic point of view because it is constituted of true belief, but it is of no basic intrinsic epistemic value, for it is of intrinsic epistemic value merely because one of its elements—true belief—is of intrinsic epistemic value.⁴

³ For a detailed discussion of the notion of basic intrinsic value, see Harman (1967), Feldman (2000), and Feldman (2004, pp. 173–174).

⁴ It is widely held that knowledge is justified true belief (plus some conditions to handle Gettier cases). Some philosophers argue that veritism is false because it cannot explain why knowledge is epistemically better than the corresponding mere true belief. I will not pursue this objection in this paper. But it is worth noting that there are two plausible replies to this objection. First, Richard Foley (2012) claims that when one knows P, one has not only a true belief P but also a substantial number of neighboring true beliefs. So knowing that p is epistemically better than merely believing that P simply because knowing that P involves more true beliefs. Second, some philosophers such as Williamson (2000), following Plato, argue that knowledge is epistemically better than mere true belief because when we know, our true belief is more stable, less vulnerable to rational defeat by future evidence. That is, knowledge is merely instrumentally better than mere true belief from an epistemic point of view.

Veritism has been challenged on various grounds. In this paper, I focus on one objection raised by Michael DePaul (2001), namely, veritism entails the implausible view that all true beliefs are of equal intrinsic epistemic value. I will first briefly summarize DePaul's argument. Then I will discuss two recent replies to DePaul, offered by Nick Treanor (2014) and Kristoffer Ahlstrom-Vig and Stephen Grimm (2013), respectively. I contend that neither of them is successful. Finally, I will propose a new response to DePaul's argument and defend my response against a possible objection.

(To avoid long technical terms, I will hereafter use 'basic epistemic value' as an abbreviation of 'basic intrinsic epistemic value.' Accordingly, I will use 'epistemic value' as short for 'intrinsic epistemic value' and 'epistemically valuable' as short for 'intrinsically epistemically valuable' whenever doing so would unlikely cause misunderstanding.)

1. DePaul's objection

Veritism states that only true beliefs are of basic epistemic value. DePaul's objection to veritism can be summarized as follows:

1. If veritism is true, then any two sets that contain an equal number of true beliefs have equal epistemic value.
2. There are two sets that contain an equal number of true beliefs but differ in epistemic value.
3. Therefore, veritism is false.

DePaul takes Premise 1 for granted. To illustrate Premise 2, he offers the following example:

Take your favorite example of a well-established empirical theory, a theory you believe that we know. Throw in all the evidence on the basis of which we accept that theory. Depending on what theory you selected, this will likely add up to a substantial number of beliefs. Now, compare this set of beliefs with an equal number of beliefs about relatively simple arithmetic sums and about assorted elements of one's stream of consciousness. I suspect that most of us would want to say that the first set of beliefs is better, epistemically better, than the second set. But the two sets contain the same number of true beliefs. (DePaul 2001, p. 173)

Although DePaul admits that some might deny that the first set of beliefs is epistemically better than the second set,⁵ he seems to think they are simply wrong.

2. Treanor's reply

Treanor (2014) advances an argument that challenges Premise 2 of DePaul's argument. In his view, for DePaul's argument to be successful, it must give us a clear example of two sets that contain an equal number of truths. But there is no such clear example. So we have no reasons to believe that Premise 2 of DePaul's argument is true.

Why is there no clear example of two sets that contain an equal number of truths? According to Treanor, we have no 'well-behaved measure' to compare the truth-content of any two ordinary true sentences. This is because how much truth a true ordinary sentence contains does not supervene on its surface grammar. It is possible that a true sentence contains more truth than another sentence.

Consider the following two sets of sentences: one has only one member, i.e. the true sentence 'grain of sand x is so-and-so-many millimeters from grain of sand y ;' the other also has only one member, i.e., the true sentence 'stars are formed when massive clouds of molecular hydrogen collapse due to gravity.' Treanor argues that it is unclear that the two sets contain an equal amount of truth. For 'on the most natural way to read' the sentence in the first set, it could have been expressed by the distinct sentence ' x is a grain of sand and y is a grain of sand and x is so-and-so-many millimeters from y '⁶ (2014, p. 556). But that would be three truths, not one. The sentence in the first set could also be read as ' x exists and y exists and x is a grain of sand and y is a grain of sand and x is so-and-so-many millimeters from y .' But that makes it five truths, not three. How many truths are behind that door? One, three, five, or some other number? Treanor thinks it is unclear. The same reasoning applies to the sentence in the second set. Since DePaul does not offer us any reason to think the

⁵ Jonathan Kvanvig (2007) and Michael Lynch (2009) hold that apparently trivial truths such as that the number of grains of sand on a certain beach is even are actually worth believing from a pure epistemic point of view. They seem to think that all true beliefs are equally valuable from a pure epistemic point of view. In this paper, I will not discuss this view but simply assume that it is wrong.

⁶ It is unclear what Treanor means by 'on the most natural way to read (a sentence).'

two sets contrasted contain the same amount of truth, Treanor concludes, his argument poses no challenge to veritism, for ‘we have ... no reason to think Inquiry’s preference for one over the other is a preference for something other than more truth’ (Treanor 2014, p. 558).⁷

3. Why Treanor’s reply fails

Treanor’s argument, interesting as it is, does not constitute a real threat to DePaul’s objection to veritism, for DePaul’s objection does not have to presuppose that we know how much truth a true sentence contains. Recall that veritism states that only true *beliefs*, not true sentences, are of basic epistemic value. Suppose Treanor is right that it is unclear how many truths are behind the true sentence ‘grain of sand *x* is so-and-so-many millimeters from grain of sand *y*.’ It may be three, or five, or some other number. We just do not know. But a person who believes that *grain of sand x is so-and-so-many millimeters from grain of sand y* does not have to believe all the truths behind the door. He might just believe the five truths Treanor lists above and no other truths. After all, how many truths a person actually believes is a psychological matter, not a logical issue. It is not uncommon that some people believes *p* without believing *q* even though *p* entails *q*.⁸ So it is not difficult to *imagine* two people who possess equal number of true beliefs. The second premise of DePaul’s argument states that there are two sets that contain an equal number of true *beliefs* but differ in epistemic value. It does not claim that there are two sets that contain an equal number of true *sentences* but differ in epistemic value. So even though Treanor is right that it is unclear how much truth a true sentence contains, his argument against DePaul is still off-target.⁹

In addition, even if Treanor’s argument also applies to true belief, that is, it is unclear how many other true beliefs are behind or ‘contained’ by a certain true belief, it is still not a serious problem for DePaul, because he could easily revise the original objection as follows:

⁷ Pritchard (2014) completely endorses Treanor’s argument.

⁸ Notice that ‘believing *p* without believing *q*’ is different from ‘believing *p* but denying *q*.’ If *p* entails *q*, then it would be inconsistent for one to believe *p* but deny *q*.

⁹ Treanor seems to think that the intrinsic epistemic value of a true belief solely depends on how many true propositions it contains. I will discuss this point in Section 7.

Suppose S1 and S2 are two sets that contain only true beliefs.

1. If veritism is true, and the number of true beliefs in S1 is much greater than the number of true beliefs in S2, then S2 does not have greater epistemic value than S1.
2. There is a case where the number of true beliefs in S1 is much greater than the number of true beliefs in S2, but S2 has greater epistemic value than S1.
3. Therefore, veritism is false.

It is not difficult to find a clear example of Premise 2. Suppose S1 contains all and only true beliefs about how many commas are used on each page of every book published since 1990. The number of the members of S1 is very large, for there are more than 2,200,000 books published between 1990 and 2013 according to *Wikipedia*.¹⁰ And suppose S2 only contains the true belief that oxygen is necessary for combustion. Intuitively, S2 is more epistemically valuable than S1. However, even if the true belief that oxygen is necessary for combustion entails or 'contains' other true beliefs such as that oxygen is a colourless, odorless gas with the molecular formula O₂, it still seems absurd to say that S2 contains the same number of true beliefs as S1. Rather, it seems clear that the number of true beliefs in S1 is much greater than the number of true beliefs in S2. So Premise 2 of the revised version of DePaul's objection is true.¹¹

4. Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm's reply

Unlike Treanor, Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm (2013) agree with DePaul that there can be two sets that contain an equal number

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_published_per_country_per_year

¹¹ One might defend veritism by holding that the value of a true belief is proportional to the number of truths contained in the proposition believed. But I think this defense might be problematic. Here are three points to explain why. First, if 'p contains q' means that p entails q, then the number of truths contained in a proposition, no matter whether it is true or not, seems to be infinite. For a false proposition may entail some true proposition, and a true proposition entails an infinite number of different true propositions. Hence, whatever one's belief is, it contains an infinite number of truths. Second, if 'p contains q' does not mean that p entails q, and Treanor is right that it is impossible to determine how many truths contained by a true proposition, then the defense is too weak to be effective, for veritists would be unjustified in claiming that T1 is epistemically more significant than T2 because T1 contains more truths than T2. Finally, if 'p contains q' does not mean that p entails q, and Treanor is wrong, then the veritist must provide a theory by which we can determine how many truths are contained by a true proposition. But it seems very difficult to provide such a theory.

of true beliefs but differ in epistemic value. They think what is really wrong with DePaul's original objection to veritism is Premise 1, which says that if veritism is true then any two sets that contain an equal number of true beliefs have equal epistemic value. Recall that veritism states that only true beliefs are of basic epistemic value. Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm claim that veritism defined as such does not imply that every true belief is of basic epistemic value, nor does it entail that all true beliefs that are of basic epistemic value are equally epistemically valuable.

The following analogy might help clarify Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm's point: from the view that only human beings can philosophize, it does not follow that every human being can philosophize or that those humans who can philosophize are equally good at philosophizing. Rather, the view that only human beings can philosophize is compatible with the view that two human beings might differ in their abilities to philosophize. Similarly, veritism is compatible with the view that two sets that contain an equal number of true beliefs might differ in epistemic value. Thus Premise 1 of DePaul's argument is false.

But then how can the veritist explain that two sets that contain an equal number of true beliefs might differ in epistemic value? If she cannot offer a consistent explanation, we would have a good reason to reject veritism. Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm think that the veritist is able to offer a consistent explanation:

In fact, the [veritist] may ... say that some true beliefs are epistemically worthless because they are void of significance, and that some true beliefs are of high epistemic value because they are highly significant. How does she get to say that without introducing a fundamental epistemic value in addition to that of truth?¹² In short, by defining the epistemically valuable in terms of that which is valuable in the way of inquiry and identifying inquiry with the inquisitive practices concerned with posing and answering questions, and then characterizing the significant as that which pertains to questions that we want answered. (Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm 2013, p. 332)

Here Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm understand true beliefs in terms of questions: true beliefs are correct answers to questions. In their

¹² Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm mean basic epistemic value by 'fundamental epistemic value.'

view, some questions are significant while others are not. How significant a question is depends on how much we want it answered. A true belief that is a correct answer to a significant question is also significant and thereby epistemically valuable, while a true belief that is a correct answer to a trivial question is insignificant and thereby epistemically valueless. The more significant a question is, the more epistemically valuable a correct answer to that question is.

One might object that Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm's explanation fails to avoid introducing a basic epistemic value in addition to that of truth, for it implicitly assumes that significance is another basic epistemic value.¹³ But Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm do not think that their explanation entails that both truth and significance are basic epistemic values. They write,

Granted, significance is a property of (some) true beliefs. ... [But] it is not a property that true beliefs have independently of our conceptions of what makes for worthwhile inquiry. More specifically, significance measures the degree of epistemic value as a function of the extent to which the relevant true beliefs speak to inquiries that we deem worthwhile... The mistake of the objection under consideration is the assumption that a significant true belief has two properties of epistemic value, i.e., truth and significance, as opposed to one property of epistemic value [i.e. truth], in great quantity. (Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm 2013, p. 334)

Here Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm claim that truth (more exactly, the property of being true) is the only thing that is of basic epistemic value, while significance (more exactly, the property of being significant) only determines the degree of the epistemic value of truth. They seem to assume that a thing that only determines the degree of the epistemic value of truth is not itself of basic epistemic value.

¹³ Susan Haack seems to think that there are two basic epistemic values: truth and importance. She writes, 'What is the goal of inquiry...? Something like: to get as much interesting and important truth about the world as possible. But the suggestion of uniqueness is misleading, since 'the' goal decomposes into two elements: truth, on the one hand, and interest or importance on the other. Obviously there is potential for tension between the two components, since it is a lot easier to get truths if one doesn't mind the truths one gets being trivial' (Haack 1993, p. 199).

5. Why Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm's reply fails

Before criticizing Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm's reply, I'd like to acknowledge that there is some truth in it. They are right that veritism, the idea that only true beliefs are of basic epistemic value, does not entail that all true beliefs are of equal epistemic value. Rather, the veritist can accept that some true beliefs are more epistemically valuable than others. So Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm successfully show that Premise 1 of DePaul's argument – if veritism is true then any two sets that contain an equal number of true beliefs have equal epistemic value – is false.

The real challenge to veritism is how to explain that some true beliefs are more epistemically valuable than others. Although it may seem plausible at first glance, Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm's explanation cannot stand a close analysis.

First, it fails to be consistent. According to Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm, the epistemic value of some true beliefs cannot be fully explained in terms of the epistemic value of their property of being true. Consider the following two beliefs:

1. Someone's belief that the universe is expanding at an accelerating rate.
2. Someone's belief that the number of people ever to have visited the David Hume memorial up until now is even.

Suppose that (1) and (2) are both true. Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm (2013, p. 331) think that (1) is more epistemically valuable than (2), because (1) is more significant than (2). But both (1) and (2) have the property of being true. So Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm have to admit that the epistemic value of (1) cannot be fully explained in terms of the epistemic value of its property of being true. But if the property of being true is the only thing of basic epistemic value, then, by definition, the epistemic value of (1) can be fully explained in terms of the epistemic value of the property of being true. Hence, the property of being true is *not* the only thing of basic epistemic value. But, as we saw in Section 4, Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm insist that the property of being true is the only thing of basic epistemic value. So they are inconsistent.

It is worth pointing out that, from this conclusion, it does not necessarily follow that the property of being significant must be of basic epistemic value even if Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm is right that (1) is more epistemically valuable than (2) because (1) is more

significant than (2). For it is possible that the property of being significant, though not of basic epistemic value in itself, augments the epistemic value of the property of being true in the case of a significant true belief: the more significant the true belief is, the more epistemically valuable it is.¹⁴ That is why (1) is more epistemically valuable than (2).

But if the property of being significant is not of any basic epistemic value, what else is of basic epistemic value? A plausible answer is that the particular true belief (1), as an organic whole that combines both the property of being true and the property of being significant, is of basic epistemic value. The epistemic value of (1) cannot be fully explained in terms of the epistemic value of its property of being true, not because it has another property of basic epistemic value, but because it is of basic epistemic value in itself.

Another problem for Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm's reply is that it seems to confuse veritism, the idea that only true beliefs are of basic epistemic value, with the idea that the property of being true is the only thing of basic epistemic value. In fact, the former is neither equivalent to nor entails the latter. For the latter implies that a true proposition is epistemically valuable even if no one believes it. But the former has no such implication. Moreover, a true belief and the property of being true are two different things. So if the property of being true is the *only* thing of basic epistemic value, then a true belief cannot be something of basic epistemic value. But Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm hold both that the property of being true is the only thing of basic epistemic value and that some true beliefs are of basic epistemic value.

6. A new explanation

The fact that Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm fail to provide a consistent explanation concerning why some true beliefs are more epistemically valuable than others, however, does not mean it is impossible for the veritist to give a consistent explanation. Rather, there is a simple and coherent explanation that fully respects veritism.

Since veritism, the idea that only true beliefs are of basic epistemic value, implies that none of the properties of a true belief are of basic epistemic value, the veritist should deny that these

¹⁴ For a detailed discussion of this possibility, see Hurka (1998).

properties such as the property of being true and the property of being significant are of basic epistemic value in order to be consistent. Moreover, she should deny that the epistemic value of a true belief must solely depend on its property of being true. Instead, she should maintain that none of the properties of a true belief can singly make the true belief epistemically valuable. Rather, it is the property of being true and the property X that co-make some true beliefs epistemically valuable, where X could be the property of being significant or some other properties of those true beliefs.

Let's assume for the moment that X is the property of being significant. Then the property of being true and the property of being significant are both necessary conditions for a belief to be epistemically valuable: if a belief is not true, then it is not epistemically valuable; if a belief is not significant, it is not epistemically valuable, either. And the combination of the property of being true and the property of being significant is a sufficient condition for a belief to be epistemically valuable: if a belief is true and significant, then it is epistemically valuable. Reconsider the two true beliefs mentioned above:

1. Someone's belief that the universe is expanding at an accelerating rate.
2. Someone's belief that the number of people ever to have visited the David Hume memorial up until now is even.

The veritist can say that the reason why (1) is more epistemically valuable than (2) is that (1) is significant while (2) is not. Since (1) is significant and true, it is epistemically valuable. In contrast, (2) is not significant, so it is not epistemically valuable.

Some might think that though (2) is much less significant than (1), it is still significant. But this does not pose any problem for veritism. For the veritist can consistently claim that the degree of the epistemic value of a true belief is in proportion to the degree of the significance it has: the more significant a true belief is, the more epistemically valuable it is. (1) is more epistemically valuable than (2) simply because (2) is less significant than (1).

In summary, the veritist may hold that a belief that possesses both the property of being true and the property of being significant is an organic whole. Neither of these two properties is epistemically valuable or able to singly make a belief epistemically valuable. Rather, they co-make the organic whole epistemically valuable. The organic whole is of basic epistemic value since it is

intrinsically valuable *not* because some proper parts of it are intrinsically valuable.

7. An objection and why it fails

Some might object that the explanation I propose above is untenable because the epistemic value of a true belief must solely depend ('supervene') on its intrinsic property, namely, the property of being true. Specifically, they might raise the following objection:

1. Veritism states that only true beliefs are of basic epistemic value.
2. A basic epistemic value is, by definition, an intrinsic value from an epistemic point of view.
3. The intrinsic value of a thing from a certain point of view solely depends on the intrinsic properties of the thing relevant to that point of view.
4. There is only one intrinsic property of a true belief relevant to an epistemic point of view: the property of being true.
5. So according to veritism, the basic epistemic value of a true belief solely depends on its property of being true.

Given Premise 3 and Premise 4, all true beliefs must have the same intrinsic value from an epistemic point of view, that is, all true beliefs have the same intrinsic epistemic value. So if Premise 3 and Premise 4 are true, DePaul's argument against veritism is vindicated.

However, there is no good reason to accept Premise 3. Premise 3 is a version of G. E. Moore's principle that whatever has intrinsic value (i.e. value as an end) has this value solely by virtue of its intrinsic properties. But Moore's principle is wrong, for it implies the view that if two things have the same intrinsic properties, they have the same intrinsic value. This view is false because a thing and its perfect duplicate have the same intrinsic properties but might differ in intrinsic value. For example, Jan Vermeer's *Girl with A Pearl Earring* (1665) seems intrinsically valuable. Suppose Han van Meegeren, one of the most ingenious art forgers of the twentieth century, created a duplicate of this painting, a duplicate so perfect that it differs from Vermeer's original only in one aspect: it was created by van Meegeren at a different time. Since the property of being created by someone at a certain time is a relational or non-intrinsic property of a thing, van Meegeren's duplicate and Vermeer's original share the

exact same intrinsic properties.¹⁵ But van Meegeren's duplicate seems less intrinsically valuable than Vermeer's original. (After all, Vermeer's original is highly innovative—its style is significantly new and different from any artworks that existed before. But Vermeer's duplicate is not innovative at all.¹⁶) Thus Moore's principle is false.¹⁷ If we have good reason to reject Moore's principle, then we have no good reason to believe Premise 3.

In addition, Premise 4 of the above objection is also problematic, for the property of being true is *not* an intrinsic property of a true belief at all. The property of being true, by definition, is the property of corresponding to reality.¹⁸ So a true belief is a belief that has the property of corresponding to reality. The property of corresponding to reality is a relational property shared by all beliefs that are true. A relational property, by definition, is not an intrinsic property. So the property of corresponding to reality is not an intrinsic property of a true belief. That is, the property of being true is not an intrinsic property of a true belief.

Now if the property of being true is a mere relational property of a true belief, and the intrinsic epistemic value of a true belief at least partially depends on its property of being true, then there is no good reason to deny that the intrinsic epistemic value of a true belief might depend on its other relational properties such as the property of being a correct answer to a significant question. Accordingly, Premise 3 – the intrinsic value of X in a domain solely depends on the intrinsic properties of X relevant to the domain – is also false.

¹⁵ A thing's intrinsic properties are roughly its non-relational properties. David Lewis defines intrinsic property as a property 'which things have in virtue of the way they themselves are,' as opposed to an extrinsic property, which things have 'in virtue of their relations or lack of relations to other things' (Lewis 1986, p. 61). There are some counterexamples to this definition, e.g., the property of having a proper part is intrinsic, but it appears to be a relational property. But we may define a relational property as one such that if an object has it, then it bears some relation to a non-part of it. This definition suffices to serve our purpose here though there might still be counterexamples to it. See Humberstone, I. L. (1996). Also see Weatherston and Marshall (2013).

¹⁶ For an interesting discussion of this issue, see Lessing (1965).

¹⁷ For more arguments against Moore's principle, see Korsgaard (1983), Kagan (1998), O'Neill (1992), Elliot (1992), Olson (2004), and Dorsey (2012). Some might object that when we say Vermeer's painting is intrinsically valuable, what we really mean is that the state of affairs that Vermeer created the painting at a certain time is intrinsically valuable. Since Vermeer's creating the painting at a certain time is an intrinsic property of the state of affairs, Moore's principle can still stand. I do not think this objection is tenable. But I will not make an argument here due to limited space. For a reply, see Kagan (1998).

¹⁸ Veritists such as Goldman and Alston all endorse the correspondence theory of truth.

8. Conclusion

Summing up, I have argued that that DePaul's objection to veritism cannot stand. But I disagree with Treanor about why DePaul's objection fails. Along with Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm, I think DePaul is wrong in thinking that veritism entails that all true beliefs are of equal epistemic value. But Ahlstrom-Vij and Grimm's explanation concerning why some true beliefs are more epistemically valuable than others appears inconsistent.

I therefore propose that some true beliefs are more epistemically valuable than others because they differ in some properties such as the property of being significant. But neither these properties nor the property of being true are of epistemic value in themselves. And the epistemic value of a true belief does not solely depend on its property of being true. Rather, it depends on both the property of being true and some other properties such as the property of being significant. All these claims are compatible with veritism.

Nanjing University
Philosophy Department
163 Xianlin Avenue
Nanjing 210023, China
xingminghu@nju.edu.cn

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