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Process Reliabilism, Virtue Reliabilism, and the Value of Knowledge

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Abstract

The value problem for knowledge is the problem of explaining why knowledge is cognitively more valuable than mere true belief. If an account of the nature of knowledge is unable to solve the value problem for knowledge, this provides a *pro tanto* reason to reject that account. Recent literature argues that process reliabilism is unable to solve the value problem because it succumbs to an objection known as the swamping objection. Virtue reliabilism (i.e., agent reliabilism), on the other hand, is able to solve the value problem because it can avoid the swamping objection. I argue that virtue reliabilism escapes the swamping objection only by employing what I call an *entailment strategy*. Furthermore, since an entailment strategy is open to the process reliabilist (in two different forms), I argue that the process reliabilist is also able to escape the swamping objection and thereby solve the value problem for knowledge.

Knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief. One would prefer to know something rather than just truly believe it. Yet it's difficult to explain *why* knowledge is more valuable. Call the problem of accounting for the value of knowledge over mere true belief the value problem (or the Meno problem).¹ More carefully, if true belief is necessary for knowledge, the value problem is that of isolating something in a case of knowledge that is epistemically (or cognitively) valuable *over and above* the value that is present in a case of mere true belief.

The value problem is important because an adequate analysis of knowledge ought to be able to solve the problem. If a particular account of knowledge is unable to solve the value problem, this provides the grounds for an argument by false implication

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that compares the particular account of knowledge with our intuitions about what is valuable (see, for example, Williamson 2000, 30–31). The argument is simple:

- (1) Knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief.
- (2) But if account X of knowledge is correct, then knowledge is not more valuable than true belief.
- (3) So account X is mistaken.

To the degree that we are willing to grant the opening assumption in premise (1), we should be willing to reject any analysis of knowledge that can't account for this difference in value.

Premise (2) is usually argued for by way of what has been called a swamping objection. The objection shows that, according to some account of knowledge X, any extra value present in a particular case of knowledge is merely instrumental value, and this instrumental value is lost once truth is present. For example, we value a belief's having been reliably produced because we value having true beliefs. But once a belief is true, we no longer care how it was produced. Thus the value of reliable production is "swamped" by the value of truth.

In the contemporary literature, it has been argued that process reliabilism is *unable* to solve the value problem while virtue reliabilism (i.e., agent reliabilism) is *able* to solve the value problem (Kvanvig 2003; Riggs 2002; Sosa 2004; Swinburne 1999; Zagzebski 2003). This is because it is thought that process reliabilism succumbs to the swamping objection while virtue reliabilism has the resources to avoid it. In other words, the general claim in premise (2) is *true* when X is instantiated to process reliabilism and *false* when instantiated to virtue reliabilism. I argue that virtue reliabilism escapes the swamping objection only by employing an instantiation of what I shall call the *entailment strategy*. I then show that—despite the protests in the contemporary literature—process reliabilism can escape the swamping objection in the exact same way. Thus process reliabilism is able to solve the value problem.

1. Process Reliabilism and the Swamping Objection

In this section I explain process reliabilism and illustrate how the view is vulnerable to the swamping objection. It is widely recognized that truly believing *p* "accidentally" is incompatible with knowing that *p*. Reliabilist epistemology attempts to meet this condition head on: If a subject believes *p* reliably, then his believing so is no accident. However, early accounts of reliabilism focus on mere causal reliability (e.g., Armstrong 1973), and these accounts are subject to various counterexamples. The

solution to these sorts of counterexamples is to restrict reliability to belief-producing faculties or processes.² For example, Goldman (1986) argues that "whether a true belief is knowledge depends on why the belief is held, [depends] on the psychological processes that cause the belief or sustain it in the mind" (43), and he concludes that in order "to qualify as knowledge, a true belief must result from a generally reliable process..." (47).

This provides one of the necessary conditions for knowledge. The other necessary conditions posited by reliabilist epistemologists are standard. Let process reliabilism refer to the following view:

S knows that *p* if and only if (A) *p* is true, (B) S believes that *p* is true, (C) S's belief that *p* was produced by a reliable belief-producing process, and (D) S's belief that *p* is justified, undefeated, etc.³

The truth condition and belief condition are standard. The justification condition is an internalist restriction meant to rule out certain cases of defeated knowledge.⁴ For example, if I truly and reliably believe that *p*, but I also have overwhelming evidence that $\sim p$, I do not know that *p*. While more could be said to supplement this (rough) sketch of process reliabilism, this analysis is sufficient for my purposes in demonstrating how a vanilla version of the view is subject to the swamping objection.

Applied to process reliabilism, the swamping objection goes as follows: While reliability might be a valuable thing by itself, this value is "swamped" by the value of truth when the two are combined.⁵ Reliably produced belief is more valuable than unreliably produced belief. And true belief is more valuable than false belief. But reliably produced true belief is no more valuable than unreliably produced true belief. Kvanvig (2003) offers an analogy:

Suppose I am interested in chocolate (which I am). I check the Internet for information on where I can buy chocolate locally and find two lists. One gives sites within walking distance that *sell* chocolate; the other gives sites within walking distance *likely to sell* chocolate. It is fairly obvious that I'd be more impressed with the first.... Suppose a visitor in my office quickly generates a third list containing the intersection of the first two lists: sites that both sell and are likely to sell chocolate. I'd have no reason whatsoever to prefer the intersection list to the first list.... (47–48)

The first list represents the value of truth. The second represents the value of reliability. The third represents the combined value of reliability and truth. The first is obviously valuable, but so is the second. After all, it's very useful to have a list of places likely to sell chocolate if one has an interest in getting chocolate.

But the point is that this value is “swamped” by the value of the first list. Once you know which stores *actually* sell chocolate, information concerning which stores are *likely* to sell chocolate is no longer valuable.

The general lesson is that certain extrinsic goods lose their value when combined with certain other goods. For example, when you combine an instrumental good with its “targeted” good, the instrumental element becomes worthless. Ward Jones (1997) summarizes the swamping objection against process reliabilism as follows:

Given the reliabilist’s framework, there is no reason why we should care what the method was which brought about a true belief, as long as it is true. We value the better method, because we value truth, but that does not tell us why we value the true beliefs brought about by that method over true beliefs brought about by other less reliable ones. (426)

2. The Promise of Virtue Reliabilism

Having shown what the swamping objection is and how process reliabilism putatively fails to solve the value problem, I shall now focus on virtue reliabilism, an account that is thought to avoid the swamping objection in a way that process reliabilism cannot. Virtue reliabilist theories are diverse, but the following analysis captures the essence of most contemporary versions of virtue theories in epistemology.

S knows that *p* if and only if (i) *p* is true, (ii) S believes that *p* is true, and (iii) S’s belief that *p* was produced by one of S’s intellectual virtues.⁶

While rough, this analysis represents the *basic* view that is defended by a number of contemporary epistemologists (Greco 2004; Riggs 2002; Sosa 1985, 2000; Zagzebski 2003). When a believer generates a true belief via one of his intellectual virtues, he is due some credit for this feat. On the other hand, when a believer gains a true belief by accident, he is not due any credit. This difference in epistemic desert is supposed to explain the difference between the value of knowledge over the value of mere true belief.⁷ According to John Greco (1995, 3, manuscript), “knowledge is valuable because intellectually virtuous believing is valuable.” Wayne Riggs (2002, 94) is even more forthright about the proposed solution to the value problem: “Being in the state of ‘knowing that *p*’ entails of a person that she have a true belief for which she deserves a certain degree of epistemic credit. Believing something true by accident entails no credit of any sort to the person.”

To show how virtue reliabilism escapes the swamping objection, I’ll briefly examine the accounts offered by Riggs and Sosa. Riggs argues that virtue reliabilism can account for the value of knowledge over mere true belief because “what makes a reliably produced true belief more valuable than its accidentally true counterpart is [a] lack of accidentality” (2002, 87). He offers the example of two Olympic athletes, one of whom wins a gold medal in her event and the other who finds his gold medal while strolling through the woods. The thought is that we would all prefer to be the former athlete rather than the latter, and this shows that “the production of the good (possession of the gold medal) in a nonaccidental way is more valuable than its accidental production” (88–99).⁸

Note that Riggs’s account thus far is parallel to a defense that a simple reliabilist might offer. After all, it’s no accident that the reliably produced belief is true: that’s what it means for a belief-producing faculty to be reliable. So by Riggs’s own lights this should show that reliably produced true belief is more valuable than mere true belief. But Riggs argues that process reliabilism *does* succumb to the swamping objection. There must be more to his explanation. The “more” comes by way of epistemic credit. Riggs claims that “bringing about some good in a nonaccidental way is more valuable than doing so accidentally, because one deserves more credit in the former case than in the latter” (2002, 92). In cases of knowledge, the believing agent is due some credit for his true belief.

Sosa (2004) tells a similar story:

[We prefer] truth gained through our own performance, and this seems a reflectively defensible desire for a good preferable not just extrinsically but intrinsically. What we prefer is the deed of true believing, where not only the believing but also its truth is attributable to the agent as his or her own doing. (20)

Knowledge is different from mere true belief because in a case of knowledge getting to the truth is “of the agent’s own doing,” whereas in a case of mere true belief getting to the truth was an accident.⁹ Sosa illustrates this with an example of two archers. The first hits a bull’s eye because he exercises a particular virtue. The second archer also makes a bull’s eye but by accident. Since we prefer to be the former archer, this shows that there is some value in the exercise of a virtue that is not present without the virtue. Likewise, belief that is true accidentally is not as valuable as belief that is true nonaccidentally when the latter is the result of an exercise of an intellectual virtue.

3. The Entailment Strategy

Let's grant that virtue reliabilism has located something of genuine value in the credit due the agent. How does this solve the value problem? We want to know why knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief. Virtue reliabilism responds by fingering something valuable in the *production* of knowledge that is not present in the production of mere true belief: epistemic credit. Both Riggs and Sosa switch from talk about why *knowledge* is more valuable than mere true belief to talk about why *being in a knowing state* is more valuable than being in a truly believing state. Riggs claims that we value "the production" of the good or the "bringing about" of some good while Sosa writes that we prefer "the deed of true believing." But the question is not what makes one *production process* more valuable than another. The question is what makes the *product* of one process better than the product of some other process.¹⁰

So we need an account of why knowledge per se is valuable.¹¹ Perhaps the product of the virtue is valuable because of its causal history. Brogaard (2006) argues that virtue reliabilism need not focus on the knowing state or the deed of production in order to account for the value of knowledge. Things can have value based on their etiology, and this goes for beliefs as well. Despite the fact that two beliefs are intrinsically identical, one might be more valuable than the other because of its history. For example, the actual finger painting by one's deceased child is more valuable than an intrinsic duplicate. The dress that Princess Diana wore the day of her wedding to Prince Charles is worth more than one just like it that is hanging in the department store. Likewise, a belief produced by an intellectual virtue is more valuable than a *doppelganger* produced by accident.

While it's true that objects are often valuable because of their histories, this won't give virtue reliabilism an edge over process reliabilism. Brogaard's strategy is to show that the product (a belief) is valuable because of where it came from (a virtue). But this isn't enough. The virtue reliabilist needs more than the fact that the true belief hails from a nonaccidental source. After all, a process reliabilist could say the same thing, but virtue reliabilists insist that an appeal to the etiology of the reliably produced belief doesn't confer any more value to the belief itself. But this is exactly the move that the virtue reliabilist is now forced to make.

Perhaps the virtue reliabilist could respond as follows. The *production* of knowledge is more valuable than the *production* of mere true belief because the believer is due some credit in the former that he's not in the latter. Knowing that *p* entails having produced the knowledge that *p* whereas merely truly believing that *p* does not. If *x* logically entails something of greater value than what *y* logically entails, then *ceteris paribus*,

x is more valuable than *y*. So if the production of knowledge is more valuable than the production of mere true belief, then *ceteris paribus* knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief.¹² Call this the *entailment strategy*.

The entailment strategy makes sense out of the examples used by virtue reliabilists to make their case. Consider Sosa's archers. One archer hits the target because he is a skilled archer. The other hits the target by sheer accident. *Ceteris paribus*, we would prefer to hit the target by skill. This is supposed to show that there is something of value in the cases in which a virtue is involved that is not present in the accidental cases.

But recall that the relation between a virtue and a belief is the relation between the producer and the produced. How can this relation transfer value? Brogaard (2006) states the problem as follows:

[Virtue reliabilists] believe that even if generic reliabilism could find a reason that a reliable source is independently valuable, this would not solve the value problem, because the value of a cause does not transfer to its effect automatically ... a cause can confer value on its effect only if cause and effect are internally connected. (336)

At this point it looks like the virtue reliabilist's solution relies on an entailment relation between knowledge and epistemic desert. The former is valuable insofar as it entails the latter. However, one might grant that the production process is valuable but question the "transfer" of value to the product. After all, there is obviously something of value in one case that isn't there in the other: the display of a virtue. However, one might be concerned with the entailment relation. For one thing, it simply isn't true that we value every state of affairs that entails some other state of affairs that we do value. For example, being a dying patient in a cancer ward reserved for Olympic heroes entails being an Olympic hero, but we don't value the former at all! So it isn't enough for the virtue reliabilist to note that knowing entails something that we value.

The response to this objection is simply to appeal to the mechanics of the entailment strategy. While it's true that we don't value every state of affairs that entails some other state of affairs that we do value, in a forced choice between options A and B where each had the same level of intrinsic value but A entailed something of value that B did not, we would prefer A to B. And when it comes to having a true belief produced by an intellectual virtue or true belief produced accidentally, we prefer the former to the latter because of what the former entails. This is enough to show that virtue reliabilism can avoid the swamping objection and solve the value problem for knowledge.

4. A Response on Behalf of Process Reliabilism

In this final section I show how the entailment strategy is open to process reliabilism as well, and since having a reliably produced belief entails something that we value, this shows how process reliabilism is able to avoid the swamping objection and solve the value problem for knowledge.

There are two ways in which the process reliabilist can use the entailment strategy to avoid the swamping objection. First, having reliable faculties is more valuable than not having reliable faculties. Having a reliably produced true belief at time t_2 entails having reliable faculties at time t_1 . We're grateful that our faculties were reliable yesterday—it's something that we value. Having a non-reliably-produced true belief at time t_2 does not entail having reliable faculties at time t_1 . If x logically entails something of greater value than what y logically entails, then *ceteris paribus*, x is more valuable than y . So if having reliable faculties is more valuable than not having reliable faculties, then *ceteris paribus* reliably produced true belief is more valuable than non-reliably-produced true belief.

At this point an objector must either deny that we value the fact that our faculties were reliable at some earlier time or else deny the fact that having a reliably produced belief entails having a reliable belief-producing process at some earlier time. Neither option seems plausible. However, one might accept that having reliable faculties at some point in the past is valuable but not *epistemically* valuable. Recall that the value problem for knowledge is the problem of isolating something in a case of knowledge that has *epistemic* value over and above the value of having a true belief. Now as a matter of fact it seems plausible that having reliable faculties in the past *is* of epistemic value, but the process reliabilist need not hang her hat on defending this claim as there is another entailment that provides an even stronger response to the swamping objection.

This second strategy is another instantiation of the entailment strategy. In this case, the process reliabilist argues not that knowledge entails that one's faculties were reliable at some point in the past but that knowledge entails that one's faculties are reliable at the present. If this entailment can be defended, the process reliabilist has a strong defense against the swamping objection. This is because we value having reliable faculties at present, and this value is not parasitic on the value of the true belief involved in the case of knowledge. In order to defend this second version of the entailment strategy I must show that (A) we value having reliable belief-producing processes at present and (B) knowledge—on the process reliabilist account—entails having reliable belief-producing processes at present.

Thesis (A) is easy to defend in light of our other epistemic values. We value getting to the truth of the matter (at least in cases in which we are interested in getting to the truth of the matter), and reliable faculties are useful in this task. This value is clearly epistemic in nature as we have an epistemic stake in gaining true beliefs. Now it's true that the value of having reliable faculties at present is an instrumental value, and it's true that this instrumental value is valuable for a truth goal. But this instrumental value is not swamped by the truth goal *because the relevant truth goal isn't yet achieved in a case of knowledge*. There are arguably two different alethic goals. The first is synchronic: We want to know the truth now. The second is diachronic: We want to know the truth in the future.

Distinguishing between the two goals illustrates both why the swamping objection to process reliabilism fails and why this second entailment strategy succeeds. Grant that having reliable faculties is only instrumentally valuable. What is the "target" of the instrumental good? The defender of the swamping objection argues that it is the synchronic alethic goal that is at issue, and since that goal is already met in a case of knowledge, the instrumental value provided by reliability adds no more value to the composite. However, according to the second entailment strategy, it's the diachronic alethic goal that is at issue. The relevant goal in this case is to believe truly *in the future*. Having reliable faculties at present is instrumentally valuable for attaining this future-directed goal, and that is why it is not swamped by the value of one's current belief being true. This is sufficient to defend thesis (A): We value having reliable belief-producing processes at present because of the diachronic alethic goal.

Thesis (B) is more difficult to defend and will require a slight detour into the inner workings of process reliabilism. What needs to be shown is that having a reliably produced belief entails not just that one had a reliable belief-producing faculty at some point in the past (this was the entailment used in the first strategy) but that having a reliably produced belief entails that one has a reliable belief-producing faculty at the time at which one holds the belief in question.

Getting clear on what it means for a process to be reliable will illustrate why having a reliably produced belief entails that one has at least one reliable belief-forming process at present. Goldman (1986) writes the following:

An object (a process, method, system, or what have you) is reliable [with regard to the production of true beliefs] if and only if (1) it is a sort of thing that tends to produce beliefs, and (2) the proportion of true beliefs among the beliefs it produces meets some threshold, or criterion, value. Reliability, then, consists in a tendency to produce a high truth ratio of beliefs. (26)

At its core, reliability is a robust notion that requires that something routinely perform in a certain way. If a process is a reliable producer of true beliefs, then this process must have the propensity to produce true beliefs. To have a propensity to produce true beliefs is to have the ability or disposition to produce true beliefs in a variety of conditions. In other words, the process's ability to produce true beliefs must not be restricted to one particular time or condition. If so, the process isn't really reliable. For example, Bertrand Russell's broken clock is not a reliable indicator of the time despite the fact that there are two times each day at which it correctly indicates the proper time. In order to be reliable, the clock would have to indicate the proper time in a number of different conditions.

One way of understanding this robustness of reliability is in temporal terms. On this way of viewing things, a reliable belief-producing process is temporally robust. A second way of understanding this robustness of reliability is in modal terms. On this way of viewing things, a reliable belief-producing process is modally robust. In fact, Goldman (1986) relies on counterfactuals in cashing out what it means for a process to be reliable:

a true belief fails to be knowledge if there are any relevant alternative situations in which the proposition p would be false, but the process used would cause S to believe p anyway. If there are such relevant alternatives, then the utilized process cannot discriminate the truth of p from them; so S does not know. (47)

The robust character of reliability is important here because either the temporal or the modal construal shows that reliability is a robust notion that holds across time or across possible worlds. If a process is not robust in one of these two ways, in what sense would it be a reliable faculty? Using the temporal notion by way of illustration, what this shows is that if I have a reliably produced belief at time t_1 , not only did I have a reliable belief-producing process at some earlier time t_0 (again, this is the entailment exploited by the first strategy), but I also have a reliable belief-producing process at present. This is because reliability is a robust notion that requires a reliable process to be able to produce true belief in a variety of later times. Using the modal version, if I have a reliably produced belief in the actual world, then the faculty that produced this true belief also does so in all of the nearby possible worlds. This is because reliability is a robust notion that requires that a reliable process is also reliable in nearby counterfactual situations. Thus the process reliabilist has a second entailment strategy available to show that the value of reliably produced belief is not swamped by the value of true belief.

I close with a final objection. One might object to the second entailment strategy in the following way. It is at least possible

that an agent at time t_1 believe that p as a result of forming p by a reliable belief-producing mechanism some earlier time t_0 and yet fail to have that same belief-forming process at time t_1 . While it may be true that reliability entails that a process produce mostly true beliefs in close temporal or counterfactual situations, it does *not* entail that the believing agent actually be located in close temporal or counterfactual situations. It's not as if once you reliably believe something it follows that you have a reliable faculty for all time. Thus the second entailment strategy fails because there is no entailment between the fact that an agent has a belief that was reliably produced at some earlier time to the fact that the agent has that same reliable belief-producing mechanism at any later time.

I think that this is the best objection that can be levied against process reliabilism. However, the objection is not devastating for two reasons. First, as I have already argued, the process reliabilist need not rely on this second entailment strategy. Arguably, the first entailment strategy is a success: My having a reliably produced belief entails that I had a reliable belief-producing faculty in the past, and this is something that I value.

Second, even if the objector is right that there is no entailment between the fact that my belief was reliably produced to the fact that I *now* have a reliable belief-producing process, there is a statistical relation between the two. Recall that reliability is either temporally or modally robust (or both). It remains the case that having a reliably produced belief does entail that my process continues to be reliable in a variety of nearby temporal situations or nearby possible worlds, whereas having a non-reliably-produced belief does not. So while it remains possible that I may find myself in a distant temporal situation or a distant counterfactual situation (and thus I do not *necessarily* have a reliable belief-producing process), having a reliably produced true belief is still more valuable than having a non-reliably-produced true belief because the former does entail something of value: reliability in nearby temporal or counterfactual situations.

In conclusion, I have shown that virtue reliabilism escapes the swamping objection only by employing an entailment strategy. Since this same strategy is open to process reliabilism (in two different forms), process reliabilism is able to escape the swamping objection and thereby solve the value problem in the same way.¹³

Notes

- ¹ Meno: ...I wonder why knowledge should be so much more prized than right opinion, and indeed how there is any difference between them.

Socrates: Shall I tell you the reason for your surprise, or do you know it?

Meno: No, tell me.

Socrates: ...true opinions are a fine thing and do all sorts of good so long as they stay in their place, but they will not stay long. They run away from a man's mind; so they are not worth much until you tether them by working out the reason... Once they are tied down, they become knowledge, and are stable. That is why knowledge is something more valuable than right opinion. (*Meno* 97d–98b).

² See Ramsey 1931 for an early version of process reliabilism that precedes the counterexamples to causal reliabilism.

³ A 4th condition can be added to handle Gettier cases, but I am ignoring this option now as it adds undue complexity to the analysis and won't affect my arguments. One might contend that it is this 4th condition that will show how process reliabilism can meet the swamping objection; I think this is unlikely, and I will show that process reliabilism can solve the value problem without appeal to this 4th condition.

⁴ For more on the justification condition, see Goldman 1986, 53–55 and 58–121.

⁵ For examples of rejections of process reliabilism based on the swamping objection, see Brogaard 2006, Kvanvig 2003, Riggs 2006, and Zagzebski 2003.

⁶ Here again a 4th condition could be added to satisfy Gettier cases, but I leave it out for the same reasons mentioned in note 3.

⁷ The claim that virtue reliabilism can account for the value problem has been defended in Greco 1995, Riggs 2002, Sosa 2003, and Zagzebski 1996.

⁸ It isn't apparent exactly what sort of accidentality is at issue here. Notice that there is some level of accidentality in both of the cases presented by Riggs. It was an accident that her shoes remained tied while her competitors' did not, that her competitors had bad days on the field, etc. So no achievement is completely nonaccidental. Virtue reliabilism owes us an account of precisely what sort of accidentality is being removed in a case of knowledge versus true belief and why it is *this* form of accidentality that matters for epistemic desert.

⁹ Sosa's account—like all virtue accounts—has difficulty accounting for testimonial knowledge. When I know that *p* because you tell me so, why do I deserve credit for getting to the truth? It seems that we are merely passive receivers in a case of knowledge by testimony, and yet testimonial knowledge makes up a bulk of what we think we know. It would seem a grave deficiency if virtue accounts cannot countenance testimonial knowledge. Jennifer Lackey exploits this shortcoming in her *Forthcoming*. The issue is also addressed in Lackey and Sosa 2006.

¹⁰ One might object at this point that Sosa is on the right track because believing is an action instead of a state. I think this is implausible. Believing *p* is a state that we find ourselves in, not an action that we undertake. Since actions are typically demarcated from events in terms of intentions and it seems clear enough that we don't intend to believe things, it follows that believing *p* is not an action.

¹¹ Think of an agent-centered version of an analogy similar to that

offered by Zagzebski (2003) against process reliabilism. You show up at the state fair and visit the pie-baking contest. What you're interested in is a nice slice of apple pie. You have two choices. On the one hand there is Grandma Jones's pie and on the other is little Suzy's. Grandma Jones has every pie-making virtue in the book, and she bakes hundreds of pies every year. On the other hand, this is Suzy's first pie. As a matter of sheer accident, Suzy's pie is intrinsically identical to Grandma's pie. If you're going to order a slice and you know that the pieces are intrinsically identical, do you have reason to prefer Grandma's to Suzy's? No. However, Grandma's *production process* is more valuable, and if we had to choose which pie-maker we'd like to be, we'd pick Grandma. But none of this shows how the credit that Grandma is due as a superb pie-baker has any relevance to the value of the pie itself.

¹² Thanks to Andrew Moon for talking this point through with me.

¹³ Jon Kvanvig, Peter Markie, and an anonymous referee for *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* provided helpful comments on early drafts of this paper. A portion of this paper was presented at the 2006 Central States Philosophical Society conference. Many thanks to the conference participants, especially Sandie Goldberg, for discussing these ideas with me, and special thanks to my commentator Matthew Mullins.

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