

BONJOUR, Laurence and Ernest Sosa, *Epistemic Justification*, City, State: Publisher, year. viii-n pp. Paper, \$price—This book is at once a lively debate between two top, cutting-edge epistemologists and a recapitulation of the main lines of the debate over epistemic justification over the last few decades. This makes it at once appropriate for upper-level undergraduate courses in epistemology as well as graduate seminars supplemented by a few essays. I will first discuss the structure of the book focusing on the main lines of argument. In the interest of brevity I will focus on their positive theses leaving the reader to consult the book for their destructive arguments.

One benefit of the book is that both authors say that they are trying in their sections to tie together scattered and sundry thoughts into a unified whole. This increases the value of the book for classroom purposes. Students will also likely enjoy the dialectical format of the book: opening statements with replies by each author (though in spite of this there is considerable disconnect, but more of this later). BonJour gets to open the debate which is perhaps appropriate because he is defending the more traditional view (though it must be noted that Bonjour is a recent convert to this position: a brief *mea culpa* appears on p. 56). His section is called “A Version of Internalist Foundationalism” He begins with the Regress Argument in the first chapter “The Regress Problem and Foundationalism”. The regress problem is the problem the skeptic poses when she points out that the line of reasons for a belief must either terminate, go on infinitely, or turn back on itself in a circle. The non-skeptic must take one of these horns or try to go between them. Until recently (Klein \_\_\_\_\_) no one considered the second option tenable. Circular reasoning has an inherent stigma (BonJour argues against coherentism in Chapter 3 “In Search of Coherentism”), so the challenge was for foundationalists to offer stopping points that were non-arbitrary. BonJour tries to meet this challenge in Chapter 4 “Back to Foundationalism” where he tries to rest all knowledge on awareness of the content of beliefs. The main burden of this chapter is to deal with the Sellers Dilemma: is awareness of content judgmental or not? If it is, then what justifies this judgement? If it is not, how does it justify anything? BonJour attempts argues that awareness of a belief’s content and of it’s assertive character are constitutive of what it is to have a belief. He thinks this goes between the horns of the Sellers Dillema (63). Then in Chapter 5 “The Conceptualization of Sensory Experience and the Problem of the External World” BonJour tries to show that this foundation of constitutive awareness of content can bear the weight of all our ordinary knowledge claims. This will obviously involve the thorny issue of inferences from states of our own consciousness to states of the external world. BonJour addresses this most crucial issue in his last section 5.5 “The Inference to the Physical World.” In the tradition of Locke and Berkeley BonJour offers an inference to the best explanation. The best explanation of the systematic nature of our experience is a world with corresponding properties and causal powers impinging upon our senses. This is all very well but BonJour never address the controversial issue of justifying inference to the best explanation. Given BonJour’s rejection of coherentism and his goal for a type of fully reflective justification (56) this seems like a major lacuna. One problem he does mention is that technically this leaves ordinary folks (and philosophers too I might add) without justification, since very few of them ever actually perform such an inference. He says he doesn’t find this too troubling since “the argument is in principle available to them,” yet this is nothing other than a fairly pervasive form of skepticism.

Sosa's half of the book is called "Beyond Internal Foundations to External Virtues." It begins with three very enlightening chapters two on the nature and structure of knowledge which will richly reward close reading. However, in the interest of brevity I will focus on his positive presentation of his thesis in Chapter 8 "Skepticism and the Internal/External Divide" and Chapter 9 "A Virtue Epistemology". In the first, Sosa adopts a quasi-pluralist stance admitting that there is something valuable in positive epistemic status deriving solely from internal conditions (147, 163, et al.). The New Evil Demon argument shows this. However, Sosa argues by cases (151 ff), internal considerations cannot capture all forms of positive epistemic status. He seeks to provide a virtue theory which can account for both internalist and externalist intuitions.

Sosa's account of epistemic justification is subtle and complex. It is centered around the following two claims entailed by virtue epistemology.

(V-Apt) For all possible worlds  $w$ , B is apt-justified in  $w$  only if B derives in  $w$  from the exercise of one or more intellectual virtues that *in that world*  $w$  would produce a high ratio of true beliefs.

(V-Adroit) For all possible worlds  $w$ , B is adroit-justified in  $w$  only if B derives from the exercise of one or more intellectual virtues that *in our actual world* virtuously would produce a high ratio of true beliefs.

The first clause is meant to capture externalist intuitions about the importance of reliability. The second clause is meant to accommodate the intuition of internalists that even if we were systematically deceived we would still be justified if we reasoned just as we do now. He considers how NED-theorists might respond to this and offers rejoinders. He also considers problems of circularity which arise in connection with the claim that we are reliable given that this cannot be introspected.