

**Laura Frances Callahan and Timothy O'Connor (eds.).  
*Religious Faith and Intellectual Virtue*. New York, Oxford  
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In religious epistemology, the times, they are a-changing. It used to be that everyone was talking about evidentialism, foundationalism, proper functionalism, and the internalism-externalism controversy. But now, recent developments in general epistemology are opening up new avenues. The present volume is a fine example of this trend. Victoria Harrison and Jacob Chandler's *Probability in the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford University Press 2012) and the forthcoming *Knowledge, Belief, and God: New Insights* edited by Matthew Benton, John Hawthorne, and Dani Rabinowitz provide more evidence (not to mention various essays scattered throughout recent journal issues and other edited collections).

In addition to a solid introduction, *Religious Faith and Intellectual Virtue* contains fourteen novel essays that show the fruitfulness of applying resources from virtue epistemology and social epistemology to questions in religious epistemology. The central topic is the alleged tension between intellectually virtuous conduct and religious faith: Can clearheaded, epistemically upstanding believing and thinking be compatible with, or perhaps even conducive to, religious faith? This has often been denied, not just by outspoken old and new atheists (recall Richard Dawkins' definition of faith as "blind trust, in the absence of evidence, even in the teeth of evidence"), but also by more fair-minded commentators.

The volume is organized in four parts, which address different aspects of the topic. Part I is entitled 'What Is Faith?'. Although this question is addressed briefly in Lara Buchak's essay, she is mostly concerned with the possible relations between faith and belief. Jay Wood and John Schellenberg address a different question, namely whether and how faith can be virtuous. Part II is about 'Evidentialism and Faith' and features essays by Trent Dougherty, Evan Fales, and Paul Moser. Part III contains reflections on 'Trust and Faith' by John Bishop, Lizzie Fricker, Eleonore Stump, Linda Zagzebski, and the editors themselves. Part IV consists of three focused contributions about the epistemic significance of religious disagreement by Jennifer Lackey, Sandy Goldberg, and Nicholas Wolterstorff. These are some heavy hitters and, accordingly, the overall quality of the volume is high. Taken together, the essays do a fine job in defending interesting theses about faith, trust, intellectual virtue, and religious disagreement. At the same time, they make it clear that there is plenty of room for further work at the intersection of social epistemology, virtue epistemology, and religious faith.

I want to commend the editors for writing a truly excellent introduction. In addition to the usual stage-setting, it provides a crisp overview of recent work in epistemology that bears on the topics of the volume, it identifies key challenges in the epistemology of religious

belief and faith, and gives an inventory of epistemological questions pertaining to faith and intellectual virtue. It thereby lays out a promising agenda for future research in this area.

Drawing on Aquinas, Jay Wood discusses how epistemic trust can be intellectually virtuous. One striking feature of the discussion is the attention Aquinas gives to non-cognitive aspects of trust: the will and the emotions. Even though the essay's historical and exegetical focus felt a bit out place in the volume, I appreciated the attempt to bring Aquinas's thought to bear on contemporary epistemology. His ideas, as presented here, deserve further analysis.

Lara Buchak starts by rehearsing her decision-theoretic account of rational propositional faith (as developed in her "Can It Be Rational to Have Faith?" in the above-mentioned Harrison & Chandler volume). The novelty of her chapter, however, consists in a systematic analysis of the possible relations between rational faith and justified belief. If an individual is conforming to norms of rationality both in believing and in having faith, how are what she justifiedly believes and rationally has faith in related? Although the details of the discussion are too technical to summarize here, an important (if somewhat predictable) lesson emerges. Depending on how one construes the relation between credence and belief, we get very different connections between rational faith and justified belief: Faith might exclude belief, it might be accompanied by belief, rational faith might require justified belief or even more, or belief itself might be an act of faith. Hence, to make progress on questions such as whether religious faith requires justified religious belief and whether justified religious belief licenses one rationally to commit oneself to religious faith, we should first pay closer attention to the nature of rational belief itself. Although the chapter should be of interest to those working in formal epistemology, I note that it will have little to offer for those who have doubts about this very approach.

John Schellenberg argues that religious faith as it is typically manifested in serious Christians, Muslims, Judaists, Hindus, etc.—which includes belief in a full package of fairly specific doctrines and is acquired through trust in relevant religious authorities (family, friends, priests, or pastors)—falls short of intellectual virtuousness. He lays out six necessary conditions for virtuous trust and suggests that these are often not satisfied. Of particular interest for Schellenberg's own proposal is the condition that, when there is reason to doubt that the other conditions are satisfied, intellectual virtue requires believers to replace their beliefs by nondoxastic attitudes such as acceptance, provided this can be done "without difficulty or harm" (77). I found this puzzling both conceptually and empirically: Just as we lack direct voluntary control over what to believe, we would seem lack it over what not to believe. Moreover, it is far from obvious that replacing one's religious beliefs by acceptances is something any reflective believer could do 'without difficulty or harm'. Schellenberg's constructive proposal in the second part of the chapter is that, in view of our place early in evolutionary time, intellectual virtue requires us to cultivate imaginative religious faith in ultimism. Roughly: we ought mentally to picture the world as if there is a reality that is metaphysically, axiologically, and soteriologically ultimate, and make it a policy to let our thinking and actions be guided by this. This is a tall order. As a matter of armchair psychology, I seriously doubt that faith in ultimism is the kind of thing that can sustain a robustly religious way of life. If I'm right about this, then ultimistic faith is, by Schellenberg's own lights, not intellectually virtuous: It might easily lead one to give up on it, thus foreclosing the possibility of acquiring knowledge and understanding of the ultimate reality.

Trent Dougherty sketches an internalist, evidentialist, and foundationalist account of doxastic trust and faith. Seemings, or ‘appearances-as-though’, are the fundamental units of evidence which provide justification for beliefs. Thus, when other people seem trustworthy to us, this gives us justification for accepting their testimony. Such seemings are typically not the result of explicit discursive reasoning, but the outputs of subpersonal processes. He then applies his account to the Catholic faith, which typically involves lots of beliefs acquired through trusting others. His conclusion is the exact opposite of Schellenberg’s (and later Goldberg’s and Lackey’s): When one’s cognitive faculties are functioning properly, such faith can be wholly justified.

I’m not sure what to make of Evan Fales’ contribution. Although it contains provocative passages on a wide variety of issues having to do with faith and evidence, it lacks the systematic focus and rigor one expects in a volume like this.

The somewhat apodictic style and polemical bouts in Paul Moser’s essay initially put me off, but, upon further reflection, I became intrigued by his claim that there is a different sort of evidence for God available that has largely been neglected in philosophical circles. Moser avers that friendship with God is a centrally important intellectual virtue. Although this includes belief that God exists, its volitional aspects are more important. The religious believer chooses to entrust herself to God, in an affirmative response to God’s gracious offer of redemptive friendship. Within such a trusting relation, God can make himself known by manifestations of agapeic love. This provides a unique kind of second-personal evidence. Moser is surely right that this idea hasn’t received much attention in recent epistemology of religious belief. (Although we do find related thoughts in the work of Aquinas (cf. what I said about Wood’s essay above), Plantinga, and Stump.) But I’m not convinced that it is as incompatible with extant work as Moser makes it out to be. Why couldn’t, for instance, natural theological arguments bring one in a state of mind that is more open to the idea that God exists, thus preparing the way for friendship with God? And couldn’t the operation of a *sensus divinitatis* and the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit as Plantinga describes them, be understood along similar lines as friendship with God? In the end, Moser’s essay does raise a question about the relevance of philosophy in finding evidence for God: If a right will is more important than a refined intellect, philosophical argument may have little to contribute. Instead, we should turn to inspirational literature, exhortational preaching, and modelling a life of love.

John Bishop protests the idea that religious trust in God can be modeled on the analogy of interpersonal trust. Unlike trust in other people, trust in God not only involves the ‘doxastic venture’ of believing the object of one’s trust to be trustworthy in the relevant ways, but also believing it to exist. Because he thinks that rational trust must be attuned to publicly available evidence, he concludes that such trust can never be rational. Unfortunately, he fails to engage those who would simply reject his requirement of public evidence.

In striking contrast, Eleonore Stump develops an account of trust in God, which does liken it to interpersonal trust. The account is inspired by Aquinas’s thought and enriched by contemporary scientific insights about how we form beliefs and acquire knowledge about other people’s mental life. In line with Wood’s essay, she also emphasizes the role of the will in the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom.

Lizzie Fricker’s essay offers a sustained attack on Richard Foley’s argument that the rationality of epistemic self-trust makes it rationally obligatory to trust others as well (and suggests that a similar argument by Linda Zagzebski fares no better). One core idea driving

Foley's argument is that we know ourselves to be cognitively very similar to others, both in the etiology of our beliefs as in our cognitive endowment. Because like cases ought to be treated alike, we should trust others as we trust ourselves. Fricker maintains that this analogy breaks down under scrutiny. (i) The variety of influences on human beliefs is enormous—only those in our relatively small social circles will have largely similar etiologies—and (ii) although our basic cognitive endowment may be universally shared, there are huge differences in how we develop it: What we acquire expertise on, how reflective we are, etc. Because of this we should expect, and in fact find, significant differences in reliability among different people and across different topics. At best, then, self-trust warrants other-trust about “dull everyday stuff” (190), not about “the more surprising and unlikely stuff” (191). For beliefs in the latter category, rational trust requires evidence about one's informants' reliability. In spite of the chapter's rhetoric, I think the disagreement between Fricker and Foley / Zagzebski may well be relatively minor. I never took Foley and Zagzebski to deny that we ought to moderate our confidence in what other people tell us by what we know about differences in reliability. Their reasoning only supports a defeasible, *prima facie* reason for trust in others. I am not convinced that the admittedly real differences between people's beliefs and cognitive functioning that Fricker emphasizes, are sufficient to undermine even such a *prima facie* reason for trust.

Zagzebski's essay really should have been put before Fricker's, for it summarizes precisely the argument that Fricker attacks, without any anticipation of her criticisms. (Of course, I don't blame Zagzebski for this.) Epistemic self-trust is inevitable for all of us. Without it we couldn't rely on any of the outputs of our belief-forming faculties. Consistency then takes us from self-trust to trust in others and in communities. Such trust is not blind, since reasonable selves reflect upon their own belief-states, evaluating their epistemic adequacy (thus again putting self-trust in their own powers of reflection). “The ultimate test that I have reached the truth in any given case is survival of conscientious reflection” (239). Zagzebski then applies these notions to sketch responses to attacks on religious beliefs. Freudian or evolutionary hypotheses about the origins of religious belief are best understood as surgical attacks on epistemic self-trust, targeting some of our belief-forming faculties but not others. She thinks such attacks easily undermine themselves. Although they seek to call into question only our self-trust in religious belief-formation, such doubts generalize quickly once we realize that we use the same powers of reflection in thinking about our religious beliefs as we do in considering our moral, political, and scientific beliefs. Undoubtedly, there is something right about Zagzebski's emphasis on the limits of our cognitive situation and the inevitability of self-reflection as the ultimate arbiter of whether we've gotten it right—at least, when we consider things from our internal cognitive perspective. At the same time, I think such an internalist perspective ought to be supplemented by an external one. Some ways of reflecting on our beliefs are in fact epistemically better (or worse) than others and ‘the ultimate test that I have reached the truth’ is really whether I have in fact gotten it right, rather than ‘survival of conscientious reflection’. Without this external perspective, nothing seems to prevent Zagzebski's account from collapsing into a radical—and to my mind implausible—epistemic relativism.

Laura Callahan and Timothy O'Connor's essay is a rich and subtle discussion of trust as an intellectual virtue. Trust, as they use it, is not only a cognitive disposition to form beliefs on the basis of someone's testimony, but also involves affective and practical aspects: a commitment to and dependence on someone that influences one's actions and feelings

towards her. Such trust should not be placed blindly, but is, at least initially, sensitive to evidential considerations. Once in place, however, it is not constantly moderated by further evidential checking (which is not to say that trust becomes blind: when evidence against trustworthiness piles up, an intellectually virtuous person will abandon it). The essay's central claim is that this thick notion of trust is an intellectual virtue. After having defended this thesis, the authors apply it to religious faith and suggest there is reason to think that it, too, can be intellectually virtuous. I cannot possibly summarize the essay's many insightful nuances and qualifications here, but suffice it to say that it provides plenty of resources to rethink the critical challenges to religious faith posed in Schellenberg's, Bishop's, and Fricker's essays.

The three essays in part four address religious disagreement. Although they do a fine job at it, the failure to interact with the extant literature on this topic from the 1990s seemed like a regrettable oversight to me.

Sandy Goldberg presents one of the strongest arguments from religious disagreement against the rationality of religious belief that I'm aware of. It is strong because he grants his opponent a lot: the resources of epistemological externalism and the supposition that some people in fact reliably form true religious beliefs. This initially seems to make it easy to defend a steadfast response to religious disagreement. Roughly: if your religious beliefs have been produced by a reliable (properly functioning) cognitive process, then they are justified (warranted). Meeting someone with conflicting beliefs doesn't change this, hence you can stick to your religious guns. This won't do, however, argues Goldberg. The fact that religious disagreement characteristically involves a cluster of related issues, is widespread, and is entrenched, provides good evidence that much religious belief-formation is unreliable. Since a religious believer typically lacks reason to think that she, rather than those who disagree with her, has gotten it right, she acquires a defeater for her religious beliefs. Goldberg considers different ways in which this basic challenge can be made more precise and offers an illuminating discussion of how the case of religious belief-formation resembles Laurence Bonjour's famous case of Norman the clairvoyant. He also responds to Bill Alston's likening of religious belief-formation to perception. There is a lot to learn here, but I suspect that whether one ultimately finds Goldberg's challenge compelling depends on how radical an epistemological externalist one is prepared to be. As I see it, the force of Goldberg's challenge to think of religious disagreement as a defeater derives from the fact that we have no universally shared access to religious truths, no independent confirmation for religious belief, and no intersubjectively agreed upon methods of settling religious disputes. A radical externalist can happily admit that it would indeed be lovely if this were different, but reject the idea that such things are necessary for rational religious belief. If a religious believer has in fact formed her beliefs reliably and this seems so to her, even upon careful reflection on the unhappy facts of systematic religious disagreement, then this either deflects or defeats any defeaters that religious disagreement might provide.

Jennifer Lackey observes that much of the discussion about the epistemic significance of disagreement has construed peerhood in terms of who we in fact consider to be our peers. This ignores the normative question of whom we ought to consider our peers. The relevance of this is as follows. Even when we are conformists in the epistemology of disagreement and think that peer disagreement in general calls for belief revision in both peers, we can counsel a steadfast response to disagreements with those we do not consider to be our peers. There is something epistemically problematic about this when we disagree with someone whom

we really ought to consider our peer. (Note, however, that there is also something problematic about revising one's opinion in response to a disagreement with someone whom one has good reason to consider as one's peer, but who is not in fact one's peer—a concern that Lackey doesn't address.) Lackey worries that this strategy makes a steadfast response to religious disagreements too cheap: If religious believers do not consider adherents of other faiths as peers, they would rationally be off the hook. Unfortunately, she never quite explains why this is bad. She just takes it as given that a rational response to religious disagreement cannot be easy. Lackey proposes a notion of peerhood that requires both parties to be roughly equally justified in their beliefs regarding a disputed matter. Two parties then ought to consider each other as peers in this sense when they satisfy three conditions: (i) they have both thought long and carefully about the issue, (ii) they are both sufficiently intellectually virtuous, and (iii) neither "is in sole possession of evidence that both would (after careful consideration) take to be decisive" (313). The essay closes with a quick, almost implicit suggestion that intelligent and informed theists and atheists ought to consider each other as peers, since their disagreement satisfies these three conditions. Perhaps Lackey also means to suggest that, therefore, some belief revision is called for. If anything, this contribution made it clear to me how important it is to be more explicit about the notion of rationality at stake in the disagreement debate. Suppose I disagree with someone whom I correctly take to satisfy (i) through (iii) above. Why exactly should I now revise my beliefs? For note that satisfying (iii) is compatible with being in a situation in which I take myself (perhaps even after careful reflection) to be in sole possession of evidence—perhaps divine revelation or religious experience—that my peer would never regard as decisive no matter how carefully she considers on it. To assume that belief revision is called for in such a situation, it seems to me, is to assume specific and controversial constraints on rationality, such as that rationally admissible evidence must always be publicly shareable or intersubjectively compelling, or that only factors accessible from within one's cognitive perspective determine what is rational.

Most of Nicholas Wolterstorff's contribution is a critical response to Lackey. As with philosophical beliefs, says Wolterstorff, the sources and grounds for our religious beliefs are often opaque to ourselves. As a result, we are often unable to identify why we disagree with those who, for all we can tell, seem to be our peers. But why think that we ought to revise our beliefs when we find each other in such an inexplicable disagreement? I was initially puzzled by Wolterstorff's bold assertions that philosophical or religious peer disagreements put no pressure on us (and our peers) to revise our beliefs, but I think they can be backed up by Wolterstorff's notion of entitlement, which he introduces later in the essay. Someone is not entitled to a belief when "there is some practice of inquiry that he failed to employ but ought to have employed with a seriousness and competence such that, had he done so, he would not have had that belief" (329). Both parties in a religious disagreement may well be entitled to their conflicting beliefs, so that there is nothing wrong if they stick to their beliefs. I do have a worry about this notion of entitlement. I wonder to what extent it is still an epistemic notion, rather than a pragmatic one. For what practices of inquiry are available to us seems to be a highly contingent affair, dependent on our time, place, and social environment. Suppose we had found ourselves in an epistemically unfriendly environment with nothing but iffy practices of inquiry at our disposal. Would the beliefs we form there really be epistemically rational, rather than just practically rational, blameless, and

subjectively justified? Once more, we run into fundamental questions about the notion of rationality at play in the debate about disagreement.

I conclude with some general reflections. The introduction states that the volume (also) aims at reaching a general audience. I doubt that it succeeds in this respect. Although it could have been a lot worse, many of the chapters still assume non-trivial amounts of philosophical background knowledge and terminology of the sort that—from my experience—general readers will find hard to follow. Personally, I don't hold this against the volume. As a scholarly work, it has plenty of merit and I am sure that professional epistemologists and advanced students can profit from it. I only mention it here to caution against blind faith in the introduction on this point.

It's a truism that any volume could have been better if the contributors had interacted more directly with each other, but it's often prohibitively difficult to pull together even a minimally coherent collection of essays. (And I hasten to add that this volume in fact deserves high marks for coherence.) Nonetheless, there are a few missed opportunities for interaction that are so glaringly obvious that they are likely to leave readers slightly frustrated. Fricker's essay is a direct attack on Zagzebski's line of reasoning later in the volume and has obvious relevance for Callahan & O'Connor's position too. The first part of Schellenberg's chapter seeks to undermine almost exactly the sort of claims about the epistemic legitimacy of trust in religious authorities and communities that Dougherty, Zagzebski, and Callahan & O'Connor defend a few essays later. Bishop critiques part of the very approach that Stump develops. And although Wolterstorff does respond directly to Lackey's essay, his interaction with Goldberg is primarily based on Goldberg's earlier work. Even if it was too hard to get the authors to respond to each other's papers, minor interventions in the ordering of the essays could have made for a smoother reading experience.

I wouldn't want to end on a critical note, however. The editors are to be applauded for bringing religious epistemology in touch with developments in contemporary social epistemology and virtue epistemology (and vice versa). This volume paves the way for further research in this broad area and I expect it to become a default point of passage for anyone who wants to write about religious faith and intellectual virtue. Highly recommended.