Jonathan L. Kvanvig. *Rationality and Reflection: How to Think About What to Think*. Oxford University Press 2014. 224 pp. $65.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9780198716419).

With *Rationality and Reflection* Kvanvig puts forth a position he calls 'Perspectivalism', a framework in epistemology in which reflection plays a more prominent role than in competing accounts. The book contains both previously published material and new work, the chapters being rather loosely connected. *Rationality and Reflection* does not present a systematic theory of Perspectivalism or reflection. Major questions for a theory of reflection remain unanswered, like: What are the principles of reflection in detail? Which episodes in a cognitive cycle (say of experience, information processing, decision, action) activate reflection? How should we model reflection and its access in relation to belief states? One may rather say that *Rationality and Reflection* covers ideas and questions in the light of a theory to be worked out more systematically. It may provide some *prolegomena* to a theory of Perspectivalism.

The foundations of Perspectivalism lie in what Kvanvig calls 'the egocentric predicament' of successfully coming to grips with the world, in a normative account of rationality and belief, putting understanding centre stage (in contrast to knowledge), and making a useful distinction between value driven theories (the value being 'having attained knowledge') and theories of epistemic rationality. Reflection distinguishes humans from animals, and therefore, according to Kvanvig, should enter the core of an account of human rationality. Perspectivalism wants to manoeuvre between a too naturalistic ('beastly') approach to rationality and 'over-intellectualizing', stressing fallibilism by further extending fallibilism to one's grasp of epistemic principles and reasons. As reflection can ascend to ever higher levels, the last level of epistemic reasoning stays elusive—'our reflective capacities themselves provide no guaranteed corrective for our beastly inclinations' (74). Reflection and normativity, on the other hand, presuppose some form of (human) epistemic autonomy: 'the following of rules that one gives to oneself as a rational agent' (149).

Kvanvig comes closer to a more specific picture on pages 65-7, outlining a schema of reflective assent in levels. Conditionals used to update beliefs are reformulated by adding in the antecedent a pointer to the level of reflection that conditional is (still) endorsed on. He claims, in general, that at each level of reflection 'different epistemic norms and epistemic conditionals come into play', but the formal and technical details are left open. What type of theory is this: empirical/psychological or conceptual? Later (155) Kvanvig asserts that the 'epistemic principles will be necessarily true'. This makes sense only understanding them as partially constituting the meaning of 'rational'. The method would then be conceptual analysis, despite Kvanvig's misgivings about conceptual analysis (6).

Two major stumbling blocks for the common reader and epistemologist concern the foundations of Perspectivalism: on one hand, the issue where a normative theory of rationality and belief sets in—is it beliefs themselves or epistemic conduct that are subject to epistemic norms? On the other hand, there is the thorny issue of distinguishing objective and subjective notions of 'justification'. Perspectivalism—by its very name and the 'egocentric predicament'—should focus on some form of subjective justification, one might think. The next two paragraphs address these two issues.

The basic question for a normative theory of belief concerns the onset of epistemic control. Are beliefs under voluntary control at all? If they are not—as many epistemologists argue—we

cannot be obliged to believe something. I cannot demand of you 'Believe that there is no largest prime!' if beliefs cannot be directly manipulated. It seems intuitively evident that we can neither make ourselves believe nor make ourselves disbelieve that by sheer will. I can demand of you that you show proper epistemic *conduct* like looking for arguments and counterarguments for your beliefs or hypotheses. You show epistemic responsible behaviour when you are open to exploring the problem space of an item of cognitive interest. In the example, I can demand of you that you consider an elementary arithmetic proof of there being no largest prime. Obliging this demand and given elementary arithmetic skills, you then drop your old disbelief and come to believe that there is no largest prime. We blame and praise epistemic conduct (and corresponding openness to belief revision or honesty in admitting mistakes). We do not blame the sheer belief. Thus a normative theory of rationality has to reflect where it sets in, and what appraisals apply to. Kvanvig does not raise these issues. In fact, he seems to believe that epistemic normativity applies at the level of belief. Chapter 5 rejects that we can be obliged to specific beliefs, but only because of an argument that the holistic character of our belief systems and belief revisions precludes a unique demand of update. Otherwise, Kvanvig might have endorsed epistemic norms applying to individual beliefs, it seems! Arguments like the one above on arithmetic belief challenge this: epistemic norms occur *in* criticism and reflection— endorsing one of Kvanvig's tenets—but they *apply* only to epistemic conduct.

Debates about justification and attributions of being justified typically distinguish between an objective sense of justification (let's call it 'o-justification) and a subjective sense of justification (let's call it 's-justification'). O-justification states that a proposition/statement is justified given total evidence and adequate (i.e. ideally correct and complete) principles of reasoning. S-justification states that a proposition/statement is justified for a subject given the partial or distorted evidence of the subject, relative to the epistemic principles of the subject (these being a set containing a subset of the proper epistemic principles, and, maybe, additional incorrect of incomplete further principles). Given a notion of o-justification we can say that 'believing *p* is justified'. Speaking of people we may say that 'Jon is justified in believing *p*'. This is *ambiguous*! It can mean that an objectively justified belief is held by Jon (call this the 'objective sense' of the attribution). It can also mean that Jon is justified in believing *p* given Jon's evidence and standards (call this the 'subjective sense' of the attribution). We use the subjective sense of such attributions to contract the subjectivity in this justification with an o-justification. In communication this will be the *default usage* of the attribution, as otherwise we needn't have referred to Jon. If one understands the attribution in the objective sense *only*, one may suppose that subjective justification reduces to objective justification. This seems to be the case in Appendix A. Kvanvig's reduction (of 'personal justification' to 'doxastic justification') works because the difference between the expressions of doxastic and personal justification consists there in the difference of attributing 'justified' to a belief (doxastic justification) or attributing the property of having a justified belief to a person (personal justification). The 'justified' is taken by Kvanvig as having the same meaning in both cases, thus lambda-conversion lets Kvanvig reduce personal to doxastic justification. The difference, however, should be seen in the sense of 'justified'. A further reduction of doxastic justification to propositional justification (as in Appendix B) leaves (a version of) o-justification as the one covering concept of justification. What then should the subjective perspective in Perspectivalism consist in?

Rationality and Reflection is a difficult book. On the one hand, readers may applaud Kvanvig's project of putting reflection more at centre stage in epistemology. One will also find some valuable discussion (say, of fallibilism or testimony) in the book. On the other hand, the reader has

to struggle and speculate about what exactly the foundations, the systematic framework, and the technical details of the whole approach are.

Manuel Bremer, University of Duesseldorf, Germany