

**John Turri and Peter Klein (eds.)**

*Ad Infinitum: New Essays on Epistemological Infinitism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. vi + 262. ISBN 978-0-19-960959-8.

If responsibly holding a belief requires a reason, and only beliefs can serve as reasons, we have the making of an infinite regress: for any given belief, it must be justified by another one, and that belief must be justified by another, and so on. This is the *regress problem* for epistemic reasons. Until relatively recently, skepticism, foundationalism, and coherentism were seen as the principal responses worth entertaining to this problem. Owing largely to the efforts of Peter Klein, another alternative was rehabilitated: infinitism. According to infinitists, the regress phenomenon should be embraced: epistemic reasons do not require a foundation, leading instead to an inevitable (though unproblematic, non-circular) infinite regress. Responsibly providing epistemic reasons is a progressive matter, without any need for an ultimate terminating point. At best, we might reach a provisional stopping point, given the context of inquiry.

Seizing on the attention infinitism has recently enjoyed, John Turri and Peter Klein have edited a collection of essays presenting fresh work on the subject. Along with the editors' introduction, the collection contains fourteen essays. The introduction itself provides a superb presentation of the basic arguments in favor of infinitism as well as many of the objections raised against it. It should prove a helpful entry point into the literature for non-experts (including faculty and graduate students). As for the essays, they are stand-alone pieces, each of which does a nice job of framing the relevant issues. The editors did not organize them by theme, opting instead to order them alphabetically, by the authors' last names. But common themes do emerge, and the brief discussion of those essays to follow is guided by some of those themes.

Several of the contributions to the volume address the very possibility of the regress of reasons itself. In "Virtue and Vice Among the Infinite," Michael Huemer discusses several kinds of infinite regresses, and sketches a general theory explaining why some of them are virtuous whereas others are vicious. This theory is further deployed to briefly assess the prospect of there being an infinite chain of reasons available to finite agents. In "First Person and Third Person Reasons and the Regress Problem," Linda Zagzebski argues that the regress problem only arises for reasons deployed from a third-person standpoint; but we also deploy reasons of a first-person variety, for which the pressing issue is not an infinite regress so much as the need for epistemic self-trust. In "Klein's Case for Infinitism," Ram Neta provides an admirably detailed reconstruction of Klein's case for infinitism, on the basis of which Neta dismisses a number of standard objections to infinitism. But he also argues that the most plausible

version of Klein's argument requires interpreting the key expression "evidential ancestry" in one of two ways, either of which results in the argument's failure.

Some of the contributions provide novel defenses of infinitism. In "Creative Reasoning," John Turri lays out an interesting case for inferential creationism, the family of views according to which reasoning itself can create justification—something that appears to be key for infinitism's success. Turri argues that inferential creationism is true; but this does not hand the advantage to the infinitist, as any non-skeptical position should also accept it. Scott Aikin's contribution, "Knowing Better, Cognitive Command, and Epistemic Infinitism," is aimed at showing that infinitism does an excellent job of explaining what is involved with *knowing better* some proposition or fact, or having a better command of a subject matter. This serves as a new non-skeptical argument for a position usually motivated by the threat of skepticism. In "Can an Infinite Regress Justify Everything?," Jeanne Peijnenburg and David Atkinson break with most discussions of infinitism, which are conducted informally. Peijnenburg and Atkinson address the *reductio* objection to infinitism: namely, if it can be demonstrated that a single proposition can be justified by an infinite chain of reasons, the same can be demonstrated for any proposition, including the negation of the proposition with which we originally began. By attending to the formal details of infinite probabilistic regresses and on the plausible assumption that justification is probabilistic, they weaken the impact of this objection. In "Reasons, Reasoning, and Knowledge," Peter Klein sketches a rapprochement between infinitism and foundationalism. Most notably, Klein grants foundationalists that various states might serve as epistemically basic for some contexts, and that some of those states *might not require reasons themselves*. But he also insists (on infinitism's behalf) that, in some contexts of inquiry, a basic proposition might be worthy of additional investigation.

A number of contributions challenge Klein's use of the distinction between propositional justification and doxastic justification, which he invokes to capture the idea that there can be infinite chains of (propositions serving as) reasons, and that justifying any given belief is provisional and sensitive to the context of inquiry. Klein's view, put roughly, is that a proposition *p* is propositionally justified just in case there is a reason available for *p*; and a belief that *p* is doxastically justified just in case that belief is *based* on whatever propositionally justifies *p*. For Klein, doxastic justification also requires that an agent cite relevant reasons for a belief—something that might seem too demanding, as many of our justified beliefs appear to be held without explicitly citing reasons. But (in this collection, as elsewhere) Klein is clear that his target is the most highly prized form of belief: what might be referred to as "reflective adult knowledge." In "Klein and the Regress Argument," Michael Bergmann targets