

Knowledge, Understanding and Wisdom

Spoznanje, razumevanje in dvom

XIXth Bled Philosophical Conference

<http://www.bled-conference.si>

May 30th – June 3rd, 2011

Bled, Hotel Kompas

Slovenian Society for Analytic Philosophy and Philosophy of Science
Društvo za analitično filozofijo in filozofijo znanosti

▪ GENERAL INFORMATION

Philosophical conferences at Bled (Slovenia) were initiated, on the suggestion by *John Biro*, in 1993 at first as a continuation of the IUC - Dubrovnik postgraduate course in philosophy but they gradually started a life of their own, with the help, first of *Eugene Mills* and then *Mylan Engel Jr.* The first week of June is traditionally reserved for a conference dedicated to various topics in the field of analytical philosophy. *Knowledge, Understanding and Wisdom* is the nineteenth Bled Philosophical Conference. All events take place in Hotel Kompas, Cankarjeva 2, Bled (*Blejska, Grajska-Triglavska*).

The 2011 conference is organized by a team consisting of *Wayne D. Riggs* (*University of Oklahoma*), *Matjaž Potrč* of the University of Ljubljana, *Nenad Miščević* and *Danilo Šuster* of the University of Maribor. The conference is included in the program of the activities of the Slovenian Society for Analytic Philosophy. Authors are invited to submit their contributions to *Acta Analytica* (<http://www.springer.com/philosophy/journal/12136>) for a special thematic issue.

▪ FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Slovenian Research Agency and Slovenian Society for Analytic Philosophy



PROGRAM

Monday, May 30th

Grajska-Triglavsko

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|-------------|--|
| 12:50-13:00 | <i>Welcoming Remarks</i> |
| 13:00-14:05 | <i>Wayne D. Riggs</i> , "Understanding and the Virtues" |
| 14:15-15:20 | <i>Anne Baril</i> , "Eudaimonia in Accounts of Epistemic Excellence" |
| 15:30-16:35 | <i>Kristoffer Ahlstrom</i> , "What's So Good About a Wise and Knowledgeable Public?" |

Tuesday, May 31st

Grajska-Triglavsko

Blejska

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|-------------|---|--|
| 9:00-10:05 | <i>Nikolaj Pederson</i> , "No Need for Entitlement" | <i>Mark Kaplan</i> , "Why Is It Important What You Know?" |
| 10:05-11:10 | <i>Igal Kwart</i> , "Rational Assertability, the Performative Role of 'Know', and Pragmatic Encroachment" | <i>Adam Morton</i> , "Externalism About Thinking" |
| 11:10-11:25 | <i>Break</i> | |
| 11:25-12:30 | <i>Robert Roberts</i> , "Emotions, Perception, and Moral Judgments" | |
| 12:30-14:30 | <i>Lunch</i> | |
| 14:30-15:35 | <i>Jason Baehr</i> , "Sophia" | <i>Kelly Becker</i> , "Basic Knowledge and Understanding" |
| 15:35-16:40 | <i>Mikael Janvid</i> , "Knowledge versus Understanding: The Cost of Avoiding Gettier" | <i>Christian Piller</i> , "Why There Are No Practical Gettier Cases" |
| 16:40-16:55 | <i>Break</i> | |
| 16:55-18:00 | <i>Sharon Ryan</i> , "The Deep Rationality Theory of Wisdom" | |

Wednesday, June 1st

Grajska-Triglavsko

Blejska

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|-------------|--|---|
| 9:00-10:05 | <i>Sarah Wright</i> , "Wisdom's Relation to Truth" | <i>Marc Moffett</i> , "Conceptions, Understanding and Wisdom" |
| 10:05-11:10 | <i>Stephen Grimm</i> , "Understanding As Knowledge of the Cause" | <i>Christopher Kelp</i> , "Three Strikes Against Contextualism" |
| 11:10-11:25 | <i>Break</i> | |
| 11:25-12:30 | <i>David Henderson</i> , TBA | |

Thursday, June 2nd

Grajska-Triglavsko

Blejska

9:00-10:05	<i>Julie Eflin</i> , “Epistemic Communities: Virtue, Vice and Epistemic Disability”	<i>Michael Pace</i> , “Wisdom, Understanding, and the Truth Goal”
10:05-11:10	<i>Student section</i>	<i>Student section</i>
	Nina Iskra: “The meaning of life: can a response-dependentist account succeed?”	Iris Vidmar: “Literature as a mode of promoting understanding”
11:10-11:25	<i>Break</i>	
11:25-12:30	<i>John Greco</i> , “Episteme, Knowledge and Understanding”	
12:30-14:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
14:30-15:35	<i>Nenad Miščević</i> , “What Kind of Knowledge Do We Need for Wisdom?”	
15:35-15:50	<i>Break</i>	
15:50-16:55	<i>Valerie Tiberius</i> , “Well-Being, Wisdom, and Thick Theorizing”	
16:55-18:00	<i>Judith Glueck</i> , “Psychological Approaches to Wisdom: Current Developments and Open Questions”	

Friday, June 3rd

Grajska-Triglavsko

Blejska

9:00-10:05	Allan Hazlett, “Limning Structure as an Epistemic Goal”	Jack Lyons, “Should Reliabilists Be Worried About Demon Worlds?”
10:05-11:10	Georgi Gardiner, “Understanding, Integration, and Epistemic Value”	Dositej Dereta, “Epistemic Relevance of Morphological Content”
11:10-11:25	<i>Break</i>	
11:25-12:30	Lizzie Fricker, “Stating and Insinuating”	
12:30-14:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
14:30-15:35	Brandon Fitelson, “Knowledge From Non-knowledge I: Deductive Inferential (Empirical) Knowledge from Falsehood”	
15:35-16:40	Terry Horgan & Matjaž Potrč, “Epistemological Skepticism, Semantic Blindness, and Competence-Based Performance Errors”	

Closing remarks

Abstracts

Kristoffer Ahlstrom // University of Copenhagen, Denmark < >

What's so Good about a Wise and Knowledgeable Public?

Political philosophers have been concerned for some time with the epistemic caliber of the general public, qua the body that is, ultimately, tasked with political action in democratic societies. Unfortunately, the empirical data paints a pretty dismal picture here, indicating that the public tends to be largely ignorant on the issues relevant to governance. To make matters worse, social psychological research on how ignorance tends to breed overconfidence gives us reason to believe that the public will not only lack knowledge on the relevant issues, but also wisdom, in the Socratic sense of an awareness of your ignorance. It might be thought that an obvious remedy to this situation would be to increase the knowledge and wisdom of the public. However, as far as sound political decision-making and action is concerned, there is nothing particularly valuable about knowledge or wisdom per se—irrespective of what account of wisdom available in the literature we opt for. It will be concluded that what the public needs is nothing but the most basic epistemic good: true belief.

Jason Baehr // Loyola Marymount University, USA < >

Two Kinds of Wisdom

This paper is a kind of prolegomenon to a broader and more extensive inquiry into the nature, structure, and epistemological significance of sophia. I begin by explaining why contemporary epistemology is ripe for such an inquiry and deal with an important methodological issue. Most of the paper, however, is aimed at clarifying the distinction between sophia and phronesis, or between theoretical and practical wisdom. I consider several initially plausible ways of drawing this distinction and identify problems with each one. I conclude with a positive account of the relation between sophia and phronesis and with some general observations about the defining character of the latter.

Anne Baril // University of Arizona, USA < >

Eudaimonia in Accounts of Epistemic Excellence

Within epistemology, broadly construed, there is growing interest in accounts that provide what we might call epistemic guidance. Among the promising candidates for such accounts are accounts of epistemic excellence. In this paper I discuss two extant accounts of epistemic excellence: Bishop and Trout's (2005) Strategic Reliabilism and Roberts and Wood's (2007) account of intellectual virtue. I draw a connection between, on the one hand, these accounts' aim to articulate an ideal that is practically helpful to individuals, as they attempt to reason in their everyday lives, and, on the other, these accounts' reference to eudaimonia, or human flourishing. I show how it is in virtue of the latter that these accounts are successful in achieving the former. I close with some questions what work we expect (and can reasonably expect) an account of epistemic excellence to do, and how these expectations affect the way we develop, and criticize, accounts of epistemic excellence.

Kelly Becker // University of New Mexico, USA < >

Basic Knowledge and Understanding

Reliabilism is a theory that countenances basic knowledge, that is, knowledge from a reliable source without requiring that the agent knows the source is reliable. Critics (especially Cohen 2002) have argued that such theories generate all-too-easy, intuitively implausible cases of higher-order knowledge based on inference from basic knowledge. For present purposes, the criticism might be recast as claiming that reliabilism implausibly generates cases of understanding from brute, basic knowledge. I argue that the easy knowledge (or easy understanding) criticism rests on an implicit mischaracterization of the notion of a reliable process. Properly understood, reliable processes do not permit the transition from basic knowledge to understanding based on inference.

Dositej Dereta // University of Ljubljana, Slovenia < > (grad. student)

The Role of Morphological Content in Belief formation

In presenting the role and the meaning of Morphological content I will use this conception as Horgan and Potrč have put it in their recent work, concerning the formulation of belief fixation as it is approached in cognitive sciences. Through a brief inquiry into the structure of human cognition which has an Architecture that is essentially morphological, I will try to explain, why is this aspect of cognition plausible and what are the main things through which the morphological structure of cognition is expressed. It will be important to realize, that the process of belief formation is not entirely dependent of information that gets explicitly represented in consciousness during processing, but is specially grounded in the relevant background information that is called morphological content. As we will see, morphological content should be understood as a fundamental part of cognition, which is implicit in its structure and is automatically employed when the process of fixation of epistemically justified beliefs occurs. Also we will notice that the presence of the role of morphological content during belief formation is not totally unconscious, but is rather not explicitly presented, what will be shown with the possible expressions of morphological content being employed in the moment of belief fixation.

Juli Eflin // Ball State University, USA < >

Epistemic Communities: Virtue, Vice and Epistemic Disability

Chief among the epistemic virtues is proper persuadability, a stable disposition involving an openness to changing one's mind when, and only when, proper evidence requires. It is the mean between intellectual imperviousness and intellectual faddism. Yet each individual, whether virtuous or not, lives in multiple communities that have standards and epistemic norms. The virtue theoretic approach to studying knowers is increasingly studying the communities in which would-be knowers develop virtues and acquire understanding. My research is focused at epistemic communities, and my approach is feminist.

Epistemic communities have methods for gaining knowledge, standards about the nature of evidence, and it is through these that its members have epistemological confidence. There are community level analogues to the vices of impermeability and intellectual faddism; and there is an analogue to proper persuadability, what I will call proper permeability. Here is my claim: In an epistemic community that is properly permeable most members flourish. In such a community, some members are more "abled" than others, and flourishing is tied to what I will call epistemic ability and epistemic disability. An epistemic community flourishes when it is properly permeable because permeability reduces epistemic disability.

Branden Fitelson // Rutgers, USA < >

Knowledge from non-knowledge I: deductive inferential (empirical) knowledge from falsehood

First, I will review some historical examples that appear to be cases of knowledge obtained via deductive inference from premises (some of) which are false. Then, I will discuss some recent analyses of such cases, with an emphasis on the precise role that the false beliefs play in the acquisition of inferential knowledge. Finally, I will offer some new examples which seem to (a) bolster the role played by the false premises, and (b) call into question some of the recent analyses of such cases. My emphasis in this talk will be on (rather simple) cases involving deductive inference. This is just "Part I" of a larger project, which also includes inductive inferential knowledge from falsehood, and -- more generally -- inferential knowledge from true premises which are not known (and, even more generally, cases in which the knowledge in question may even be non-empirical).

Lizzie Fricker // Oxford, UK < >

Stating and Insinuating

Georgi Gardiner // University of Edinburgh, UK < >

Understanding, Integration, and Epistemic Value

Epistemic Value Truth Monism (T-Monism) is the thesis that true belief is the sole fundamental epistemic good. This entails that all other epistemic goods derive their epistemic value from the value of true belief, and that there is no further epistemic good with respect to which true belief is merely derivatively valuable. T-Monism entails that if you have a true belief that p, you have all the epistemic good qua p (and if you have every possible true belief you are maximally epistemically good). T-monism is a plausible and widely held view. I argue that structure and integration among beliefs possess epistemic value not reducible to the value of true belief, and so possess value T-Monism cannot account for. I then argue that this structure and integration among beliefs is the distinctive value of understanding, as opposed to knowledge. I thus hope to shed light on the nature and value of understanding whilst making progress in the dialectic against T-Monism.

Judith Glueck // University of Klagenfurt, Austria < >

Psychological Approaches to Wisdom: Current Developments and Open Questions

The construct of wisdom has long been avoided by psychological researchers – probably because it is a complex, multi-faceted construct that is difficult even to define. Since the 1980s, however, it has become a topic of psychological inquiry, which may reflect a growing general interest in positive aspects of aging. This presentation gives an overview (with a certain focus on our own work) of past and current wisdom research, centering on three questions: What is wisdom? Can wisdom be measured – and if yes, how? How does wisdom develop?

John Greco // Saint Louis University, USA < >

Episteme, Knowledge and Understanding

The first part of the paper argues that epistemology ought to respect the distinction between knowledge and understanding, as failing to do so creates misunderstanding and confusion. In particular, it has led many philosophers to place conditions on knowledge that are inappropriate. Second, it is argued that the Greek episteme better tracks our contemporary concept of “understanding” than it does our concept of “knowledge,” although it tracks neither perfectly. Finally, the paper reviews some important issues in the contemporary literature on understanding, and argues that an updated Aristotelian view competes well against alternatives.

Stephen Grimm // Fordham University, USA < >

Understanding as Knowledge of the Cause

What happens when we move from knowing that something is the case to understanding why it is the case: e.g., from knowing that the sky is blue to understanding why it is blue? According to a long line of philosophers, the move from knowing that to understanding why is not the result of acquiring some sort of superknowledge but rather simply the result of acquiring more knowledge: in particular, it is said, it is the result of acquiring a knowledge of causes.

Although this is the traditional view of understanding, several recent philosophers have argued that it can no longer be sustained. According to Duncan Pritchard, Jonathan Kvanvig, and Catherine Elgin, for example, knowledge of causes is either not necessary for understanding, or not sufficient, or both. In this paper I consider some of the objections that have been made to the traditional view, and argue that what they show is not that the traditional view is mistaken, but rather that it needs to be understood in a particular way. More specifically, I argue that what the objections show is that the object of understanding is not a proposition or set of propositions, but rather the actual causal relationships (or, more broadly, modal relationships) that obtain in the world.

Allan Hazlett // University of Edinburgh, UK < >

Limning Structure as an Epistemic Goal

Many epistemologists theorize epistemic justification in teleological terms, and many of these take truth to be an epistemic goal, or the fundamental or primary epistemic goal. Here I explore the idea that there is another epistemic goal: limning structure, i.e. employing cognitive categories that map nature's fundamental structure or "carve nature at the joints." I look at some consequences of this idea for teleological conceptions of epistemic justification, and propose a connection between the goal of limning structure and understanding, analogous to the connection between the truth goal and knowledge.

David Henderson // University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA < >

TBA

Terry Horgan & Matjaž Potrč // University of Arizona, USA < > and University of Ljubljana, Slovenia < >

Epistemological Skepticism, Semantic Blindness, and Competence-Based Performance Errors

Lately one popular line of objection to contextualism about the concept of knowledge, and to contextualist-based replies to radical skepticism about knowledge, is to claim that contextualism is committed to an implausible thesis that ordinary users of the concept of knowledge are "blind" to the semantical workings of this concept. Our reply is to this effect: the kind of error they are prone to is a subtle and predictable "competence-based performance error," and the fact that contextualism is committed to saying that folks are prone to that kind of error is not a strong objection against the theory.

Nina Iskra // University of Maribor, Slovenia < > (grad. student)

The Meaning of Life: Can a Response-dependant Account Succeed?

The paper is a brief discussion of the response-dependant account of the meaning of life recently proposed by Suzan Wolf. The questions raised concern the status of »objective attractiveness« (is it universal, is it »queer« in Mackie's sense, is it »real« in any reasonable sense?), and its epistemology. A Mackie-like error account is discussed as a possible alternative.

Mikael Janvid // Stockholm University, Sweden < >

Knowledge Versus Understanding: The Cost of Avoiding Gettier

In the current discussion on epistemic value, several philosophers argue that understanding enjoys higher epistemological significance and epistemic value than knowledge – the epistemic state the epistemological tradition been preoccupied with. By noting a tension between the necessary conditions for understanding in the perhaps most prominent of these philosophers, Jonathan Kvanvig, this paper disputes the higher epistemological relevance of understanding. At the end, on the basis of the results of the previous sections, some alternative comparative contrasts between knowledge and understanding are briefly explored, including one where an analogue to the KK-principle for knowledge – the "UU-principle" – does not hold.

Mark Kaplan // Indiana University, USA < >

Why is it Important What You Know?

It is easy to understand why Descartes thought that knowledge is important. He thought that "[a]ll knowledge is certain and evident cognition;" that every inquirer is endowed with a cognitive capacity that enables her to tell, simply by paying due care, what she knows and what she doesn't; that an inquirer ought to believe only what she, in this sense, knows; and that, if we but took this obligation as our own, we would conduct our inquiries in a different and better way than before.

But why should we think knowledge is important—we who don't think that all knowledge is certain and evident cognition, and who don't think any inquirer has the cognitive capacity that Descartes thought all inquirers have? After all, given what we think knowledge is, it looks as if an inquirer's ability to fulfill her duties as an inquirer would be in no way compromised were she to attend only to what she is justified in believing, and never even broach the question as to what exactly it is she knows. My purpose will be to say (i) why it seems so hard to see how knowledge (as we understand it) can possibly be of any methodological importance, and (ii) why knowledge is methodologically

important all the same. It will turn out that two of the critical insights necessary to appreciate the methodological import of knowledge are fully present in Roderick Chisholm's wonderful (but sadly out of print) book, *Perceiving: a Philosophical Study*.

Chris Kelp // K.U.Leuven, Belgium < >

Three Strikes Against Contextualism

This paper raises three worries for attributor contextualist theories of knowledge attributions (AC), or to be more precise, to versions of AC that are motivated by the likes of bank cases. The first concerns the plausibility of the underlying "methodology of the straightforward", the second is that AC itself fails to live up to the demands of this methodology and the third uses the second to suggest that invariantism offers the simpler theory than AC and so may turn out to be preferable on theoretical grounds.

Igal Kwart // Hebrew University Jerusalem, Israel < >

Rational Assertability, the Performative Role of 'Know,' and Pragmatic Encroachment

In this paper, I lay out an account of the pragmatics of 'know', and use it to argue against pragmatic encroachment into the semantics of 'know'. In the past couple of decades, there were a couple of major attempts to establish the thesis of pragmatic encroachment. Contextualism and Subject-Sensitive Invariantism offered accounts of knowledge in which standard and/or stakes play a major role in the semantics. These accounts were propelled first and foremost by examples that seemed to require a pragmatic component in the truth-conditions of knowledge ascriptions in order to be accounted for. The pragmatic account I propose explains the admittedly pragmatic character of the examples in question within the pragmatic field, obviating the need for pragmatic encroachment into the semantics. The main pragmatic components I employ are the rational assertability as well as the pragmatic role of the use of 'know' in deliberation that resorts to practical inference. This pragmatic account is fundamentally different than the Gricean approach. It accounts for the intuitions associated with the paradigmatic examples, and offers new insight about the methodology of using intuitions as semantic evidence.

Jack Lyons // University of Arkansas, USA < >

Should Reliabilists Be Worried About Demon Worlds?

The New Evil Demon argument is supposed to show that reliability is not necessary for justification, for the cognitive processes employed by demonworlders are unreliable, yet the demonworlders are intuitively justified. I argue that reliabilism can attribute a good deal of justification (or positive epistemic status, at least) even in demon worlds, by invoking the concepts of belief-dependent processes and conditional reliability. Where reliabilism must insist the demonworlders are unjustified is where their belief-independent processes are concerned, but on closer inspection, these beliefs are not intuitively unjustified after all.

Nenad Miščević // University of Maribor, Slovenia & CEU, Hungary < > ***What Kind of Knowledge do We Need for Wisdom?***

The introductory part of the paper puts it on a map of philosophical options concerning wisdom (anthropo-, theo- and cosmo-centric ones). The second part briefly develops a two-level picture, close to Sosa's and Lehrer's work on knowledge. Wisdom combines the virtues of the first-order production of decision and action (reliability and practical validity) with second order reflective endorsement of the first order picture. The first order production yields phronesis-generated action-guiding desires which constitute practical wisdom in the narrow sense, and the second level the more refined and sophisticated wisdom of philosophers and their kin.

Marc Moffett // University of Wyoming , USA < >
Conceptions, Understanding and Wisdom

Adam Morton // University of Alberta, Canada < >
Externalism about Thinking

There are criteria for successful thinking that generalize the relation knowledge has to belief-forming thinking. I try to state them, and draw some tendentious consequences about the status of rationality.

Michael Pace // Chapman University, USA < >
Wisdom, Understanding, and the Truth Goal

Nikolaj Pederson //University of Copenhagen, Denmark < >
No Need for Entitlement

According to some views on the structure of warrant, it is not possible to acquire an evidential warrant for thinking that there is an external world. Similarly it is not possible to acquire an evidential warrant for thinking that one is not a brain in a vat. Due to epistemic circularity, any attempt to acquire such a warrant will be subject to a principled failure of warrant transmission. In light of this, Crispin Wright has suggested that we enjoy a certain kind of non-evidential warrant---entitlement---to trust anti-sceptical hypotheses. The aim of the paper is to discuss two seeming problems for this proposal: firstly, is there any good sense in which entitled trust is underwritten by epistemic reasons, and secondly (and relatedly), is entitled trust epistemically rational? If these answers cannot be answered in the affirmative, it is not clear that Wright-style entitlement deserves to be classified as species of epistemic warrant properly so-called. I adopt an epistemic consequentialist framework and investigate whether trusting anti-sceptical hypotheses maximizes expected epistemic value. If so, there is an interesting sense in which trusting anti-sceptical hypotheses can be regarded as being underwritten by epistemic reasons and being epistemically rational. The adopted consequentialist framework is of a pluralistic nature in that it incorporates several epistemic values---one of an externalist kind (truth), the other of an internalist kind (what I will label "meta-cognitive coherence"). I suggest that trusting anti-sceptical hypotheses maximizes expected epistemic value locally, viz. with respect to the internalist kind of value. This might seem like good news for the proponent of Wrightian entitlement. However, I argue that it is not: the success of the consequentialist strategy eliminates the need for entitlement.

Christian Piller // University of York, UK < >

Why There Are No Practical Gettier Cases

In this paper, I argue that if one tries to transfer the Gettier structure to the practical domain, then either one fails to describe an action or one does describe an action but one which is not normatively criticisable. I explore the critical implications my view has for the ambitions of virtue epistemology.

Wayne Riggs // University of Oklahoma, USA < >

Understanding and Virtue

I argue that an important feature of the “value-profile” of open-mindedness is that it is not merely truth-conducive, but also understanding-conducive.

Robert Roberts // Baylor University, USA < >

Emotions, Perception, and Moral Judgments

How are moral judgments related to emotions? I argue that emotions serve moral judgments in a way analogous to the way sensory perception serves ordinary factual judgments. Most of the paper consists in explanation of the perceptual character of emotions and of the way emotions of ordinary types — joy, contempt, anger, fear, hope, and the like — can supply the kind of perceptual basis required by moral judgments.

Ryan Sharon // West Virginia University, USA < >

The Deep Rationality Theory of Wisdom

Valerie Tiberius // University of Minnesota, USA < >

Well-Being, Wisdom, and Thick Theorizing

We wouldn't attribute well-being to someone who is seriously physically ill and we wouldn't attribute practical wisdom to someone who has poor skills of instrumental reasoning. But when we attribute well-being or wisdom to someone we also mean to say that they have something worth having, something good for them, perhaps even something admirable. Well-being and wisdom are thick concepts: they are tied to the world and they express evaluations at the same time. Interestingly, psychologists have taken a recent interest in thick concepts that used to be the domain of philosophers. Psychologists have constructed and operationalized definitions of well-being and wisdom and have run many studies to discover the facts about what causes well-being or wisdom so defined. One might think that this research is irrelevant to philosophical theories because one assumes a picture according to which we start with philosophical analysis of the thick concept and then simply turn things over to the scientists. I argue that this is the wrong picture and that things are more complicated than this – at least as far as well-being and wisdom are concerned. I further argue that once we see how things are more complicated we can also see that thick concepts hold out a special promise for making progress in moral theory.

Iris Vidmar // University of Rijeka, Croatia < >

Literature as a mode of promoting understanding

Contemporary epistemology has abandoned monistic picture of epistemic values, according to which we mostly cared about reaching knowledge. Under the influence of Duncan Pritchard and Johanthan Kvanvig, we recognize some other epistemic aims, like understanding and wisdom. In this paper I try to connect this pluralistic picture which comes from epistemology and a commonplace in literary aesthetics, namely the claim that literature is cognitively valuable. Following authors like John Gibson, I try to show that literature provides us with a form of 'cognitive awareness' and is in that sense extremely valuable for our epistemic project of reaching understanding.

Sarah Wright // University of Georgia, USA < >

How Boots Befooled the King: Wisdom, Truth, and the Stoics

The Stoics hold that the wise person cannot be deceived. This seems an implausibly strong claim. I suggest a more moderate position, the result not of following the Stoics epistemology, but of extending the Stoic account of the moral virtues into a virtue epistemology. Looking to a folk story for a common conception of wisdom, I make a distinction between being fooled (i.e. deceived or tricked) and being befooled; only the person who is befooled has shown themselves to be a fool and lacking in wisdom. If our overall epistemic goal is wisdom, then we only need to ensure that we are not befooled. Cognitive virtues modelled on the Stoic moral virtues cannot ensure that one is not fooled, but they can ensure that one is not befooled. These cognitive virtues focus on the part of our epistemic lives that the Stoics think is under our control; our assent to appearances. The Stoics characterize virtue as the skill of living. Cognitive virtue is then a skill in assenting to appearances; this is perfectly parallel to the Stoic claim that moral virtue is the skill of assenting only to particular appearances about value. Both virtues are required of the wise person.

