



UNIVERSITY OF
STIRLING

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

EPISTEMIC VALUE

AUGUST 18TH-20TH, 2006

CONFERENCE BOOKLET

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www.philosophy.stir.ac.uk/postgraduate/EpistemicValueConference.php

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

All talks are in room A7, Pathfoot. Tea/coffee will be in A5, Pathfoot. These sessions are free and open to everyone, regardless of whether they are registered for the conference.

Friday 18th August

- 1.00 Registration Desk Open
Main Foyer, Pathfoot Building
- 2.00 Pre-Conference Workshop Welcome
- 2.00-3.00 ***Stephen Grimm (Notre Dame/Montana)***
'Epistemic Normativity'

ABSTRACT. Sometimes we evaluate beliefs positively (we call them “justified” or “rational”), sometimes negatively (thus “unjustified” or “irrational”). But why? In virtue of what? In this paper I first consider and reject the widely held view that a belief earns positive marks, from an epistemic point of view, if it does well with respect to the things with intrinsic epistemic value (i.e., helps to promote them or bring them about). I then consider Ernest Sosa’s more recent, and to my mind more promising, view that casts truth as the epistemically “fundamental” value (the ultimate explainer of other distinctively epistemic values) while rescinding from questions of whether or not acquiring the truth is intrinsically valuable. The problem with Sosa’s view, I argue, is that it leaves out the normative dimension of epistemic appraisal—i.e., the dimension of obligation and blame and culpability. I then sketch a different theory of epistemic normativity.

Chair: Adrian Haddock (Stirling)

- 3.00-4.00 ***Jason Baehr (Loyola Marymount)***
'Unravelling the Value Problem'

ABSTRACT. The value problem in epistemology is rooted in a commonsense, theoretically neutral intuition to the effect that knowledge has value over and above the value of true belief. Call this the “guiding intuition.” This intuition generates a problem in light of two additional considerations. The first is that knowledge is (roughly) justified true belief. The second is that according to certain popular accounts of epistemic justification (e.g., reliabilism), its value is apparently instrumental to and hence derivative from the value of true belief. But if knowledge is justified true belief and the value of justification is derivative from the value of true belief, how can knowledge be more valuable than true belief? This problem has received a great deal of attention among epistemologists in recent years. I argue here, however, that standard ways of understanding and responding to the value problem are flawed. I begin by distinguishing between two different conceptions of the value problem in the literature: what I call the “strong formal constraint” conception and the “single determinate property” conception. I argue that both of these conceptions are based on implausible characterizations of the guiding intuition. I go on to sketch an alternative characterization of the guiding intuition and examine its implications for the value problem itself. I conclude that when properly formulated, the value problem gives way to a familiar debate about epistemic value pluralism.

Chair: Duncan Pritchard (Stirling)

4.00-4.20 Tea/coffee break

4.20-5.20 ***W. Jay Wood (Wheaton)***
 ‘Love of Knowledge as an Intellectual Virtue’

ABSTRACT. The dispositions of desire, emotional response, and choice that constitute the excellent formation of the will have been, from ancient times to the present, much noticed in discussions of ethics, but remarkably less in epistemology. Aristotle noted in his *Metaphysics* that humans have a natural appetite for knowledge, but in his development of the intellectual virtues he does not describe the development of this appetite; indeed, the appetitive part of the soul is left out of his account of intellectual virtues. A central contention of this paper is that the will is crucial to an agent’s intellectual functioning, and we attempt to sketch, under the title “love of knowledge,” a virtue consisting in the proper formation of this natural appetite. We mean ‘knowledge’ to express a richly intertwined bundle of understanding, acquaintance, and propositional knowledge. We argue that in addition to wanting her beliefs to be true and adequately supported, the virtuous lover of knowledge seeks knowledge that has load-bearing significance, is connected with other beliefs in frameworks of explanation and understanding, and is worthy, bearing crucially on human flourishing and excellent objects. Our account of virtuous love of knowledge develops a theme sounded by Augustine and Aquinas, that insists that intellectual formation goes hand in hand with moral formation.

Chair: Alan Millar (Stirling)

5.20 Pre-Conference Workshop Close

5.45 Taxis Depart for *Chambos* Restaurant, Bridge of Allan
 (Please congregate at the front of the Pathfoot Building)

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

All talks will take place in the Stirling Management Centre

Saturday 19th August

9.00 Registration Desk Open
Main Foyer, Stirling Management Centre

9.30-10.00 Tea/coffee

10.00 Conference welcome

10.00-11.00 ***Alan Millar (Stirling)***
'The Value of Knowledge'

ABSTRACT. The aim of Stirling's AHRC-funded Value of Knowledge project is to shed light on knowledge, and the shape of an adequate theory of knowledge, through consideration of the issue of why, if at all, knowledge matters. This talk outlines a view of how these matters are connected. It draws attention to a problem for traditional theory of knowledge in explaining why knowledge is of particular value by contrast with lesser states and sketches an alternative approach.

Chair: Miranda Fricker (Birkbeck)

11.00-12.30 ***Wayne Riggs (Oklahoma)***
'On Luck and Value'

ABSTRACT. In this paper I will defend the theory that knowledge is credit-worthy true belief in the light of the account of epistemic luck offered by Duncan Pritchard. In support of this theory, I offer a two-part defence of an account of luck. The first part will consist of a critique of the best-developed rival account of luck around—Pritchard's "safety account" of luck. I will argue that his modal definition of luck falls to decisive counterexamples. I will also argue that the specific instantiation of this definition that he develops to account for epistemic luck fails as well, as does his subsequent "safety" theory of knowledge which is presented in terms of such luck. The second part of the defence will be to respond on behalf of my "control account" of luck to the most important objections raised to it, and to show that not only do the objections fail, but their failures offer us some interesting insights into the nature of luck that other accounts do not.

Chair: Albert Atkin (Glasgow)

Commentator/First Discussant: Heather Battaly (Cal State, Fullerton)

12.30-1.30 Lunch

1.30-3.00 ***Matt Weiner (Texas Tech)***
'Does Knowledge Matter?'

ABSTRACT. John Hawthorne offers a conception of knowledge on which knowledge is important because it is critical for our practical reasoning. If this analysis holds, knowledge is obviously important. Few things are more important than whether a belief is a suitable premise for practical reasoning, and on Hawthorne's analysis that question is the question of whether the belief amounts to

knowledge. I will argue that analyzing practical reasoning will not show that knowledge is important in itself. When we consider what beliefs may be used as practical premises, there will be several different standpoints from which we may consider which premises will be acceptable. From one standpoint, it is important that a belief be true if it is to be used as a practical premise; from another standpoint it is important that it be well justified; from another standpoint it may be important that it be non-Gettiered in a certain way. From no single standpoint, however, is it important that the premises of practical reasoning be known. Insofar as knowledge is important to practical reasoning, it is because a belief that amounts to knowledge will have several of these other characteristics that in themselves are important to practical reasoning.

Chair: Marcus Lammenranta (Helsinki)

Commentator/First Discussant: Igor Douven (Leuven)

3.00-3.30 Tea/coffee

3.30-5.00 ***Berit Brogaard (Missouri)***

‘The Trivial Argument for Epistemic Value Pluralism: Or How I Learned to Stop Caring about Truth’

ABSTRACT. Relativism offers a nifty way of accommodating most of our intuitions about epistemic modals, predicates of personal taste, colour expressions, future contingents, and conditionals. But in spite of its manifest merits relativism is squarely at odds with epistemic value monism: the view that truth is the highest epistemic goal. I will call the argument from relativism to epistemic value pluralism the trivial argument for epistemic value pluralism. After formulating the argument, I will look at three possible ways to refute it. I will then argue that two of these are unsuccessful and defend the third, which involves denying that there are any genuinely relative truths.

Chair: Nikolaj Pedersen (UCLA)

Commentator/First Discussant: Mikkel Gerken (UCLA)

5.00-6.30 ***Mark Kaplan (Indiana)***

‘Coming to Terms with our Human Fallibility’

ABSTRACT. Suppose I claim to know that there is rosebush in my garden. Even as I make that claim, I must concede that it is imaginable that I am mistaken. It is imaginable that the bush has been removed since I last cast my eyes in the direction of the place I planted it, imaginable (supposing my eyes are now cast that way) that it has been replaced by an ersatz bush that I cannot distinguish from the original at this distance. This being so, it would seem to behove me to admit that I might be wrong about there being a rosebush in my garden. But once I have admitted this much, it would seem I ought to withdraw my claim to knowledge. I cannot say, “I know there is a rosebush in my garden, but I might be wrong.” If I know, I *can’t* be wrong. In ‘Other Minds’, J. L. Austin offered a distinctive diagnosis of how this argument goes wrong. What I want to argue is that much the same diagnosis will serve to show what is wrong with thinking that an author of an ambitious book of history must be willing to say, in the preface of her book, that not everything she’s said in her book is true. That is, I want to argue that Austin has provided a key insight into how to solve the Paradox of the Preface. The rest, I will suggest, is provided by a proper understanding of the epistemic value of doing what we do: of writing papers and books that purport to tell (in the words of Jonathan Ronda) “a univocal story about the way the world is.”

Chair: Adrian Haddock (Stirling)

Commentator/First Discussant: Jesper Kallestrup (Edinburgh)

6.30-7.00 Wine Reception
Sponsored by Edinburgh University Press

7.00 Conference Dinner
Stirling Management Centre

Sunday 20th August

9.00 Registration Desk Open
Main Foyer, Stirling Management Centre

9.30-10.00 Tea/coffee

10.00-11.30 **Ward Jones (Rhodes, South Africa)**
'Doxastic Goods'

ABSTRACT. Doxastic goods correspond to the many ways in which believing is a valuable state. Given that goods are (or provide) *prima facie* reasons to behave in order to attain them, it follows that doxastic goods are *prima facie* reasons to believe. However, there is a distinction between the ways in which a believer's concern for doxastic goods can motivate him to believe; some doxastic goods are unacknowledgeable to the believer. This feature of certain kinds of doxastic goods must be kept in mind as we search for the value of knowledge.

Chair: Tim Chappell (Open University)

Commentator/First Discussant: René van Woudenberg (Free University, Amsterdam)

11.30-1.00 **Pascal Engel (Geneva)**
'Pragmatic Encroachment and Epistemic Value'

ABSTRACT. A number of writers, whom we may call neo-pragmatists (Fantl & McGrath 2002, 2004; Hawthorne 2004; Stanley 2005) have recently argued, against what they call "purism" or "intellectualism", that knowledge is not a purely epistemic matter of truth related factors, but a matter of pragmatic and interest relative factors. Although these writers do not draw explicitly the consequences of their view for the nature of epistemic values, it would seem that one important consequence of this form of neo pragmatism is that epistemic values are intrinsically connected to practical values. But in the first place it is not clear that "pragmatic encroachment" and the relevance of practical interests to knowledge attributions shows that knowledge is practically laden. In this respect, I intend to defend a form of purism or intellectualism against this form of neo-pragmatism. And in the second place it is not clear that pragmatic encroachment has any consequence for the nature of epistemic values, which I take to be independent of practical values.

Chair: Scott Sturgeon (Birkbeck)

Commentator/First Discussant: Joe Salerno (St. Louis)

1.00-2.00 Lunch

2.00-3.30

Christian Piller (York)

‘Desiring the Truth and Nothing But the Truth’

ABSTRACT. Most epistemologists see truth as the ultimate goal of all theoretical enquiries. The aim of this paper is to develop a fundamental problem for the most common views about what the aim of believing truly really is.

Chair: Kent Hurtig (Stirling)*Commentator/First Discussant:* Klemens Kappel (Copenhagen)

3.30-4.00

Tea/coffee break

4.00-5.30

Martin Kusch (Cambridge)

‘Testimony and the Value of Knowledge’

ABSTRACT. In this paper I seek to defend a communitarian form of value-driven epistemology. “Value-driven epistemology” studies the epistemic value of various cognitive achievements, such as knowledge, understanding, or wisdom. The favourite question of value-driven epistemologists is whether knowledge is epistemically more valuable than other cognitive states; for instance, whether knowledge is epistemically more valuable than true belief (*simpliciter*), reliably-produced true belief, or justified true belief. A form of epistemology qualifies as “communitarian” if its investigations are guided by the assumption that human cognizers are “highly gregarious and deeply interdependent” creatures. Putting the two elements together, a communitarian form of value-driven epistemology seeks to understand the values of various cognitive states in relation to the needs and actions of human beings in social interaction with one another.

Chair: Rowan Cruft (Stirling)*Commentator/First Discussant:* Dennis Whitcomb (Rutgers)

5.30

Conference close

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TRAVEL INFORMATION

To The University

By Road:

From the North, A9 via Perth and Bridge of Allan
 From the East, A91 from St. Andrews A8, M9 from Edinburgh
 From the South, M74, M73, A80, M80, M9
 From the West, M8, A80, M80, M9 from Glasgow

By Rail:

Intercity Services to Stirling Station from London, 5 hours 15 minutes
 From Edinburgh, 45 minutes
 From Glasgow, 35 minutes

By Air:

Glasgow Airport, 1 hour 20 minutes drive
 Edinburgh Airport, 45 minutes drive

From Edinburgh Airport you can get a regular shuttle to the main Edinburgh train station (this takes about 15-20 minutes). You can then get a train direct to Stirling, which should take about an hour. From the Stirling train station just take a cab to the conference centre, which should take about five minutes.

From Glasgow Airport you can get a regular shuttle to the local train station (Paisley Gilmour Street), which should just take a few minutes. From there you can get a train to Glasgow itself and then catch a direct train to Stirling. From the Stirling train station just take a cab to the conference centre, which should take about five minutes.

By Bus:

By Citylink Bus to Stirling Bus Station, Goosecroft Road, Stirling, 3 miles from Stirling Management Centre.
 Local bus services—Bus No's 53, 54 and 81 every 15 minutes from and to the campus.

By Taxi:

The railway station is only a short taxi ride from Stirling Management Centre. A taxi stand is directly opposite the station entrance.

To The Stirling Management Centre

From the main entrance of the University you simply follow the road up past the sports centre on your left and take a left turn at the first island you come to. This takes you straight to the Management Centre. (Please note that those who arrive in cars will need to stop at the barriers near the entrance of the University to report as a visitor. It is recommended that those arriving by car arrive by the main entrance for this reason).

From the rear entrance of the University you simply follow the road around to the first island, where you carry straight on. At the second island you come to, take a left turn which will take you directly to the Management Centre.

USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACTS

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University of Stirling—(+44) (0) (1786) 473171 (www.stir.ac.uk)

Philosophy Department—(+44) (0) (1786) 467555 (www.stir.ac.uk/departments/arts/philosophy)

Conference Webpage—www.philosophy.stir.ac.uk/postgraduate/EpistemicValueConference.php

Conference Organiser:

Prof. Duncan Pritchard—(+44) (0) (1786) 467594 (d.h.pritchard@stir.ac.uk)

Chambos Restaurant—(+44) (0) (1786) 833617 (www.chambo.co.uk/)

University of Stirling Maps—www.cs.stir.ac.uk/~kjt/general/univ.html

Information about Stirling—www.stir.ac.uk/town/town.html

Stirling Tourist Information—(+44) (0) (1786) 445222/462517

Scottish Tourist Board—www.visitscotland.com

Train Timetables—(+44) (0) 8457 484950 (www.nationalrail.co.uk/planmyjourney/)

Local Taxi Numbers:

AA Taxis—(+44) (0) 1786 479799/448866

Ace Taxis—(+44) (0) 1786 449955

Albion Taxis—(+44) (0) 1786 812141

Goosecroft Taxis—(+44) (0) 1786 472220

Stirling Taxis—(+44) (0) 1786 447177

Local Airports:

Edinburgh Airport—(+44) (0) 131 3331000 (www.baa.co.uk/main/airports/edinburgh)

Glasgow Airport—(+44) (0) 141 8871111 (www.baa.co.uk/main/airports/glasgow)

Stirling Bus Station—(+44) (0) 1786 446474 (www.stirling.co.uk/local_services/busstation.htm)

Stirling Car Hire:

Abercromby, Kerse Rd—(+44) (0) (1786) 472222

Arnold Clark, Kerse Rd—(+44) (0) (1786) 478686

Eurodollar, Borestone Crescent—(+44) (0) (1786) 470123

Europcar, Drip Road—(+44) (0) (1786) 472164

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Knowledge, Mind and Value Project:

Project Webpage—www.philosophy.stir.ac.uk/deparment/KM&VProject.htm

Project Weblog—<http://epistemicvaluestirling.blogspot.com/>

Project Research Resources—www.philosophy.stir.ac.uk/postgraduate/EpistemicValuePage.php