
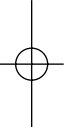




Introduction

Alan Millar, Adrian Haddock, and Duncan Pritchard


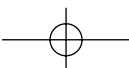

1. VALUE PROBLEMS

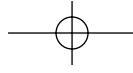


In recent years there has been a surge of interest in issues about value in epistemology. Two themes loom large. One is provided by puzzles about the value of knowledge. The starting point, but only the starting point, is provided by the question, ‘How can knowledge be more valuable than merely true belief?’ The other theme concerns epistemic value in a broad sense. Here the central issue is how best to make sense of epistemic appraisal conceived broadly to include evaluation of beliefs not just with respect to whether they amount to knowledge, but also with respect to whether they are, for instance, justified, or reliably formed, that is, formed through methods or processes that reliably yield true beliefs. A common approach is to think of truth as the end for the sake of which we value a belief’s being justified or reliably formed. The themes are related. For instance, we might hope to explain why knowledge is valuable in terms of the value we place on truth. Yet an interest in epistemic appraisal can lead in other directions. For instance, it can prompt enquiry into why we should value truth, how the goal of truth should be conceived, and why, if at all, we should think of truth as *the* goal of enquiry or as the fundamental goal of enquiry. All of these issues are represented in the essays collected here.

2. THE *MENO* PROBLEM

Suppose that you are a tourist in a foreign city. You ask for directions to the cathedral and you are told that this street, which you are facing, will take you there. You believe this and head along the street in question. What difference does it make that you should know that the street leads to the cathedral rather than have a merely true belief to this effect? If you act on your merely true belief



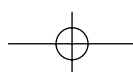


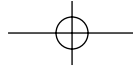
then, it seems, you will reach the cathedral as well as you would if you knew. This is a variant of Plato's road-to-Larissa example from *Meno*. Like Plato's it invites us to think that knowing something is no more valuable than having the corresponding true belief. It does not seem unduly strained to take the value in question to be practical. After all, the worry is posed by the thought that if you acted on the merely true belief you would reach your goal of arriving at the cathedral as well as you would if you knew. One way of reacting to the problem is, obviously, to concede that from a practical point of view knowledge is not any more valuable than having a merely true belief. Having made that concession, two options become available. One is to conclude that, contrary to what many think, knowledge is not any more valuable than merely true belief on the grounds that the only relevant dimension of evaluation is practical. The other is to reject the assumption that the only relevant dimension of evaluation is practical. This line is developed by, for instance, virtue epistemologists, who argue that knowing is valuable for its own sake, and thus irrespective of whether there are practical benefits to knowing. Not all theorists are willing to make the concession, however. The idea that from a practical point of view knowing is no better than having a merely true belief is open to challenge. Socrates' original proposal in *Meno* was to the effect that when we know our beliefs are tethered down. Timothy Williamson (2000: 78–80) defends a view that is very much in keeping with this proposal. He argues that knowledge is less vulnerable than merely true belief to rational undermining by future evidence. If this is right, then there are, at least potentially, practical benefits to knowing that are greater than those accruing to merely true belief. A merely true belief that *p* might be readily undermined. If it were, the person who had it would be left wondering whether or not *p* and thus be in no position for confident action on the assumption that *p*.



3. A RELATED VALUE PROBLEM AND 'SWAMPING'

Issues about the value of knowledge are often posed within a framework that assumes that knowledge is analysable in the traditional manner in terms of true belief plus other ingredients. A natural thought is that being justified is a necessary condition for knowing. Notoriously, on a common understanding of what it takes to be justified, having a justified belief that *p* that is true is not sufficient for knowledge that *p*. As Edmund Gettier (1963) famously showed, there are examples in which subjects have a justified true belief but in which it is accidental that the belief is true. These include examples in which a subject justifiably draws a conclusion that happens to be true from a premise that is justifiably believed yet false. On the assumption that knowledge admits of an analysis along traditional lines there will have to be some further condition—an anti-Gettier condition—to screen out Gettier cases.

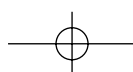




Against this background Duncan Pritchard (2007: 86–7) distinguishes between the primary value problem, which is posed by the *Meno*, and the secondary value problem: why is knowledge more valuable than any proper subset of its parts? Knowledge might be better than merely true belief because if one knows one is justified in believing, and being justified in believing is better than having a merely true belief. Even if that is so it does not establish that knowing is better than having a justified true belief that falls short of knowledge, as in Gettier cases. The general idea behind this formulation of the secondary problem can be extended to frameworks, such as that of Williamson (2000), in which it is denied that knowledge is analysable in the traditional way. For within such a framework it still makes sense to ask, for instance, ‘Is knowing that p better than having a justified true belief that p that falls short of knowledge that p ?’

Addressing the traditional analytical framework, Jonathan Kvanvig (2003) has argued that attempts to show that knowledge is better than any proper subset of its parts are doomed to failure due to the *swamping problem*. Suppose that we attempt to show that knowing that p is better than some lesser state that implicates a true belief that p , in terms of there being some property that one’s belief that p has when one knows that p but lacks when one is in the lesser state. Suppose, further, that the value of the property in question is parasitic on the value of true belief. Kvanvig thinks that no such property can solve the problem since if one has a true belief that p then, with respect to what is valuable, it is neither here nor there whether one’s belief has the property in question. As he puts it, the value of truth swamps any value that might be thought to attach to the proposed property (Kvanvig 2003: 45–8).

Virtue theorists attempt to show that knowledge is valuable for its own sake since there is value to having come by the truth through the exercise of particular virtues or competences (for instance, Sosa 1991; 2007; Riggs 2002; Zagzebski 2003; Greco 2003). As Ernest Sosa views the matter (2007: lecture 4), we rightly think that credit is due to performances, for instance, the shot of an archer, which achieve the aim of the relevant activity not merely by accident or luck, but due to the exercise of competence on the part of the performer. This general approach raises a host of interesting issues about the individuation of cognitive competences and the role of such competences in a general account of knowledge. It also faces a number of challenges. For instance, one might think that an adequate answer to the *Meno* problem should explain why the tourist seeking the way to the cathedral should prefer to know rather than have a merely true, or a merely true and justified, belief on the matter. From this perspective it is not clear that the consideration that knowing would be worthy of credit gives the right kind of answer. We were led by the problem to wonder what good it would be to an enquirer to know, not how good the enquirer would be to know.



4. TRUTH AND EPISTEMIC APPRAISAL

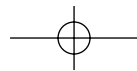
A common idea is that it is for the sake of truth that it matters that we should acquire knowledge or matters that our beliefs should be justified. Philosophical issues quickly arise when we try to probe more deeply. Here are a few:

- (a) It does seem important that we should avoid believing what is false. But we might strive towards that by trying to minimize what we believe, so far as it is in our power to do so. Is it not also important that we should believe what is true? Yet it seems implausible that we should believe *whatever* is true if for no other reason than that, lacking omnipotence, it is impossible for us to do so. The question, then, is how best to formulate a more restrictive requirement and whether a restrictive requirement enables us to make sense of epistemic appraisal.
- (b) Should we think of the truth as being instrumentally valuable or as valuable for its own sake? Either way, is the value of a true belief independent of its content? For some at least it seems powerfully intuitive that the value of a true belief, or of an item of knowledge, is dependent on its content. But now if that is so what determines that true belief or knowledge with this or that content is of value, when true belief or knowledge with different content is not? Is this simply determined by the goals of enquiry that we actually set ourselves or in some other way?
- (c) Is it right to conceive of our cognitive achievements as being directed ultimately at true belief? Might there be other epistemic goals? Kvanvig (2003 and this volume Ch. 4) argues that understanding has a special kind of value that knowledge lacks. A number of the contributions in this volume address this matter.

5. THE CONTRIBUTIONS IN PART I

The essays in Part I are all more or less directly concerned with the value of *knowledge*. Problems concerning the value of knowledge that stem from Plato's *Meno* are often made vivid in the context of criticism of reliabilist theories of knowledge or justification. The swamping problem applied to reliabilism depends on the assumption that if a belief is true its value would be not raised by the fact that it was reliably produced. In their contribution (Ch. 1), Alvin Goldman and Erik Olsson offer two independent responses to the problem.

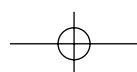
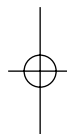
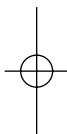
The first response is to reject the presupposition just noted and develop *the conditional probability solution*. This invokes the idea that the composite state consisting in having a true belief produced by a reliable process has the property



of *making it likely that one's future beliefs of a similar kind will also be true*. Goldman and Olsson argue that a true belief's being formed by a reliable process enhances the probability that the next belief formed by the same process will be true to a greater degree than, all else equal, a belief of the same type's being produced by an unreliable process would enhance the probability that the next belief of the same type formed by that unreliable process would be true. Goldman and Olsson emphasize that the value of being in the state of having a belief produced by a reliable process is not, as they put it, contained in the value of the implicated true belief. They note that the conditional probability solution allows for the possibility that reliabilist knowledge is not always more valuable than true belief but argue that this is no objection to the proposed solution.

Goldman and Olsson's second solution offers an explanation of why we come to accord reliable belief-forming processes an *autonomous value* that is not dependent on the value of the resultant true beliefs. Furthermore, they think that the 'the value imputed to a token process is inherited from the value imputed to its type' and 'isn't a function solely of that token's own consequences' (p. 31). Applying this to the present case they suggest that '[w]hile many [reliable belief-forming] processes are originally regarded as merely instrumentally valuable to true-belief attainment, they are later upgraded to the status of independent value, thereby accommodating the legitimacy of *adding* their value to that of true-belief outcomes' (pp. 34–5). From this perspective the added value accruing to knowledge is such that knowing will always be more valuable than the implicated true belief.

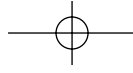
In his contribution (Ch. 2) Jason Baehr asks whether there is a problem about the value of knowledge. There seems to be a problem in the light of 'the guiding intuition' that knowledge is more valuable than true belief. This intuition is thought to supply a constraint on the analysis of knowledge: the analysis should identify among the ingredients of knowledge something that has truth-independent value. Baehr suggests that if it is to perform its role the content of this guiding intuition must be 'entirely *general*, in the sense that it must . . . cover *all* instances of knowledge' (p. 45). This is because an intuition about value that concerned only some cases of knowledge would not supply a constraint on an analysis of knowledge aimed at identifying its essential features. Baehr then observes that the content of the guiding intuition must be entirely formal in that 'it must not provide any indication of *why* or *that in virtue of which* knowledge is more valuable than true belief' (p. 46) This derives from the fact that the constraint imposed by the intuition is supposed to be entirely formal in that 'it does not require anything of an analysis of knowledge *beyond* that one or more of the conditions specified by this analysis have truth-independent value' (p. 44). Baehr argues that it is implausible that there is a widespread guiding intuition that has the required features. For instance, he argues that it is implausible that when we think a case of knowledge more valuable than a corresponding true belief this has nothing to do with specific features of the knowledge. He finds recent ideas of John Greco on the value of knowledge to be in keeping with the



conclusions reached so far since Greco's conception of the value of knowledge turns on a substantive account of what knowledge is. Reviewing the situation, Baehr raises a further question suggested by the guiding intuition: what besides truth might be included within the range of epistemic values?

Martin Kusch (Ch. 3) responds to Kvanvig's scepticism about the value of knowledge by outlining 'a *communitarian* form of value-driven epistemology' which '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' (p. 60). He adopts a genealogical method from Edward Craig (1990), which is designed to bring out why knowledge might matter to us and thereby shed light on what knowledge is. The starting point is the idea that our ancestors, wondering whether *p*, would have had an interest in what Kusch calls *protoknowledge*—roughly speaking, those who are detectably likely to be right as to whether *p*. From this perspective the question arises as to why having protoknowledge should be more valuable than having merely true belief. It is at this point that Kusch introduces into the genealogical story a modification inspired by Bernard Williams (2002) to the effect that the institution of testimony is a collective good that exists only if underpinned by a network of intrinsic values. Kusch applies this to, among other things, the swamping problem. If the institution of testimony is a collective good *supported by intrinsic values*, like accuracy and sincerity, then it is not of merely instrumental value; it is of central intrinsic value to our social existence. These values are maintained through interactions, like talking, sanctioning, honouring, and shaming, through which our social existence is shaped. Indeed, attributions of protoknowledge themselves play a key role in sustaining the values and the institution of testimony that depends upon them. Seen in this light, having protoknowledge—at its core true belief deriving from a good informant—is not just a good thing because it involves acquiring a true belief by a good method. It is something that depends essentially on an institution that is a collective good and that contributes to shaping our existence as human beings.

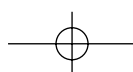
In his piece Jonathan Kvanvig develops his conception of the special epistemic value of objectual understanding—the kind of understanding in play when we understand quantum mechanics or Republican ideology. Understanding on this conception is a matter of grasping explanatory, probabilistic, and logical connections between pieces of information or ideas. Whereas the luckily true beliefs highlighted by Gettier cases cannot constitute knowledge, understanding is compatible with the implicated beliefs being luckily true. What matters for understanding, according to Kvanvig, is that one has the abilities that are constitutive of understanding such as, for instance, the ability to answer questions correctly. The differences between knowledge and understanding have a bearing on the value problem. Attempts to respond to the Gettier problem, Kvanvig thinks, are bound to end up with accounts of knowledge that are 'ad hoc and gerrymandered' (p. 103), making it difficult to see why knowledge should be of value. But because understanding tolerates luck, it is not subject to the same problem.

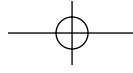


Could there not be cases in which understanding is undermined because of a failure to know why something is so? Kvanvig addresses an example presented by Michael DePaul and Stephen Grimm (2007) that is designed to show just this. The example is one in which an unreliable source invents an explanation that by chance is a correct account of why the winning goal at a game of soccer was scored by the US team. The account has it that the US team scored the winning goal because the opposition's goalkeeper slipped in the mud. DePaul and Grimm claim that the ingredients for understanding on Kvanvig's conception are in place but the account does not give us understanding of why the winning goal was scored. In defence Kvanvig notes that the use of the example by DePaul and Grimm turns on the idea that we do not understand because we do not *know* why the winning goal was scored. He concedes that there is a sense in which one does not understand why the winning goal was scored, if that entails knowing the correct explanation. But that, he suggests, leaves open the possibility that understanding in some sense—objectual understanding—is present. En route Kvanvig considers methodological issues concerning the role of linguistic intuitions in philosophical enquiry.

In his contribution to the volume (Ch. 5), DePaul assesses a line of reasoning that he discerns in Kvanvig (2003), and which, as we have just observed, also occurs in Kvanvig's contribution to the present collection. This line of reasoning takes as its starting point some 'ugly' analysis of knowledge—one that seems complicated, ad hoc, messy, gerrymandered—and argues to the conclusion that knowledge is not valuable. DePaul discusses a similar argument that focuses not so much on ugliness, but on our inability to see why satisfying the conditions given by a proposed analysis of knowledge would be valuable. He seeks to put pressure on the transition to the conclusion that knowledge so conceived is not valuable. Why, he asks, should we suppose that if *A* is an adequate analysis of knowledge, and knowledge is valuable, then it should be apparent to us after due consideration that satisfying the conditions given by *A* is valuable? In support of this he asks why we should expect an adequate analysis of something to operate at the same level as our ordinary understanding of that thing. Why, in particular, must an adequate analysis of knowledge be spelled out in terms of concepts we ordinarily employ? If an adequate analysis of knowledge need not meet this requirement then, he argues, it is far from clear why we should expect to recognize on due consideration that satisfying the analysis is valuable. Further, DePaul suggests, analyses may have a metaphysical focus: we should not assume that by revealing the nature of knowledge we thereby bring into focus what makes knowledge valuable.

Ward Jones has virtue-theoretic conceptions of the value of knowledge in his sights, though his starting point is a much more general discussion of doxastic goods—'goods [that] correspond to the ways in which believing is a valuable state, or contributes to valuable states or things' (p. 139). These would include the feeling of well-being or happiness that a belief can give us and the explanatory



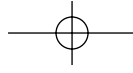


insight afforded by a belief. Jones observes that some doxastic goods can motivate belief only surreptitiously. It might bring relief to me to believe that my sick mother is recovering, but, if I recognize that the sole motive for believing is that it brings relief, my belief will tend to be weakened. Jones explores why it matters for issues concerning the values of exploration that some doxastic goods are surreptitious. He focuses on considerations about the relation between reasons and motivation that are more usually discussed in the literature on practical reasoning. Sympathetic to the idea that necessarily reasons are potential motivators, Jones notes that this idea can be interpreted strictly, in keeping with the view of Bernard Williams (1980) about reasons for action or in more liberal ways as in the writings of John McDowell (1995). He favours the stricter view and on that account resists the idea that surreptitious doxastic goods can provide reason to believe. Such goods are ‘at best, beneficial side-effects of believing’ (p. 149). Finally, he teases out the ramifications of his view for virtue-theoretic accounts of the value of knowledge focusing our attention on whether gaining credit for a true belief virtuously formed is a surreptitious good.

The starting point of Matt Weiner’s essay (Ch. 7) is the idea discussed by John Hawthorne (2004) that knowledge is tied to practical reasoning. As Weiner reads it the idea is that ‘it is unacceptable to use p as a premise in your practical reasoning if and only if you do not know that p ’ (p. 164). Offered a lottery ticket with a \$5000 prize at the price of one penny it would be crazy to argue that since if you buy the ticket it will lose, and you will therefore be out by a penny, you should not buy the ticket. This would be so even if the premises were true. Weiner is prompted to consider what it is for a premise in practical reasoning to be acceptable. He argues that there is no single way of understanding it so that all and only known premises are acceptable. Practical reasoning can be acceptable, from a certain point of view, even when it has a false premise, and thus proceeds from something that is not known. For instance, an inference with the premise that one will not have enough money to go on an African safari next year can be acceptable even though the premise is not known. It is not feckless to rely on the assumption that you will not be able to afford the safari. If that does not lead to the best outcome—you don’t buy the guidebook to Africa and do buy the local guide—then that is simply epistemic bad luck. But there can be different interests attached to a stretch of practical reasoning. In some contexts it matters whether the premises are true. In others what matters is that belief in the premises should be well enough justified.

In the light of these and related considerations, Weiner invites us to think of knowledge as being like a Swiss Army knife. Each of the tools in the knife are valuable in some practical contexts and not in others. There is nothing especially valuable about being a Swiss Army knife beyond its making each of the tools conveniently available. Weiner suggests that knowledge is in some respects like this. Knowing that p involves having a belief that p that satisfies various conditions. Each condition may be one that it is valuable to satisfy in some





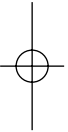
contexts of practical reasoning but not in others. Knowledge is worth having because one does not know in advance which of its elements is going to be valuable in this or that circumstance.

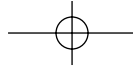
The idea that epistemic evaluation is in some way dependent upon practical concerns is an important theme of recent epistemology. Pascal Engel (in Ch. 8) is concerned with this phenomenon of pragmatic encroachment. Engel considers, and finds wanting, a number of different arguments for a number of different forms of pragmatic encroachment. According to Paul Horwich, the value of true beliefs is to be explained in terms of their role in guiding people to satisfy their desires. Engel questions whether this account can properly accommodate the normative character of truth. The fact that it is pragmatically good to have a true belief, Engel contends, would not explain why it is desirable to believe something because it is correct and correct because it is true.

Engel then addresses Jeremy Fantl and Matthew McGrath's (2002) argument for a form of pragmatic encroachment upon justification, according to which it is possible that one person is justified in believing an empirical proposition, and another person is not, even though both people are in possession of the same evidence for the proposition. According to Fantl and McGrath, the difference in justification is explained by the fact that the practical costs of believing the proposition are higher for the second person than they are for the first. But Engel thinks that all this argument shows is that it is more important for the second person to be justified in believing the proposition than it is for the first.

Finally, Engel discusses Jason Stanley's (2005) argument for a form of pragmatic encroachment upon knowledge, according to which its being rational to act as if a certain proposition is true is a necessary condition for knowing the proposition in question. Engel thinks that Stanley's argument only gives us reason to endorse the weaker claim that knowing a proposition is a necessary condition for its being rational to act as if the proposition is true. He does not deny that practical factors play a role in epistemic enquiry. But he insists that this role is limited to what he calls 'pragmatic relevance': knowledge does indeed matter for practical reasoning and action but that is a far weaker claim than the claim that knowledge depends on pragmatic considerations.

Wayne Riggs commends a value-driven approach to epistemology on the grounds that becoming clear about the value of knowledge and why in practice we care about knowledge 'helps us understand how our cognitive lives are intertwined with our moral lives, our prudential lives, etc.' (p. 204). Against this background he suggests that if we can work out what is so bad about luckily true belief we can come to an understanding of why we value knowledge. His contribution takes a step in this direction by exploring in some detail how luck should be conceived if knowledge is taken to exclude luck. Pritchard's (2005) account of luck makes safety central. More specifically, on his account if an event is lucky then it does not occur in a wide class of the nearest possible worlds where the relevant initial conditions are the same, and, in addition, it is

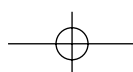


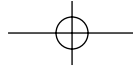


an event that is significant to the agent, or would be if the agent were apprised of the relevant facts. Drawing on a discussion of Pritchard by Jennifer Lackey (2006), Riggs argues that neither of the specified conditions on luck are necessary: there are counterexamples in which there is a lucky combination of events or circumstances yet the salient features of the example obtain in many nearby possible worlds. Riggs also argues that Pritchard's conditions are not jointly sufficient, while recognizing that Pritchard does not intend his conditions to be taken to be jointly sufficient. Building on these considerations he finds fault with safety-based accounts of knowledge. He then defends an account of luck in terms of lack of agent control. He suggests that '[o]ne has control over some happening to the extent that the happening is properly considered something the agent has *done*' (p. 214) and thus both something that the agent meant to do and the product of the agent's power, abilities, and skills. He then argues that this conception handles the examples he directed against Pritchard's account. Finally, he addresses an objection to the lack-of-control account to the effect that there are far too many things that are not in one's control but which are also not lucky. This leads him to suggest that for an event to be lucky for a person the person must not have successfully exploited the event (prior to its occurrence) for some purpose.

6. THE CONTRIBUTIONS IN PART II

Michael Lynch (Ch. 10) presents two ways of understanding the claim that truth is a value. The first has it that truth is a proper end of enquiry in the sense that '[i]t is prima facie good that, relative to the propositions one might consider, one believe all and only those that are true' (p. 226). The second takes truth to be a norm of belief in the sense that '[i]t is correct to believe $\langle p \rangle$ if and only if $\langle p \rangle$ is true' (p. 228). Lynch asks what sort of meta-normative stance should, or indeed, can we take to the value of truth conceived in either of these ways. His particular critical target is expressivism. As applied to *alethic correctness* (the value implicated by the truth-norm), expressivism states that '[i]t is a non-factual matter whether beliefs are correct if and only if true, since to describe a belief as correct is not to state a fact about it but to express a sentiment or attitude' (p. 231). After arguing that a simple version of expressivism is self-undermining, Lynch considers a more sophisticated version that distinguishes between engaged and disengaged stances. Sophisticated expressivists can acknowledge that from an engaged standpoint we can use evaluative language to affirm all that the realist about values can affirm. To this end they can adopt a deflationary view of truth and from an engaged standpoint acknowledge that the truth-norm is true. At the same time they can acknowledge that from a disengaged stance we can tell an expressivist story about the function of evaluative thought according to which the truth-norm is neither true nor false but an expression of our desires and sentiments.

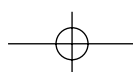


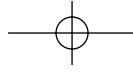


Lynch argues that the disengaged stance is not an option when it comes to alethic correctness. The reason is that the expressivist must invoke the natural fact that a given proposition is true to explain why it is correct to believe it but, being a deflationist, lacks a theory of truth that provides for truth to have an explanatory role. After considering possible responses on the part of the expressivist, Lynch argues that the expressivist about the value or good of having true beliefs fares no better. He concludes that a sceptical attitude towards the value of truth is not an option on either of the understandings of this value that have been considered

How can we best make sense of epistemic appraisal in the broad sense? Stephen Grimm (Ch. 11) engages with a teleological approach to this question on which truth is regarded as being of intrinsic epistemic value and the positive epistemic status that some beliefs have is explained in terms of the value of truth. A problem for this view is that it is far from obvious that intrinsic value attaches to true beliefs irrespective of their content. Suppose that to deal with this it is suggested that only some true beliefs are intrinsically valuable. Grimm points out that this raises the question, 'How should we make sense of our epistemic appraisals with respect to those beliefs (or, better, those topics) that apparently *lack* intrinsic epistemic value . . . ?' (p. 249). He considers Ernest Sosa's (2007) proposal that we should think of values in relation to domains of human experience. Performances within a domain are evaluated in terms of the values that are fundamental to that domain. Appraising performances within a domain involves no commitment to the domain-transcendent value of its fundamental values. Epistemic appraisal, on this approach to the matter, is made within a domain for which the fundamental value is the truth. But this involves no commitment to the view that the truth has an intrinsic value that is absolute (domain-transcendent). Grimm argues that this view fails to accommodate the fact that to judge a belief to be unjustified or irrational is to judge that the subject's attitude towards the content of the belief *should* be reconsidered, in some binding sense, which implies that the subject is culpable in some way. The sense of 'should' that is internal to a domain, he thinks, is too weak to capture this binding sense and thus is unable to capture the idea that the truth-perspective is non-optional. Grimm suggests that to make sense of epistemic appraisal we need to adopt a communal or social view of truth that can accommodate a version of the thesis that every truth has a special value. The key idea is that every topic might come to have value given the varied practical concerns people throughout a community might have. We must duly respect the truth because of the central role that truths play in the lives of others if not ourselves.

In the course of his discussion Grimm notes that some theorists think that we value certain truths for their own sake, irrespective of what practical ends they may serve, simply because of natural curiosity about certain matters. In his essay (Ch. 12) Michael Brady poses the question, 'How can we move from the claim that we are naturally curious to discover the answers to particular questions, to the claim that answers to those questions are valuable in themselves?' (p. 271).



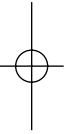


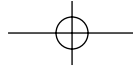
There are reasons to think that this move is problematic. For instance, if our natural curiosity is compulsive it might generate enquiries leading to answers on which we place no value. From this and other considerations Brady concludes that ‘it is implausible to suppose that we could have a general interest in the truth which is generated by our natural curiosity’ (p. 274).

Curiosity, Brady suggests, is an emotion that by its nature involves selective attention. In particular, it alerts us to matters of intrinsic interest or fascination. Curiosity can be aroused by what is of little or no interest in this sense, but the standard of correctness or appropriateness for curiosity about some matter is that it should be of intrinsic interest or fascination. In the light of this one might think that true beliefs are valuable for their own sake because such beliefs constitute answers to intrinsically interesting or fascinating questions. But Brady argues that it is neither true that true beliefs are valuable only if they answer interesting or fascinating questions, nor that if true beliefs answer interesting or fascinating questions they are valuable. He concludes that the value of true beliefs is only sometimes contingently related to our natural curiosity. Nonetheless he thinks that ‘if we are to equate the aim of inquiry with something that is genuinely valuable, then it should be identified with the goal of attaining interesting or fascinating or surprising true beliefs’ (p. 281) and natural curiosity has a role in attaining this goal.

Epistemic monism, on Berit Brogaard’s understanding (Ch. 13), is the view that truth is the highest epistemic goal. Brogaard argues that a problem arises if this view is understood to be tantamount to the thesis (EG) that for any proposition p , the epistemic goal is for you to believe that p if and only if it is simply true that p . A proposition p is simply true if and only if it is true at the actual world. Brogaard argues that the problem arises because on plausible assumptions (EG) entails a further thesis (FT) that for any proposition p , the truth-value of p is relative only to the world of evaluation. (FT) is linked to the idea that the objects of belief have their truth-values eternally and thus that the only factors that determine whether or not a proposition is true are factors pertaining to the world with respect to which the proposition is being evaluated. She explores examples suggesting that (FT) is false. Suppose, for instance, that when I say ‘John is a firefighter’ at t_1 , what I am saying is that at t_1 John is a firefighter, and when you say ‘John is not a firefighter’ at t_2 what you are saying is that at t_2 John is not a firefighter. It follows that if t_1 and t_2 are different times we are not contradicting each other. But, argues Brogaard, it is unnatural to suppose that if my utterance was at t_1 and yours was at t_2 ($t_1 \neq t_2$) we would not be contradicting each other. So, on the face of it, the object of the beliefs we would express by our utterances is not adequately specified by, respectively, the propositions that at t_1 John is a firefighter and that at t_2 John is not a firefighter.

Relativists respond to these and related considerations by arguing that there are relative expressions whose extensions vary with parameters determined not only by the context of use but also by a context of assessment, where ‘[a] context of





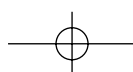
assessment is a context in which a sentence is considered or evaluated for truth' (p. 291). If this is right 'there are some propositions which have no truth-value relative only to a world and a time' (p. 292) and thus some that are not simply true. If this is right, argues Brogaard, then epistemic value monism, understood as above, is false. After considering various responses to this line of thought Brogaard suggests an alternative view, perspectivalism, which, she argues, is both compatible with a version of epistemic monism and can explain the linguistic data. On this alternative there is no need to distinguish between the context of use and the context of assessment; the data are accommodated by recognizing a judge parameter, the default value of which is the speaker.

7. THE APPENDIX

The symposium on Jonathan Kvanvig's *The Value of Knowledge and the Pursuit of Understanding* opens with a brief precis by the author. Two key themes of the book are that 'our ordinary assumption that knowledge is more valuable than its subparts is simply mistaken' (p. 311) and 'that understanding has a special and unique value that exceeds the value of its subparts' (p. 311).

In his critical essay John Greco argues that Kvanvig's presentation of the value problem shifts between different questions. He challenges Kvanvig's assumption that there is widespread pre-theoretical conviction that knowledge is more valuable than any of its proper subparts. If there is no such conviction then, he suggests, Kvanvig's demand that a solution to the value problem should show that knowledge is more valuable than any of its proper subparts is inappropriately demanding. Nonetheless, argues Greco, all of the questions Kvanvig poses can be answered in terms of a virtue-theoretic approach to value problems according to which knowledge is true belief achieved through the exercise of intellectual abilities that constitute intellectual virtue. Indeed, such an approach, he claims, can even explain why knowledge is more valuable than the sum of values of its parts. This is because success *through* virtue is more valuable than success plus virtue.

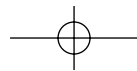
Catherine Elgin explores the idea, prominent in Kvanvig's book, that propositional understanding is factive. She argues that if epistemology is to accommodate science we need to consider different types of understanding. In particular, she argues that 'some bodies of information, even though they are not true, nonetheless display a measure of understanding' (p. 325). To make sense of the idea that progressive science involves advances in understanding, she suggests, we need to recognize that not all understanding is factive. She supports her case with reference to the role of idealization in science. Such idealizations, she contends, have a central and ineliminable role in scientific understanding. While they are fictions—felicitous falsehoods—they 'afford epistemic access to matters of fact that are otherwise difficult or impossible to discern' (p. 327).



Wayne Riggs considers that an adequate response to the problem posed by Plato's *Meno* does not require us to show that knowledge is more valuable than any combination of its proper subparts. Indeed, in setting up the problem he sees no reason to deny that some true belief could be as valuable or more valuable than any instance of knowledge. He targets Kvanvig's view that understanding is factive and that we can have understanding of X in the absence of knowledge of X. Further, he argues that '[a]s long as there is a possible source of epistemic value for a belief that is independent of whether that belief constitutes knowledge [e.g. its being a component of a subject's understanding of some subject matter] then there will be the possibility that the belief could derive enough value from that alternative source that it is equally or more valuable than it would be if it were known' (p. 337). Indeed, being an element in one's understanding of some subject matter is just such an alternative source. Riggs concludes that a better way to formulate the *Meno* requirement is that 'an item of knowledge must have a kind of epistemic value, or perhaps a source of epistemic value, that no belief that fails to count as knowledge has' (p. 338).

In his response to his critics Kvanvig begins by defending the view that all truths, irrespective of their content, are defeasibly valuable. His main focus, however, is on the nature and value of understanding and on the character of the *Meno* problem. As in his contribution to this collection in Part I (Ch. 4), Kvanvig gives special attention to objectual understanding, 'the kind of understanding in which the content of the attitude is an object of some sort (person, theory, part of reality, etc.)' (p. 341). He suggests that such understanding is quasi-factive, being dependent *in some measure* on true belief. He acknowledges that there is vagueness in the extent to which understanding can incorporate false belief and he exploits this vagueness to accommodate examples that critics have taken to show that understanding is not necessarily factive. Understanding X, he thinks, may incorporate some false beliefs about X.

In response to Elgin's discussion of idealization, he distinguishes between understanding a model or theory and understanding the phenomenon that the theory or model is about. Idealizations are indeed strictly false but they may themselves be part of the object understood, as when the object is *how a theory or model stands in relation to reality*. In response to concerns about his formulations of the *Meno* problem, Kvanvig emphasizes that the key issue for him always concerned the value of knowledge over any of its subparts. Responding to Greco's suggestion that there is no pre-theoretical conviction that knowledge is more valuable than any of its subparts, he suggests, among other things, that this is belied by our taking knowledge to close enquiry in a way that justified true belief does not. He agrees with Rigg's view that his way of formulating the *Meno* problem does not sit well with his view about the value of understanding, but contends that the formulation should be viewed as a working hypothesis about the nature of the problem. Finally, he takes issue with Greco's attempt to solve the *Meno* problem by arguing that Greco's account of knowledge is not adequate.



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