



Introduction

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This special issue contains papers presented at (or from those who participated in) the 2017 Bled Epistemology Conference, the topic of which was “Epistemic Virtue and Epistemic Skills.” These papers address this topic at many different levels of generality, from questioning the very nature of epistemic virtues to addressing the details of particular virtues and skills.

The contribution by Terry Horgan, Matjaž Potrč, and Vojko Strahovnik as well as that by Benjamin McCraw both focus on foundational questions about the nature of the epistemic virtues and particularly explore the sources of normativity for those virtues. Both papers seek to establish new positions in virtue epistemology, ones that respect the attractions of existing positions in the field, but also ones that look for new ways to bring together attractive elements of alternative views in configurations that avoid old debates and divisions.

Horgan, Potrč, and Strahovnik start from the phenomenology of occurrent belief formation, finding that while belief formation is not voluntary, the phenomenology of “creedency” shares broadly agentive features with actions. In particular, they highlight the means–ends structure of agentive states; belief formation aims at the constitutive telos of believing the *P* only if *P* is true. They mark off the core epistemic virtues as ones that have this aim; they also recognize that there can be many means to this end. The most basic means, one that is required of all competent believing by “Potrč’s Principle” is that of believing only in accordance with one’s “experiential best take on the import of the available evidence.” To this, they add a hierarchy of other means to the end of true belief: believing in accordance with one’s deep (but still subjective) epistemic sensibilities, believing in accordance with objective rationality, and finally believing by deploying reliable processes. Core epistemic virtues, on their account, are then graded by how many of these different means they satisfy.

As should be apparent, the means to the end of true belief that Horgan, Potrč, and Strahovnik consider include those desired by both the epistemic internalist and the epistemic externalist. By requiring all of these means for full core epistemic virtue, they chart a course that aims to satisfy the demands of both sides, while still recognizing the

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value of enacting only some means to the end of true belief. In addition, they make room for character virtues like intellectual courage and open-mindedness as auxiliary virtues. They highlight the role of these virtues in providing epistemic power—a measure of the number and extent of true beliefs one comes to have. They argue that epistemic power is a mixed epistemic and practical goal, which allows practical rationality to guide our inquiry into new and important topics.

As noted, Horgan, Potrč, and Strahovnik's picture of core virtues incorporates insights from internalism and externalism, while making room to explain the practical and epistemic value of character virtues. McCraw's contribution to this volume turns to the debate between reliabilists and responsibilists in virtue epistemology and tries to find a middle ground between them. The need to find a middle ground is motivated by considering well-established problems for both sides in the debate. Responsibilists follow ethical virtues in requiring correct motivation for the epistemic virtues; but correct motivation does not seem to be required for knowledge. Even the epistemically vicious can know many things. Virtue reliabilists do not require motivation, but face a problem that stems from their permissiveness in accepting abilities as epistemic virtues. If eyesight or hearing can be counted as an epistemic virtue, how can we exclude the abilities displayed by Lehrer's Truetemp as a virtue as well? In light of these arguments from both sides, McCraw suggests that we return to Aristotle, as responsibilists often do, but rather than focusing on his picture of fully developed moral virtues, he suggests that we might start by looking at the general type that virtues fall under—hexis. A hexis is a disposition, but one that is essentially normative, acquired, and part of the character of its possessor. While the particular kind of hexis that makes up a moral virtue requires proper motivation, hexes in general do not. This allows a hexis-based virtue epistemology to avoid the problem of requiring motivation. On the other hand, Truetemp's abilities do not qualify as a hexis because they are not acquired in the ordinary way and so are not sufficiently integrated into his cognitive character.

McCraw's suggested hexis-based approach to virtue epistemology produces a very general characterization; the details of this approach could be filled in very differently with different accounts of the specific virtues. The contributions to this volume by Nenad Mišćević and Lani Watson both present virtues at this more detailed and specific level. Mišćević gives an account of the virtue of self-inquisitiveness, while Watson examines the specific epistemic skill of good questioning particularly exploring its role in the education of epistemic virtues. Mišćević's exploration of the virtue of self-inquisitiveness begins with a consideration of whether it requires an intrinsic motivation for self-knowledge, or whether an instrumental drive for this knowledge is sufficient. Regardless, self-inquisitiveness of an important kind focuses on what he calls causal-dispositional self-knowledge. This general kind of self-knowledge can come from recognizing particular instances of individual states over time. Mišćević uses Othello as an example of someone who lacks self-inquisitiveness; an exploration of how Othello might have instead been self-inquisitive shows how we can come to have a rich-causal dispositional self-knowledge of our character traits. If Othello were to reflect on a number of instances where he felt jealous, he might be able to discover that he has a more jealous character than he is willing to recognize. This self-discovery will involve general reasoning capacities (like induction) as well as capacities that are more specific to this task (like introspection). Mišćević (2016) argues that self-inquisitiveness helps to mobilize and organize these general and specific cognitive

abilities and skills. This model makes self-inquisitiveness the central virtue relevant to self-knowledge and it mirrors his other recent arguments that inquisitiveness is the central and guiding epistemic virtue. Self-inquisitiveness is important not only for generating self-knowledge, but also for explaining its value. Mišćević argues for a response-dependent account of the value of self-knowledge. Do we desire self-knowledge because it is good, or is it good because we value it? Mišćević develops the second of these approaches. Of course self-knowledge is not valuable simply because it is valued, but rather we can say that it would be valued by the intellectually virtuous. Still, some kinds of self-knowledge are harder to obtain than others. Mišćević points to the empirical work of Dunning and Kruger who show us how hard it can be to correctly estimate our own abilities. Their work highlights a kind of self-knowledge worth having yet hard to get. While accepting their empirical conclusions, Mišćević suggests that the virtue of self-inquisitiveness will need to make use of feedback from others in order to overcome this obstacle.

Watson's contribution to this volume focuses on our attempts to get information from others more generally. We can elicit information from others well or badly. Watson focuses on the intellectual skill of good questioning as an ability to elicit important information from others by asking questions well. This complex intellectual skill has an important social component; one must be able to figure out who is likely to have the desired information and how one can best elicit that information from them. Watson is careful to distinguish good questions from the skill of good questioning; a good question asked at a bad time does not demonstrate good questioning. This skill is not yet a virtue because it does not require the correct motivation; one could use the skill of good questioning to elicit harmful information or to embarrass someone. The "good" in good questioning is an attributive use. Still Watson argues that many instances of intellectual virtues will be constituted by acts of good questioning; questioning initiates and guides inquiry and so it will be an essential part of many good inquiries.

As we think about how to educate for the intellectual virtues, Watson argues that teaching students how to engage in good questioning will be an essential part of this development. Within the classroom we naturally look at good questioning by students. Watson highlights recent work in education that also points out the importance of teachers asking good questions. Teachers are both modeling the target behavior and engaging in questioning to bring out what students already know or can figure out for themselves; they ask questions they know the answers to with the eventual goal of teaching their students to ask questions they do not know the answer to. Outside of the specific literature on education, Watson also makes a very general argument that educating for good questioning can help in the development of a number of specific intellectual virtues: attentiveness, intellectual autonomy, intellectual humility, intellectual courage, and inquisitiveness. For each virtue, Watson explores how it may require good questioning—specifically how a student learning the virtue needs to develop and use the skill of good questioning to develop the virtues. Each of these examples supports her general claim about the importance of educating for good questioning.

Watson clearly distinguishes intellectual skills and virtues and she places good questioning in the camp of skills. Mikael Janvid also focuses on intellectual skills, asking whether the "grasping" necessary for understanding is the exercise of a skill. He argues that we should see this grasping as a kind of inference; on its face making

inferences seems like the kind of action that can be done skillfully. However, Janvid argues that the inference we make here is not (always) intentional in the way that actions are intentional; rather grasping an inferential relation is more like a way of seeing than of acting; but skills have to do with acting, which is intentional. Thus, understanding should not be understood as involving a cognitive skill. Janvid takes this conclusion to apply not only to his own question about the nature of understanding, but also to Ernest Sosa's (2015) notion of knowing full well which he has defined to essentially involve skills. In parallel with his argument about understanding, Janvid argues that knowing full well, when aimed at a functional belief, is not sufficiently intentional to be well-modeled as a skill. In place of the skill model of understanding, Janvid develops his model of understanding as making an inference. However, he wants to avoid committing himself to a claim that Linda Zagzebski (2001) has made, that whenever we understand something we also understand that we understand. This requirement he thinks is too strong. The account of understanding he offers requires a grasp of an inferential relation but one that does not require a) that one believe the relation or b) access to the epistemic adequacy of the inference. Janvid's model requires only access to the inference itself. This moderate position still provides a robust picture of understanding, without requiring full reflective access.

Finally, Igal Kvat's contribution offers a definition of knowledge that is based on the token indication relation holding between a subject's belief that P and P 's being true. This requirement is to be understood on the chance interpretation of probability, and is added to the traditional belief and truth requirements on knowledge. Kvat takes this requirement to be distinct from a requirement that the belief type is an indicator of the content type being true; such an account would be similar to a reliabilist account of knowledge. Of particular interest with respect to the topic of this volume is Kvat's discussion of token discriminability as part of overall indication; in order to have perceptual knowledge a subject must have the ability to distinguish the object she thinks she is perceiving from other objects. Even if she is good at distinguishing this type of object in general, she must be able to distinguish this particular token in her particular circumstances. Thus, the agent's abilities or skills are an essential requirement in his account of knowledge.

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