# Introduction

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Virtue epistemology is by now a broad and varied field. Also by now, there are various helpful overviews of the field available, some of which are included in this volume (see especially Battaly 2008 and Baehr 2008).[1] This introduction will not provide another. Rather, we will begin with a brief characterization of what virtue epistemology is (Section 1), and then briefly describe some of the topics that are treated in this volume (Section 2). Some of these are topics that have occupied epistemologist in general, while others are raised by virtue epistemology in particular. We end with a summary of the selections that have been collected here (Section 3).

## 1   What is virtue epistemology?

Virtue epistemology begins with the premise that epistemology is a normative discipline, and that, accordingly, a central task of epistemology is to explain the sort of normativity that knowledge, justified belief and the like involve.  A second premise of virtue epistemology is that a focus on the intellectual virtues is essential to carrying out this central task. In these respects, virtue epistemology is conceived on an analogy with virtue ethics: in both fields, a focus on the virtues is taken to be central to the explanation of an important normative domain.

One way to characterize virtue epistemology is in terms of a thesis about the direction of analysis. In virtue ethics, the thesis is that moral

properties in general may be explained in terms of the moral properties of persons. Person-level moral excellences (moral virtues) are fundamental, and other moral properties are to be explained in terms of them. In virtue epistemology, the thesis is that epistemic properties in general may be explained in terms of the epistemic properties of persons. In this case, person-level intellectual excellences (intellectual virtues) are fundamental. In virtue ethics, for example, the rightness of actions is to be explained in terms of the moral virtues of actors, rather than the other way around. In virtue epistemology, the justification of beliefs is to be explained in terms of the intellectual virtues of believers, rather than the other way around.

A different way to understand virtue epistemology, still on the analogy with virtue ethics, is in terms of a weaker characterization. While not endorsing the thesis about direction of analysis described above, some virtue epistemologists advocate a focus on the virtues nonetheless. Motivations for such a focus are varied. Some claim that a focus on the intellectual virtues helps us to make progress on traditional problems in epistemology, even if not by way of a traditional analysis of epistemic properties. Others claim that a focus on the virtues broadens and enriches epistemology, either by raising new questions or by returning us to older ones. For example, a focus on the virtues provides good entry into questions about intellectual agency, and about the relationships between intellectual and moral agency. Alternatively, a focus on the virtues can return us to questions about understanding and wisdom that have been long neglected in the field. Some strands in virtue epistemology, then, look to expand or reorient epistemology in general, sometimes in radical ways. This constitutes yet another analogy with virtue ethics, which did as much for moral philosophy in the latter part of the 20th century.

Before moving to a discussion of topics in Section 2, we note one more way in which discussions of virtue epistemology vary. Namely, different virtue epistemologists have tended to think of the intellectual virtues in different ways. First, some think of the intellectual virtues as cognitive abilities or powers, such as reliable perception, sound memory, and sound reasoning. Others, however, think of the intellectual virtues as character traits, such as open-mindedness, intellectual courage or intellectual honesty, and so as more closely analogous to the moral virtues. At times, discussions on this topic have been framed as if epistemologists are here disputing about a substantive issue: What are the intellectual virtues *really* like, or what is the *right* way to think of the intellectual virtues? Nowadays, however, most virtue epistemologists are happy to agree that there are at least two kinds of intellectual virtue, or intellectual excellence. One's focus on powers or on traits will be determined by one's theoretical interests.

## 2  Some questions in epistemology and virtue epistemology

When Ernest Sosa first introduced the notion of intellectual virtue into the contemporary literature, his topic was *the structure of knowledge*, and more specifically the debate between foundationalism and coherentism. Foundationalist theories propose that knowledge is structured like a pyramid, with a firm foundation supporting the remaining edifice. Coherentist theories propose that knowledge is structured like a raft, held together by relations of mutual support, and with no piece in the structure more fundamental than others. Sosa's proposal was that his virtue theory preserves the truth in both pictures: On the one hand, intellectual powers

such as perception and introspection are sources of knowledge in virtue of their reliable access to relevant truths. Such powers are "foundational" in that they are not reasoning powers, and therefore generate knowledge that is not inferred from knowledge that is evidentially more fundamental. The Pyrrhonian regress is thereby avoided. But coherence, too, is a virtue, Sosa argues. More exactly, coherence-seeking reason is an intellectual power that, in our world, gives reliable access to the truth and therefore counts as an intellectual virtue. Moreover, coherence-seeking reason can give rise to *understanding*, and, in particular, understanding regarding the source of belief in intellectual virtue. Accordingly, intellectual virtue is self-supporting in a way that a full resolution of the Pyrrhonian problematic demands.

Sosa's early discussions already contained suggestions about *the nature of knowledge*, or what knowledge *is*. This is the age-old question of Plato's *Theaetetus*, and aims to explain the difference between knowledge and mere opinion. A popular theme in virtue epistemology is that knowledge is true belief from intellectual virtue. More exactly, in cases of knowledge, S believes the truth *because* S's belief is produced by intellectual virtue. A number of the selections in this volume put forward this sort of view. Hence,

> Zagzebski: Knowledge is belief arising out of acts of intellectual virtue. (Zagzebski 1999)

> Greco: S knows *p if and only if* S believes the truth (with respect to *p*) because S's belief that *p* is produced by intellectual ability. (Greco 2010)

Sosa: Belief amounts to knowledge when it is apt: that is to say, when its correctness is attributable to a competence exercised in appropriate conditions. (Sosa 2007)

Turri: knowledge is adept belief . . . you know Q just in case *your truly believing Q* manifests your cognitive competence. (Turri 201#)

Riggs: S knows that *p* iff: (1) S believes *p*, (2) *p* is true, (3) S is sufficiently deserving of credit for the fact that she has come to hold a true belief in this instance . . . S's coming to hold a true belief in this instance is the product of S's actual abilities. (Riggs 2007)

An adequate theory of knowledge ought to explain the difference between knowing and not knowing— between cases that amount to knowledge and cases that do not. A working assumption among epistemologists is that knowledge is well formed in a way that mere opinion is not. For example, it has been proposed that knowledge must be based on good evidence, or epistemically responsible, or perhaps "epistemically justified." In any case, an adequate theory ought to explain this normative dimension to knowledge, or the way in which knowledge is well-formed and mere opinion is not.

Another working assumption is that *knowledge cannot be true by accident*, at least not in the relevant sense of "accident." For example, in Gettier cases the subject has a true belief, and even a true belief that seems well formed in the sense of being justified, or epistemically responsible, or based on good evidence. Nevertheless, S's believing the truth seems "too

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lucky" to count as knowledge. The Lottery Problem and skeptical problems also suggest that knowledge must exclude luck in some important sense. Accordingly, an adequate theory ought to explain how knowledge is incompatible with luck or accident, and in what sense.

Virtue theories try to meet these demands, proposing that the difference between knowledge and opinion is to be explained in terms of intellectual virtue. What makes knowledge good or well formed, the idea goes, is that it is produced by intellectual virtue. This same feature, moreover, explains how and why knowledge is incompatible with luck or accident. The main idea is this: knowledge is incompatible with luck in the way that credit-worthy success in general is incompatible with luck. Knowledge is a kind of achievement, or credit-worthy success, and so relates to luck as do achievements in general.

One objection to the account is that it is too weak. In particular, Pritchard (2009) argues that the account does not rule out the sort of luck that is involved in Gettier cases and barn façade cases. Pritchard also objects that the account is too strong—some kinds of knowledge, for example testimonial knowledge, seem not to require the sort of virtuous formation that the theory makes a necessary condition on knowledge in general. Jennifer Lackey has put the objection in the form of a dilemma: Either the virtue condition is to be interpreted strongly, in which case it rules out too much, including some cases of testimonial knowledge and innate knowledge. Alternatively, the virtue condition can be interpreted weakly, but then it will be too weak to do the proposed work regarding Gettier cases and the like. Virtue theorists have tried to respond in various ways.

We said that knowledge has a normative dimension, and that an

adequate theory of knowledge ought to explain its nature. A closely related question regards *the value of knowledge*. It is generally assumed that we value knowledge more than mere opinion, and even more than true opinion. But why should that be so, especially if true opinion has the same practical value that knowledge does?

Questions about the value of knowledge go back at least to Plato's *Meno*, but recently they have come back to the fore in epistemology. One reason for the renewed interest is the rise of reliabilist theories, which seem especially vulnerable to the value problem. According to generic reliabilism, knowledge is superior to mere true opinion because knowledge is reliably formed. But Linda Zagzebski has argued that this provides an inadequate explanation of knowledge's value over true belief. In general, she argues, it does not add value to a thing that it has been reliably produced. For example, a good cup of espresso is not more valuable in virtue of having been produced by a reliable espresso machine.

A number of authors have argued that virtue epistemology offers an elegant solution to the value problem, or the problem of explaining the value of knowledge over true belief. First, we may return to the distinction marked above between merely lucky success and success from ability. Only in the latter case do we have success that is creditable to the agent, in virtue of its production through agent ability or competence. In other words, we have an achievement or accomplishment. The proposal, then, is that knowledge is a kind of achievement, and thereby has the value of achievements in general. More specifically, the value of knowledge over mere true belief is an instance of something more general: the value of achievement over merely lucky success.

The solution is elegant but has problems nonetheless. First, it is only

as good as its major claim—that knowledge is a kind of success from ability. Second, the proposal raises further questions about epistemic value. Is epistemic value "monistic," so that the value of knowledge is always parasitic on the value of true belief? And if so, does the present solution really avoid the problem of the *Meno*, or the "swamping" problem raised for reliabilist theories above?[2] Another problem: Is true belief always valuable, even when idiosyncratic or trivial? And if not, can the value of knowledge really be explained in terms of the value of true belief? These are questions about epistemic value for epistemology in general, but pressing for virtue epistemology in particular.

Another issue that has occupied epistemology in general, and that is treated in some of the essays collected here, regards *the scope of knowledge*. Questions about the scope of knowledge are directly related to skeptical arguments, which seek to show that knowledge's scope is limited in some important way. A standard kind of skeptical argument is *Cartesian*. This sort of argument challenges our knowledge of the external world by invoking skeptical possibilities that are incompatible with what we take ourselves to know. It is impossible to rule out the possibility that we are dreaming, the argument goes, or that we are victims of a deceiving demon. Another standard kind of skeptical argument is *Pyrrhonian*. This is the sort of argument that occupies foundationalism and coherentism, as we saw above. It invokes the regress of reasons, and argues that belief must be founded on vicious regress, dogmatic assumption, or question-begging circle. Some of the essays in this volume engage these skeptical problems and try to offer virtue-theoretic solutions. Most notably, the selections from (Sosa 2007) engage different versions of the Cartesian dream argument. And as already noted, Sosa's accounts of animal and

reflective knowledge are developed with Pyrrhonian challenges in mind.

Likewise, Greco's accounts of ability and intellectual ability are developed with Cartesian skepticism in mind. Greco (2010) argues that abilities in general are dispositional properties: to say that S has the ability to achieve result R is to say that S has a disposition or tendency to achieve R across some *range of relevantly close worlds*. More exactly, we will be interested only in worlds where, among other things, S has the relevant physical constitution and S is in some relevant set of conditions and environment. A perceptual ability, for example, would be a disposition to form true perceptual beliefs across some range of relevantly close worlds—worlds where S is physically constituted as in the actual world, and where S is in conditions and an environment that are relevant to the kind of perceptual task in question. The important point in this context is that skeptical scenarios often invoke irrelevant conditions and environments. For example, presumably there is no close world where I am a brain in a vat or the victim of a deceiving demon. But then those sorts of worlds are irrelevant to determining whether my perceptual beliefs in the actual world are from ability.

This general approach comes with problems, of course. Perhaps most importantly, the approach must be filled in with an adequate account of which worlds count as relevantly close. Sosa does this in terms of what is normal and appropriate to the ability in question, whereas Greco relativizes to practical interests. In each case, however, the account of intellectual ability is informed by considerations about abilities or competences in general. This is as it must be, if such an account is to have explanatory power—that is, if it is to *explain* what makes a world relevantly close, as opposed to offering ad hoc stipulation.

Here we note a recurring theme in virtue epistemology: that knowledge is an instance of a more general normative phenomenon—that of success through virtuous (able, competent) agency—and that we make progress in epistemology by invoking the more general relations among agency, virtue, luck and credit. By locating epistemic issues within this more general normative domain, we gain insight into the dynamics that drive epistemology's problems. By exploiting the relations that hold across the domain, our theories gain in explanatory power. That, in any case, is a recurring theme. Questions about how that theme should play in its details, and to what extent it is successful, are taken up by the essays that follow.

As we have already seen, some virtue epistemologists confront skepticism head-on, viewing it as an opportunity to help clarify what exactly knowledge requires. But some virtue epistemologists think that *avoiding* a confrontation with skepticism can be illuminating as well. For example, Zagzebski (2001) points out that progress on some philosophical questions tends to come only once we are "ready to put skeptical worries aside." Indeed, she claims, modern epistemology has been partly "stultified" by an obsession with skepticism, and its attendant focus on certainty and justification. The consequence is that we have neglected other important epistemic categories, such as understanding and wisdom.

The suggestion that we look beyond a confrontation with skepticism is not, as Zagzebski notes in her discussion, unprecedented in the history of Western epistemology. But some recent trends in virtue epistemology represent a more radical departure from traditional themes. For instance, Jonathan Kvanvig (1992) argues that virtue epistemologists ought to break free of the Cartesian paradigm of individualistic epistemology, and

embrace a historical and social perspective on cognition, from which perspective the full import of the intellectual virtues becomes apparent. Robert Roberts and Jay Wood (2007) go a step further and advocate a kind of intellectual activism, whereby theorists aim to not only understand the social and psychological foundations of virtue, but to reform intellectual culture by providing detailed and inspiring case studies of individual virtues. And Miranda Fricker (2003) makes the case that virtue epistemology is suited to help us understand the political dimensions of knowledge, through an examination of the habits involved in the consumption of testimony.

Nevertheless, even when virtue epistemology appears at its most iconoclastic, just beneath the surface we find connections with deep trends in the history of Western philosophy. For instance, Fricker's discussion owes a debt to John McDowell's theory of normativity, which draws explicitly on Aristotle's ethics, focusing on the role of culture in initiating humans into the distinctively rational activities of basing beliefs and actions on reasons, the assessment of reasons, criticism, and so on. A similar approach informs Zagzebski's and, especially, Kvanvig's discussions as well. Paul Bloomfield follows Plato in opposition to Aristotle, and argues that virtues are best thought of as skills, which in turn has further theoretical payoffs.

It turns out, then, as it does in so much of philosophy, that what was old is new again. We gain a fresh perspective on the prospects and possibilities of epistemology by revisiting the ancient roots of virtue theory in the Western tradition. Contemporary virtue epistemology is an exciting and dynamic field with a rich tradition to draw upon in order to help address epistemological questions, both old and new.

## 3   Summary of chapters

*A. The Nature of Knowledge.*

In "What is Knowledge," Linda Zagzebski makes the case for a virtue-theoretic account of knowledge, very much in line with an ancient tradition going all the way back to Aristotle. She begins with the relatively uncontroversial observation that knowledge is "a state of believing a true proposition in a good way," or more simply, knowledge is "good true belief." But in what way is it good? Zagzebski aims to provide a "real definition" of knowledge — the traditional project of providing a necessarily true statement that reveals the essence of knowledge — that helps us understand knowledge's goodness. One important restriction on an acceptable definition, Zagzebski argues, is that whatever is said to make a true belief good must *guarantee* that it is true. The restriction is motivated by reflecting on how certain forms of *chance* or *luck* prevent true belief from counting as knowledge. Gettier cases provide the best such examples, with their "double-luck" structure of good luck canceling out bad luck. Drawing inspiration from Aristotelian virtue theory, Zagzebski proposes that we understand knowledge on the general model of external success "arising out of" virtue, where a virtue is an admirable or praiseworthy internal state of the agent. More specifically, she proposes that "knowledge is belief arising out of acts of intellectual virtue." An intellectual virtue is an excellence of a person that involves a characteristic motivation for the truth, and makes the person reliable in getting at the truth. The sense in which knowledge is good, according to this definition, is the sense in which it is good to succeed because of virtue.

In the selections from *A Virtue Epistemology*, Ernest Sosa marshals two principal resources to explain the nature of knowledge and respond to a form of skepticism. The first resource is the "AAA" model of performance assessment. A performance is *accurate* if it achieves its aim, *adroit* if it manifests relevant competence or skill, and *apt* if it is accurate because adroit. Sosa treats belief as an intellectual performance whose aim is truth, and defines knowledge as apt belief; that is, belief that is true because competent. Although apt beliefs might typically also be safe beliefs — a safe belief is one that would not have easily been false, at least when held on the basis that it actually is held — Sosa denies that safety is absolutely required for aptness. Safety and aptness can come apart. This allows Sosa to respond to skeptical doubts which take as their starting point the nearby possibility that we might be dreaming in sleep.[3] This nearby possibility might render our perceptual beliefs unsafe, but does not render them inapt. The second resource is the distinction between animal and reflective knowledge. Whereas animal knowledge is apt belief, reflective knowledge is "apt belief aptly noted"; that is, knowing that you know. Sosa employs this distinction to handle objections to his response to dreaming skepticism.

In "The Nature of Knowledge," John Greco proposes that you have knowledge if and only if you believe the truth because your belief is produced by intellectual ability. He then develops this thesis in the context of three themes: that knowledge attributions are somehow context sensitive; that knowledge is intimately related to practical reasoning; and that one purpose of the concept of knowledge is to flag good sources of information. Wedding these themes to the proposed account, Greco argues, helps to explain a wide range of cases, including barn façade cases

and standard Gettier cases. It also helps to answer some important objections, including the generality problem for reliabilism, and the charge that virtue theories cannot explain testimonial knowledge.

In "Character in Epistemology," Jason Baehr offers a detailed critique of attempts to define knowledge in terms of intellectual virtues. Baehr focuses on Zagzebski's theory, but intends his conclusion to apply more generally to virtue-theoretic treatments. After a detailed exposition outlining Zagzebski's theory of virtue and definition of knowledge, Baehr proceeds to argue that the conditions featured in her definition of knowledge are neither necessary nor sufficient for knowledge. They are not sufficient because they don't rule out luck of the relevant form, such as in Gettier cases, or when the subject only fleetingly has the relevant motivation and ability. They are also insufficient because they don't ensure that knowledge is reliably produced, or based on good evidence. One main reason why they are not necessary is that there are examples of "passive knowledge," where you are simply saddled with the relevant belief, as when the lights go out and darkness envelops you. Your belief that the lights went out isn't virtuously motivated, but it clearly counts as knowledge.

In "Apt Performance and Epistemic Value," Duncan Pritchard Pritchard contests Sosa's theory of knowledge as apt belief, arguing that apt belief is neither necessary nor sufficient for knowledge. It is not sufficient because apt performance is, but knowledge is not, compatible with the sort of luck on display in typical Gettier cases and in fake-barn cases. It is not necessary because knowledge based on testimony needn't involve apt performance on the hearer's part (see Jennifer Lackey's selections included in the section "Credit and Luck"). Pritchard suggests

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that these results motivate a shift to "anti-luck virtue epistemology," which appends a safety condition to standard virtue-theoretic accounts of knowledge. There are two fundamental, and independent, intuitions about knowledge that Pritchard says his proposal vindicates. First, that knowledge involves true belief due to ability. Virtue epistemologists privilege this intuition. Second, that knowledge precludes luck. Those who favor safety, sensitivity, reliability or similar requirements privilege this intuition. Pritchard proposes an account that respects both of these intuitions, by identifying knowledge with safe true belief produced by cognitive ability.

In "Manifest Failure," John Turri argues that the basic insight behind virtue-theoretic definitions of knowledge can be strengthened by paying close attention to the metaphysics of dispositions. The key move is to highlight the distinction between, on the one hand, an outcome happening merely because of a disposition, and on the other, an outcome manifesting a disposition. This is a perfectly general distinction that applies to all dispositions, not just intellectual ones. *That the subject forms a true belief* is often the outcome of inquiry. You gain knowledge when, and only when, such an outcome manifests your intellectual dispositions or abilities. Knowledge is true belief manifesting intellectual ability, what Turri calls "adept belief." Turri concludes that virtue epistemology has the resources to solve the Gettier problem once and for all.

*B. Epistemic Value.*

In "The Search for the Source of Epistemic Good," Zagzebski argues for several theses about the value of knowledge. First, she argues that

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reliabilism cannot solve the value problem, which is the problem of explaining what makes knowledge better than mere true belief. This is because reliabilists understand knowledge to be reliably produced true belief, and *being reliably produced* doesn't add any value to a true belief, just as good espresso isn't more valuable for having been made by a reliable espresso machine. Indeed, a similar inability affects internalist theories that claim that justification's value is merely instrumental to truth. To properly solve the value problem, Zagzebski argues, we must recognize that knowledge has value independently of anything "external" to it. She suggests thinking of knowledge as a properly motivated "act" or "state of the agent" for which the agent earns credit. Proper motivation adds value. For belief, proper motivation is love of truth.

In "Knowing Full Well: The Normativity of Beliefs as Performances," Sosa amplifies the AAA-model of performance assessment we met with earlier, distinguishing first-order from second-order performances. He employs this distinction to explain the normativity involved in assessing not only belief but also suspending judgment. The normativity of belief is that of apt performance more generally — that is, performances that succeed due to the agent's skill or competence. The normativity of suspending judgment is that of "meta-apt" performances more generally. Specifically, it is the sort of normativity involved in assessing an agent's decision to proceed, or to not proceed, with a first-order performance. Knowledge is more valuable than mere true belief because it is an apt performance, and not successful merely through luck. A "fully apt" performance is not only apt, but also apt because meta-apt. Reflective knowledge fits into this picture by contributing to fully apt belief.

In "Can Virtue Reliabilism Explain the Value of Knowledge," Berit

Brogaard argues that Zagzebski and others overlook an important category of non-instrumental extrinsic value, which would allow generic reliabilists to account for the value of knowledge without adverting to intellectual virtues or virtuous motivation. The non-instrumental or "final" value of something can be enhanced by its relation to something external to it, such as, for example, the source that produced it. Additionally, if virtue epistemologists can't locate a principled distinction between belief-producing processes that are "grounded in the agent's virtuous abilities and those that are not," then they are no better positioned than generic reliabilists to adequately solve the value problem. Here Brogaard refines the problem of "strange and fleeting processes" that virtue reliabilists have used as a cudgel against generic reliabilists, and trains it on virtue–reliabilism.

In "Epistemic Normativity," Stephen Grimm argues that "teleological accounts" of epistemic value, which consider true belief to be the ultimate epistemic value, suffer from a potentially serious defect, and then considers whether Sosa's theory of epistemic value provides a way to remedy it. Grimm argues that Sosa's theory fails, because it cannot account for the "binding," "non-optional," "reason-giving force" of epistemic evaluation. The main problem with Sosa's account, Grimm contends, is that it allows epistemic value to be only relatively, non-categorically valuable.

In "Knowledge and Final Value," Duncan Pritchard asks whether the thesis that knowledge is an intellectual achievement can properly explain knowledge's distinctive value. After arguing that intellectual achievement is neither necessary nor sufficient for knowledge, Pritchard asks what can be salvaged from the virtue-epistemological program. Again we encounter

the two "master intuitions" about knowledge discussed above: the ability intuition and the anti-luck intuition. Whereas virtue epistemologists tend to think that properly satisfying the ability intuition will suffice to satisfy the anti-luck intuition, Pritchard argues that this is false. Instead, the anti-luck intuition "imposes a distinct constraint" on a theory of knowledge. Pritchard argues that his own anti-luck virtue epistemology satisfies both master intuitions and explains knowledge's value.

*C. Credit and Luck.*

In "Knowledge as Credit for True Belief," Greco argues that knowledge is true belief for which you deserve credit, and supplements this with a theory of intellectual credit; to wit, you deserve intellectual credit for believing the truth only if your reliable cognitive character is "an important and necessary part" of the causal explanation of your true belief. Recognizing that knowledge ascriptions have an illocutionary force — namely, that of crediting someone for believing the truth — helps resolve the lottery problem and the Gettier problem. In lottery cases, the salience of reliable character is trumped by chance. In Gettier cases, the salience of reliable character is trumped by abnormality —  i.e., by something odd or unexpected in the way that S comes to have a true belief. Greco ends by arguing that this account of knowledge solves the value problem as well.

In "Why Epistemologists Are So Down on Their Luck," Wayne Riggs notes that there is virtual unanimity among epistemologists that knowledge excludes luck, and then asks, why *does* knowledge exclude luck? He argues that the best explanation for this is that knowledge is "credit-worthy true belief," or in other words, "an accomplishment,"

wherein it is not "inadvertent" that your abilities produce your true belief. This view also solves the value problem, since an accomplishment (in this case, knowledge) is more valuable than lucky success (in this case, mere true belief). Riggs also offers a partial account of luck and credit to complement his theory of knowledge. An event is lucky for you only if it was not the product of your abilities, or you inadvertently caused it to happen. And you deserve credit for an event only if it is not lucky for you that it occurred.

In "Why We Don't Deserve Credit for Everything We Know," Jennifer Lackey argues that knowing something does not require deserving credit for truly believing it (call this "the credit thesis"). After clarifying what's required to deserve credit for believing the truth, Lackey produces a case that she thinks is a clear counterexample to the credit thesis. The case involves Morris, who just arrived in Chicago. He asks "the first adult passerby that he sees" for directions to the Sears Tower. The stranger knows the city very well, and gives Morris impeccable directions, which Morris accepts as accurately locating the Tower. Lackey argues that Morris knows where the Tower is, but doesn't deserve credit for his true belief. Rather, the passerby deserves credit for Morris gaining a true belief. This problem threatens to generalize, because Morris's belief is a fairly typical testimonial belief. Lackey goes on to consider a revised credit thesis, which pertains only to "first-hand" knowledge, rather than second-hand knowledge through testimony. She thinks this revised credit thesis is also false, adducing as evidence the possibility of innate knowledge, and a case of reliably produced, virus-induced true belief.

In "Knowledge and Credit," Lackey reviews and responds to objections to her critique of the credit thesis. In particular she responds to objections

from Riggs, Greco, Pritchard and Sosa. In the end, Lackey believes that the credit thesis faces a fundamental dilemma: *either* it requires too much for a subject to deserve credit, in which case it results in skepticism about testimonial knowledge, *or* it requires too little for a subject to deserve credit, in which case it can't solve the Gettier problem.

*D. Broadening Epistemology.*

In "Epistemic Injustice and a Role for Virtue in the Politics of Knowing," Miranda Fricker offers a fascinating study of the role played by intellectual traits in assessing testimony. Fricker's focus is the "epistemic injustice" suffered by the less powerful and marginalized, which is the result of improperly formed "testimonial sensibility" on the part of hearers. The vice of testimonial injustice is a disposition to improperly assign less credibility to someone's testimony, often based on their social status (e.g. gender, ethnicity, class). The virtue of testimonial justice is a disposition to remain aware of and resist your prejudices from interfering with your estimation of someone's testimony. A properly formed testimonial sensibility displays "reflexive critical openness to the words of others," which is the result of socialization and training, especially emotional training. Here Fricker draws on the work of John McDowell, whose epistemology is in turn modeled explicitly on Aristotle's virtue ethics. Fricker's discussion contains detailed case studies from literature, in particular *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. These provide examples of culpable and non-culpable testimonial injustice.

In "Recovering Understanding," Linda Zagzebski draws inspiration from the history of epistemology and conjectures that work on

*understanding* will take center stage as epistemologists renounce their post-Cartesian preoccupation with skepticism and its attendant narrow focus on certainty and justification. Understanding is closely tied to mastering a skill, is holistic rather than directed at a single proposition, involves nonpropositional representations, and is a property of persons rather than belief states. Virtue epistemology is uniquely suited to explain understanding, she argues, because its account of understanding will be structurally similar to its account of knowledge. Roughly, we need only exchange a propositional object for a nonpropositional one, and exchange the virtues aimed at truth for those, as of now poorly understood, aimed at understanding. Zagzebski proposes that understanding is cognizing "nonpropositional structures of reality," and that it is "impossible to understand without understanding that one understands."

In "Understanding 'Virtue' and the Virtue of Understanding," Wayne Riggs notes that there is a tendency to characterize intellectual virtues instrumentally as those cognitive traits that promote the goal of a good truth/falsehood ratio in our beliefs. Riggs rejects this as incomplete: human intellectual flourishing involves much more than a good truth/falsehood ratio. Intellectual flourishing requires *understanding important subjects*, so we must include *understanding* alongside truth when theorizing about intellectual virtues.

In the selections from *Intellectual Virtues*, Robert Roberts and Jay Wood espouse "regulative epistemology," which aims to promote intellectually virtuous dispositions in its readers. This practical orientation stands in contrast to analytic virtue epistemology, which, as Roberts and Wood understand it, unsuccessfully struggles to define epistemological concepts, especially propositional knowledge. The authors go on to

demonstrate how regulative virtue epistemology is done by providing detailed "conceptual maps" of several intellectual virtues and vices. Reproduced here is their discussion of intellectual humility. Humility stands opposed to the vices of vanity and arrogance. Roberts and Wood characterize humility as the trait of having little concern for reputation or influence on others. They furnish illuminating examples from a wide range of sources, including novels, biography, and biblical passages. They also hypothesize that intellectual humility promotes the acquisition of epistemic goods, such as acquaintance, warranted belief, and understanding, though they don't claim that this instrumental value exhausts humility's value.

*E. Competing Visions.*

In the selections from *Intellectual Virtues and the Life of the Mind*, Jonathan Kvanvig argues that we ought to abandon the Cartesian perspective in epistemology, according to which "the deepest epistemological questions concern the isolated intellect," focusing narrowly on individual time-slices of individual thinkers and their individual beliefs. Kvanvig advises us to instead take the "genetic" and "social" aspects of cognition seriously, including the history of an individual's intellect, the education she received, the habits she has developed, her role models, and the ways that information is organized and communicated in her community. Rather than ask whether some isolated proposition is justified for her, we should ask how she was trained as an inquirer and whether she knows how to properly gather and assess information. The virtues, and the virtuous exemplar, play a central role in

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this new epistemological vision, underwriting our assessment of individual and collective cognitive activities, intellectual training, and the social organization of information.

In "Virtue Epistemology and the Epistemology of Virtue," Paul Bloomfield argues, *pace* Aristotle and others, that virtues are a species of skill. After presenting and rejecting Aristotle's argument that virtues are not skills, Bloomfield reviews the early Platonic view that virtues are indeed skills, which is supported by reviewing the similarities between virtues and paradigmatic skills, such as navigation, medicine, and animal tracking. One key feature of a skill is being able to "diagnose" situations by knowing how to look for signs and connect them to underlying causes in the relevant domain. Viewing virtues as skills brings two primary benefits. First, it provides a satisfying account of moral knowledge, according to which moral knowledge is likened to medical diagnosis or any other skillful assessment of a situation. Second, it transcends the internalist-externalist debate over epistemic justification, because if intellectual virtues are, as Bloomfield contends, the "locus of justification," then questions about first-person access to justifying factors, which divide internalists and externalists, turn out "to be beside the point." Bloomfield's ultimate conclusion seems to favor externalism. That is, he concludes that knowledge does not essentially involve having the sort of first-person access to justifying factors that internalists typically demand.

In "Four Varieties of Character-Based Virtue Epistemology," Jason Baehr presents a fourfold taxonomy of "responsibilist" or "character-based" virtue epistemologies and assesses each variety. Character-based virtue epistemology treats intellectual virtues as refined intellectual traits, such as intellectual courage and open-mindedness. Within the character-

based camp, conservative views appeal to intellectual virtues to engage traditional epistemological questions about the nature and scope of knowledge. Strong conservative views propose that the virtues will feature centrally and fundamentally in answers to the traditional questions. Weak conservative views envision a more modest, secondary but still notable role for virtues. Autonomous views appeal to intellectual virtues to blaze new trails in epistemology. Radical autonomous views aim to replace and eliminate traditional epistemological questions. Moderate autonomous views aim only to add questions to the agenda. Baehr argues in favor of the moderate conservative and weak autonomous varieties, and lists some ways to fruitfully develop these research programs.

In "Virtue Epistemology," Heather Battaly provides an admirable overview of virtue epistemology, which also introduces new ways of thinking about the field and makes a suggestive proposal that advances the debate over the correct definition of knowledge. Battaly first distinguishes virtue epistemology from belief-based epistemology. Belief-based epistemology focuses on properties of beliefs — such as whether they fit the evidence, or fulfill epistemic obligations, or are reliably produced — and treats these as primary. Conventional analytic epistemology is belief-based. By contrast, virtue epistemology focuses on agents and their intellectual traits, and treats these as primary, and aims to explain other epistemic notions, such as justification or knowledge, in terms of them. Battaly also distinguishes two strands of virtue epistemology: the *theory* and *anti-theory* strands. Virtue theories aim to define knowledge and justified belief, just as conventional analytic epistemology does, except that it treats agents and their virtues as primary. Virtue anti-theories eschew "formulaic" definitions and instead focus on the virtues "in their

own right." Battaly also suggests combining virtue reliabilist and virtue responsibilist approaches to generate a "unified theory of knowledge." This is motivated by the observation that virtue responsibilism is better suited to explaining "high-grade" knowledge, whereas virtue reliabilism is better suited to explaining "low-grade" knowledge and solving the Gettier problem. The introduction to section II presents an enlightening list of questions facing any theory of intellectual virtues, which can be used to generate a nuanced and helpful taxonomy of the field.

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[1] See also Linda Zagzebski, "Virtue Epistemology," *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*; Jason Baehr, "Virtue Epistemology," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*; John Greco and John Turri, "Virtue Epistemology," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*; John Turri and Ernest Sosa, "Virtue Epistemology," *Oxford Bibliographies Online*.

[2] So called because the value of true belief "swamps" the value of reliably formed belief. See Jonathan Kvanvig, *The Value of Knowledge and the Pursuit of Understanding* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[3] As Sosa notes, skeptical arguments often invoke "far off" possibilities of illusion, such as that one is a brain-in-a-vat, or the disembodied victim of a Cartesian demon. Here Sosa considers the more "nearby" possibility that one is simply fooled by a dream in normal sleep.