



The Intrinsic Value of Knowledge

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Elliott R. Crozat

Purdue University Global

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Introduction

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Axiology

Epistemology

Knowledge

Intrinsic Value



Intrinsic Value, Extrinsic Value, and Instrumental Value



To be valuable is to be worthy of a pro-attitude (e.g., approval, desire, choice, etc.). I.e., to be valuable is to be objectively *choice-worthy*.



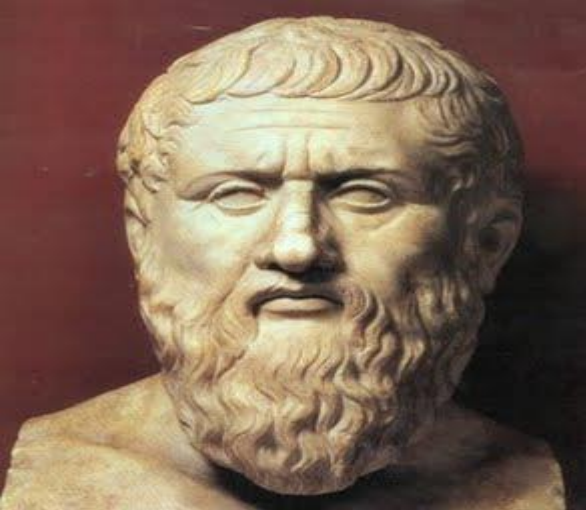
Intrinsic value: good for its own sake or as an end in itself; good in virtue of its internal features. (Rønnow-Rasmussen, 2015, 30)



Extrinsic value: good in virtue of some external relation or feature. (Rønnow-Rasmussen, 2015, 30)



Instrumental value: good as means to some valuable end. Feldman: the standard characterization of instrumental value is that something has it if that thing is useful to obtain something else which is intrinsically valuable. (2005, 380-81)



What is knowledge?

Propositional knowledge is (at least) justified, true belief. To know a proposition, three conditions must hold: (a) one believes the proposition (i.e., accepts it as true); (b) the belief is true (i.e., corresponds with reality); and (c) the belief has adequate justification (e.g., relevant evidence, experience). (Plato, *Theaetetus*, ca. 369 B.C., *Meno*, ca. 385 B.C.)

Propositional knowledge differs from know-how (e.g., how to make coffee) and from knowledge by acquaintance (e.g., what a lemon tastes like).

The Value of Propositional Knowledge

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The *Meno Argument*: since knowledge is intrinsically better than true belief, knowledge is intrinsically valuable

Aristotle (*Metaphysics*, Book I, Part I), Frankena (1973, 87-88), Chisholm (2005, 172), others affirm knowledge as a basic intrinsic value

G. E. Moore's Isolation Test (1903)

Omniscience

The Curiosity Test

The Preferred Life Test



Why
important?
What's the
use?

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Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*: the Laputans

The “*Cui bono?*” question (Who benefits?
What's the use? Is knowledge merely a
tool?)

Students, employers, politicians?

Others?



Why important? Epistemic Inclusivity

Knowledge is a universal and intrinsic human value – good as such, good for and accessible to all persons. Knowledge is *inclusive* in this respect.

Knowledge is not merely instrumental; that would make its value exclusive (i.e., useful only for those who use it).

Conclusion

Suppose a student asks: why should I learn your subject? What are some answers we might give?

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