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Wisdom and Knowledge

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Abstract

A current debate in philosophy focusses on whether propositional knowledge is necessary for wisdom. In this paper I defend the view that propositional knowledge is necessary for wisdom. I call Weak Reductionism the view that propositional knowledge is merely necessary for wisdom, but not sufficient. I also examine two rival accounts of wisdom – Strong Reductionism, the view that propositional knowledge is both necessary and sufficient for wisdom, and Non-Reductionism, the view that propositional knowledge is neither necessary and nor sufficient for wisdom. I critique both of these views and find them wanting in light of various wisdom-related intuitions that we have.

Keywords: practical wisdom, epistemology, scepticism, virtue

Introduction

Following the standard view among philosophers (Grimm, 2015; Kekes, 1983, 2020; Nozick, 1981; Tsai, 2022; Whitcomb, 2011), in this paper I take wisdom to be a virtue which is intimately connected to living well.[1] Here, I defend what I call Weak Reductionism about wisdom, the view that propositional knowledge[2] about living well is necessary, but not sufficient, for wisdom. My view shall defend the thesis that knowledge of propositions like '*G* is a goal of living well', 'φ is a way to live well' etc are necessary for wisdom. This leaves open the question of whether various forms of non-propositional knowledge are also essential for wisdom, a question that's beyond the scope of this paper. I also examine two rival accounts of wisdom – Strong Reductionism[3], the view that knowledge is both necessary and sufficient for wisdom, and Non-Reductionism, the view that wisdom is neither necessary nor sufficient for knowledge. I critique both views and find them wanting in light of various wisdom-related intuitions we have. The paper is organised as follows. In section 1, I discuss

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my core thesis, i.e., Weak Reductionism. Sections 2 and 3 are dedicated to defending Weak Reductionism against Strong Reductionism and Non-Reductionism, respectively.

1. Weak Reductionism

Weak Reductionism is the view that knowledge is merely necessary for wisdom. Towards this, I'll discuss two views of wisdom current in the philosophical literature – the Aristotelian view, and the Consequentialist view – and point out that irrespective of which view of wisdom one espouses, we cannot escape the conclusion that knowledge is necessary for wisdom.

The Aristotelian view proposes a *constitutive* relationship between wisdom and knowledge. More specifically, that wisdom is constituted by knowledge about living a good life or living well. Philosophers (e.g., Kekes 1983, Whitcomb 2011, Grimm 2015) observe that typically this knowledge of living well that constitutes wisdom broadly has two components: (i) knowledge of the goals of living well[4], and (ii) knowledge of some ways to realise those goals. Regarding the first, there is no singular way of enumerating what precisely the goals of living well are, but without delving into much detail, in general, such goals include various kinds of personal, political, social, and religious liberties, economic prosperity, moral rights, mental and physical well-being, legal justice, and so on. Conversely, a wise agent also knows that various kinds of persecution, dictatorship, illness, poverty, injustice, etc., aren't the goals of living well. That this is the case is seen well when we consider why we admire wise people and what we approach them for. They are admired for their practical judgments in life, and we usually approach them for their advice and guidance in our relationships, career, etc., ask them to settle disputes, and so on. Now, when we turn to someone for, say, career advice, we would not turn to someone who, as Grimm puts it, has 'flawed (or 'screwed up') priorities' about life, say, someone who thinks that everyone should aim for stark poverty. What this shows is that our view of whether someone is wise lies in our judgment of whether we think of them as someone who believes what is good for living well. Similarly, if at any time we see a pattern in a person's belief system that isn't conducive to living well, we very likely would not consider them wise – seek their advice, ask them to settle a dispute, and so on.[5] Secondly, wise agents know certain strategies of living well. This makes sense given that basically all wisdom traditions offer advice on the ways to live well. Now, of course, such advice could be different from each other and sometimes even contradict each other. However, the point here isn't so much the content of such advice, but rather the intuition that a wise person knows various ways to live well. [6]

Accordingly, a wise agent is someone who not only knows what the goals of living well are, but also knows ways to make progress towards those goals. It's hard to think of someone as wise who has absolutely no clue about how to make such progress – in all likelihood, we would not go to them for any advice.

Consequentialism, on the other hand, broadly speaking, proposes that consequences alone determine the normative properties of something (e.g., Driver 2004). Accordingly, a Consequentialist about ethics would say that what makes an action φ morally right is the fact that φ brings about some state of affairs that's morally good. Thus, the moral rightness of an action is defined in terms of the moral goodness of the state of affairs that's brought about. And it's precisely because the consequences of φ are some morally good state of affairs that φ could be taken to be a morally right action. Given this, the relationship between the two is a *causal* one. Thus, following Consequentialism, a wise agent could be taken to be one who is disposed to form attitudes and perform actions that are conducive to living well. Accordingly, what would make an agent wise if she, say, reliably performs actions that would lead to the living well of herself, others, the society in general, and so on? The answer is that, just like in the case of Aristotelianism, in the case of Consequentialism as well, a wise agent needs to know a number of general facts about living well, and more particularly, what the goals of living well are and which actions can reach those goals, for otherwise it would not make much sense for someone to bring a state of affairs of living well without them knowing what their action φ is aimed at achieving.

But beyond this, whether one is an Aristotelian or a Consequentialist, one will still have to apply one's general knowledge of facts about living well to particular situations or contexts to perform wise actions. Owing to this, not only does the wise agent have to possess such general knowledge about living well, but she'll also have to be sensitive to the particular contexts in which she performs such wise actions. This entails that she has particular knowledge of various facts concerning the situation at hand. Let us call such knowledge of particular situations, *particularist knowledge*. That such particularist knowledge is essential for wisdom could be demonstrated in two ways. Firstly, to be able to make a wise judgment, in a particular situation, one must first assess the relevant facts of the particular situation, even though such facts may not be directly related to living well. Generally, such a process requires empirical observation of the facts of the particular situation, and it's only after an assessment of the relevant facts is made that she's in a position to make a wise judgment. Irrespective of what form of reasoning the agent employs to arrive at the wise judgment, it seems right to think that the agent has to possess the

knowledge of these relevant empirical facts of the particular situation in order to make wise judgments in those situations.

Secondly, knowledge of such particular situations is available to non-wise agents as well. However, what distinguishes a wise agent is that she's more sensitive to certain characteristics of the situation that are relevant to the wisdom-related issue at hand. In that aspect, the agent has various abilities and dispositions to discern certain relevant characteristics of the situation that others may fail to notice. Such discernments could be thought quasi-perceptually, such that the wise agent *sees* certain aspects of a situation that others do not. Such abilities and dispositions entail that the wise agent has the ability to 'see that' one aspect of the situation requires particular attention while also 'seeing that' certain other aspects need to be ignored, depending on the exigencies of the particular situation. However, since there is nothing in the general body of knowledge of living well through which one can access those facts, the only way to access them is by somehow being in contact with the situation. Now, irrespective of how precisely the model of wisdom's relation to perception pans out, following a standard view in philosophy, it could be said that seeing entails knowing (e.g., Williamson, 2000; Holton, 2017). For example, when you see that it's raining, then you know that it's raining. But Gisborne (2010) observes that 'see' and its cognates are polysemous such that even though their prototypical meaning relates to visual perception (as in a sentence like 'I see that it's raining'), that isn't always the case. Take the following sentence, for instance:

(1) Jane saw that Peter was right. (Gisborne, 2010, p. 122)

The natural reading of 'saw' in (1) is something like Jane realised or understood that Peter was right, and not that Jane visually perceived that Peter was right. Our use of 'seeing that' a certain aspect of the situation needs more attention or needs to be ignored could also be thought of in similar terms – when a wise agent sees that a certain aspect of the situation needs more attention or needs to be ignored, they don't perceptually do so (even though in some situations that may be the case); the wise agent realises or understands that a certain aspect of the situation needs more attention or needs to be ignored. French (2012) calls such instances of 'see' the 'purely epistemic sense'. He observes that in cases like these, the subject is taken to possess knowledge of the relevant proposition such that 'see' here is primarily a verb of knowledge, and that it's difficult not to construe 'realise' or 'understand' as something that isn't knowledge (French, 2012, p. 120).[7] Thus, when Jane saw that Peter was right, she knew that he was right. Similarly, when a wise agent sees that a certain aspect of the situation

needs more attention or needs to be ignored, she also knows that that aspect of the situation needs more attention or needs to be ignored.

To sum up, in this section, I argued that irrespective of whether one is Aristotelian or Consequentialist about wisdom, a wise agent, inter alia, has knowledge of two forms: (i) knowledge of general facts about living well, and (ii) knowledge of particular facts about the situation in which a wise action is performed. In what follows, I shall defend this view from two of its competitors.

2. Strong Reductionism

Strong Reductionism says that knowledge is not only necessary but also sufficient for wisdom. Since such a view takes the reductive base of wisdom to consist merely of knowledge (about living well), it entails that wisdom isn't a state different from knowledge. Strong Reductionism isn't very popular among philosophers in general, but among contemporary philosophers, Whitcomb's (2011) view is perhaps most aligned with it. He presents two cases in favour of Strong Reductionism. First, he observes that the Devil can be regarded as wise just in virtue of his knowledge of living well, despite his being absolutely evil and sinister, by continuously advising others how to live badly. Whitcomb stipulates that, before his fall, the Devil was a wise angel and, in virtue of that, had knowledge of living well. Post his fall, he still retains all his pre-fall knowledge of living well. But now his motivation has changed – whereas earlier, as an angel, he was motivated to perform good actions, now, as a demon, he's motivated to perform evil actions. Given this, the question is, in the face of pre-fall knowledge of living well, despite his evil motivations, can the Devil still be wise? Whitcomb's answer is yes (2011, pp. 97-8). If Whitcomb is right, the implication is that wisdom could be reduced to mere knowledge since non-epistemic factors like motivation make no difference to whether an agent is wise as long as she possesses the body of knowledge about living well pertaining to wisdom. Contrary to Whitcomb, however, I think that the answer to the question is no. I shall make two arguments towards this.

Firstly, one way of thinking about wisdom is that attributing wisdom to someone has certain practical significance. That is, third-person knowledge ascriptions like '*S* is wise' have a functional aspect to them – when we make such a statement, inter alia, we pick out the agent *S* as a reliable guide, adviser, etc., about life-related matters. There is something laudatory about the agent or a sense of recommendation towards them when we call someone wise – particularly, for our purpose, it's in the sense that we recommend them for good advice or guidance if we need any. This seems to be correct, as Whitcomb himself observes that the intuitions that

wise agents are those who have the ability to give good advice and also are those whom we approach when we are in need of good advice are very strong (2011, p. 102). But if that's the case, then calling the Devil wise fails to serve that function. This is because, according to Whitcomb, he only gives advice that will lead others to a bad life (2011, p. 97). Thus, there is something extremely odd about saying that 'The Devil is wise' since he's simply not stably disposed to perform the actions that a wise agent typically or is supposed to perform, and in this particular case, give good advice. On the contrary, he's stably disposed to perform a certain kind of action that isn't characteristic of wise agents, i.e., giving bad advice. Accordingly, the Devil cannot correctly be called wise despite him retaining the knowledge of living well, which he had while he was still an angel – it conflicts with our deeper intuition that wise agents are those who give good advice.[8]

Secondly, even if we grant that non-cognitive states or practical functionality are irrelevant for wisdom, one still cannot correctly attribute wisdom to the Devil after his fall. We observed earlier that in addition to possessing knowledge of general facts about living well, the wise agent also possesses particularist knowledge – knowledge related to particular issues of the contexts they're performing the wise actions in. And gaining such particularist knowledge requires certain abilities and dispositions on the part of the wise agent, such as reflection, humility, benevolence, etc. (e.g., Ardelt 2003, König and Glück 2013), which cannot be straightforwardly reduced to knowledge. Now suppose that when the Devil rebelled against God, as a punishment, God deprived him of all such particularist knowledge-forming abilities and dispositions such that, even though he's allowed to retain the general knowledge about living well as well as particularist knowledge he formed in pre-fall circumstances, he can no longer form any particularist wisdom or relevant knowledge in post-fall situations. In such a scenario, he'll still retain the knowledge of living well, as Whitcomb would like to have it. However, now as a demon, since he no longer possesses those particularist knowledge-forming skills and dispositions, he cannot reliably form particularist knowledge of novel situations that'll be necessary for him to stably perform wise actions in a range of particular situations in conjunction with the general knowledge of living well that he already possesses. And accordingly, since he now no longer has a stable disposition to perform wise actions over a range of situations, the Devil is no longer wise. But if God didn't deprive him of such particularist knowledge-forming abilities and dispositions, then he'll be in a position to characteristically perform wise actions over a range of situations. But in that case, *pace* Whitcomb, the explanation of his wise behaviour will depend on things like certain abilities and dispositions that cannot be reduced to mere knowledge.

Whitcomb's second case concerns a sage who is unable to live well owing to his unfortunate depression, but still retains his knowledge of living well despite no longer desiring to live well. He thinks that such a person could still be wise (Whitcomb, 2011, p. 97). Whitcomb says that the sage is 'deeply depressed' and stipulates two points regarding his condition. Firstly, like the Devil, he also retains the knowledge of living well that he possessed before he became deeply depressed. And secondly, that he no longer desires or values the good life. But if that's the case, then we are in no different place than in the case of the Devil. Although he continues to possess the knowledge of living well, he fails to appropriately relate this body of knowledge to other things that characterise wisdom, which in this case is valuing a good life and also desiring the good life. As Ryan observes, if the sage was indeed wise, then he'd have still valued the good life, and in all likelihood would have attempted to get help for his depression (Ryan, 2012, p. 105). Alas, his depression has evaporated his value of a good life and the desire for it! And if this is the case, then the advice the sage gives isn't reliable – any advice he gives would be susceptible to suspicion at best. I don't know of Whitcomb, but I would definitely not take any word of advice to my heart from a person who doesn't value a good life. Beyond this, just like the Devil, his deep depression may afflict him in such a way that he may lose a number of abilities and dispositions required to gain wisdom-relevant knowledge of particular situations while giving advice. For instance, his depression may now have made him sluggish, such that he no longer reflects on various aspects of individual cases and therefore gives out advice a bit too hastily. So, his advice may now come to lack reflective depth and may not generally lead to the living well of those who take his advice. Thus, in both cases, it's hard to see how he could be a reliably good advice-giver, something that's characteristic of wise agents. Accordingly, the sage also cannot be wise.

3. Non-Reductionism

Non-Reductionism about wisdom is the view that knowledge is neither necessary nor sufficient for wisdom. In this section, I discuss two versions of Non-Reductionism and find them wanting. The first is due to Sharon Ryan, and the second to Kevin McCain.[9]

3.1. The Matrix

According to Ryan (2012, 2017), a real-life wisdom exemplar will be wise even if they're trapped in a sceptical scenario where they lack knowledge. Thus, Confucius could be wise even if he, unbeknownst to him, is trapped in the Matrix. Unfortunately, however, she doesn't describe in much detail how she thinks that could be the case, for sceptical scenarios can play out

in a number of ways, ranging from lacking some kind of knowledge to lacking all knowledge. Ryan's sceptical view seems to be of the latter kind. But if the person is lacking in all knowledge, then it's hard to see how she can be wise. Suppose that on the day he was born, Confucius was kidnapped from his parents and put in the Matrix. For the next sixty-odd years, he remains in the Matrix. The kidnappers ensured that the Matrix simulates the real world perfectly, such that one cannot differentiate the real world from the simulated world of the Matrix. One fine day, the kidnappers let Confucius come out of the Matrix without him being aware of it, and as he lands in the real world, he has no way of differentiating the real world from that of the Matrix. Suppose further that I know that he has been in the Matrix but don't know anything about his situation while he was in the Matrix – even though the kidnappers ensured that the simulations in the Matrix perfectly imitated the real world, since I have not been informed of that, for all I know, Confucius might have been fed with simulations that give him a completely perverse view of what life is and what constitutes living well in the real world. In such a case, if he tries to give me any life advice, I'll not take his advice seriously. This is because, since I don't know if he knows anything about what real life and living well are, by my own lights, there's no guarantee that his advice will lead to my living well. Given this, it stands to reason that I don't take his advice seriously, as taking it seriously might affect me adversely. And my reaction is appropriate because I don't know if *he knows* anything about real life and living well.

Now take a very similar scenario where Confucius, for sixty years since being an infant, was in the Matrix perfectly simulating the real world, comes out of the Matrix one day, doesn't know that he was in the Matrix, and I know that he has been in the Matrix. However, in this case, I also know that the simulations he has been fed in the Matrix track reality perfectly. Now, if he starts giving me some life advice, will I take it seriously? The intuition isn't very clear, but I do think that I'll take some of them seriously to the extent that I do believe that his advice will lead to my living well. But this is precisely because in such situations, I would take him to know about life and living well. From what I know, his view of life and living well isn't perverted since the simulations track reality perfectly. And just like a pilot trained in a perfect flight simulator can tackle a number of novel real-life situations based on the simulator training, one can also think of Confucius being able to figure out ways of living well in novel real-life situations based on his experience in the perfectly simulated Matrix.[10] To further see this point, suppose that scientists and psychologists develop a test to figure out whether someone is wise or not based on a questionnaire.[11] The test is taken by Confucius right after coming out of the Matrix (where

simulations perfectly imitate the real world) and answers the questions in a way that he receives a very high wisdom score. Will he be considered wise? I cannot see why not (assuming that the test does track wise agents). If he does answer all or most of the questions correctly, i.e., he demonstrates a pattern of answering correctly, then it'll be far-fetched to say that he answered them correctly merely out of luck[12] – our intuition would be that Confucius knows the answers to the questions. Just as in Radford-type cases, our intuition about a subject demonstrating a pattern of correct 'guesses' is that she knows the answers (Radford 1966), here too I think our intuition would be that Confucius was able to answer them correctly because he knows the answers to them. Accordingly, *pace* Ryan, what such scenarios demonstrate is that wisdom attributions do depend on whether we take the attributee to know about living well or not.[13]

3.2. Debasing Demon

McCain (2020) develops an argument for Non-Reductionism by appealing to Schaffer's 'debasing demon' scepticism. The standard view of knowledge has it that knowledge requires believing what is true *based* on evidence. Schaffer's debasing sceptical argument observes that someone, *S*, could come to believe that *p* on the basis of, say, wishful thinking, which is an improper basis for the belief. However, despite having that improper basis for believing that *p*, *S* could possess the false impression that they arrived at the belief on a proper basis, like visual evidence. In such a case, *S* fails to properly base their belief, and thus, fails to know that *p*, and it's in this sense that *S's* beliefs can be *debased* (Schaffer, 2010). Following this, McCain's argument is that knowledge isn't required for wisdom since a wise agent needn't have their true beliefs to be based on evidence. Thus, imagine a Confucius whose beliefs are debased. Such a Confucius will be no different from a real-world Confucius – he'll have the exact same reasons for believing *p* that the real-world Confucius has, he'll possesses exactly the same epistemic virtues that the real-world Confucius does, e.g. being open-minded, ability to reason properly, being epistemically responsible, etc – except that his beliefs aren't properly based and he's under the false impression that those beliefs are properly based. In other words, unlike the real-world Confucius, he doesn't possess knowledge. Thus, both the real-world Confucius and his debased counterpart have exactly the same true beliefs about living well and also exactly the same evidence in support of those beliefs, such that for all practical purposes – in terms of the information they have, and how they respond to various situations – they both are indistinguishable from one another. The reasonable conclusion to make from this, McCain thinks, is that if the real-world Confucius is wise, then so is his debased counterpart (McCain, 2020, p. 524-5).

Now, a response to this point on wisdom depends a lot on whether Schaffer's debasing demon argument goes through in general.[14] I, however, shall take a different route in engaging with McCain's argument. Earlier, we observed that when we attribute wisdom to someone, it's as if we are making some (positive) evaluation of the person. This evaluation is typically done in the practical context. So, one could be called wise for giving good advice, or making certain kinds of life decisions, etc. But it seems that when it comes to attributing knowledge in practical contexts, our sceptical intuitions aren't as robust as compared to non-practical contexts (e.g. in a philosophy seminar). Stanley makes a similar point about knowledge-how by giving the following example:

> 'Suppose Mary learns to play tennis from a generally reliable tennis coach. The coach teaches her what is, in fact, a way to ace her regular opponent, a way that involves twisting her body to the left. However, the coach didn't in fact intend to teach her this – he meant to deceive her, but because of incompetence, in fact taught her correctly. Suppose, watching Mary ace her opponent, I say, "Mary knows how to twist her body to the left in hitting that shot". This ascription seems perfectly true, even though Mary only has a justified true belief, and lacks genuine knowledge.' (Stanley, 2011, p. 179).

Similarly, suppose that I took advice from Confucius about how to improve a badly strained relationship between a close friend and me, and he advised me of various ways I can take to improve the relationship. In such a case, I'd typically be interested only in whether his advice would successfully be able to help me achieve my goal, which, in this case, is normalising our friendship – I'm not particularly interested in how he came to believe, say, in the effectiveness of the strategies which he has advised me with. Maybe a debasing demon did haunt him by tampering with his evidential base – perhaps he came to believe in the effectiveness of that strategy to improve friendships on the basis of a lucid dream, but the debasing demon made him believe that it had some proper basis. In such a scenario, I agree with McCain that someone with mere true beliefs can just as equally advise others as someone with knowledge. However, just like our discussions of Whitcomb's and Ryan's examples earlier, if I'm made aware that Confucius is being haunted by the debasing demon, it's highly unlikely that I'd turn to him for any advice, far less call such advice wise. This would be more so if I come to believe that he's highly prone to getting his beliefs debased – far from being wise, he's perhaps gullible! Here, at most, the debased Confucius merely *seems* to be wise without actually being wise.

Endnotes

[1] Following Aristotle's discussion on wisdom in *Nicomachean Ethics*, a general assumption among philosophers is that there are two different kinds of wisdom, viz., practical wisdom *(phronesis)* and theoretical wisdom *(sophia)*. Whereas the former relates to living well, the latter generally refers to a kind of wisdom that comes from having a deep knowledge or understanding of a domain or subject matter. Baehr (2012), however, observes that this distinction isn't as clear cut as philosophers generally take it to be. Grimm (2015, p. 148-52) also argues that the focal sense of wisdom relates to living well and instance of theoretical wisdom are somehow mere approximations of this focal sense of wisdom. I shall set these debates aside here and merely take wisdom to relate to living well.

[2] For brevity's sake, henceforth I shall use 'knowledge' for 'propositional knowledge' unless otherwise specified.

[3] In the literature on understanding, some philosophers (e.g., Sliwa 2014) use 'Reductionism' in the sense that instances of knowledge are both necessary and sufficient for the corresponding instances of understanding, and is expressed by the biconditional that an agent understands, say, that *p* if and only if she knows that *p*. It's in this sense that I shall use the term here as well for wisdom. Thus, a Strong Reductionist's claim is that knowledge of living well is both necessary and sufficient for wisdom, and could be expressed by the biconditional that an agent is wise if and only if she's knowledgeable about living well.

[4] Throughout the paper, I shall assume pluralism about goals of living well, i.e., the view that there is no singular goal of living well, and that the goals of living well could be thought of in multiple ways. For a thorough discussion of such kind of pluralism, especially vis-à-vis wisdom, see Kekes (2020, chapter 3). My arguments in the thesis, however, don't rest on such pluralism, and could be easily modified to fit a view that endorses a singular goal of living well.

[5] For a detailed discussion on the kind of living well relevant for wisdom, see Kekes (2020, chapter 3).

[6] O'Grady (2018) notes that even though this seemingly puts pressure on the knowledge requirement thesis, this could be avoided by understanding the content of wisdom attributions as being situated in complex socio-cultural environments with the evaluations of those attributions as being subjected to such contextual standards.

[7] Holton (2017) also points to something similar where he takes 'see' as a factive mental state operator. Following Williamson (2000), if knowledge is the most general factive mental state operator, then seeing entails

knowing – if one sees that *p*, then one also knows that *p*. Contrast this with Turri (2010) where he argues that in fake barn type cases where Henry saw that a barn was near him, he didn't know that a barn was near him. A counterargument to him would be that here Turri uses 'see' in a different sense such that it doesn't operate as a factive mental state operator as it's false that it was a real barn. French (2012) discusses this line of argument against Turri in detail.

[8] He later says that the Devil is a fringe case and in general wisdom and evil are incompatible. He observes that one's knowledge of living well makes it likely that they'll live well. He seems to take this to be obvious. I think this would be obvious if one's knowledge is accompanied by certain motivational components. Otherwise, however, it doesn't seem so.

[9] It may be suggested that Tsai's (2022) account of wisdom, which takes a wise agent to be one who knows how to live well, is also a Non-Reductionist account. I, however, don't think so. This is because one of the conditions of his account is that *S* is wise only if, inter alia, *S* knows that overall attitude success constitutes well-being, knows what the best means to achieve well-being are, and knows why she's successful at acting and living well (Tsai, 2022, p. 34). Bear in mind that 'only if' clauses in conditional sentences introduce necessary conditions, and that 'knows that', 'knows what', and 'knows why' pertain to propositional knowledge. Accordingly, Tsai does take propositional knowledge related to living well to be necessary for wisdom.

[10] For discussions on knowledge in sceptical scenarios, see Chalmers (2005) and Magidor (2018).

[11] This isn't something just out of sci-fi – psychologists and cognitive scientists often use various questionnaires to measure wisdom. For general discussions and overviews, see Kunzmann (2019) and Webster (2019).

[12] According to the orthodox view, one's beliefs in a sceptical scenario can be true or false only out of luck (e.g., Pritchard 2005).

[13] Ryan's preferred epistemic view is justified belief, i.e., it's not knowledge, but justified belief that's necessary for wisdom. I argue against this view in detail. His point is that mere justified belief doesn't allow an agent to perform wise actions reliably as the agent can easily have a false belief about, say, which action will lead to her reaching a goal of living well, and in such cases when the agent performs actions based on such false beliefs (even if justified) she'll fail to reach that goal, thus not making the action wise.

[14] For objections to Schaffer, see, e.g., Breuckner (2012) and Conee (2015).

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