

Conference Report

xxixth Bled Philosophical Conference

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The week spanning from Monday 4th until Friday 9th of June 2023 marked the 29th convening of the Bled Philosophical Conference, organised by professor Sarah Wright of the University of Georgia in association with co-organisers from University of Maribor and DAF (the Slovenian Association for Analytic Philosophy and Philosophy of Science), which was met with much enthusiasm among the participants, as it was the first Bled conference to take place after the Covid-19 pandemic-induced three-year hiatus.

The conference took place at Hotel Lovec's conference centre in the scenic town of Bled, Slovenia, and attracted a number of expert scholars from around the world – mostly from, but not limited to the countries within the European Union and the United States of America – not only as speakers, but also as audiences. Due to the number of participants, the usual two concurrent sessions in the Panorama conference halls were supplemented by a third one taking place in the hotel pub, which provided for an unexpectedly pleasant, intimate, and relaxed atmosphere.

The topic of this year's conference was 'Applied Epistemology: Virtue, Vice, and Bias,' which, in light of the fairly recent explosion of misinformation, has been the subject of extensive research among epistemologists, the representation of which gathered in the conference provided for over fifty excellent talks and presentations that addressed the titular topic from various approaches. Several talks focused on virtues and vices by either deepening the understanding and applicability of individual virtues or vices, enhancing existing accounts of virtue and vice, or presenting new conceptual virtues and vices. A significant set of other participants focused on vice-adjacent phenomena such as conspiracy theories, fake news, fanaticism, etc., and vice-epistemological accounts thereof. Most impressively, an unexpectedly large number of participants focused on deeply social aspects of epistemology, including epistemic and social injustice, testimonies, reparations, and so forth. Lastly, a number of presen-

tations turned out to be largely concerned with theoretical epistemology and only partially connected to the overall topic of the conference, but were by no means of any lesser quality on that account.

The Wednesday morning sessions, the only ones without concurrence, saw the addresses of three keynote speakers – David Sosa’s talk titled ‘Bias in Doubt’, Ernest Sosa’s ‘Methodology and Internalism Under a Dawning Light’, and Jennifer Lackey’s ‘Talking, Listening and Learning’. The latter was centred around a fascinating case of what we may call ‘tacit coercion’ of confession in a police interrogation, and emphasised the importance of first-hand epistemic engagement with bearers of truth, such as marginalised and oppressed groups, or in the case mentioned, victims of police coercion strategies and the like.

While it is extremely difficult, and, in light of the topic of the conference in question, almost impossible to select without bias the best of the best among the addresses given at the conference, especially while being limited only to the roughly third of them I had the opportunity to attend due to session overlap, I would like to highlight, for example, Heather Battaly’s ‘Fanaticism and Close-Mindedness’, wherein she argued that neither fanaticism nor close mindedness need to be vicious, and may indeed in right circumstances be considered virtuous. Additionally, I wish to give special mention to Nancy McHugh’s outstandingly active, hands-on approach to socio-epistemic issues in her community that she described in her ‘Extractive Knowledge: Challenges for Community Engaged Philosophy’, as well as Jonathan Matheson’s great justification of relying on expert opinion in ‘Why It’s Ok Not to Think for Yourself’, Gaile Pohlhaus’ ‘Intersectional Independence as Epistemic Resistance’, Simon Rippon’s conception of *Epistemic Lassitude* as a new type of epistemic vice that I believe fills an important niche in vice systemisation, and Benjamin McCraw’s ambitious epidemiological model of dissemination of vice in ‘Pathologies of Trust: Epidemiological Social Epistemology’.

Finally, I cannot emphasise enough the quality of other contributions at this year’s Bled conference. The entirety of the content was incredibly intellectually stimulating, and has, in the most constructive sense possible, opened to further investigation and research at least as many questions as it sought to answer, which is why we zealously anticipate and look forward to the next Bled Philosophical Conference on Epistemology in 2025, as well as to its Ethical counterpart in 2024.