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# The Epistemic Value of Live Fiction: A Dramatic Response to the Question of Knowledge

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## Abstract

This essay occupies a niche wedged between Philosophy and Art, exciting both the creative and inquiring mind. Drawing on both foundational and recent work in the philosophical study of knowledge and aesthetic theory, this paper synthesizes two fields within the humanities: epistemology and live theatre. This presentation challenges the academic barriers that keep philosophy and the performing arts from fully participating in interdisciplinary communication, and challenges the conceptual definition of knowledge itself. The aim is to promote recognition of the value in using that which is live, liminal, and personal in understanding the nature of knowledge. This can be achieved through exploring the ways in which the experiences of engaging with the fiction of live drama are a key to finding the missing element in the definition of knowledge. In exploring the collective views of specific, highly developed fields such as philosophy's epistemology and art's live theatre, an underutilized tool emerges: truth through fiction. This tool spurs the emergence of new societal and learning expectations and changes the face of academia in the process.

## Introduction

This research paper occupies a niche, wedged between the massive, living tomes of Philosophy and Art. As dusty as the topic may seem, these fields are both rich and lively in their modern conversations, without a speck of dust in sight. The marvelous part of these two fields is that once one breaks through the veil of misconception and stigma surrounding them, they can be both accessible and satisfying to explore. Walls have been built up between these fields out of misplaced elitism or suspicion of the other, originating on both sides. Plato himself argues against the representational arts in the first half of Book 10 of his *Republic*, a work that describes the creation of the best society and how societies fall, saying that poetic *mimesis* is the imitation of appearance alone and its products rank far below truth, corrupting the soul, and should therefore be banned from the good city (Plato 602c–608b). Breaking down the

wall that holds these disciplines apart is a key to finding unconsidered truths and the answers to fundamental questions.

The aim is to explore the nature of knowledge by traveling an unlikely and interdisciplinary path hallmarked by the creative practice of live fiction, experiencing action through story, and the imagination of children. Musical and instrumental performance, live radio, ritual practices, sport and martial art competitions, dance, clowning, acrobatics, and puppet theatre are fascinating kinds of live performances that could be explored in the context of exploring the nature of knowledge, but they are beyond the scope of this paper. This paper proposes that the ways in which audiences experience the fiction of live children's drama is a key to finding the missing or mis-defined element in the epistemic definition of knowledge. We can begin to understand this argument by seeking the significance of its main components: the question of knowledge, experiences in engaging fictional worlds, the liminality of theatrical experience, and children's drama.

### **Philosophy and Epistemology**

The word "philosophy" comes from the Ancient Greek φιλοσοφία (*philosophia*), which literally means "love of wisdom." In their book "Philosophy: A Beginner's Guide" Teichmann and Evans define philosophy as "a study of problems which are ultimate, abstract and very general. These problems are concerned with the nature of existence, knowledge, morality, reason and human purpose," (Teichmann & Evans 2). In other words, philosophy explores all that there is and attempts to creatively understand the way things are and the way things should be.

In the first sentence of his *Metaphysics*, Book I, Section 1, Aristotle can be quoted: "πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει" or: *All men by nature desire to know* (Aristotle 1). This paper will adopt this as a basic and true premise and a hallmark of philosophy as a whole. The modern English word *desire* lacks the connotation that ὀρέγονται carries of being actively in the pursuit of that desired thing. Other translations of the word include "covet" and to "lust after." This author contends that Aristotle intended the connotation of action when he chose his words and that "crave" would be a more apt modern translation in that it more fully captures the sense of an active want.

It is in this craving for knowledge – this pursuit so fundamental to the wisdom-loving field of philosophy— that epistemology is born. In her 2009 book entitled "On Epistemology", modern epistemologist Linda Zagzebski described the field as such: "Epistemology is the philosophical study of knowing and other ways of believing and attempting to find truth," (Zagzebski 1). She further defines it as "the study of right or good ways to cognitively grasp reality," (Zagzebski 8). Epistemology asks "The Question of Knowledge." This Question, includes all related sub-questions, such as:

*What is knowledge? Is knowledge possible? What does it mean to know? What makes something knowable? What should we know? How do we gain knowledge?* These are the most basic questions of the field of epistemology. That which is “epistemic” is anything that pertains to this study of knowledge itself. Armed with fiction and live children’s drama, this paper will tackle only the premier question: *What is knowledge?*

A commonly accepted three-part definition of knowledge defines it as “justified, true belief.” The argument is as follows:

“S [a Subject] knows that *p* [proposition] iff [if and only if]:  
*p* is true  
 S believes that *p*;  
 S is justified in believing that *p*” (Ichikawa & Steup 1).

Zagzebski says of this, “this definition was masterfully defended by Roderick Chisholm (1964), a leader of later twentieth-century epistemology, and this account of knowledge dominated epistemology for decades. Because it was part of the consensus until recently, it still shapes the way many epistemologists approach knowledge,” (Zagzebski 6). But, there is an intuitive sense that this definition, while agreeable, is incomplete.

Most of epistemology and its theories are concerned with *propositional knowledge*. (Zagzebski 3) In philosophy, a proposition is a declarative statement which can be true or false. For example: “The tree’s leaves are green” and “Obama is the President of the United States.” *Propositional knowledge* is knowledge based around claims in the form “S knows that *p*”, such as: “*Susie* knows that *the tree’s leaves are green*.” With this in hand, we substitute “knowledge” for its first accepted definition: “*Susie* has justified and true belief that *the tree’s leaves are green*.” That’s acceptable, but the definition runs into problems when faced with claims like “Suzie knows *how* to ride a bike” or “Suzie knows Joseph.” Can both of these merely be reduced to a massive list of propositions about each subject? Zagzebski says that she find this sort of reduction “dubious”. She continues, “... I suspect that contemporary epistemology has suffered by ignoring understanding. I also suspect that understanding is connected with nonpropositional [sic] knowledge, which. . . is usually left aside in contemporary treatment of knowledge,” (Zagzebski 7).

Let’s return to the claim “Suzie knows Joseph” and others like it: “Suzie knows Seattle.” It is in statements like these in which live theatre gets a foothold. An intuitive aspect of this kind of knowledge is that it implies some kind of invested personal familiarity, linked with Zagzebski’s “non-propositional understanding”. This aspect of invested familiarity was not obvious in Suzie’s knowledge of the green-ness of the tree’s leaves, if it exists there at all. Suzie’s familiarity in these cases of knowing is also, intuitively, the result of first-hand experience with both Joseph and

Seattle. These implications of experienced familiarity are a vitally important link to the personal “experiential” nature of live theatre and its way of retelling fiction in a manner that is fully enacted. There is something more in what is being experienced in theatre than the fiction of a thought experiment or a novel, and more so even than television and movies. If the experiencing of fiction is a possible key to unlocking the missing or mis-defined element of knowledge, then an analysis of how audiences and readers engage with fictional worlds is in order.

## Engaging Fictional Worlds

In an infamous pursuit of certainty and basic unity in all sciences through a search for foundational truths, 17<sup>th</sup> Century philosopher and mathematician René Descartes single-handedly undertook a project of methodological doubt. He attempted to systematically suspend his beliefs by “withholding assent” from the beliefs he found to be even slightly doubtful, in order to find that which was most certain. He went about this project by the simple means of imagining a naysayer for his views, creating a hypothetical scenario through which to pass his beliefs, and then suspending those that did not pass the test. He created an all-knowing, deceiving being called the Evil Genius, whose sole purpose is to deceive him in everything. Essentially, Descartes imagined a universe in which everything and all that he experienced was nothing but an illusion, much like the Matrix, except there is no “real-body” hooked up to a machine. The most well-known declaration that resulted from his project is *cogito ergo sum*, or *I think therefore I am* (Descartes 71). In other words, the only thing that the Evil Genius could not affect was his knowledge of his own being as a thinking thing, and he treated this as his first foundational truth.

Descartes employed suppositional thinking in his First Meditation, containing the Evil Genius scenario. He “supposed” or imagined a situation to be true. In the creation of the character of the Evil Genius and other governing rules of the universe in which It, the Evil Genius, resides, Descartes created a consistent hypothetical scenario in which to prove his beliefs. He created a wholly hypothetical and purposeful world in which to ask the very real questions that had been weighing on him, very obviously expecting to gain real and relevant insights.

There is debate about whether what Descartes did by “withholding assent” from his own beliefs is even possible. Zagzebski explains: “In the fifth century St. Augustine defined believing as thinking with assent. . . Some people use the terms ‘believe’ and ‘know’ in a way that makes them mutually exclusive, but as long as believing is just thinking with assent, there is a consensus that knowing is a form of believing,” (Zagzebski 3) So, to say that Descartes was “withholding assent” from his beliefs threatens the very value of his project and profound declarations, while threatening the consensus of the accepted three-part definition of knowledge. It also raises

questions about the ability to choose our beliefs. This ability to choose our beliefs has been named *doxastic voluntarism*.

Aaron Meskin, in his 2009 article called “Scrutinizing the Art of Theater”, wrote: “We are not free to choose our beliefs—doxastic voluntarism is false. . . . On the other hand, a central datum recognized by contemporary theorists of pretence [sic] is that we *are* free to choose what we pretend,” (Meskin 57). It is this valuable freedom to step out of the current reality and our current beliefs that makes fiction so valuable to philosophy and quite especially so to epistemology. This theory also carries with it the hope of freedom found in *doxastic voluntarism*. According to Meskin’s claim, and what can be read in Descartes’ writing about the intent of his project, it can be seen that Descartes was not participating in *doxastic voluntarism*; he was merely choosing what to pretend for the purpose of uncovering basic truth. This theory of choice in pretence quashes the debate of *doxastic voluntarism* altogether, and opens up a new realm of exploration and inquiry that does not threaten the consensus of the accepted definition of knowledge. This is a new and significant step in the theory of knowledge, and is a strong step toward connecting epistemology to the realms of pretend play in which children engage and the theatres of children’s drama.

We may not be able to choose our beliefs, but we can choose the road that gets us to the kinds of beliefs we want. Meskin further cites pretence theorist Shaun Nichols, who collected a book of essays titled, “Architecture of the Imagination: New Essays on Pretence, Possibility, and Fiction.” It includes new essays written for the book from epistemologists, philosophers of the mind, cognitive psychologists, and authors of aesthetic theory. One of the main philosophical focuses of the book is the concept of the “propositional imagination.” In the introduction of this book, Nichols writes: “...thought experiments, modal judgment, counterfactual reasoning. All of these activities, so central to philosophical inquiry, involve the ‘propositional imagination’, the capacity we exploit when we imagine that there is an evil genius, that everyone is color-blind, or that Holmes had a bad habit,” (Nichols 1). It is in this exploration of pretence, or the act of pretending, that epistemic theorists have found a way out of the trappings of the Question of Knowledge and forged a strong link toward the openly theatrical through a study of fiction and hypothetical worlds.

Hypothetical worlds are, by definition, separated from this primary reality by time, the characters/people that are found or not found there, the basic ruling structures of physics, or maybe the mere fact that the emotions employed or words used are external in suggestion, such as poetry. These “worlds” are separate from the primary reality and are thus “secondary.” Separate but related beliefs can be held within the context of the “secondary reality.” These can be called “secondary beliefs.” In an essay he wrote called “Belief and the Suspension of Disbelief”, M. H. Abrams describes this view by quoting and summarizing Baumgarten who coined the term ‘aesthetics’ (the philosophical study of art and beauty). Abrams summarizes: “[A

work of art is] produced by a poet who is ‘like a maker or creator . . . the poem ought to be a sort of world,’ related to the real world ‘by analogy.’ Poetic fiction is ‘heterocosmic,’ consisting of things possible in another world than the one we live in, and subject therefore not to the criterion of strict philosophic truth, but only to the criterion of ‘heterocosmic truth’; that is, self-consistency and the maximum of internal coherence,” (Abrams 6). In other words, the secondary world of a story is judged by how well it “holds together”. This is an interesting feature of fiction, but a water-tight story is not always necessary for it to be valuable. In entering these secondary worlds, we are challenged to look beyond our world into a secondary plane, which is not held to the same standard of truth, and then bring back what we can, through analogy.

Another way to look at this multiple level system of reality is in terms of the “suspension of belief” and the “suspension of disbelief.” These terms are related, but they differ fundamentally in definition. The “suspension of belief” is synonymous with Descartes beginning his project of methodological doubt. The suspension of belief is what happens when someone willfully engages in pretending or pretence and begins conceiving or adopting the framework of a hypothetical or supposed scenario. The suspension of disbelief is a term closely associated with theatrical performance. It is that ability which allows us keeps the illusion of the hypothetical coherent for entertainment’s sake or inquiry’s sake. It is through the mental maneuvering of both of these separate states that healthy navigation through hypothetical worlds is possible. It is also what makes fiction the most excellent and already familiar ground to stage questions about the nature of knowledge.

How do pretence and the use of secondary worlds actually function in fiction? Here is a delightful excerpt of a review of author Samuel Richardson, written by Denis Diderot in 1761:

*O Richardson! Despite ourselves, we take part in your books; we mix in the conversation; approve, blame, admire, become irritated, and get angry. How often I have surprised myself, like children that we take to the theatre for the first time, by crying out: “Don’t believe him, he is deceiving you! . . . If you go there, you are lost!” My soul was held in a state of perpetual agitation. How good it was! . . . In the space of a few hours I had undergone a vast number of situations, scarcely available throughout the length of the longest life imaginable. I heard genuine discussions about the passions; I watched self-interest and self-esteem played and judged in a hundred different ways; I became the spectator for a multitude of incidents; **I felt that I had acquired experience.** (Diderot 12) [emphasis added]*

Diderot expresses what almost everyone has felt after reading a good book or watching a good movie or play: there is the feeling of having escaped into the

secondary world of the fiction, and coming out feeling like there has been something gained—something truly experienced. There is a sense of vicarious learning that takes place when a fiction is allowed to do its work.

While knowledge can be gained vicariously through our perceived experiences with fictional and “secondary” worlds, it is not the act of learning knowledge and other facts that addresses our problem in the epistemic Question of Knowledge. The problem is the very nature of knowledge itself. It is not what is learned that is the key point here. It is the *way* in which it is learned from fiction that is important. It is the *personal and active use* of analogy and the imagination that makes fiction noteworthy in an epistemic regard, and the feeling of acquired *experience* that is the key to uncovering why “Suzie knows Joseph” is different from “Suzie knows that the tree’s leaves are green.” It is these pursuits within and through fiction that Aristotle’s claim for the common “desiring” and “craving” of knowledge comes to light.

## Theatre

Theatre and live performance is a massively broad representational art form that has been with humanity since time can recall. It evolves with us and permeates almost every aspect of history, culture, society, and life. It is a means of disclosing and reflecting life and its complications in a way that is shared by all who participate. Speaking of theatre from a contemporary American standpoint, this paper will discuss the kinds of theatre performed before an audience that consist of the live performance of a play or devised work containing characters performed by human actors within a stage space. There are many other fascinating kinds of live performances that could be explored in the epistemic context, but they require a much deeper treatment of the topic.

What is it about live performance and particularly theatre that makes it best suited for the pursuit of the Question of Knowledge? The key to the effectiveness of theatre’s immersive suppositional experience is that it is at its most basic levels both liminal and live. Liminality refers to a space, time, thing, or character that exists suspended between defined zones, which are often considered opposite. “Liminality” originates from the Latin “limen” for “threshold, cross-piece, sill”, or in broader terms, that object which exists, in purpose, between the inside and the outside (Harper n/p). The experience of theatre is a threshold experience for both actor and audience. When one enters a theater and engages in drama, he no longer exists in the outside world nor is he totally a part of the world of the play. Liminality is what makes the theatre perfect for suppositional exploration, because it engages the use of metaphoric analogy and exploration.

One of literature’s most profoundly liminal and beloved characters is found in J. M. Barrie’s *Peter Pan*. Within the characterization of Peter Pan himself there is much to

be discovered, especially in Peter's dual nature. In Allison Kavey's essay entitled, "I Do Believe in Fairies, I Do, I Do; The History and Epistemology of Peter Pan", she mentions Peter's link to his namesake and other distinctly liminal characteristics:

*Peter himself is a composite of bodies and characteristics borrowed from Pan[the Greek God], birds, fairies, and children that cannot fit into a single world, but fits perfectly into neither the world of the living or the dead, the material or the natural, the real or imagined, the human or the nonhuman (preternatural or animal). Because he cannot fit into existing categories, he straddles the worlds from which those categories derive their meanings, pressing hardest on the divide between the real and the imagined to create a space that can intrude into both places, the Neverland. (Kavey 102)*

Peter Pan, is one of the most essentially liminal figures in all of literature, whose life and world had aptly been translated to the stage by J. M. Barrie himself even before the publication of *Peter Pan and Wendy* in novel form in 1904. Placing the Neverland on stage is the ultimate acknowledgment of the stage itself as a liminal space, where the Neverland can truly live.

Paul Ricoeur, in his book called "Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning", said: "There is a triple correspondence between the body, houses, and the cosmos, which makes the pillars of a temple and our spinal columns symbolic of one another, just as there are correspondences between a roof and the skull, breath and wind, etc," (Ricoeur 62). This description of a "triple correspondence" identifies the multilayered metaphor that theatre engages when a breathing actor walks onto a proscenium stage. In his fantastic book exploring the limits of theatre as metaphor, Bruce Wilshire asserts that "although theater is predominantly physiognomical communication, it is nevertheless ideal. Actual persons and things are used in the production, but their factual reality is bracketed out so that what they are as types and essences can be revealed," (Wilshire 137). "Physiognomical communication" refers to the way that theatre and most arts communicate in a presentation of surfaces and appearances. Audience members and consumers are to infer the nature and characteristics of an object or person through its outward appearances. The significance of Wilshire's assertion is that within theater, the "factual reality" of what is presented on stage can be interpreted entirely through analogy on many multiple levels, and much deeper truth can be revealed. To return to the ideas from M. H. Abram's summarizing quote, the liminality of theater allows for the internally coherent "heterocosmic" truth of a fictional world to be *actively* "related to the real world 'by analogy'" by the theatrical audience.

The next important aspect after theatre's liminality is its live nature. In addition to powerfully engaging Ricoeur's "triple correspondence" in the inclusion of live breath, there is a distinct power and connection that lies in the viewing of that which is alive

and human. Consider the apparel department of your favorite department store. There is a very distinct and internally jarring shift that occurs in our perceptions when we accidentally bump into a mannequin, begin to apologize, and realize that it is but an object. The live nature of theatre is what distinguishes it from our experiences encountering the fictional in other media. There is a vast difference between watching Cinderella and her helpful mice on a TV in the living room and going to Disneyland for her autograph. It's one thing to imagine an ageless boy who can fly using fairy dust, but it is quite another to watch him do it, even in the full knowledge that he is being shown to us through the skills of what is usually a slight female actress in a harness and talented fly crew. It is in the live nature of theatre that the strength and import of the "analogy" of the secondary, fictional world is supported.

### **Children's Drama**

A beautiful sub-category of this kind of theatre is children's drama. Historically, it has been seen as an inferior form to "real" "adult" theatre. Think of children's theatre as a caricatured version of other standard modern theatre. This does not mean it is meant only for humor or entertainment, or that it is somehow a degenerate and unworthy version—it skillfully takes the things that theatre is and amplifies them, and diminishes the things that it isn't along with some subtler aspects of the form. This makes the elusive aspects of liminality and live enactment more obvious in children's drama in some ways and more subtle in others. In children's drama, the analogical framework is often simplified for easier consumption. The morals are clearer, characters are "bigger", and the limitations of the stage space is often pushed and altered for the audience's more attentive inclusion in the secondary world. For example, it becomes more common for characters to directly address the audience in children's drama. On the other hand, the recognition of other human beings in live enactment might decrease. Actors are often more obscured by costume, makeup, color and spectacle. The inclusion of other live performance such as puppets, dance, and clowning also contributes heavily to a possible sense of diminishing "purity" in the form. If skillfully employed however, these features only enhance the telling of the fictional world.

In his review of Richardson, Diderot also mentions his "crying out" to fictional characters "like children that we take to the theatre for the first time." As Diderot confesses, these participatory impulses are not confined to children, though it is in children that audience reactions are less regulated by societal codes of behavior. The study of the imaginary and how humans imagine quite immediately falls to the study of children and how they play and learn. Not only do children have more outwardly observable reactions to fiction and theatre, the study of children's pretence tells about the development and basic structures of the human imagination. If study can find the "architecture of imagination," as theorist Shaun Nichols called it, then exploring and utilizing the structure will become much more targeted and effective.

Encouraging a suspension of disbelief in a theatrical production should never be about trying to “fool” the audience, especially children. It is ill-use of imagination’s structure, and is not nearly as effective in teaching or inspiring inquiry. It is the dual knowledge and correspondence of both reality and the fictional reality that makes live theatre a particularly powerful and apt tool for greater understanding of the nature and definition of knowledge. It is the encouraged use of this correspondence, through the personal and active use of analogy, the use of the child-like imagination, and the feeling of gained understanding through the feeling of acquired experience that makes children’s theatre the premier form of live theatre, and the premier vehicle for new epistemic exploration.

In the task of analyzing the personal use of analogy and the imagination, the only illustrating examples that can be used are personal ones, as there is no other way to truly describe the experience of theater and the relevant thoughts that arise from such an experience than from a subjective point of view. For this author, it is a vivid childhood memory of seeing a theatrical production of *Charlotte’s Web* that exemplifies the use of liminality, live performance, and personal analogical imagination in children’s drama.

The audience saw that Charlotte’s costume was designed in such a way that when she had scenes in which she spoke to Wilber and other animals such as Templeton the rat, the actress stood at full height in a spider costume, but when Charlotte was on her web while Fern and other humans were present, the actress went behind a pillar or a section of her web and crossed her costumed hands. Her gloves mimicked the rest of her costume in coloring and design, creating, for the view of the audience, a miniature Charlotte.

Even as a child, this author found it to be phenomenally clever. She remembers the delightful wash of comprehension as she understood the symbolic representation of what had happened. At the time, she knew that Charlotte was being played by a human woman, but also knew by her costume and the content of the play’s universe that Charlotte was a spider. This author also knew that as a spider, Charlotte was not in fact changing size. The size change was merely the audience’s forced perspective of her in differing scenes. Charlotte’s transformation was like a film actor’s “close-up.” It wasn’t until later, after some theatrical and director’s theory, that this author uncovered the complexity of the illustration showing a very literal difference in how Fern and the other human characters perceived Charlotte and how Wilber saw her. Even in a child’s understanding, this author had allowed her beliefs about the sizes of people and the sizes of spiders and her disbelief at the size-morphing ability of either to all be suspended, and a greater truth and essence was revealed. The live nature of the human playing Charlotte was key in the recognition and appreciation of what had been seen.

All of the elements this paper has discussed were present in that theatrical experience. This is a powerful but typical experience for imaginative children when exposed a well-told story through theatre. The access to multi-level understandings through the experience of encountering living, representational reality is exactly the mode in which epistemology should now address the problem of defining the missing element of the definition of knowledge.

## Conclusions

This paper looked to theatre to challenge the Question of Knowledge, and sought to understand the ways in which the experiences of engaging the fiction of live drama is a key to finding the missing element in the definition of knowledge. These experiences included the involvement of suppositional thinking and the interactive engagement with other people and live events. Theatre fulfills this in its essence through its liminality and live nature. In exploring ways in which the fictional can be navigated, through the suspensions of belief and disbelief and the use of analogy to access the “types and essences” displayed, we discovered ways in which epistemology is already reaching out to theatre. It is, indeed, the use of the personal and active analogy, the use of the child-like imagination, and the feeling of gained understanding through the feeling of acquired experience that makes children’s theatre the premier form of live theatre. Children’s drama epitomizes the use of theatre as it should be used in epistemic exploration, and has yet to be explored in depth, in spite of the mounting research connecting pretend play and children’s development to epistemic advancement and the pursuit of a complete definition of knowledge.

This research excites both the creative and scientific mind, bridging chasms that have stood between these fields since they divided. A collaborative conversation is finally beginning to emerge. It’s time that the specializations that have arisen turn back and collaborate for the answers they seek. In exploring the collective views of specific, highly developed fields such as philosophy’s epistemology and art’s children’s drama, unconsidered truths can emerge. Doing so, in this case, gives epistemology more tools to resolve a question that has plagued epistemology since its creation. It also creates the opportunity for drama to become more central to education and learning and more fully fulfill its potential to teach. In recognizing the uses of that which is live, liminal, and personal in the nature of knowledge, new societal and teaching expectations emerge, changing the face of academia in the process. This paper proposes a reevaluation of the misplaced elitisms and suspicions that exists between analytic and formulated academic spheres, and the realms of learning and creativity in the arts.

Limiting the uses of fiction limits the quality of knowledge, and locks down the types of knowledge available to humanity as common philosophers. The disparity between fiction or poetry and philosophy has been present since philosophy’s creation. This is

damaging to our understanding of the nature of knowledge. A drastic epistemic re-evaluation of the value of fiction and most especially theatre is in order. I find this topic to be both modern and relevant, not just to the philosopher or artist, but to the greater understanding of what can be known and how we can know it. Society changes when creativity and inquiry are prized.

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The obvious argument in disfavour of people being indifferent to the extinction of living creatures is that every species contributes towards the balance in the ecosystem. To illustrate, if there were no bees, plants would suffer; if plants'™ cultivation were confined, people and other animals would starve. This makes it evident that people being on the top of the food chain should take responsibility to prevent animals from becoming extinct. Another reason why our society should take action in order to help endangered species is that people themselves are culpable for the elimination of wildli

The Value of Emotions for Knowledge, ed. L. Candiotta, 2019. Laura Candiotta.Â piece of art and assessing the epistemic valence of the appreciation of a fictional intentional object, thus nurturing an interdisciplinary approach to emotion theories (on the relevance of fiction and literature for grasping the meaning of emotions in our life, see here Chapters 7 and 10). But it is not only the cognitive theories that can be a valid point of reference for an epistemological investigation of emotions. Request PDF | On Sep 1, 2015, Johan De Smedt and others published The Epistemic Value of Speculative Fiction | Find, read and cite all the research you need on ResearchGate.Â As the digital revolution continues and our lives become increasingly governed by smart technologies, there is a rising need for reflection and critical debate about where we are, where we are headed, and where we want to be. Against this background, the paper suggests that one way to foster such discussion is by engaging with the world of fiction, with imaginative stories that explore the spaces, places, and politics of alternative realities.Â When the question at hand is one of speculative ethics, there is no method better fit to the purpose than argument from analogy to speculative fiction. View.