

Is tracking knowledge a precondition of tracking belief? Commentary on Jennifer Nagel's 'Knowledge as a Mental State'

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Abstract

1. ***

What do human adults understand of knowledge? Consider two claims about the nature of knowledge.

Nagel argues that they treat knowledge as explanatory of action, that they treat it as a state (rather than, say, as an ability), and that they treat it as a mental state (rather than, say, as a bodily state).

Is 'the identification of knowledge as a mental state ... one of the central principles of our [human adults'] intuitive mindreading system?'

2. Tracking vs. Representing

In footnote 25 Nagel writes:

'By observing that chimpanzees have some capacity to recognize the state of knowledge, one need not thereby credit chimpanzees with any very sophisticated understanding of the nature of knowledge'

I want to distinguish two issues. One is whether