

Two recent books have reignited the controversy between Aristotelians and Kantians about the nature of morality: Stephen Engstrom's *The Form of Practical Knowledge* (HUP 2009) and Michael Thompson's *Life and Action* (HUP 2008). In contrast to much of contemporary ethics Engstrom's Kant and Thompson's Aristotle agree in placing the concept of practical knowledge at the center of moral philosophy. However, underneath this consensus about the role of the concept of practical knowledge, there is a deep disagreement about the source of practical knowledge. According to Aristotelians, practical knowledge springs from a well-formed specifically human power of practical judgment. According to Kantians, by contrast, any reference to our specifically human nature is misplaced in an account of practical knowledge. As it cannot depend on experience, the source of practical knowledge can only be the pure form of practical reason.

Taking the work of Engstrom and Thompson as a point of departure the workshop inquires into the nature, the source and the object of practical knowledge. The discussion will focus on Stephen Engstrom's book *The Form of Practical Knowledge* and Michael Thompson's manuscript "Forms of nature: 'first', 'second', 'living', 'rational' and 'phronetic'", in which he further develops ideas presented in his *Life and Action*.

The format of the workshop will be the following: the two texts by Stephen Engstrom and Michael Thompson as well as the comments will be distributed in advance. No papers will be presented at the workshop. The workshop sessions will be devoted entirely to a discussion of each of the papers, with the author of each paper responding to questions and objections.

Participants are required to register with Karin Sturm (karin.sturm@unibas.ch), from whom they will receive the papers to be discussed.

Practical Knowledge

**A workshop with
Stephen Engstrom
and Michael Thompson**



July 9-11, 2009

**hosted by the Philosophisches Seminar
Universität Basel**

**sponsored by the SNF-Pro*Doc
*Menschliches Leben***

Program

Thursday, July 9

*Comments on Michael Thompson
(Univ. of Pittsburgh): "Forms of nature: 'first',
'second', 'living', 'rational' and 'phronetic'"*

10.00 - 10.15

Opening

10.15 - 12.15

Anselm Winfried Müller (Keimyung
University, South Korea)

Chair: Christian Kietzmann (Univ. Basel)

12.30 - 13.30

Lunch Break

14.00 - 16.00

Thomas Müller (Universität Utrecht)

Chair: Rebekka Gersbach (Universität Bern)

16.30 - 18.30

Matthias Haase (Universität Basel)

Chair: Astrid Kottmann (Universität Basel)

Friday, July 10

10.00 - 12.00

Sebastian Rödl (Universität Basel)

Chair: Susanne Schmetkamp (Univ. Basel)

12.30 - 13.30

Lunch Break

*Comments on Stephen Engstrom
(University of Pittsburgh):
The Form of Practical Knowledge*

14.00 - 16.00

Andrews Reath (UC Riverside)

Chair: Wolfram Gobsch (Universität Basel)

16.30 - 18.30

Florian Rödl (J.W.G.-Univ. Frankfurt/M.)

Chair: David Horst (Universität Basel)

Saturday, July 11

09.00 - 11.00

Sergio Tenenbaum (University of Toronto)

Chair: Anton Ford (University of Chicago)

11.30 - 13.00

Final Discussion

Chair: Matthew Boyle (Harvard University)

13.00

Lunch