

Perspectives, Understanding, and Epistemic Aptness

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Metaphors and other framing devices are often praised and maligned for their open-ended, intuitive effects on our thinking. Apart from their rhetorical effectiveness, can such 'perspectively-loaded' tools contribute to genuine understanding – or do they at best generate an illusion of knowledge, by inducing a felt 'click' of comprehension? I argue that perspectival tools can make genuine contributions to knowledge and understanding by underwriting robust epistemic access to the world. I identify some key norms for assessing their epistemic aptness, and explore ways of achieving the sort of critical engagement that is needed to combat their attendant risk of epistemic complacency.