



The Nils Klim Prize 2019: Committee Citation

FINNUR DELLSÉN (UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND)

The Nils Klim Committee has decided to recommend Associate Professor Finnur Dellsén at the Department of Philosophy, University of Iceland, as this year's recipient of the Nils Klim Prize. Finnur Dellsén is an outstanding and original philosopher. Despite his young age, he is at the cutting edge of his field, with an impressive list of publications in internationally renowned journals.

In 2014, Finnur Dellsén completed his Ph.D. at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with a dissertation entitled *Epistemology of Science: Acceptance, Explanation, and Realism*. His research has mainly been focused on epistemology and the philosophy of science. Dellsén pursues a cluster of questions in relation to the epistemic status of scientific realism: the problem of accounting for explanatory rivalry in the context of inferences to the best explanation; the distinction between accepting a scientific theory and believing it; and whether all scientific explanations are causal explanations. In addition, Dellsén shows how, from a realist perspective, the acceptance of a theory depends on social and historical factors, such as the structure of scientific communities, scientific dogmatism and the time that has passed since a theory first was accepted. In his recent works, Dellsén pursues the question of what constitutes scientific progress, arguing that it should be conceived in terms of the advancement of scientific understanding, instead of increased knowledge. Dellsén convincingly claims that the distinction between knowledge and understanding lies in the fact that understanding, as opposed to knowledge, requires neither belief nor justification. Through this line of argument, Dellsén is likely to move the primary focus of epistemology towards the conditions of understanding and the nature of acceptance of scientific explanations.

Finnur Dellsén writes about highly complex philosophical matters in a clear and concise style. He frequently takes examples from everyday life to clarify his arguments, while using technical language and formal logic to substantiate them. He thoroughly examines the arguments involved and fairly considers alternative accounts of the topic in question. The committee is impressed by the originality, perceptiveness and precision of his philosophical work.

On behalf of the Nils Klim Committee,
Tone Sverdrup, Committee Chair