

ASIAN

EPISTEMOLOGY

NETWORK

1ST Online Meeting

July 31, 2020 / 7:00 – 10:00 pm (Shanghai Time)

Masaharu Mizumoto / Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology
The Theory of Knowledge-How and the Theory of Intelligence:
The Case for Bifurcation

Rie Izuka / Kansai University
Epistemic Partiality of Friendship, Belief Polarization, and Virtue
Epistemology

Ru Ye / Wuhan University
Epistemic Permissivism and the Rationality-Accuracy Connection

Adam Marushak / South China Normal University
Skeptical Arguments from Possibility

Registration required: <http://suo.im/5BrC3P>
Website of AEN: <https://asianepistemology.net/>

Title: The Theory of Knowledge-How and the Theory of Intelligence: The Case for Bifurcation

Masaharu Mizumoto / Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology

Abstract: In a series of papers, we have examined the uses and semantics of knowing how constructions in English and Japanese, and found radical and systematic differences between them. In one of such studies, we used various vignettes and found that English knowledge-how varies with the relevant ability, together with the belief about the ability of the agent, whereas Japanese knowledge-how varies with the agent's (implicit) description about how one ought to do something. This is also confirmed in another study in which we used the felicity judgments on sentences with knowing how construction. However, in that paper we also found, using corpuses and Google search, that there is virtually no natural occurrence of Japanese knowing how constructions that are used for expressing physical ability like knowing how to swim.

There we considered three possible consequences of such radical differences: 1) Pluralism, 2) Thin monism, and 3) Chauvinistic monism. In this paper I first argue that only pluralism about knowledge-how is the viable position. If so, however, this also has a serious consequence for the debate between intellectualism and anti-intellectualism. This debate has been formulated in terms of knowledge how and knowledge that, where the question was whether the former can be reduced to the latter. However, if pluralism about knowledge how is correct, it seems that we cannot expect a single answer to this question. Indeed, the question would be interesting only in English and some other languages but not in Japanese (and possibly some other languages). In other words, the question itself may be local. I will argue that the theory of knowledge how must in future focus on the details of specific properties of specific languages, investigating and comparing various theories of knowledge how.

Recently, however, perhaps expecting such linguistic diversity, some theorists avoid the use of "knowledge how", preferring "practical knowledge", discussing as if the topic has been independent of any language from the start. This is a betrayal of both the representative anti-intellectualist and the leading intellectualist. Ryle, being an ordinary language philosopher, would be surprised to hear that his topic is totally independent of language. Stanley has taken the linguistic aspect of the topic equally seriously. But if so, exactly when the topic has been changed? One cannot and should not change the topic in order to one's own position!

Still, Ryle's original interest in his discussions of knowledge how was the *intelligence* exhibited in intelligent actions. Thus, the debate between intellectualism and anti-intellectualism was rather concerned with the theory of intelligence, and the consequence of pluralism about knowledge how is that the topic must now be *bifurcated* into the theory of knowledge how and the theory of intelligence.

At the same time, the total lack of the natural occurrence of Japanese knowing how constructions in attributing physical ability suggests that, for Japanese, what Ryle took as a special kind of intelligence was not only not knowledge how, but also not even a *mental* state or capacity, let alone *knowledge* at all. In this sense, while the Japanese conception of knowledge how is the intellectualist's, the Japanese conception of the relevant intelligence (if it is intelligence at all) is even more radically anti-intellectualistic than Ryle's. I will therefore argue that intelligence is not a natural kind, or at least the articulation of intelligence is not determined by natural kinds, allowing the plurality of culturally articulated intelligence and the theories of intelligence.

Title: Epistemic partiality of friendship, belief polarization, and virtue epistemology

Rie Izuka / Kansai University

Abstract: In this paper, my aim is to consider the virtue epistemological implications of the debate regarding the epistemic partiality of friendship. We are more prone to believe what friends tell us than what non-friends tell us. This is not just a description of what we do: we are right to do so, according to Sarah Stroud (2006) and Simon Keller (Keller 2004; 2018). Both have made very similar yet independent arguments for allowing the epistemic partiality of friendship to take precedence over an epistemic norm, namely believing in accordance with evidences. In the first section, I will lay out the norm of friendship in the realm of belief. Given the argument espoused by Stroud and Keller is broadly on the right track, I will then discuss the friendship dynamic, where this exact partiality plays an important role and where it has less impact. Next, another epistemic worry inherent in the epistemic partiality of friendship will be addressed: belief polarization, which in the worst case leads to echo chambers. Finally, I will explain why the epistemic partiality of friendship paradoxically promotes the cultivation of epistemic virtues at the individual level, yet by non-individual methods.

Title: Epistemic Permissivism and the Rationality-Accuracy Connection

Ru Ye / Wuhan University

Abstract: Epistemic Permissivism says that sometimes there are multiple rational responses to the same body of evidence. An argument against Permissivism says that this view is incompatible with an intuitive understanding of the value of rationality—rational credence is more expectedly accurate than irrational credence. This is called ‘the value problem for Permissivism.’ In this paper, I first explain this problem and I argue that the Permissivist’s response to this problem is unsuccessful. Then I propose a new response: the value of rationality doesn’t lie in that rational credence is more expectedly accurate than irrational credence, but that rational credence performs better in long-run convergence to truth. Drawing on recent development of learning theory, I argue that this convergence understanding of the rationality-accuracy connection is more attractive than the expected accuracy understanding, and I argue that the convergence understanding is compatible with Permissivism.

Title: Skeptical Arguments From Possibility

Adam Marushak / South China Normal University

Abstract: A classic skeptical argument runs roughly as follows: knowledge is incompatible with the possibility of error, but error is almost always possible, so we know next to nothing. The existing replies to this argument come in three main varieties. Fallibilists argue that knowledge is compatible with the possibility of error. Mooreans deny that error is possible with respect to commonsense propositions. Contextualists hold that the skeptical argument is sound only in contexts where its conclusion does not conflict with our ordinary claims to know. In this talk, I sketch a new line of reply that I call the Nonclassical Strategy. On this strategy, one grants the skeptic's premises but holds that the skeptic's argument is invalid. Since the skeptic's argument is valid on classical logic, the proposed strategy requires a nonclassical account of consequence. I show how recent work on epistemic modals delivers the desired consequence relation and yields a resolution of the skeptical puzzle that has a key advantage over the existing replies in the literature.