

5th online meeting
Asian Epistemology Network
May 9, 2021
7 - 10pm (Shanghai)

1st session: Democracy and Epistemic Fairness: Testimonial Justice as a Founding Principle of Aggregative Democracy

- Speaker: Junyeol Kim (Kookmin University)
- Commentator: Kunimasa Sato (Ibaraki University)
- Abstract: The current discussion on the relationship of epistemic justice to democracy focuses on its relationship to deliberative democracy. This paper concerns the relationship of epistemic justice—specifically, testimonial justice which I call ‘epistemic fairness’—to aggregative democracy or democracy by voting. The aim of this paper is to establish the point that epistemic fairness is one of the founding principles of the democratic institution of voting, i.e., the principles by which the democratic institution of voting is organized. Under an arguably plausible interpretation, the democratic institution of voting turns out to be committed to realizing epistemic fairness. If epistemic fairness is a founding principle of the democratic institution of voting, a number of implications follow with respect to the issues related to the practice of voting in democracies, such as the problem of gerrymandering or the fairness of the aggregation rule.

2nd session: Being self-deceived about one’s own mental states

- Speaker: Kevin Lynch (Huaqiao University)
- Commentator: Winnie Sung (Nanyang Technological University)
- Abstract: A familiar philosophical problem about self-deception concerns how self-deception is possible in light of the paradoxes generated by a seemingly plausible way of defining it. A less familiar problem concerns how a certain type of self-deception—being self-deceived about one’s own intentional mental states—is possible in light of a plausible way of understanding the nature of self-knowledge. According to this understanding, we ordinarily do not rely on evidence to know our own minds, but then it is puzzling how this sort of self-deception could occur given that self-deception arises from the mistreatment of evidence. This paper argues that to accommodate this kind of self-deception we should accept that sometimes ordinary self-knowledge is attained through inferences from evidence, but that this needn’t be as unappealing an idea as has been thought. In particular, by showing that such inferential self-knowledge can be both ‘transparent’ and ‘direct’, the paper argues that it need not imply having an abnormal, ‘alienated’ relation to the mental state. Some specific processes that make this kind of self-deception possible are also discussed.