

***Introduction to
KNOWLEDGE-THAT/KNOWLEDGE-HOW: BETWEEN
PHENOMENOLOGY AND ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY –
Thematic Dossier***

ADRIAN LUDUȘAN*, MIHAI RUSU**

The ongoing debate surrounding know-how and skill is one of the most animated and diverse areas of contemporary philosophy. In fact, the inquiry is hardly limited to philosophical theories and arguments, as inputs from cognitive psychology and neuroscience, linguistics, computer science, and other fields have been regularly called upon and analyzed in the literature. Moreover, the range of philosophical theories and traditions that have been brought to bear on the debate is unusually vast, stretching from the ancient to the most novel, and from classical analytic philosophy to various strands of continental philosophy, of which the phenomenological tradition has probably been appealed to the most, whether to lend support to, or to criticize a certain idea. While the distinctions have been anticipated or mirrored in various approaches, the main source of the current debate is Ryle (1949)'s famous distinction between two types of knowledge: knowledge-that (i.e., propositional knowledge) and knowledge-how. Ryle criticizes what he calls, in a somewhat derogatory manner, *intellectualism*, that is, the view that all knowledge (including know-how) is propositional. The intellectualist position has been revived by Jason Stanley and Timothy Williamson in their 2001 joint paper "Knowing How." This paper has elicited an impressive number of responses, both favourable and critical, and has stimulated new research and creative reappraisals of previously less problematized views of such fundamental notions as *knowledge*, *skill*, *proposition* and *propositional knowledge*, *intelligence*, etc. The subsequent

* Issue coordinator. Department of European Studies / Interdisciplinary Center for Data Science, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, Emm. de Martonne 1, Cluj-Napoca, Email: adiludusan@gmail.com.

** Issue coordinator. Department of Environmental Engineering and Protection, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca, 3-5 Calea Mănăştur, Cluj-Napoca, Romania; Department of Philosophy, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, 1 Mihail Kogălniceanu str., Cluj-Napoca, Romania, Email: mihaimcrusu@gmail.com.

contributions to the debate have developed various perspectives and strategies that intellectualists and anti-intellectualists could adopt in relation to Ryle's views and Stanley and Williamson's opposing arguments and tenets. Many of the most important works on these issues are cited and discussed in the papers in the dossier.

From our point of view, there are three main directions that the recent inquiries on knowledge-how have followed. The first and most substantial is the development of arguments for and against Stanley and Williamson's intellectualism which has branched off in various arguments and debates: the Rylean argument from regress, the sufficiency objection, the linguistic argument for intellectualism, the epistemological profile of knowledge-how, and others. While the majority of publications on these issues have developed inside the general framework defined by Ryle's distinctions and their dominant interpretation in analytic philosophy, there is another trend that has gained momentum more recently, in which various authors propose to reconsider the classical knowledge-that/knowledge-how distinction in various ways (starting with a reassessment of Ryle's own intentions concerning a strict separation of the two). It is here that alternative perspectives, such as the phenomenological tradition, can contribute the most. The intellectualists emphasize in various papers (notably, Stanley and Krakauer 2013, and Stanley and Williamson 2016) their critical stance on various phenomenological and phenomenologically inspired perspectives, such as the work of Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980, 1986). However, innovative contributions such as Gallagher and Aguda (2020) illustrate the significant insights that we can extract from Husserl's work, coupled with recent results from the cognitive sciences, and seem to go beyond the altogether too restrictive conceptual limitations of the orthodox interpretations of the main framework. As for the last main thread of the current discussion, the relation of the philosophical theories and concepts about know-how with the theory and practice of other fields, such as social sciences, arts, humanities and sports is highly interesting and should reflect back substantially on the philosophical discussion. We remark with great satisfaction that the contributions to the dossier cover all three main directions and integrate different and highly creative perspectives on the subject matter.

(Felix 2020) is a novel contribution to the intellectualism – anti-intellectualism debate. The author uses slips as a key notion in an argument against the intellectualist reduction of knowledge-how to knowledge-that. A slip has the following traits: it is performed by an agent without her being aware of it, it is different from the action the agent intended to perform, but nevertheless it is guided by knowledge-how. The case of slips appears to show that knowledge-how is not properly reducible to propositional

logic, as it has a different epistemological profile: the knowledge-how manifested in slips is different from the knowledge-how the agent intends to apply. Such a phenomenon cannot appear in the case of knowledge-that.

Copoeru and Luduşan (2020) may be seen both as a contribution to the main debate, and as an attempt to reframe and redescribe the conceptual framework. The authors put to use Groenendijk & Stokhof's (1984) semantic analysis of embedded questions in order to highlight some of the difficulties and limits of Stanley and Williamson's account of knowledge-how. Nevertheless, they don't take a stance in the intellectualism – anti-intellectualism debate, but rather press the need for a more complex treatment of knowledge-how, to be done by adding a mereological layer to the semantic approach. The paper also explores the openings afforded by accounting for the role interrogation plays in communicative interaction and by assessing more thoroughly the significance of context for knowledge-how.

Marquez Sosa (2020) proposes a different approach to the problem of knowledge and experience. Inspired by McDowell, Cussins and Evans, he introduces the notions of mediational fields and dynamic situated senses, in order to argue for a two-dimensional analysis of the cognitive content of experience, which is, according to the author, both referential (truth-conditional) and mediational. Marquez Sosa argues that this emerging account should allow a bypassing of conceptual difficulties stemming from traditional epistemological perspectives, such as the controversies regarding the knowledge-how/knowledge-that distinction.

Miranda Medina (2020) illustrates the possible extension and application of the notion of knowledge-how to the philosophical analysis of performance. The author argues that Ryle's and Stanley and Williamson's conceptions are not necessarily opposing views, as their basic tenets and objectives are similar. The idea that the gist of Ryle's distinction has been misrepresented by its followers and adversaries alike has been expounded in other recent papers in the literature, but the author's perspective on Ryle's view is highly enriched by his practical knowledge and interests. Miranda Medina then compares different frameworks of analysis of notions such as performance, information and feedback, most notably from Greimas' semiotics, to the knowledge-how/knowledge-that framework and shows their similarities and the ways they may mutually extend and enrich each other's grasp and reach.

We are certain that the contributions to this dossier will move the debate forward in multiple directions and will add to an already lively, broad and creative exchange of ideas.

SOURCES

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