

SK Seminar 09/04/19

Attending: Paul, Giovanni, Giacomo, Crispin, Carrie, Jonathan, Xintong, Jose, Peter, Alan
Presenting: Paul

Reading: Boyle on two kinds of self-knowledge

1. On dichotomy of self-knowledge

Giovanni asked about Boyle's dichotomy of kinds of self-knowledge, i.e., that between sensation and attitudes. He wondered which camp does passing thought belong to. Is Boyle right about that this dichotomy is what implied by Moran's account?

Crispin suggested that an alternative dichotomy is between things that are under our rational control and those that aren't.

Peter and **Giovanni** had an exchange about what is a passing thought. **Crispin** suggested that it is a content with a force, or a content embedded in an attitude, but lack 'datability', i.e., it is impossible to know when did the thought occur to me.

2. On whether the account is only trivially true and whether self-knowledge is built in

"...if we suppose that to conclude that p on the basis of deliberation normally just amounts to coming to believe that p , and that a subject who possesses the concept of belief will understand that this is so." (p. 137)

Crispin argued that the claim about the doxastic process that leads to my coming to believe that p is either trivial or utterly obscure. On the non-trivial construal of concluding that p , something happens is the basis for its normative status, what is that basis? There is no place for irrationality to get in.

Giovanni: it is important to understand how one can come to believe what one believe just by deliberating. Suppose that I assume that my belief about p is determined by the conclusion of the reflection of my reasons. But still, I don't know, without some self-knowledge, whether I believe that p because if I have no prior clue of what I conclude in the first place, that general assumption about the connection between concluding that p and coming to believe that p cannot get me self-knowledge.

Crispin: If you know that you conclude that p , then you know you believe that p . It is trivial.

Alan emphasized that there seems to be two different relations we are concerned with here. One is between believing that p and knowing that you believe that p , the other is between concluding that p and believing that p . How is transparency is going to help us to get the former from the latter? If the claim about the relation between concluding and coming to believe is a claim to particular instance, then it seems question-begging.

Crispin: Some degree of self-awareness or self-knowledge is built into the account. As such we haven't been given any fundamental route for acquiring self-knowledge.

Peter: What I believe is what I conclude; moran's passage is about a right I have to answer a question about what I think what by concluding so and so.

Giovanni: There is some kind of transition from p to I believe that p . Why is that transition is legitimate? Is it legitimate by invoking agency/entitlement?

Peter: I don't stand independently to the first thing and then make a transition from it, rather, on this view, the second thing is just the same as the first thing. This is not an inferential account. It is *not* as it were, I first look for evidence, adding the condition that I am rational, and then conclude that I believe so and so.

Crispin: what's the clue that leads you into that belief? What intimates it to you? Otherwise it is like magic

Alan: The point is that believing has certain reflexivity to it; it is part of what it is to believe, that you are capable of thinking about that very content is a thing that you believe. That's not magic. It is to do justice to the role belief plays in our psychological economy. Pettit (1993) makes this point in *the common mind*.

Peter: do you think Moran recommends a TM method? Authority is not an epistemic notion for Moran. It is an idea of responsibility; of what one is answerable for.

The group agreed that the use of the trained parrot example is unfortunate. **Peter** pointed out that Boyle seems to be using **Expression R** as a necessary condition for accounts of self-knowledge.

Giovanni: is this condition employed to deal with expressivist accounts?

Peter: expressivist accounts should have the linguistic resources that one can draw on to avoid the problem in the trained parrot cases.

Giovanni asked about what linguistic competence amounts to (p.149).

Paul: linguistic competence is an upshot of conceptual competence.

Alan: One might want to fend off challenges from ppl who don't want to tie self-knowledge from the capacity of using language. Davidson is against such idea. He thinks that if a creature doesn't have language, then it need something else in order to have the same level of complexity we have. But Boyle is not interested in exploring the possibility that there are such creatures.

Giovanni: why couldn't accounts of those kinds creatures, help us to understand self-knowledge for humans?

Alan: recently there are works on additive theory of rationality, which develops that line of thought.