

Intellectualism and Nonhuman Animal Knowledge
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Apparent asymmetry: Evidence of nonhuman animal know-how abounds; evidence of their *knowledge* is lacking.

Thesis: Evidence of know-how *is* evidence of knowledge. There is no asymmetry.

I. *A Problem for Intellectualism*

The view at issue:

Intellectualism. Knowing how to ϕ , for any action type ϕ , is a matter of having *propositional knowledge* relevant to ϕ -ing.

And a worry:

Over-Intellectualization Worry (OIW)*. Intellectualism risks failing to account for nonhuman animal know-how by making propositional knowledge necessary for know-how.

*First pass

Two intellectualist strategies:

(1) Embrace agnosticism (e.g., Löwenstein 2020).

(2) Appeal to our practice of ascribing knowledge (Stanley and Williamson 2001, p. 439).

Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*: “A decade hence only the oldest oaks will *remember*, and at long last only the hills will *know*” (116, emphases mine).

II. *Learning from SW-Intellectualism*

The paradigmatic intellectualist view is Stanley’s and Williamson’s (2001):

SW-Intellectualism. S knows how to ϕ iff S knows, of some way w , *that* w is a way for S to ϕ .

SW-Intellectualism can’t account for nonhuman animal know-how, but this doesn’t mean we should accept OIW. It means we should formulate a view that doesn’t entail higher-order concepts.

I know how to make coffee:

I know *that* the Chemex is on the shelf. (descriptive proposition)

I know *that* I should put the kettle on to boil. (*prescriptive* proposition)

I know *that* I have a firm grip on the kettle handle. (proprioceptive proposition = a proposition about my physical position relative to my immediate environment)

I recommend a view and a test, respectively:

Basic Intellectualism. S knows how to φ iff S knows whatever propositions they need to know in order to φ .

Counterfactual Test (CT). For any proposition P, if (1) S behaves differently in a world, W, than S behaves in a nearby possible world, W_1 , in which S does not know that P, and (2) S's behavior is different in W_1 *because* S does not know that P in W_1 , then infer S knows that P in W.

CT in a slogan: *What we know affects how we do what we know how to do.*

Upshot: We have a principled reason to ascribe the crow knowledge of propositions that *don't* embed higher-order concepts.

III. Over-Intellectualization Worry, Round 2

Over-Intellectualization Worry (OIW). Intellectualism risks failing to account for nonhuman animal know-how by *requiring the capacity to grasp or entertain propositions.*

Implicit premise: *Knowing that P* requires grasping or entertaining a thought with the content P.

Carl Ginet (1975):

The exercise (or manifestation) of one's knowledge of how to do a certain sort of thing need not, and often does not, involve any separate mental operation of considering propositions and inferring from them instructions to oneself... I exercise (or manifest) my knowledge that one can get the door open by turning the knob and pushing it (as well as my knowledge that there is a door there) by performing that operation quite automatically as I leave the room; and I may do this, of course, without formulating (in my mind or out loud) that proposition or any other relevant proposition. (p. 7)

Two arguments: (1) from proprioceptive knowledge; (2) from a thought experiment—consider Lars.

IV. Evidence of Know-How is Evidence of Knowledge

A theory-neutral feature of know-how: Routine, reliable success requires know-how.

If S routinely and reliably φ s, S knows how to φ .

Honeybees routinely and reliably forage for nectar; a honeybee knows how to forage for nectar.

Apply CT: When foraging for nectar, a honeybee *knows that* flower patch A has flowers with nectar to forage.