

BETH BARKER
(current as of April 2024)

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Department of Philosophy
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AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Epistemology, Philosophy of Action

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science, Animal Ethics, Bioethics, Logic

EDUCATION

2019- Ph.D. in Philosophy, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL (expected 2025)
2016-2018 M.A. in Philosophy, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO
2011-2015 B.A. in Philosophy and B.A. in Spanish, Summa Cum Laude, Evangel University,
Springfield, MO

DISSERTATION SUMMARY

Ascribing know-how to someone is a way of explaining or predicting their success. Why is the espresso from 4LW so good? The roasters know how to roast and the baristas know how to pull 'spro. Why does the coach call on that batter? That batter knows how to hit a home run. It's natural to think that roasters, baristas, and batters have a distinctively *practical* kind of knowledge that makes them good at what they do. My dissertation dispels this assumption and redirects the debate about what it means to know how to φ . The core idea is that, if we ascribe know-how to explain and predict success, then we're better off rejecting the idea that there's such a thing as distinctively practical knowledge. The view I develop is that we know how to φ in virtue of having propositional knowledge that supports our φ -ing when, or *if*, we φ .

PUBLICATIONS

2021 "Epistemic Injustice and Performing Know-How," in *Social Epistemology* 35, no. 6: 608–20. DOI: 0.1080/02691728.2021.1882608

PRESENTATIONS

2024 "How Knowledge-How Is Practical: Two Theses," Submitted Symposium, American Philosophical Association (APA) Central Division Meeting, New Orleans (blind refereed)
2024 "What Should an Account of Knowledge-How Be an Account Of?" Submitted Symposium, APA Eastern Division Meeting, New York (blind refereed)
2023 "Propositions in Action: The Problem of Over-Intellectualizing Know-How," Rule-Following: Between Nature and Culture, University of Hradec Králové, Hradec Králové, Czech Republic (blind refereed)

- 2023 “Propositions in Action: The Problem of Over-Intellectualizing Know-How,”
Concepts in Action: Representation, Language, and Applications, Concordia
University, Montreal, Québec (blind refereed)
- 2022 “Ryle’s Regress from Category Mistake,” Normative Guidance Workshop,
Australian National University, Canberra, Australia (blind refereed)
- 2019 “Epistemic Injustice and Intellectualist Know-How,” Submitted Symposium,
American Philosophical Association (APA) Central Division Meeting, Denver (blind
refereed)

INVITED COMMENTARIES

- 2023 Kyoungmin Cho, “Against Subjectivism about Final Ends: The Fickleness
Argument,” Northwestern Society for the Theory of Ethics and Politics (NUSTEP),
Northwestern University
- 2023 Ian Dunkle, “Can an Action be Difficult beyond Compare?” APA Central Division
Meeting
- 2022 Keshav Singh, “The Paradox of Consequentialism,” NUSTEP, Northwestern
University
- 2021 Ben Henke, “Degree Encroachment,” 12th Annual NU/ND Graduate
Epistemology Conference, University of Notre Dame
- 2018 Ofra Magidor, “Meaning Transfer Revisited,” Kline Workshop on Semantics and
Logic, University of Missouri
- 2018 Bob Fischer, “Veganism, Vegetarianism, and the Duty to Signal,” Kline Workshop
on Animal Ethics, University of Missouri

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- 2023-2024 Graduate Writing Center Fellowship, Northwestern University
- 2022 Travel funding from the Australian National University, Normative Guidance
Workshop
- 2019 Graduate Student Travel Stipend, American Philosophical Association Central
Division
- 2018 Scott T. Davey Memorial Prize for Excellence in M.A. Research, awarded for
“Epistemic Injustice and Intellectualist Know-How,” University of Missouri
- 2015 Outstanding Graduate in Philosophy, Evangel University (awarded to one
graduating student chosen by department faculty)
- 2015 Outstanding Graduate in Spanish, Evangel University (awarded to one
graduating student chosen by department faculty)

TEACHING (as Primary Instructor)

Loyola University Chicago

Philosophy and Persons (fall 2022 and 2023)

Judgment and Decision-Making (200-level course; fall 2021, online, asynchronous)

University of Missouri

Introduction to Ethics (summer 2018 and 2019, online, asynchronous)

Introduction to Bioethics (spring 2019)

Introduction to Philosophy (fall 2018)

TEACHING (as Teaching Assistant)

Northwestern University

Modern Philosophy (200-level course; spring 2021 and 2023)

Introduction to Philosophy (winter 2023)

Theory of Knowledge (200-level course; spring 2022)

Elementary Logic II (200-level course; winter 2022)

Bioethics (winter 2021)

University of Missouri

Medical Ethics (spring 2018)

Logic and Reasoning (fall 2017)

Introduction to Philosophy (spring 2017)

Introduction to Ethics (fall 2016)

ADDITIONAL TEACHING (as Fellow)

Northwestern University

Graduate Writing Center (advises graduate-student and faculty writing, leads writing workshops; AY 2023-2024)

COURSES TAKEN

All listed courses are graduate level; NU = Northwestern university; MU = University of Missouri
Language, Epistemology, Mind: Reasoning and representation (audited; L. Rips, NU Department of Psychology); Higher-order evidence (S. Goldberg, NU); Philosophy of inquiry (S. Goldberg, NU); Legal epistemology (J. Lackey, NU); Seminar in language and mind (M. Glanzberg, NU); The modal future (F. Cariani, NU); Epistemic modality (P. Weirich, MU); Self-knowledge (M. McGrath, MU); Knowledge-how (P. Markie, MU); Formal Semantics (A. Radulescu, MU); Semantics (A. Radulescu, MU); Pragmatics (C. Horisk, MU)

History: Belief and doubt in early modern philosophy (B. Reed, NU); Creaturely life before—and against—Descartes (L. Shannon, NU); Knowledge, persuasion, and power in ancient philosophy (P. Marechal, NU); Understanding and reason in Kant (R. Zuckert, NU); Russell and Wittgenstein (D. Sievert, MU); Locke's metaphysics (M. Folescu, MU); Aristotle's ethics (N. Baima, MU)

Social and Political, Ethics: Group-based morality (S. White, NU); Derrida/Agamben (A. Ricciardi & I. Alfandary, NU); Critical phenomenology of race, gender, sexuality (J. Medina, NU); Ideal and non-ideal theory (K. Ebels-Duggan, NU); Habermas's theory of communicative rationality (C. Lafont, NU); Political authority and anarchy (P. Vallentyne, MU)

Logic and Metaphysics: Seminar in logic (P. Weirich, MU); Advanced logic (S. Ebels-Duggan, NU)

SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP

2022- Co-organizer, Graduate Works in Progress (forum for peers to discuss projects at any stage of development), Northwestern University, Department of Philosophy

2022- Co-organizer, Northwestern/Notre Dame Graduate Epistemology Conference

2022-2023 President, Philosophy Graduate Student Association (PGSA), Northwestern University

2021-2022 Climate Committee Member (committee that represents students' climate-related concerns to department faculty), Northwestern University, Department of Philosophy

- 2021-2022 Graduate Leadership and Advocacy Council Representative, PGSA, Northwestern University
- 2021 Tea-Time Coordinator, PGSA, Northwestern University, Department of Philosophy
- 2018-2019 President, Philosophy Department Graduate Student Organization (organization that plans and coordinates professional activities for graduate students in philosophy), University of Missouri
- 2017-2018 Philosophy Department Representative, Graduate Professional Council (graduate and professional student organization), University of Missouri
- 2017-2018 Treasurer, Philosophy Department Graduate Student Organization, University of Missouri
- 2014-2015 President, Phi Sigma Tau (International Honor Society in Philosophy) Missouri Epsilon Chapter
- 2013-2015 President, Alpha Chi (National Academic Honor Society) Missouri Rho Chapter
- 2013-2014 Global Ambassador and Intern, International Studies Abroad (unpaid internship; 40+ hrs)

OTHER EMPLOYMENT

- 2015-2020 Freelance copyediting
- 2015-2016 Administrative Coordinator, Donor Relations Department, Life Publishers Intl., Springfield, MO (copy editing and general office work for small publishing company)
- 2013-2014 Tutor and Office Assistant, Academic Support Center, Evangel University
- 2011-2014 Teaching Assistant for Dr. Eliezer Oyola, Humanities Department, Evangel University

CERTIFICATIONS

- 2016 Poynter-ACES Certificate in Editing
- 2016 General Assembly Data Analysis Circuit
- 2015 TESOL (minor and certificate)

LANGUAGES

- Intermediate/advanced reading proficiency in French and Spanish
- Basic ASL

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Title: *How to Be a Reluctant Intellectualist about Know-How*

My dissertation is a collection of stand-alone papers that together redirect the debate about knowledge-how, or know-how. By redirecting the debate, I clarify what an account of know-how is supposed to do: to characterize whatever it is about *knowing how* that explains or predicts an agent's success. I develop a novel view of what it is to *know how to ϕ* that does precisely this.

We tend to think knowledge-how is a distinctively *practical* kind of knowledge. In chapter 1, I show that there are two theses about the practical nature of knowledge-how lurking in the literature. Both are taken for granted. One view of know-how takes it for granted that knowledge-how is practical because it explains what makes successful action *probable*, or likely enough. As this story goes: my knowing the relevant facts about how to make coffee makes it probable that I'll succeed at making coffee when I try. If I didn't know those facts, I'd be less likely to succeed. The other view takes it for granted that knowledge-how is practical because it explains the very possibility of performing some action type out of one's own agency (as opposed to habit or luck or instinct). On this view, I make coffee out of my own agency because I have the *ability* to make coffee. Admirable as this latter view is for its explanatory aims, I conclude that it's *not* the view of know-how it purports to be. It is, instead, a view of agency, or agential action.

Chapter 2 can be seen as picking up this thread: the view that I concluded was *not about know-how*, but about *agency*, is anti-intellectualism. Anti-intellectualism claims that knowing how to ϕ is having an ability to ϕ . Anti-intellectualism has had to contend with a persistent objection, which I call 'the Knowledge Objection', or KO. According to KO, anti-intellectualism is inadequate because it equates know-how with ability and thereby fails to amount to a view of a kind of *knowledge*, properly speaking. I argue that, if anti-intellectualism inherited its explanatory purpose from Gilbert Ryle (as everyone in the literature claims!), then KO just *doesn't apply* to anti-intellectualism. This is because neither Ryle's view from the '40s *nor* contemporary anti-intellectualism is a view *about knowledge-how*. So, this chapter develops a novel reading of Ryle and thereby corrects our understanding of what anti-intellectualism is about.

The view of the debate that emerges from chapters 1 and 2 is this: intellectualism turns out to be the only extant view of *what it means to know how to ϕ* . Intellectualism is, paradigmatically, the view that knowing how to ϕ is knowing a proposition about a *way* to ϕ . In chapter 3, I dissolve a persistent objection to intellectualism. The objection is that intellectualism *over-intellectualizes* know-how by equating it with propositional knowledge, or knowledge of facts. I interrogate what it means to over-intellectualize know-how and find that the worry about over-intellectualizing is misplaced. There's no such thing as over-intellectualizing an account of knowledge-how as such.

The final two chapters together dispense with a myth about know-how, familiar from chapter 1: that it is a distinctively *practical* kind of knowledge. The core idea here is that knowledge is already practical. To think otherwise is to over-intellectualize our understanding of knowledge itself. If this is right, then know-how doesn't need to fill the role of a distinctively practical kind of knowledge in our explanations and predictions of successful action. All we need is the idea that *what we know supports what we do*. My account of know-how, then, is deflationary. I argue that we know how to ϕ in virtue of having some propositional knowledge that supports our ϕ -ing when, or *if*, we ϕ .