

Practical Knowledge and Abilities

by

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Submitted to the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy
on September 11, 2009, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy

Abstract

The thesis is an exploration of the relations between know-how, abilities, and ordinary knowledge of facts. It is shown that there is a distinctively practical sort of know-how and a corresponding interpretation of ‘S knows how to ϕ ’, and that this special sort of know-how, while possessing representational content, is not simply ordinary knowledge-that. The view rests on a novel distinction between two interpretations of the Intellectualist slogan, familiar from the work of Gilbert Ryle, that know-how is a kind of knowledge-that. The distinction allows us to clarify the issues that are at stake in the debate and see the possibility of a position that combines aspects of both Intellectualism and anti-Intellectualism. An entailment from know-how to a certain sort of ability is defended, and it is shown that the present view preserves the possibility of appealing to know-how to block Frank Jackson’s “knowledge argument” against physicalism.

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