

A Place at the Table: Experimental Philosophy and the Western Philosophical Tradition

講演者 : Professor Stephen Stich
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日時 : 平成28年6月2日(木) 17:00~18:30
Date&Time June 2, 2016 17:00~18:30

場所 : 知識科学講義棟2階 中講義室
Room KS Lecture Hall

Abstract: Thought experiments and the appeal to intuition about hypothetical cases have played an important role in the methodology of Western philosophy from Plato to the present. Over the last 15 years, however, philosophers identified with the “experimental philosophy” movement have offered a variety of arguments aimed at limiting or eliminating the use of intuitions about cases as evidence in philosophy.

This talk will be devoted to a review of those arguments and some of the objections that have been raised against them. The experimental philosophers’ arguments maintain that intuitions are subject to “irrelevant influences” including order, framing and environmental effects, and that intuitions vary significantly from one demographic group to another. Recent finding illustrating these phenomena will be presented. One of the objections raised against these arguments is that the studies are focusing on the wrong group of participants-ordinary people, rather than professional philosophers who are experts on the issues in question. Another objection is that the studies focus on the wrong sort of intuitions and that when the notion of intuition is construed more narrowly, the irrelevant influences are likely to disappear. These objections will be assessed with the aid of recent empirical studies. The conclusion of the talk is not that appeal to intuition should be eliminated from philosophical methodology, but rather that experimental philosophy has an important role to play in determining which intuitions may be problematic and which may be safely used. Experimental philosophy, I will argue, deserves a place at the table.

About the speaker: Stephen Stich (born May 9, 1943) is a professor of Philosophy And Cognitive Scientist at Rutgers University. Stich’s main philosophical interests are in the philosophy of mind, cognitive science, epistemology, and moral psychology. (Wikipedia) He has been famous in cognitive psychology for his arguments about the theory of mind. But since 21st century he has began the movement of “Experimental Philosophy”, and is still a leading figure in this field. He is a winner of the prestigious Lebowitz Prizes of this year.