
Common sense in Philosophical knowledge

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Résumé

As (Dutilh Novaes and Geerdink 2017) have shown, the analytic tradition, from its origins, is divided between methodologies that give an important role to common sense (Moore, Strawson) and more revisionist methodologies (Russell, Carnap). To the present day, there is no consensus about the methodological role of common sense in philosophical knowledge. Part of the problem is that "common sense" is itself an ambiguous expression, that can correspond to different "delineations" (Van Woudenberg 2020). It can refer to (at least):

(A) beliefs in the pre-theoretical cognitive system of the enquirer.

(B) beliefs that have a high or maximal degree of certainty.

(C) beliefs that are shared by (almost) all human beings, in virtue of being part of the natural cognition of our species.

These three (orthogonal) categories of belief can give rise to three very different arguments in favour of some special epistemological privilege of "common sense". Although such arguments could be developed independently from each other, my purpose in this presentation is to defend a "common-sense epistemology" that combines the three (as three stages, ordered from the least controversial to the more controversial).

Stage 1: pre-theoretical beliefs (A) have a default (though defeasible) epistemic status, because any modification of one's epistemic system requires a motivation to change one's views (see Lewis' conservatism in Lewis 1986, 2.8).

Stage 2: even though stage 1 allows for the revision of *anything*, there are in fact limits to what you can revise, because it will never be justified to revise the most certain (A&B) on the basis of premises less certain (Lycan 2001; Kelly 2005).

Stage 3: the epistemic situation of pre-theoretical certainties that are *common* to human nature (A&B&C) is even more privileged, because their certainty is not going to be (immediately) diminished by a peer-disagreement defeater.

(294 mots)

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Mots-Clés: Common Sense epistemology, Mooreanism, revisionism, epistemic conservatism