

KBNS Network Workshop 2

Self-Knowledge and the A Priori

17th-18th December 2018, Stirling Court Hotel, University of Stirling

The project's second Network Workshop will be held on Monday 17th and Tuesday 18th December 2018 at the Stirling Court Hotel, a conference centre on the University Campus.

The Workshop is open to all, and there is no registration fee.

Draft Programme

Monday 17th December: The A Priori

10.45	Arrival and coffee
11.00 – 12.30	Derek Ball (St Andrews) Analyticity, Definition, and Revisionary Theorising
12.30 – 1.30	Lunch
1.30 – 3.00	Tuomas Tahko (Bristol) The A Priori Within and Beyond Natural Science
3.00 – 3.10	Break
3.10 – 4.40	Claire Field (St Andrews and Stirling) Defeat through inertia. A priori propositional justification and rational mistakes about what rationality requires
4.40 – 5.00	Coffee
5.00 – 6.30	Marcus Giaquinto (UCL) A Priori and A Posteriori in Mathematics
7.30	Workshop Dinner

Tuesday 18th December: Self-Knowledge

10.00 – 11.30	Katherine Hawley (St Andrews) Self-Knowledge and Trustworthiness
11.30 – 11.45	Coffee
11.45 – 1.15	Anil Gomes (Oxford) Perception, Reflection, Autonomy
1.15 – 2.15	Lunch
2.15 – 3.45	Alisa Mandrigin (Stirling) The Where of Bodily Awareness
3.45 – 4.00	Coffee
4.00 – 5.30	Anna-Sara Malmgren (Stanford) Why be reflective?

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ABSTRACTS DAY 1 (continues)

Derek Ball (St Andrews), “Analyticity, Definition, and Revisionary Theorising”

Many interesting philosophical theories are revisionary, in the sense that accepting them requires rejecting some aspect of ordinary or expert belief or linguistic usage — in many cases, aspects of belief or usage that are so central to our thinking that one might naturally have regarded them as analytic truths or matters of definition. (Consider, for example, the claim that the contents of my iPhone should be counted among my beliefs, the idea that one can have free will even if one’s actions are determined by events in the distant past and the laws of nature, or social constructionist views of gender according to which to be a woman is by definition to be socially subordinated.) I aim to defend a notion of analyticity — metasemantic analyticity — and related notions of definition that vindicate the possibility of such revisionary theorising, and in particular vindicate the idea that such theorising is possible without change of topic or change of meaning.

Tuomas Tahko (Bristol), “The A Priori Within and Beyond Natural Science”

One reason to be interested in the a priori-a posteriori distinction is the desire to strive for the most naturalistic and scientifically respectable epistemology as possible. This issue is especially pressing for the epistemology of metaphysics, where a priori inquiry runs rampant. Assuming that the a priori-a posteriori distinction can be made in the first place, one might think that it provides us with at least a rough tool to distinguish between naturalistic and non-naturalistic approaches to the epistemology of metaphysics. Unfortunately, this is a naïve attitude. Not only is the distinction itself unlikely to be sharp enough to provide any useful input on this question, but a closer look quickly reveals that even the most “naturalistic” area of science will need input from methods of inquiry that can be reasonably classified as a priori.

In this paper, I will discuss the prospects of a naturalised epistemology of metaphysics, arguing that the distinction between non-naturalistic and naturalistic metaphysics cannot be simply made on the basis of the a priori-a posteriori distinction. Instead, we will see that a priori methods pervade both metaphysics and science. The upshot is that there may be no area of human inquiry whatsoever which would not take advantage of both a priori and a posteriori resources.

Claire Field (St Andrews and Stirling), “Defeat through inertia. A priori propositional justification and rational mistakes about what rationality requires”

Given a standard set of epistemic commitments, it seems possible for agents to sometimes be rational in contravening the requirements of rationality, because they have misleading evidence about what rationality requires. A simple explanation of this, and one that I defend here, is that agents who have misleading evidence about what rationality requires are justified in believing falsely about what rationality requires. However, this simple explanation causes downstream problems for our theories of epistemic rationality. To prevent these downstream problems, some have argued that rational mistakes about what rationality requires are impossible, and that this follows from the nature of our a priori justificatory assets for the truth about what rationality requires. Defending this claim requires providing an alternative explanation of apparent cases of rational mistakes about what rationality requires. I argue that the alternative explanations available to views that postulate such a priori justificatory assets fail because the relevant justificatory assets are epistemically inert. I suggest that this is some reason to prefer the simple explanation of cases of misleading evidence about what rationality requires.

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ABSTRACTS DAY 1 (continued)

Marcus Giaquinto (UCL), “A Priori and A Posteriori in Mathematics”

Here is what I think is a quite common epistemic picture of mathematics:

“Mathematics is an *a priori* science, in which proofs play a central role. This is largely because thinking through an argument warrants high confidence in its conclusion only if the argument is a proof. If, in thinking through an argument, visual experience helps us not merely to grasp the argument, but also to accept it, the argument is not purely *a priori* but contains an *a posteriori* element, and for that reason is not a proof.”

I will cast doubt on all of this, apart from the claim that proofs play a central role, in order to make way for a more nuanced (and more interesting) epistemology of mathematics in practice.

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ABSTRACTS DAY 2 (continues)

Katherine Hawley (St Andrews), “Self-Knowledge and Trustworthiness”

If we aim to be trustworthy, then we need to exercise control over our commitments. Otherwise, we will bite off more than we can chew, write cheques we can't cash, make promises we can't keep, and end up letting other people down. If we don't know our own strengths and weaknesses we therefore face an uncomfortable choice: either risk untrustworthiness or else avoid potentially valuable new commitments. I will explore this dilemma, paying attention to the ways in which our social and material circumstances can make it more difficult for us to attain the right kind of self-knowledge.

Anil Gomes (Oxford), “Perception, Reflection, Autonomy”

One aspect of the *Knowledge Beyond Natural Science* project concerns the way in which self-knowledge might resist assimilation to naturalistic accounts of scientific knowledge. The topic for my talk is another type of knowledge – knowledge of the nature of the mind – and the way in which it might resist assimilation to naturalistic accounts of scientific knowledge. I'll focus on the nature of perception, and explore questions about how we should go about investigating the nature of perception, and the role that philosophy might play in any such investigation. The aim will be to try and identify some of the commitments involved in taking the philosophy of perception to be independent of the science of perception. In particular, given the focus of the project, I'll try to raise some questions about whether the knowledge we have or seek about the nature of mind should be thought of as independent of the kind of self-knowledge which the *Knowledge Beyond Natural Science* project is interested in.

Alisa Mandrigin (Stirling), “The Where of Bodily Awareness”

In bodily awareness tactile and bodily sensations are felt to be located in parts of the body. It seems plausible that to experience the felt location of a sensation is to be primed to act on the part of the body in which the sensation is felt to be located. That is, the spatial content of bodily awareness depends constitutively on the perceiver's bodily action. However this approach to the spatial content of bodily awareness has been challenged by apparent evidence of dissociations, in both neurological patients and healthy subjects, between experience and action (de Vignemont 2009, 2011, 2018).

In this paper I first examine what the plausible claim amounts to, and then assess the case against it. My aim is to resist the empirical counterargument by offering an alternative interpretation of the empirical results.

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ABSTRACTS DAY 2 (continues)

Anna-Sara Malmgren (Stanford), "Why be reflective?"

Some mental states—paradigmatically, beliefs and intentions—are rationally evaluable: they can be rational or irrational, justified or unjustified. Others—e.g. sensations and gastrointestinal states—are not. On a familiar but hard-to-make-precise line of thought, this is because we are somehow *responsible* for (having/being in) states of the former sort, in a way we are not for the others. But the responsibility we have for those states—'fundamental' responsibility—cannot be modeled on the responsibility we have for our (free, intentional) actions. So how should it be understood? The overall structure of my answer to this question is in line with tradition: I take fundamental responsibility to be grounded in a combination of a capacity for *control*, of an elusive kind, and a capacity for *reflection*. But the challenge is to get the details right: to describe these capacities correctly, and to articulate the connection to fundamental responsibility.

I argue that we are fundamentally responsible for all and only those *reflectively accessible* states that we have *direct deliberative leverage* over—where reflective accessibility is understood as accessibility to introspection and self-reflection, modestly conceived in turn. What it is for a state to be under our direct (deliberative) leverage is for it to be a potential unmediated outcome of deliberation—specifically: an outcome that is unmediated by further actions or propositional attitudes—and to have that potential in virtue of the functional role that is characteristic of the type of mental state it is. Direct leverage is meant to capture the sense in which our beliefs and intentions (and other rationally evaluable states) are 'up to us', or within our control. But it does not suffice for fundamental responsibility. What such responsibility in addition requires is the absence of *systematic non-culpable ignorance of relevant facts*. In the domain of interest, those facts crucially include what mental states one has, and why. This where reflection comes in: our introspective and self-reflective capacities ensure that we are not thus systematically ignorant with respect to our beliefs, intentions and other rationally evaluable mental states.

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PRACTICAL INFORMATION

BOOKING

Invited Speakers and Network Members:

You will have been contacted individually. Accommodation and meals during the Workshop are pre-booked, and you need only contact us if there are any changes to the standard arrangements described below.

Other delegates:

Please let us know by email if you are planning to attend (to: sonia.rocaroyes@stir.ac.uk). There is no registration fee, and teas/coffees during the Workshop are provided. You are welcome to join us for meals during the Workshop – lunches, and the Workshop Dinner on Monday 17th – but these have to be booked in advance: details and costs are given below. (Email to: sonia.rocaroyes@stir.ac.uk)

TRAVEL TO STIRLING

Both Edinburgh and Glasgow airports are well connected with Stirling by public transport (unless at night times; please let us know if you're arriving after 9pm and before 7am).

From Edinburgh airport:

There's a shuttle bus ([Airlink, Service 100](#)) from just outside the airport terminal. This service will bring you to either of *Haymarket* and *Waverley* train stations. From either of those you can get a train to Stirling (if you leave the shuttle at Haymarket you'll save some minutes). You don't need to get the train tickets in advance and can do so via machines or at a desk with a human being. Alternatively, you can take the [Tram](#) from the airport to *Edinburgh Park Station* and get onto a train for Stirling there; again, no need for advance booking.

From Glasgow airport:

There's a shuttle bus ([First Group, Service 500 or 77](#)) from outside the airport terminal. You want to get off the bus at *Glasgow Queen Street train station*. (N.B.: The bus also calls at *Glasgow Central*—a different train station and not the one you want.) From *Glasgow Queen Street* you can get a train to Stirling. You don't need to get the train tickets in advance and can do so via machines or at a desk with a human being. (<https://www.firstgroup.com/greater-glasgow/routes-and-maps/glasgow-airport-express>)

Journey planner:

If you want to check times, alternative routes, etc., play a little bit with this (reliable) journey planner: <https://www.travelinescotland.com/>

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AROUND STIRLING

Accommodation:

Accommodation for Invited Speakers and Network Members is pre-booked at the Stirling Court Hotel (on campus), which is also the venue of the workshop. <http://www.stirlingcourthotel.co.uk/>
For Speakers and Network Members not based in Stirling, the default booking is 3 nights, arriving on Sunday 16th and departing on Wednesday 19th.

Please let us know as soon as possible of any amendment needed to this default booking. (Email to: sonia.rocaroyes@stir.ac.uk) Thanks!

Shops on Campus:

They can be checked here: <https://www.stir.ac.uk/campus-life/campus-facilities/>
They are all in "The Atrium" (a 5-minute walk from the workshop venue).

Campus Maps:

Several maps of the campus can be found here: <https://www.stir.ac.uk/media/stirling/student-life/welcome/documents/campus-map.pdf>

Internet access while on campus:

The campus is covered with Eduroam signal, so you should be able to access it with your existing accounts. (If you're not an Eduroam user but would like internet access while on campus, please let me know and we'll take it from there.)

CATERING

Lunches, Monday 17th and Tuesday 18th:

There will be a catered two-course lunch on each day of the workshop. Vegetarian options are standard. If you have any further requirement or allergy, please do let us know.

Costs for Speakers and Network members will be met and will be provided by default (i.e. you need only inform us if you *don't* want lunches).

For others the cost of lunches will be £13.50: please email (sonia.rocaroyes@stir.ac.uk) if you want to have lunches at the workshop.

Dinner on Monday 17th:

This will be the official Workshop Dinner.

Costs for Speakers and Network members will be met and will be provided by default (i.e. you need only inform us if you *don't* want to attend the dinner).

For others the cost of dinner will be £25.00: please email (sonia.rocaroyes@stir.ac.uk) if you want to attend the dinner.

Dinner on Tuesday 18th:

An informal dinner will be arranged for those staying on after the end of the Workshop: by default invited speakers staying over on Tuesday 18th will be included. For anyone else who wants to attend, please let us know by email (sonia.rocaroyes@stir.ac.uk).

Self-catering:

The campus has several "eating and drinks" facilities which you can check here:

<https://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/campus-facilities/eating-drinking/>

If arriving late: the latest food options would be as follows:

- Stirling Court Hotel Restaurant: Last orders 8:45pm
- Stirling Court Hotel Bar: Last meal orders 9:45pm

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FURTHER INFORMATION FOR SPEAKERS

Handout printing:

We can easily print handouts for you if we get them by lunchtime on Sunday 16th. Beyond that point we can still print them, but less easily. (Email to: sonia.rocaroyes@stir.ac.uk)

IT facilities:

The room comes equipped with a projector with VGA connector. It does not come with a computer. You can connect your own device but please note you might need the required adapter if your device doesn't have a VGA output.

If you need a computer, we can provide one but please get in touch to let us know.

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