BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

„NATURALISM IN PHILOSOPHY"
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Hilary Kornblith

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Hilary Kornblith is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

He has written widely on topics in epistemology and related fields, and he is the author of *Inductive Inference and its Natural Ground*; *Knowledge and its Place in Nature*; *On Reflection*; *A Naturalistic Epistemology: Selected Papers*; *Second Thoughts and the Epistemological Enterprise*; and *Scientific Epistemology: An Introduction*

Naturalism and the Intellectual Legitimacy of Philosophy

Abstract: A number of authors have questioned the intellectual legitimacy of philosophy. The history of philosophy fails to show the kind of progress that we see in the sciences, and this raises doubts about whether philosophical theorizing achieves anything of intellectual worth. I argue that a naturalistic approach to philosophy can adequately respond to this worry, and I show how a particular naturalistic method has allowed for important progress across a wide range of different areas within philosophy.

Bana Bashour

American University of Beirut

Bana Bashour is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Director of General Education at the American University of Beirut. Her research is at the intersection of the philosophy of mind, ethics and moral psychology. In 2013, she published an edited anthology with Hans Muller entitled "Contemporary Philosophical Naturalism and Its Implication" which explores various philosophical themes (the nature of the human mind, of biological categories, morality, evolutionary explanations in general) on the basis of a naturalistic worldview. She has also published other work in moral psychology and virtue epistemology and an interdisciplinary work on philosophy and Economics with Ramzi Mabsout as well as a series of papers that present reasons for why we should think of virtuous behavior and virtuous character traits in relation to skill. In that latter series of papers she brings up contemporary work in empirical psychology to motivate a view based on Aristotle's virtue ethics. She is currently finishing a book manuscript (which is under contract with Routledge) entitled "How We Blame: A Theory of Moral Responsibility" in which she also marries traditional philosophical texts with contemporary empirical work. Her work also goes beyond philosophical writing to include curricular development and political activism.

How We Blame: A Naturalized Theory of Moral Responsibility

Abstract: Moral responsibility judgments are central to our moral and social lives. In the philosophical literature on the subject, they have been discussed in relation to the metaphysical problem of free will, one of the trickiest issues in philosophy. I

will be putting forth an account of moral responsibility that is both naturalistic in its approach and sidesteps the problem of free will and determinism. While inspired by P.F. Strawson's naturalized account of moral responsibility, I believe my account to be an improvement as it is able to respond to many of the objections raised against the Strawsonian view. I start by clarifying that the conceptual framework within which we are working includes discussions from the intentional stance and not the physical or design stances. While I remain neutral on metaphysical issues (e.g. the nature of mental states or the thesis of determinism) I argue that if we restrict ourselves to the domain of the intentional stance, we will be able to make headway in our discussions on moral responsibility. I argue that agency requires an understanding of moral responsibility attributions, which requires that one have an understanding of one's own intentional states and those of others. It also requires that one be able to take attitudes towards those intentional states. On my view, agents are embodied sentient intentional systems capable of reciprocation, verbal communication and reflective evaluation. I then argue that justified attributions of moral responsibility involve justified attributions of intentional states as well as justified perceptions of norm violation. I conclude by showing how recent empirical literature in moral psychology seems to be in line with the view that I have defended in purely theoretical terms, making it doubly motivated.

Mitchell Green

(University of Connecticut)

Mitchell Green is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Connecticut, as well as Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Philosophia*. His research interests include the evolutionary biology of communication, speech acts and their role in conversation, empathy, self-expression, self-understanding, and the epistemic value of fiction. He is author of *Engaging Philosophy: A Brief Introduction* (Hackett, 2006), *Self-Expression* (OUP, 2007), *Moore's Paradox* (co-ed. with J. Williams; OUP, 2007), *Know Thyself: The Value and Limits of Self-Knowledge* (Routledge, 2017), and *The Philosophy of Language* (Oxford, 2021), as well as over threescore articles in edited volumes and in such journals as *Linguistics and Philosophy*, *Oxford Studies in the Philosophy of Language*, *Noûs*, *Mind*, *Topoi*, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, *Theoretical Linguistics*, *Minds and Machines*, and *Philosophical Studies*. Special issues of the journals *Grazer Philosophische Studien* (vol. 96 (2019)) and *Organon Filozofia* (vol. 29 (2021)) contain articles by other philosophers focusing on Green's research contributions over the last quarter-century.

How Machines Can Perform Speech Acts

Abstract: Green and Michel, in 'What Might Machines Mean?' (*Minds and Machines*, vol. 32 (2022), pp. 323-8), argue that under certain conditions, artificially intelligent robots are able to perform speech acts in the traditional, semi-technical sense of 'speech act' traceable to Austin and Searle. In their, 'AI Assertion' (OSF Preprints, 2023), Butlin and Viebahn contend that Green and Michel's showcase robots do not meet the normative standards required to make assertions. In this talk I will recount Green and Michel's original argument and Butlin's

and Viebahn's reply to it. I will then show that with a modest clarification of their position, Green and Michel can accommodate Butlin's and Viebahn's objection while maintaining their original contention of the possibility that artificially intelligent robots can illocute.

M.T. Hemme

University of Groningen

Matthias Thymen (Thijs) Hemme has recently earned two master's degrees in philosophy (of science) from Utrecht University and the University of Groningen, and is currently looking to apply for a PhD position. He specializes in naturalism in philosophy, (general) philosophy of science, and a variety of topics in the philosophy of physics, philosophy of cognitive science, and the philosophy of complex systems. His main interests lie on the intersection of all these fields and topics, and as such he has worked mainly on issues surrounding naturalized metaphysics and naturalized epistemology.

Epistemic Agents Naturalized

Abstract: I will argue that a naturalistic approach to epistemology could be characterized as approaching the question of knowledge about the natural world in a somewhat deflationary manner. Taking (some version of) the 'scientific image' as our starting point—and as something that in our scientific discourse we take to provide us with a representation of a way the world might be—then within that way of talking about the world our scientific theories are trivially true. The question we can then address is: how, within our scientific image, do human epistemic agents come about and come to acquire, or construct, knowledge of theories that accurately represent the natural world as stipulated by the scientific image. This circular, or self-consistent, way of studying what knowledge is what I argue characterizes a naturalistic approach to epistemology. Such a naturalized epistemology is more concerned with naturalizing epistemic agents, and thus modeling them within scientific theories. To illustrate what such an enterprise might look like, I will briefly discuss how contemporary ideas emerging in complexity science and cognitive science, such as the 'free energy principle', can helpfully inform this project.

Jonathan Dixon

Wake Forest University

I am currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Wake Forest University in Winston Salem, North Carolina, USA. I earned my PhD in Philosophy from UMass Amherst in 2021 under the supervision of Hilary Kornblith. Before this I earned an MA in Philosophy from Virginia Tech. I research primarily in Epistemology and where it overlaps with the Philosophy of Science and Ethics. Specifically, my current research projects are grown out of my dissertation, *Defending Philosophical Knowledge,* where I defend the possibility of philosophical knowledge from some prominent arguments for philosophical skepticism, viz, pervasive disagreement among philosophical peers, and empirical challenges to philosophical methodology (i.e. x-phi against the use of intuitions and the method of cases in philosophy).

Experimental Philosophy and Philosophical Scepticsm

Abstract: Using two decades worth of experimental philosophy (aka x-phi), Edouard Machery argues in *Philosophy within its Proper Bounds* (OUP, 2017) that philosopher's use of the "method of cases" is unreliable because it has a strong tendency to elicit different intuitive responses from non-philosophers. And because, as Machery argues, appealing to such cases is usually the only way for philosophers to acquire the kind of knowledge they seek, an extensive philosophical skepticism follows. I argue that Machery's "Unreliability" argument fails because, once its premises are percisified, they are either self-defeating or without justification. This is a significant result because Machery's arguments are the most widely cited and discussed x-phi arguments for philosophical skepticism and many hold that Machery provides the most empirically informed, convincing, and thus best case for this kind of skepticism. So, if my arguments are sound, then the best x-phi argument for philosophical skepticism fails. Additionally, I argue that this result provides strong reason to believe the general conclusion that x-phi likely can never support a substantive philosophical skepticism.

Petar Nurkić

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Petar Nurkić is a Ph.D. candidate in philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, and a Research Associate at the Institute for Philosophy at the same university. His areas of expertise are epistemology, the philosophy of science, and the history of philosophy. In 2022, he published an article entitled "What Does a Bee Know? A Teleosemantic Framework for Cognitive Ethologist," which was inspired by his interest in naturalistic epistemology and honeybees. Since then, he has published several short texts attempting to popularize philosophical accounts of bee epistemology.

What does a Bee Know? A Teleosemantic Framework for Cognitive Ethologist

Abstract: The paper explores the topic of naturalistic epistemology and its relation to theories developed from Quine's ideas, specifically Millikan's teleosemantics and Kornblith's cognitive ethology. We seeks to answer three questions: (i) Can a bee know?; (ii) What can a bee know?; and (iii) Does the bee know? To answer these questions, we draw on the research of apiologists and cognitive ethologists to provide empirical support for its theses. The first question is answered by looking at animal cognitive capacities using Kornblith's understanding of the epistemic environment and the basic features of cognitive ethology. The second question is addressed by setting up teleosemantics as a framework in which Millikan attempts to naturalize intentional states and answer the question of the knowledge content in animals. Finally, the third question is answered by considering the non-propositional content of mental representations in animals and understanding natural signs. By doing so, the paper provides concrete descriptions of the world and the place of knowledge in it, instead of remaining only on attempts and possible introductions to naturalistic conceptions of knowledge.

Blanca Luque-Linero

University of Lisbon

Blanca is a PhD fellow at the Centre for Philosophy of Sciences of the University of Lisbon. She is carrying out a research project on naturalistic epistemology in relation to the scientific-philosophical ideas of the nineteenth century. She graduated in Philosophy at the University of Seville in 2019, with a thesis on Auguste´s Comte Philosophy of mathematics and its application to Astronomy. In 2020 she took a Master´s degree in Philosophy, Science and Values at the University of Basque Country and did her thesis on Naturalism in Auguste Comte´s Positive Philosophy.

Can a naturalistic epistemology be normative? A proposal rooted on Auguste Comte´s Positive Philosophy.

Abstract: Since Quine (1969), one of the most relevant debates in order to define naturalism has to do with normativity. While some authors defend the normative caracter of traditional epistemology (Kitcher, 1992), others assume descriptive epistemologies as successors of traditional epistemologies (Ambrogi, 1999). The purpose of this work is to defend the possibility of an epistemology that is both naturalistic and normative. We will do this through an exposition of the Comtean positive method for obtaining knowledge, establishing a kind of dialogue with authors such as Quine and Kitcher.

Auguste Comte is well known for being the main proponent of classical positivism and is often interpreted as one of the forerunners of the Fregean epistemology, against which naturalists react. However, in his Course de Philosophie Positive (1830-1842) Comte offers a process of knowledge that involves both naturalistic and

normative elements. He rejects absolute and a priori criteria and emphasize a necessary connection between philosophy, history and science (Bourdeau, Pickering and Schmaus, 2018). In this sense, this may shed light on the problem of normativity in naturalistic epistemology and, therefore, on the characterization of current naturalism.

Sushruth Ravish

IIT, Kanpur

Dr Sushruth Ravish is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Kanpur, India. He completed his PhD on Naturalizing Moral Epistemology at IIT Bombay. His area of specialization is in Metaethics and Epistemology. His current research interests are in exploring how public deliberation and collective reasoning contribute to moral inquiries.

He holds an undergraduate engineering degree from the National Institute of Engineering, Mysore and a Master's degree from SP Pune University. He is interested in the role of ethics in various professions and has conducted modules at various govt. institutes on Administrative and Judicial Ethics. He is committed to public philosophy and is a chess enthusiast.

Can Social Reflective Equilibrium Delineate Cornell Realist Epistemology?

Abstract: Cornell realism (CR), a prominent meta-ethical position that has emerged since the last decades of the twentieth century, proposes a non-reductionist naturalistic account of moral properties and facts. This paper argues that the best version of CR's chosen methodology for arriving at justified moral beliefs must be seen as a variant of reflective equilibrium. In comparison to the traditional versions, our proposal offers a 'social' reinterpretation of reflective equilibrium in delineating CR's epistemology. We argue that it satisfactorily accounts for objectivity and calls for the inclusion of the social nature of both moral and scientific inquiries. Emphasising the social dimension of their epistemological account also nudges debates in metaethics into incorporating the much-needed social dimension while dealing with questions of moral beliefs and facts that have been of CR's concern.

Jeremy Pober

University of Antwerp

Jeremy Pober is a postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for Philosophical Psychology, University of Antwerp. Prior to taking up this position, he completed his doctorate in philosophy at the University of California, Riverside, under the supervision of Eric Schwitzgebel. His dissertation was on how constructs from philosophy of the life sciences can help settle debates in the metaphysics of mental states in favor of the reductive position. In addition to this work, he has an ongoing project on neuroscientifically informed accounts of affective mental phenomena, including mental states (desire, emotion) and psychopathologies (especially addiction). He hopes to expand this latter project into an understanding of how addiction affects the self, using the psychology and neuroscience of addiction on the one hand, and mental phenomena on the other as a framework.

Reduction: What? Me Worry?

Abstract: In the debate between reductive and nonreductive physicalists about the mental, I argue that whether one counts as reductive or nonreductive is less important than avoiding the problematic commitments of either side. For the nonreductive side, I distinguish between the claim that a mental kind might be realized in more than one kind of physical kind and the claim that the physical realizers do not matter at all; what is important is to avoid the latter. For the reductive side, I distinguish between the claim that a mental kind reduces to a physical kind and the claim that this reduction iterates all the way down to microphysics; again, avoiding the latter is what is important. The difference between the former claim in each pair is whether a mental kind is realized in one or many physical kinds. This issue is largely semantic, turning on what counts as a physical kind. Suppose a mental kind reduced to various metallic kinds. We could ask: is 'metal' a single physical kind? If one says yes, that is tantamount to the reductive position. If one says no--only aluminum, copper, etc. are *bona fide* kinds--then that is tantamount to the nonreductive position.

Amir Horowitz

Open University of Israel

Amir Horowitz is a faculty member and head of the philosophy and the PPE programs at the Open University of Israel. He studies mainly philosophy of mind and philosophy of language, and occasionally philosophy of sport, ethics, and philosophy of religion. His book "Intentionality deconstructed: an anti-realist theory" is forthcoming in Oxford University Press.

Non-metaphysical Naturalism – the Example of Intentionality

Abstract: Naturalism is a general metaphysical thesis. It is the thesis that everything is natural or naturalistic (whatever the precise meaning of these italicized terms is). There are also specific naturalistic theses, according to which properties of some kinds – e.g., moral, mental, epistemic, aesthetic – are natural. The suggested talk deals with the

issue of the naturalization of intentional properties. Its main purpose is to show that the case of intentionality exhibits what we may call ";non-metaphysical naturalism". I will first provide an argument against the metaphysical naturalization of intentional properties. Second, I will suggest that the intentional is natural in the non-metaphysical sense that the application conditions of (third-person) content ascriptions are naturalistic. So, assuming the truth of the claim that intentional realism presupposes intentional naturalism, this picture exemplifies irrealistic and non-metaphysical naturalism. Even independently of this assumption, we get a sense to intentional naturalism – ascriptivist intentional naturalism – in which intentional naturalism does not depend on intentional realism. In either case, intentionality exhibits non-metaphysical naturalism.

Marina Bakalova

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Marina Bakalova is an associate professor at IPS, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the chair of Bulgarian Society for Analytic Philosophy. Her PhDs are from BAS and from Central European University. She has been working on Sosa-Greco virtue epistemology. Her recent work is focused on epistemology of music.

The Role of Schemata in Making Sense of Expressive Music

Abstract: Schema is an organized unit of information for a subject or event which is based on past experience and is located in long-term memory. When we listen to music, we purportedly use schemata in order to make sense of its tonal content (Leman, Marc (1995), Snyder, Bob (2001)). Musical schemata enable us to interpret the incoming stimuli from the echoic memory in the working memory, and to determine what actually enters in the working memory. Take, for instance, the schematic representation of tonality. It determines the harmonic chords and hence our recognition of consonance and dissonance. It also determines the anticipated development of a piece. Thus, a classical piece of music written in F sharp minor is expected to end up in an F sharp minor chord. We want to know whether expressive characteristics of music, as opposed to its purely tonal characteristics, are also organized in schematic structures. To answer this question, we will explore the conceptual role of our phenomenal concepts, and will seek analogies with tonal semantics.

Boris Grozdanoff

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Boris Grozdanoff holds doctoral degrees in Philosophy of Science (from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) and in Analytic Epistemology (from the Central European University). He specialized at the University of Toronto under James Robert Brown and held a Visiting Fellow position at the Pittsburgh Centre for Philosophy of Science. He won the individual Marie Curie Fellowship (IEF) of the EC in 2008 and worked as a researcher at the Philosophy of Physics group at Oxford University until 2010. At present, he is working on deep reinforcement learning models in AI. Associate professor at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, teaches at the Technical University of Sofia. Co-founder of the Defence and International Security Institute (DISI) and QAISEC. Former advisor to the minister of science and education

on AI in 2019 and co-author of the national AI strategy project. Author of two books and a number of papers in philosophy.

Are Synthetic Data and Reinforcement Learning in AI Compatible with Naturalism?

Abstract: The talk examines the current relationship between artificial intelligence (AI) in computer science and the naturalism stance in philosophy. While AI models have achieved impressive success in recent months, they pose two unresolved challenges for empiricism: the factual lack of human-like artificial knowledge and the explanatory vacuum on the epistemic nature of artificial analogues of belief, truth, and justification. I argue that these analogues rely on purely mathematical methods for dataset generation and interpretation and therefore cannot be considered empirical on a par with classical empirical data from domains like physics.

The paper also explores the role of synthetic data in AI, which is epistemically distinct from standard empirical data. Two possible responses to this issue are examined: the first one argues that synthetic data is ultimately traceable to empirical data, and thus can be considered weakly empirical. The second response claims that the methods for generating synthetic data are purely mathematical and are solely constrained by mathematical limits. I argue against the first response and support the second one as I analyze two case studies, one from artificial neural networks and one from reinforcement learning. I conclude that synthetic data and RL are only superficially compatible with naturalism.

Fiorella Battaglia

University of Salento

Fiorella Battaglia is the Head of the 'Laboratory for Ethics in the Wild' in the 'Digital Humanities Centre' at the University of Salento (Italy), where she is also appointed as Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy. Themes of her research are the hard ethical questions posed by emerging technologies, which are shaping our social and epistemic practices and our moral experiences.

She got her philosophy degree at the University of Pisa and received her doctoral degree in Philosophy and Politics from the University of Naples 'L'Orientale' (2004). 2016 she completed her habilitation in Practical Philosophy and received her venia legendi from the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität of Munich (Germany). She was also lecturer of Epistemology at the Medical School of the University of Pisa (Italy) and visiting professor at the Dirpolis and Biorobotics Institutes of the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa.

Moral naturalism from the edge of our merging with machines

Abstract: This paper situates the question of naturalism in a broader debate about the source of knowledge we have of our actions. It argues for an embodied account of agency, an account that is complemented by the interaction with machines. The argument builds upon new philosophical insights stemming from the interaction with robotic agents. I argue for a different approach to understanding questions regarding agency, which relies on separate convergent epistemic schemes stemming from robotics that are normally not associated with the philosophical notion of agency but are nevertheless capable of being a relevant area for moral naturalism.

Matej Drobňák

University of Hradec Králové

Matej Drobňák is currently a Visiting Fellow at the Department of Philosophy, Radboud University in Nijmegen. Before coming to Nijmegen, he worked as a Junior Researcher at the Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences, University of Hradec Králové. His interest areas cover a broad range of topics in metasemantics and pragmatics. In recent years, he is particularly interested in the framework of normative inferentialism and its connections to the debates in semantics and pragmatics.

Naturalized Inferentialism as New Behaviourism

Abstract: Inferentialism claims that linguistic meaning can be understood in terms of inferential rules (Brandom 1994) and inferential rules can be understood as patterns of (linguistic) behaviour established and sustained by positive and negative reinforcements. Because of the behaviouristic terminology of positive and negative reinforcements, inferentialism becomes the target of the poverty of the stimulus argument (POS).

In recent years, we can see a new wave of inferentialists, led by Peregrin (2014, 2022), who opt for Naturalized Inferentialism, i.e. relate it to current empirical research of norms and normativity in evolutionary and developmental psychology (Schmidt & Tomasello 2012; Rakoczy & Schmidt 2013; Schmidt et al 2016).

In my talk, I argue that this empirical research can help inferentialists to respond to POS by understanding language acquisition as a specific case of norm acquisition. At the same time, the research forces inferentialists to reconsider the role of corrective behaviour (positive and negative reinforcements) in their framework. Rather than seeing corrective behaviour as a tool for forcing children to conform to communal standards, we should see it as a cue that helps children to identify, which patterns of behaviour should be adopted. In this way, Naturalized Inferentialism paves a way for New Behaviourism.

Daniel Dohrn

State University of Milan

Daniel Dohrn works as a researcher in the department of philosophy at the state university of Milan. Before coming to Milan in 2019, he worked at the universities of Berlin, Mannheim, Aachen, Konstanz, and Munich. He is interested in questions of modality, combining issues from philosophy of language, modal epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics, and history of philosophy from Descartes onwards. In particular, he worked on imagination and counterfactual thinking in modal epistemology and on the epistemology of thought experiments.

The Humean Project of Naturalizing Modality

Abstract: *Modality* (as I shall discuss it) concerns what is possible and impossible. The project of *naturalizing* metaphysical

modality can be formulated with regard to two sceptical doubts (Nozick 2001): there are no natural facts underpinning mere possibilities and necessities. There are no evolutionarily selected capacities adapted to knowing specifically mere possibilities and necessities. Accordingly, the project of naturalizing modality can be divided into two topics. The first topic concerns the ontological grounding of modality. The second topic concerns the way we arrive at true and justified modal judgements. The latter topic can be pursued along empiricist lines: the foundation of modal claims is ultimately empirical. And it can be pursued as an exercise of non-exceptionalism (Williamson 2007): there is no special faculty of modalizing which is not reducible to our everyday capacities of judging non-modal issues. I discuss in how far Hume (1739-1740, 1757, 1779) provides resources for the project of naturalizing modality.

Alex Stamatiadis-Bréhier

Tel Aviv University

(alexios.brehier@gmail.com /)

I am LAHRI Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Leeds and an Azrieli International Postdoctoral Researcher at Tel Aviv University. I was awarded my PhD from the University of Leeds in November 2021 (which was funded by the Onassis foundation). Before that, I did my BA and MA in the History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Athens in Greece.

My work focuses on the metaphysics of explanation (broadly construed) and metaethics, and especially their intersection.

In metaethics, I have interests in moral naturalism, normative explanation, and the nature of moral principles. More broadly, I also have interests in metaphysical grounding and the metaphysics of non-causal explanation.

Neo-Humean Moral Contingentism

Abstract: The neo-Humean account of moral principles (NHM) is a theory about the metaphysical status of moral principles. According to NHM, moral principles (in the genetic, non-propositional, sense) are entities that supervene on the Humean mosaic (the set of fundamental, non-modal, physical properties). Specifically, NHM holds that moral principles are nothing over and above the regularities that figure in the Humean mosaic. In this presentation, I will do two things. First, I will present the positive case for NHM. NHM provides at least one plausible way of explaining moral principles and a way of explaining moral supervenience that is dialectically superior to its rivals. Secondly, I will defend the contingentist aspect of NHM. The properties that figure in the Humean mosaic are governed by a principle of recombination. In this sense, moral principles are contingent and differ depending on the distribution of the base properties of each possible world. This makes NHM susceptible to a normative authority problem, an epistemological problem, and modal miracle problem. I show that NHM can meet these challenges thus making it superior to other moral contingentist proposals.

Will Moorfoot

University of Southampton

Will Moorfoot is a second-year Philosophy PhD student at the University of Southampton. His supervisors are Naomi Thompson (University of Southampton) and Richard Gray (University of Cardiff). Will works on issues in metaphysics and the philosophy of mind; specifically, on developing a form of physicalism that can reject the metaphysical supervenience of the mental on the physical by appealing to indeterministic grounding.

Indeterministic Grounding, Emergence and Physicality

Abstract: Grounding, a non-causal relation of metaphysical dependence, is usually assumed to be deterministic. Nonetheless, indeterministic grounding has been given serious consideration (e.g., Montero 2013, Craver 2017, and Bader 2021). Perhaps, as with cases of indeterministic causation, whether a full ground succeeds in grounding a groundee can be left to chance.

This paper explores the implications of indeterministic grounding for the distinction between physicalist and anti-physicalist theories of mind. Prima facie, indeterministic grounding is an exclusively anti-physical notion because it violates the deterministic supervenience of groundees on their grounds, suggesting that the groundees are something over and above their grounds.

Against this worry, the paper demonstrates how the notion of indeterministic grounding can be coherently employed within a physicalist framework. Say that a grounding relation is physically acceptable when it ensures the transmission of physicality up the grounding hierarchy. Deterministic supervenience is typically assumed to follow from any plausible understanding of physicality transmission. I resist this assumption by setting out a plausible reading of nothing over and above that fails to entail deterministic supervenience but ensures physicality transmission. This reading respects many of our intuitions regarding physicality transmission while also allowing physicality transmission for some instances of indeterministic grounding.

Pablo Caballero Fernández

University of Sevilla

Pablo Caballero Fernández is an FPU researcher (Spanish Ministry of Universities) and PhD student at the University of Sevilla (Spain). He holds a degree in Philosophy from the University of Sevilla (obtaining the Extraordinary End of Degree Award from the same University, as well as the Sevilla City Council Award) and a Master's Degree in Logic and Philosophy of Science from the University of Granada (Spain). He is currently working on a doctoral thesis on the Philosophy of Mathematics under the supervision of Professor José Ferreirós (University of Sevilla). His main interests are History and Philosophy of Mathematics, Logic and Philosophy of Science.

Naturalising Formal Logic

Abstract: We argue that a naturalistic approach to formal logic can be developed in at least two (compatible) ways:

I. by testing the truth of certain classical tautologies or inference patterns on the basis of empirical evidence that appears to support or contradict them;

II. by redefining in empiricist terms certain elements of logical systems susceptible of empirical interpretation.

Firstly, the failure of distributivity of conjunction over disjunction in quantum systems provides a paradigmatic example of I (Putnam's Is Logic Empirical? is a classic reference on this subject). To some extent, some many-valued systems can also be regarded as naturalistically-motivated (see, for example, Reichenbach's three-valued quantum logic in Philosophic Foundations of Quantum Mechanics). Secondly, an example of II is offered by developing an empiricist approach to alethic modalities (necessity and possibility), usually interpreted according to possible worlds semantics. We briefly consider the approaches developed by Carnap (Philosophy and Logical Syntax) and van Fraassen (The Scientific Image), in which modalities are understood within the framework of scientific theories and models. Finally, we outline an alternative formal analysis of modalities based mainly on Carnap's idea that alethic modalities can be reduced to syntactical predicates.

Mousa Mohammadian

Ahmedabad University

Mousa Mohammadian is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the School of Arts and Sciences, Ahmedabad University, India. He was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Reilly Center for Science, Technology, and Values at the University of Notre Dame and received his Ph.D. in History and Philosophy of Science (Philosophy of Science Track) from the University of Notre Dame. He specializes in philosophy of science (and its history), metaphysics, and Islamic philosophy. His works have been published in *European Journal for Philosophy of Science, Synthese, Metascience, and Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society.*

Theoretical Virtue in Science and Metaphysics

Abstract: There is a consensus among philosophers of science that theoretical virtues play a crucial role in theory choice in science. But can these virtues be used, justifiably and fruitfully, in metaphysical theory choice too? To answer this question, first we need to see under what conditions theoretical virtues are truth-conducive in science. Second, we should see if these conditions can be fulfilled in the context of metaphysics. By adopting a promising version of scientific realism called semi-realism, I argue that to deem a scientific theory true, it should satisfy three conditions: (i) it should exemplify theoretical virtues collectively; (ii) theoretical virtues of the theory should be exemplified in high degrees; and (iii) Some empirical theoretical virtues should be exemplified. Then I argue that it is possible to use theoretical virtues in metaphysics if it can be shown that metaphysical theories can exemplify the three theoretical virtues of empirical fit, external consistency with well-established scientific theories, and

explanatory power in a particular way: our metaphysical theories should aim to explain aspects of the world as described by our scientific theories, rather than as we find in our everyday experiences and common-sense intuitions.

Johan Heemskerk

University of Warwick

I am a third year PhD student at the University of Warwick. I am supervised by Professor Stephen Butterfill. My thesis, entitled 'A New Information Theoretic Groundwork for Teleosemantics',concerns certain foundational issues in the field which can be called, following Fodor, Psychosemantics. This field attempts to provide an answer to what we might call the 'content question': what determines the content of mental representations? I focus on theorists which have attempted to answer this question using naturalistic resources, which often involves reading and analysing cognitive science literature. Related to the central question are questions about the nature of representation, the importance of naturalism, and various concerns around indeterminacy.

Naturalistic Theory or Gloss? On the Viability of Psychosemantic Methodology.

Abstract: Naturalistic theories of representational content remain one of the central concerns of Philosophy of Mind. In this paper I consider a common methodology used by contemporary theorists, and consider an objection to this methodology, based on an argument due to Frances Egan. The methodology involves analysing cognitive science, with the aim of extracting an implicit theory of content determination. Egan's challenge consists in her argument that content talk is a 'gloss' designed to aid comprehension of mathematical functions carried out by the brain. Since there is no implicit naturalistic theory of content in cognitive science, none can be extracted. In this paper I provide an analysis of influential work in cognitive science and argue, contra Egan, that the representational content invoked in this and other studies meets Egan's two criteria for inclusion in the theory proper. First, content is 'essential' to the representational states and structures under consideration. Second, content is determined by a privileged naturalistic relation holding between a representation and its distal content. I argue that we must concede to Egan that unless content is used in the theory proper in her sense, it is not informed by an implicit naturalistic theory.

Madelaine Angelova-Elchinova

Sofia University

Madelaine is an Assistant Professor at Sofia University, Bulgaria. She is primarily interested in epistemology, philosophy of perception and metaphilosophy. Her PhD research project was to design a methodological approach to philosophy that is compatible with externalist foundationalism about justification. The results of her research were published in her first book "Inside Out. A Priori Justification, Intuitions and Concept Mastery" (2023) (Original title in Bulgarian: "Отвътре навън. A priori обосноваване, интуиции и конзептуално владеене").

Her current research, that is yet in a very early stage, aims to develop a Gibson inspired account of perception that is able to face the challenges against the common sense view.

Beliefs as Natural Kinds: Credition, Primal Beliefs and Epistemic Normativity

Abstract: Applying normativity to belief-*forming* seems plausible since according to the traditional view beliefs are reflexive and have propositional content. Thus, in order *to sustain* a belief that *p*, an agent A has to possess reasons to believe that *p*. What is implied by the traditional view then is not only that beliefs are conscious mental states, but also that they are produced by higher-order cognitive processing (namely – by reasoning). Further, the traditional view allows one to accept that mental acts can be distinguished from bodily acts on the grounds that the former are governed by epistemic norms which are constitutive for successful epistemic performance (as emphasized by Joëlle Proust in her paper "*Mental acts as natural kinds*"). Let`s call this the Traditional Belief-forming (TBF) principle. TBF can be expressed as follows:

TBF: "To perform the mental act of believing that *p*, A`s belief ought to be constituted in accordance with the relevant epistemic norms."

In my talk, I would like to challenge the traditional view and the TBF principle by offering an analysis of recent findings in cognitive science and neuroscience that suggest that belief-forming is governed by perceptive and affective processing. In my argument, I make use of Seitz and Angel`s concept of primal belief and suggest that primal beliefs are natural kinds. Primal beliefs can be regarded as multilayer relational states of a cognitive system S that do not presuppose conscious awareness, nor they include propositional content. Finally, if presented as natural kinds, beliefs (at least not at the stage of belief-*forming*) can not be constituted in accordance with epistemic norms.

Michael Kolodziej

University of Chicago

Michael Kolodziej is currently a doctoral candidate in the Philosophy Department of the University of Chicago. His work focuses on the reconstruction of a Hegelian alternative to contemporary theories of the identity and persistence of natural substances, especially with respect to animal organisms. He has previously completed his MA at Kingston University and Paris VIII and his BA at Concordia University in Montreal, both in philosophy.

Natural Kind Sortalism and Taxonomic Cross-Cutting in Biology

Abstract: In my paper I will critically discuss Natural Kind Sortalism - a form of naturalism in contemporary metaphysics - with a particular focus on the work of David Wiggins.

According to the Natural Kind Sortalist, there is a principal natural kind for each natural object that determines all relevant identity and persistence conditions for the objects of the kind. An identity statement about, for example, some cat would presuppose the employment of ideas about the typical modes of generation, the typical life phases, the possible properties, and the typical modes of corruption of cats in general. I argue that this view is inconsistent with our best contemporary biological theories, which show significant cross-classification between zoological taxonomic systems. This cross-classification puts into question the idea that for each animal organism, there is some class of objects to which it belongs that constitutes its principal natural kind. I will end my presentation with some proposals as to how the theory can be amended in response.

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