INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

SCIENCE VERSUS COMMON SENSE?

FEBRUARY 25TH – 27TH 2016
VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

RUSS SHAFER-LANDAU | NOAH LEMOS | KATIA VAVOVA
DUNCAN PRITCHARD | RENÉ VAN WOUDENBERG
Please find all route descriptions and contact information in the back of the booklet.
Thursday February 25th

09:30 – 10:00  Registration and coffee

10:00 – 11:15  Noah Lemos  “Common Sense, Philosophy, and Science”
Commentator: Rik Peels

11:15 – 11:30  Coffee Break

11:30 – 12:15  Parallel Session 1
   A. Anthony Coleman
   B. Neil McDonnell

12:15 – 13:00  Parallel Session 2
   A. Jan Willem Wieland
   B. Thomas Raleigh

13:00 – 14:00  Lunch Break

14:00 – 15:15  René van Woudenberg  “The Epistemic Status of Belief in Free Will”
Commentator: Niels van Miltenburg

15:15 – 15:45  Coffee break

15:45 – 16:30  Parallel Session 3
   A. Adem Mulamustafić
   B. Jan Bransen

16:30 – 17:15  Parallel Session 4
   A. Pawel Zieba
   B. Coos Engelsma

17:15 – 18:00  Parallel Session 5
   A. Sreekumar Jayadevan
   B. D. Dronkers & A.P. de Jong
**Friday February 26th**

09:30 – 10:00  Registration and coffee

10:00 – 11:15  **Russ Shafer-Landau**  “Moral Realism and Evolutionary Debunking Arguments”  
Commentator: Elizabeth O'Neill

11:15 – 11:30  Coffee Break

11:30 – 12:15  **Parallel Session 6**
   A. Derek Leben  
   B. Huginn Freyr Þorsteinsson

11:30 – 12:15  **Parallel Session 6**
   A. Derek Leben  
   B. Huginn Freyr Þorsteinsson

12:15 – 13:00  **Parallel Session 7**
   A. Rob Compaijen  
   B. Jonathan Knowles

13:00 – 14:00  Lunch Break

14:00 – 15:15  **Katia Vavova**  "A Dilemma for the Darwinian Debunker"
   Commentator: Joeri Witteveen

15:15 – 15:45  Coffee break

15:45 – 16:30  **Parallel Session 8**
   A. M. Carrara & V. Morato  
   B. Kelvin McQueen

16:30 – 17:15  **Parallel Session 9**
   A. Lisa Leininger  
   B. Uskali Mäki

17:15 – 18:00  **Parallel Session 10**
   A. Nikola Andonovski  
   B. M. Sie & F. Hindrinks

18:30  Conference Dinner
Saturday February 27th

09:30 – 10:00  Registration and coffee

10:00 – 10:45  Parallel Session 11
   A.  --
   B.  Gerrit Glas  Agora 1

10:45 – 11:30  Parallel Session 12
   A.  Michael Klenk  06A-32
   B.  Markus Pawelzik  Agora 1

11:30 – 12:15  Parallel Session 13
   A.  Naomi Kloosterboer  06A-32
   B.  William Goodwin  Agora 1

12:15 – 13:15  Lunch Break

13:15 – 14:30  Duncan Pritchard  “Faith and Reason”
   Commentator: Jeroen de Ridder

14:30 – 15:30  Drinks
Abstracts Keynote Speakers

Thursday 25th, 10:00 – 11:15

“Common Sense, Philosophy, and Science”
Noah Lemos (College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, USA)

In the first section, I present some main features of the common sense tradition, a tradition that includes Thomas Reid, G. E. Moore, and Roderick Chisholm. The common sense tradition takes some common sense beliefs as data for philosophical reflection and rejects various philosophical views that conflict with our common sense beliefs. Why should our common sense beliefs have this weight? In the second section, I consider three answers to this question. In the third section, I consider some objections to the appeal to common sense beliefs. In the final section, I make some comments about the relationship between our scientific beliefs and some common sense beliefs.

Commentator: Rik Peels (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands)

Thursday 25th, 14:00 – 15:15

“The Epistemic Status of Belief in Free Will”
René van Woudenberg (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

This presentation explores the epistemic status of belief in libertarian free will. I argue that it can have the following statuses: (a) being practically rational, (b) being properly basic, and (c) supported by empirical evidence. I also argue that there are good reasons to prefer an incompatibilist construal of could-have-done-otherwise statements over a compatibilist one.

Commentator: Niels van Miltenburg (Utrecht University, the Netherlands)

Friday 26th, 10:00 – 11:15

“Moral Realism and Evolutionary Debunking Arguments”
Russ Shafer-Landau (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA)

Some recent critics of moral realism allege that much of our moral outlook originates in natural selective pressures. Such pressures operate so as to produce adaptive behaviors and beliefs. But why think that adaptive moral beliefs are also true? There is no good answer to this question, if proponents of Evolutionary Debunking Arguments (EDAs) are correct. In this paper I assess the merits of EDAs and argue that, on the assumption of moral realism's truth, EDAs do not succeed in undermining the justification for moral beliefs.
"A Dilemma for the Darwinian Debunker"
Katia Vavova (Mout Holyoke College, South Hadley, USA)

I present a dilemma for evolutionary debunkers, who argue that our moral beliefs are probably mistaken. To show this, they must establish:

- **Gap.** The true moral beliefs and the adaptive moral beliefs come apart.

But Gap is plausible only against substantive presuppositions about the moral truths. However, such assumptions allow us to self-correct. We’re not hopeless.

Debunkers argue that such assumptions are question-begging. This doesn’t help. True, we lose our reason to think that our beliefs are mistaken. But we also lose our reason for Gap. Thus, the debunker’s challenge is either manageable or no challenge at all.

Commentator: Joeri Witteveen (Utrecht University, the Netherlands)

“Faith and Reason”
Duncan Pritchard (University of Edinburgh, Scotland)

A novel account of the rationality of religious belief is offered, called quasi-fideism. According to this proposal, we are neither to think of religious belief as completely immune to rational evaluation nor are we to deny that it involves fundamental commitments which are arational. Moreover, a parity argument is presented to the effect that religious belief is no different from ordinary rational belief in presupposing such fundamental arational commitments. This proposal is shown to be rooted in Wittgenstein’s remarks on hinge commitments in On Certainty, remarks which it is claimed were in turn influenced by John Henry Newman’s treatment of the rationality of religious belief in An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent. The implications of such a proposal for how we should think about scientism are explored.

Commentator: Jeroen de Ridder (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
A  “Two Kinds of Common Sense”  
*Anthony Coleman (Willamette University, USA)*

If we think of common sense as a set of propositions, then we need a criterion to determine whether any given proposition falls within that set. I argue that any criterion must be what Rescher (2005) calls ‘cognitively minimalist’, i.e. a common sense proposition must be one that is within someone’s purview with little to no intellectual effort on the part of that person. I argue that this criterion generates various sets of propositions, each of which deserves to be called common sense. We may divide these sets into at least two categories: sets of propositions the members of which are known as a result of minimum cognitive functioning and sets of propositions the members of which are merely believed as a result of minimum cognitive functioning. I suggest that these two categories correspond to two different points of view we may adopt towards common sense: an epistemological point of view and an anthropological point of view. I then argue that insofar as common sense has any epistemic authority, the source of that authority is different depending on which point of view we adopt.

B  “Causation’s Two Masters: Science and Sense”  
*Neil McDonnel (Universität Hamburg, Germany)*

The philosophy of causation serves two masters: on the one hand theories of causation had better fit with our scientific understanding of the world as we find it, on the other it had better not disagree too much with common sense. It is my contention in this paper that these two requirements pull in different directions and that the philosophy of causation, since at least 1986, has conflated two alternative target phenomena: making a contribution and making a particular difference.

These two notions can be introduced via Lewis’s treatment of late pre-emption problems for counterfactual theories of causation. In that discussion Lewis considers, but rejects, treating events as fragile in the sense that any alteration in timing or manner would make for a new event rather than an altered version of the same event. Lewis rejects this treatment of events because, whilst common sense assertions about which events did cause others all come out true on a fragile treatment of events, many that common sense dictates should not are considered true too. Lewis thought that this was a *reductio* of the fragile events strategy, and virtually every writer since has echoed his stance. That events cannot be considered fragile for the purposes of causal reasoning is now orthodoxy.

I think this is a mistake.
Lewis’s initial target was a ‘broad and non-discriminatory’ concept of a cause, free from pragmatic concerns or selection effects. However, ignoring the contribution made by minor factors, as Lewis does, points to a different project, one where the target is a more pragmatically entrenched conception of being a cause. We might expect a pre-pragmatic conception of causation to deliver a mind-independent and objective verdict on whether one event caused another, but a pragmatically-loaded conception will be context- and interest- sensitive. These conceptions are in tension: if the truth of a causal claim is subject to contextual variation and selection effects, then how can it be considered truly mind-independent and objective?

It is tempting to set these notions against each other and seek a victor – perhaps that notion which bests conforms to our use and practice in ordinary life – but I think we can do better by seeking to understand both and how they relate to one another. I will offer just such an account.

On the one hand we have the well-known and much discussed notion of making a difference. This notion conforms to some of our explanatory sensibilities and helps us understand the impact of events at a human level. This is the common sense conception of being a cause, fitting common sense judgements (more or less).

On the other hand we have the novel notion of making a contribution. This notion captures all of the factors that science tells us affect an outcome, regardless of the human significance of the contribution. This is the mind-independent, objective, feature of the world which is far more permissive than our common sense version.

2. Thursday 25th, 12:15 – 13:00

A “Perplexed Common Sense”

Jan Willem Wieland (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands)

Many philosophical theories are compatible with common sense, and take this to be a good thing. Many other philosophical theories flatly contradict common sense, and do not consider this a problem. Hence the question arises: should philosophical theories respect common sense or not? In this talk, I will suggest that we are dealing with a false dichotomy, and put forward a third possibility: philosophical theories should neither respect common sense, nor violate it; rather, they should help refining it. In plenty of cases, common sense is perplexed, and does not know what to say. In such cases, philosophers can deliver the conceptual tools to help and refine common sense. To illustrate the view, I will discuss the debate on willful ignorance. In many legal systems, willfully ignorant wrongdoers are as blameworthy as knowing wrongdoers. This is called the ‘equal culpability thesis’. Is this thesis correct? I take it that there is no common sense view on the matter, and that we need conceptual tools to develop such a view.
Eddington (1927) famously distinguished between the familiar commonplace table “which lies visible to my eyes and tangible to my grasp”, and the ‘Scientific table’ which is ‘nearly all empty space’. This sort of striking and surprising contrast between science and common sense has since become the bread and butter of popular science books. In philosophy, Sellars (1962) gave us the labels ‘Manifest Image’ vs ‘Scientific Image’ for this sort of contrast, and claimed that the ‘clash’ between these two kinds of conceptual frameworks was the fundamental issue that modern philosophers should deal with.

One common way of understanding this clash/contrast is to locate the source of the manifest image in our sensory experiences – the way that the external environment appears to us in perception. Eddington spoke of ‘the process by which the external world of physics is transformed into a world of familiar acquaintance in human consciousness’ (italics added). More recently, John Campbell writes:

‘Mathematical physics gave us a firm conception of ‘matter’. But it seemed to show our surroundings to be unlike anything in sensory experience... the trouble is that physics seems to push sensory experience inside the head... If mathematical physics is the whole truth about our surroundings, then the qualitative character of our sensory experience seems to have little to do with the qualitative character of our surroundings.’ (Campbell, 2014, 2)

One general moral to draw from the supposed clash between science and perceptual appearances is simply that perceptual experience is providing us with a misleading picture of the external world – e.g. it presents the environment as populated by ‘substantial’ medium sized objects, with cleanly discrete boundaries and coloured surfaces, whose matter fully occupies the space they take up, mostly obeying the laws of ‘folk-physics’. When in fact, according to proper physics, there are no such things – rather there are swarms of scattered, colourless micro-particles and forces in mostly empty space etc. Another sort of worry, which Campbell alludes to, is that whilst sensory features in our experiences may be structured so as to be isomorphic to the external features that are their distal cause, the specific phenomenal/sensory nature of our experiences has nothing to do with the real physical world ‘out there’. Such a view has been called either “Kantian Humility” or “Ramseyan Humility” – at best we can learn about the causal-dispositional structure of the world but it’s substantial/categorical nature must remain forever hidden. Or as Eddington put it: ‘physical science is concerned with a world of shadows’.

Campbell’s suggestion for how to reconcile the manifest and scientific images is as follows: in order to resist the move that pushes perceptual experience inside the head, we should accept a ‘layered’ metaphysical account of reality, according to which all the truths couched in the language of fundamental physics do not capture all there is, even though everything else may supervene on the state of affairs describable in the language of fundamental physics. Campbell’s position accepts then that there is a prima facie mis-match or conflict between the descriptions of matter in physics and the
deliverances of our sensory experience – the suggestion is that this conflict can be resolved by allowing our experiences to be revelatory of a layer of reality distinct from that which is described in the language of, say, particle physics.

I criticize the initial assumption – common to both Eddington and Campbell – that perceptual appearances themselves are committed to, or represent, the world as conforming to the common-sense/manifest image. The key question I press is: How should a scattering of trillions of microscopic particles ‘arranged table-wise’ look/appear to a macroscopic observer? Why think that it ought to look/appear any differently than how a table does in fact appear to a normal observer? (Compare Wittgenstein’s oft-reported remark ‘How should the earth going around the sun look?’)

I conclude: (i) we should not think of perceptual experience itself as being committed to the truth of (supposed) common-sensical/manifest image claims such as: ‘an object’s matter/substance fully occupies the space within its boundaries’. (ii) Pace Campbell, if we wish to avoid Kantian Humility, we do not necessarily have to accept a ‘layered’ metaphysics.

3. **Thursday 25th, 15.45 – 16.30**

A. **“Are Naïve Realism and Scientific Realism Compatible?”**

*Adem Mulamustafić (University of Potsdam, Germany)*

The physicist Arthur Eddington distinguishes two tables: a macroscopic, extended, colored, and solid table and a table consisting mostly of emptiness that is riddled with a few micro-particles. We know the first table (the ordinary table) from our everyday life and we know the second table (the scientific table) because of scientific research. Against this background, the following question emerges: Which table exists objectively, i.e., mind-independently?

The most prominent answer to this question states that both tables are mind-independent entities. This answer amounts to the claim that the ordinary table consists of the entities postulated by science. Therefore, according to this position, the ordinary table and the scientific table are numerically identical. There is thus only one table but that table is considered from two perspectives: from an everyday perspective, the table possesses the sensible properties we usually ascribe to it; from a scientific perspective, the table is a system of non-perceivable entities.

I want to present an argument that excludes exactly this answer. The argument, if sound, establishes that the ordinary table and the scientific table are ontologically incompatible. The table example is, of course, only a random example; in general, the argument, if sound, establishes that the existence of ordinary entities is incompatible with the existence of scientific entities. The incompatibility argument is in other words an argument to the conclusion that naïve realism is irreconcilable with scientific realism.
I shall argue for the following three theses in this paper:

1. Common sense is continuous with science
2. Common sense is not unified
3. The disunity of science

With respect to the first thesis the idea is roughly that science aims to improve the success rate of our commonsensical expectations. During childhood people familiarize themselves with a range of protoscientific beliefs about the way the world is, such as folk physics, folk biology and folk psychology. These sets of background beliefs enormously facilitate our daily life, allowing us to be cognitively economical. Science, as Quine understood, should be continuous with common sense by increasing the accuracy and adequacy of these sets of background beliefs, offering each one of us to stand on the shoulders of giants.

But common sense is not unified, as I shall argue. Folk physics, folk biology and folk psychology form discontinuous sets of background beliefs. This is no problem in everyday life, because we are, practically speaking, flexible enough to switch back and forth between the very different kinds of expectations these background beliefs generate. We approach things with a scheme that is predominantly causal, living organisms with a scheme that is predominantly functional and our fellow men with a scheme that is predominantly normative. Dennett has written extensively about these schemes, calling them, respectively, the physical stance, the design stance and the intentional stance. I shall, however, argue for a slightly different understanding of folk psychology, as primarily a normative rather than an intentional stance. On my account folk psychological expectations are essentially built on background entitlements and obligations. That is, I expect things to display causal regularities and living organisms to display functional regularities. But I expect people to act in concordance with normative constraints. I expect them to follow rules, to respect my entitlement to hold them to their obligations as I expect them to act on their entitlement to hold me to my obligations. This disunity of common sense is crucial to our skillful coping with the different kinds of challenges we face in getting along with matter, life and one another.

But the disunity of common sense has a tremendously important, but often overlooked and misunderstood, impact on the ways in which science can be continuous with common sense. The upshot of this line of thought is a novel kind of support for the claim that science cannot, and should not, be unified. The thesis of the disunity of science is not new. It is extensively debated in what is known as the Methodenstreit (or sciences wars). But a proper understanding of the disunity of common sense, or so I argue, gives us a new way to appreciate its import. This will in particular be relevant for the contribution of the behavioural sciences to the improvement of our common sense.
1. I argue that at least one element of common sense does not stand in opposition to empirical science. On the contrary, the commencement of any empirical research is conditional on this element. Namely, I think that naïve realism is one of the things that make such research meaningful.

2. By ‘ naïve realism’ I mean the claim that mind-independent objects constitute our veridical perceptions (Martin, 2009). Thus understood, naïve realism has been recently defended as a part of metaphysical disjunctivism. Under this theory, perceptions and hallucinations have different intrinsic natures, even if they can be subjectively indistinguishable. This claim is a denial of the so-called Humean skepticism: if it is possible for S to have exactly the same experience whether S perceives or hallucinates, then there is nothing about the senses that makes them capable of getting S in touch with mind-independent world (Martin, 2006).

3. Regarding common sense, it might be argued that it boils down to a list of hinge commitments. According to Wittgenstein, ‘[...] the questions that we raise and our doubts depend upon the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn' (Wittgenstein, 1969). Probably the most common examples of hinge commitments are denials of skeptical hypotheses. Metaphysical disjunctivism is one of such denials.

4. I agree with John McDowell that another version of disjunctivism – epistemological disjunctivism – is a necessary assumption, the rejection of which ‘threaten[s] the very idea of perceptual knowledge’ (McDowell, 2013). Contrary to Duncan Pritchard (Pritchard, 2012), I argue that plausibility of epistemological disjunctivism depends on metaphysical disjunctivism (and i.e. naïve realism). Contrary to Tyler Burge (Burge, 2005, 2011), I argue that disjunctivism is not inconsistent with empirical science. I also dismiss common objections that (i) disjunctivism entails that there is no common factor between perception and hallucination whatsoever and that (ii) disjunctivism entails an incorrect classification of experiences (cf. Williamson, 2000). They are both based on misunderstandings.

5. The outcome is simply that we can have perceptual knowledge. This is false only if skeptical hypotheses are true. However, not caring about the possibility of skeptical scenarios is typical of empirical researchers. To this extent they are naïve realists, and there is nothing wrong about that. Still, naïve realism is neutral concerning scientific realism vs. scientific anti-realism distinction. Thus, it is neutral with regard to existence of theoretical objects, truth-aptness of scientific theories and the overall purpose of science (cf. Hacking, 1983).
Throughout the history of philosophy, several philosophers have attempted to justify beliefs by an appeal to common sense. Reid argued that beliefs in what he called ‘first principles’ are justified in virtue of their according with a faculty of common sense; he thought they are justified because their denial engenders an ‘emotion of ridicule’. Moore defended common sense beliefs against sceptical theories according to which those beliefs are not justified. More recent philosophers, too, maintain that common sense is a source of justification. Michael Bergmann endorses a Reidian view on which beliefs in the reliability of our faculties are justified through common sense, for instance by being accepted on the basis of a particular ‘seeming’. Michael Huemer follows Moore, arguing that when an epistemic theory clashes with common sense beliefs, we should stick to the beliefs rather than accept the theory.

I will raise the question whether, and in what sense, common sense can indeed be a source of justification. In order to answer this question, I draw two distinctions: first, between pragmatic justification and epistemic justification; second, as regards epistemic justification, between inferential justification and noninferential justification.

Concerning pragmatic justification, I will argue that when a philosophical theory challenges common sense beliefs, it can indeed be pragmatically warranted to dismiss the theory instead of the beliefs. Given that the beliefs the theory clashes with are common sense beliefs, accepting the theory could require that many people revise large parts of their doxastic system. Since that would certainly be very inconvenient, one may be pragmatically justified in sticking to one’s common sense beliefs when they conflict with a philosophical theory.

As I will explain, though, the real challenge is to show that common sense can give one not merely pragmatic but also epistemic justification. Regarding the merits of common sense for this sort of justification, I will be less optimistic than several common sense philosophers.

Although philosophers usually do not speak of common sense as a source of inferential epistemic justification, I will grant that it could be such a source. Especially when a person has suitable background beliefs, her beliefs can be inferentially justified through common sense.

However, most common sense philosophers, most notably Reid and Bergmann, think that common sense can also provide beliefs with noninferential epistemic justification. Against them, I will argue that common sense beliefs cannot be noninferentially justified. As I will explain, a common sense belief B, held by a person S, can only be justified by an ‘emotion of ridicule’ or a ‘seeming’ (i) when B is also based on that emotion or seeming, and (ii) when the emotion or seeming gives S a reason for preferring B over B’s contraries. I will argue that since the satisfaction of both these conditions requires that S holds further beliefs, B cannot be noninferentially justified.
I will conclude that the role of common sense vis-à-vis justification is at most modest. Though common sense can be a source of pragmatic justification and inferential epistemic justification, it cannot provide the noninferential epistemic justification that many common sense philosophers believe it provides.

5. Thursday 25th, 17:15 – 18:00

A. “Incongruity in Scientific Realism: Towards a Continuum between Common sense and Science”
Sreekumar Jayadevan (Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur)

Scientific realism contains two inherently incongruous views involving common sense. They are summarized as follows:

(i) History of science is a series of revisions and rebuttals of numerous commonsensical views. These beliefs, once parts of the past scientific repertoire are constantly eliminated in favor of sophisticated novel scientific beliefs. Interestingly, scientific realism is a thesis that warrants the truth of matured current theories and yet defends continuity across past conceptual changes.

(ii) Scientific realism contains a commonsensical thesis about the reality of an external world populated by natural kinds. However, the very nature of several of these natural entities and their causal relations as asserted by scientific theories are in conflict with common sense.

How do we respond to these incongruities? Sellars (1962) famously defended the view that there is a manifest image of the world refined by common sense and a scientific image arising out of the manifest image but grounded in mature science. Taking cues from Sellars, I entertain the possibility of these two forming a continuum. Here, the manifest image with the scaffold of common sense evolves to a scientific image containing sophisticated and advanced scientific ontology. I argue that, if we selectively characterize our epistemic attitudes to revision-prone and revision-resistant beliefs, the incongruity can be dissolved. This claim can be made sense if we appreciate the fact that revision-prone beliefs have an added quality of unity. We see and feel the world in relation to a peculiar unity the world shares with us. The sunrise and sunset everyday is not understood as a nuclear reaction around which the earth containing molten lava orbits. Instead, it is commonsensical to simply grasp such a situation as the sun rising and setting in relation to our location. This is part of our existential praxis, which is the praxis of convenient beliefs that unite our daily world. However, as we move closer to the more sophisticated scientific views, we lose unity. With it, we lose the peculiar ability to connect isolated phenomena in relation to our existential praxis. The revision-prone beliefs have more unity in them. This is explicated by discussing the phlogisten-oxygen conceptual shift. The common sense belief that all bodies must expel something while going through calcinations and combustions has unity while relating it to our practical world. However, Lavoisier’s own revisions starting from 1772 are interesting to the extent that he removes the unity inherent in the Stahl-Priestleyan worldview. Consequently, the revision-resistance of certain claims in Lavoisier’s theory is evident in its lack of unity with our existential praxis. I believe
that this argument can be extended to several cases of conceptual shift. The history of science thus is a continuous flux from beliefs with more unity to lesser ones. Therefore, one can be selectively realist about those beliefs which are not in unity to our existential praxis.

This paper has three parts. In part one, I extrapolate the two incongruities and their historical trajectory using critical views by van Fraassen (1980) and Laudan (1981) and then, juxtapose them with Psillos’ (1999) defense of scientific realism. In part two, I discuss the notion of common sense-science continuum and the idea of unity. Here, I extend the views of Feyerabend (1999) to appraise the relationship between science and its roots in existential praxis. In part three, I show that, by employing the ideas of revision-proneness and unity, one can appreciate the elimination of commonsensical views in history of science. Here, I take cues from works on eighteenth century Chemical revolution by Perrin (1988), Gough (1988) and Holmes (1989) to develop my arguments. To conclude, the two incongruities inherent in scientific realism can be accommodated as toothless if we endorse, as suggested in this paper, a fine-grained approach to our epistemic attitudes to scientific beliefs.

B. “Arguments and Intuitions: An Argument for and by Common Sense”

Daan Dronkers and Andries de Jong (Utrecht University, the Netherlands)

Is there a role for common sense in philosophy? Quite a few philosophical positions seem contrary to common sense. Moreover, some philosophers go so far as to deny that common sense can play any role in philosophy whatsoever. In particular, Naturalistic philosophers (see Ladyman and Ross 2007) have argued for the elimination of intuitions in metaphysics all together. Intuitions are vital to common sense philosophy. Hence, an attack on intuitions constitutes an attack on common sense philosophy. We will, in this paper, argue that it impossible to do away with intuitions.

This paper is ultimately a defence of the indispensability of intuitions in substantial arguments, against attacks from anyone in general and Naturalistic philosophers in particular. A rigorous analysis of (a representational model of ) philosophical arguments, culminating in a rigorous reformulation of Agrippa’s Trilemma, will provide the foundation of the bastion to be erected. We follow Hitchcock (2007) in defining an argument as a sequence of some assumptions, a ‘therefore’ and a conclusion. Using propositional logic as our metalanguage, we will represent arguments by a material implication (a → c); the arrow playing the role of the ‘therefore’.

Taking cues from Moore’s “Proof of an External World” (1939), it can be seen that an argument is easily reversed into its modus tollens (¬c → ¬a). In this way, we end up with two different arguments, which are both equally valid. However, we need to choose one over the other. Given this choice, another argument is required to explain why we chose the one over the other. This subsequent argument can be turned into its modus tollens as well. Hence, there is need for another explanation of why this subsequent argument should be preferred over its modus tollens counterpart. Given the looming regression, we have to face Agrippa’s Trilemma, as found in Sextus Empiricus (n.d.): for every argument,
it either follows that (1) there is an infinite regress in the premises supporting the argument; (2) the argument becomes circular; or (3) a terminus is required that does not require another argument.

In this paper, we will argue that (3) is preferable to (1) and (2), since arguments need to stop somewhere. Moreover, we will argue that the regression could only find a terminus in appeals to intuition: every line of substantial argument ultimately relies on intuitions, for which, at that point, no further argument is required nor can be given.

Given that intuitions provide the only solution to the regression, we will conclude that intuitions are indispensable for any argument, and in particular for arguments in metaphysics. Indeed, the Naturalistic philosophers, who want to do away with intuition, will be stuck in a vicious regress of arguments. Ultimately then, this paper vindicates the role of intuitions and common sense in metaphysics by rigorously reformulation the well known truth that one philosopher’s modus ponens is another’s modus tollens.

6. Friday 26th, 11:30–12:15

A. “The Practical Function of Moral Intuitions and Moral Theories”

Derek Leben (University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, USA)

What is the relation between moral theories and common intuitions about the permissibility of actions? One position claims that the purpose of a moral theory is to explain and systematize our moral intuitions, much like linguistic theories of syntax attempt to explain our grammatical intuitions (Mikhail, 2013). Call this the direct relation (DR) view. Yet this view turns moral theories into nothing more than psychological theories with no normative force. An alternative position is that moral theories are completely unrelated to intuitions and should float free from them, much like modern theories of physics are unencumbered from our folk intuitions about how objects move and change (Brink, 1989). Call this the no relation (NR) view. Yet this view ignores the role that common intuitions play in real moral theorizing, as well as the reference-fixing that is required to establish the target of explanation. Along these lines, Parfit (2011) suggests that there are many things that ‘good’ might refer to, but it can’t turn out to refer to cabbages or kings, because this doesn’t bear enough similarity to our intuitions about what counts as a relevant application of moral terms.

This paper proposes that moral theories are indeed related to common moral intuitions in an explanatory way, but via an indirect relation: intuitions are biological and cultural adaptations with the practical function of minimizing certain problems, and theories are attempts to provide optimal solutions to these problems. To support this claim, I bring together two strands of research in meta-ethics. The first is the claim that moral intuitions are adaptations (or co-opted adaptations) for the
function of solving certain problems of social cooperation amongst self-interested organisms. This view has been endorsed by Joyce (2006) and Greene (2013):

Morality [moral intuitions] evolved as a solution to the problem of cooperation . . . Morality is a set of psychological adaptations that allow otherwise selfish individuals to reap the benefits of cooperation (Greene, 2013, 23).

The second strand of research is the Contractarian’s meta-ethical proposal that moral theories are introduced for the purpose of explaining optimal solutions to the problems of cooperation in selfinterested organisms. This view is clearly described by Rawls in the first pages of A Theory of Justice:

Then, although a society is a cooperative venture for mutual advantage, it is typically marked by a conflict as well as by an identity of interests . . . A set of principles is required for choosing among the various social arrangements which determine this division of advantages and for underwriting an agreement on the proper distributive shares. These principles are the principles of social justice. . . (Rawls, 1999, 4).

The indirect relation between moral theories and common intuitions allows us to see why both the DR and NR views are incorrect. The fact that both intuitions and theories are designed for the same purpose makes them indirectly related to each other in a way that folk physics and scientific physics are not. Folk physics is a biological and cultural adaptation for the function of navigating around our local environment, while theories of physics are designed for discovering the fundamental laws of the universe. Thus, the NR view is mistaken. However, while both intuitions and theories are ‘attempts’ to solve the same social problems, it is inevitable that theories will begin to come up with different (and better) solutions to these problems. Intuitions are quick, automatic, inaccessible to conscious awareness, and usually unfalsifiable and unresponsive to evidence. Theories, on the other hand, postulate well-defined entities with explicit rules that can be used to generate novel predictions about the world. Theories can thus be supported or rejected based on evidence in a way that intuitions cannot. When theories and intuitions come into conflict, then, theoretical claims (that are well supported) have greater epistemic priority.

B. “Scientific Terms in the Context of the Causal Theory of Reference”

Huginn Freyr Porsteinsson (University of Akureyri, Iceland)

The causal theory of reference famously argues for the direct reference of proper names and that the same principles apply to vernacular or natural kind terms. Certain philosophers, especially those concerned with the stability of reference of theoretical terms and semantic incommensurability, have welcomed the insights offered by the causal theorist on natural kind terms. I think friends and foes of the causal theory of reference have been uncareful by not drawing a clear line between vernacular terms and scientific or theoretical terms. In my mind there is an important difference between terms like ‘water’, ‘tiger’ or ‘gold’ and terms like ‘phlogiston’, ‘atom’, ‘electron’ and ‘tiger’ (in the way
biologists use it), water and gold (in the way chemists use it). This has both to do with the intentions behind the reference fixing as well as how the baptismal event or act of ostension is thought of. The story of the baptismal event and reference borrowing for vernacular terms is a make believe story. One is made to imagine how causal chain was initiated when the first person pointed at a sample of water and named it thus. Questions as to whether this sample uniquely picked out the natural kind water are unanswerable because there are not facts in the case to appeal to in order to answer such a question precisely because the case is imaginary. In the scientific case matters are different. The history of science provides us with real cases – a complex history of why a term was invented to pick something out. The history of science provides facts that we can appeal to in our quest to answer the question whether the scientist secured reference by linking a term to the sample produced. In science we can look at the production of samples through experiments, theories about what these samples are in addition to the written and spoken material where scientists explain their work. The isolation of oxygen by Joseph Priestley, the Millikan oil drop experiment, and Dalton’s work on the atom are all examples of stories of how terms were related to certain phenomena. The baptismal event is therefore rich in detail and it is vastly more complicated than the imaginary stories given by Putnam and Kripke. This important difference between vernacular and scientific terms may be helpful in getting a better understanding of what a baptismal event or act of ostension consists in and in turn answer certain worries pertaining to the causal theory such as the qua problem. Furthermore, in the scientific community the intention is to uncover the laws of nature and explain the existence of things in reality. Intentions of a language community are not the same and therefore adherence to the reference fixing of the scientific community not always appropriate. Speakers may have non-scientific intentions when using language such as reserving the term ‘ruby’ for a certain type of ruby because of monetary or aesthetic value. However, if the question becomes is this stone really a ruby then that is a question for the scientist and not for the admirer of red rubies.

7. Friday 26th, 12:15 – 13:00

A. “Ethics and Moral Intuitions”

Rob Compaijen (University of Antwerp/Radboud University Nijmegen, Belgium/ the Netherlands)

Moral intuitions have been described as “spontaneous convictions, moderately reflective but not yet theorized, about the answer to some ethical question”. It is beyond doubt that many of our moral beliefs, attitudes, feelings, reactions, choices, and so forth, are (or are shaped by) such intuitions. For example, we reject the idea of cannibalism, we are appreciative of monogamy, and we tend to accord human beings a different moral status than (other) animals. Now, although such intuitions are ubiquitous, it is commonly argued that we need to move beyond them and establish whether they are actually justified.
Asking for a justification of our everyday, more or less unreflective convictions is an important aspect of philosophy and the sciences. They typically does so by adopting a more objective point of view – that is to say, by abstracting from our immediate convictions, and viewing them, as it were, from ‘the outside’ so as to test them. The motivation for such abstraction, as Williams points out, is ‘the idea that we consider the world as it really is only when we see it from the outside, sub specie aeternitatis.’ Crucially, there is a strong tendency to mirror this approach in the domain of ethics. Our moral intuitions are in need of justification, so it is argued, and to discover whether they actually are justified, requires us to adopt a point of view wholly outside of our moral engagement. Sam Harris’ recent attempt to argue that the validity of our moral intuitions can be established by neuroscience is a clear (and vary radical) example of this strategy.

In this paper I will discuss the role of moral intuitions in ethics, by exploring what is involved in moving beyond our moral intuitions. I will try to show that, and why, we cannot adopt a standpoint that is outside of our moral engagement in attempting to find a justification of our moral intuitions. That is, I will develop a critique of the idea that ethics should mirror the sciences and (some other domains of) philosophy by adopting a similar kind of objective, ‘external’ standpoint. I will also try to answer the question of how far we can plausibly get outside of the standpoint of moral engagement.

B. “Global Expressivism, Common Sense and Science”

Jonathan Knowles (Norwegian University of Science and Technology)

In recent work Huw Price has defended what he calls a global expressivist approach to language and so-called ‘placement problems’. This combines an anti-representational and neo-Carnapian account of language that deflates ontological commitment, but also makes room for substantive enquiry into the naturalistic basis of our different discourses. It is an anti-metaphysical view that insulates common sense from scientific ‘debunking’ at the same time as it places common sense thinking in a scientific context.

I am sympathetic towards anti-representationalism (AR henceforth) and also Price’s irenic project of non-reductively integrating common sense into the natural world. However, I will argue that though AR does render metaphysical projects prima facie unmotivated, it does not rule them out; moreover Price’s elaboration of AR as global expressivism (GE henceforth) also fails to do so. What we need to achieve this in addition to AR is not GE but a certain philosophy of science and scientific practice.

Price develops GE on the basis of an argument against metaphysical, or object naturalism, as he calls it, which he links to representationalism: the idea that our terms have meaning in virtue of substantial semantic relations between them and bits of the world. Object naturalism (ON henceforth) thus becomes the view that all genuine truths – including any of common sense – are made true by natural or scientific truth makers. However, representationalism is itself a substantive...
scientific view of language, and moreover one that Price thinks does not deserve our endorsement, arguing instead for semantic deflationism (i.e. AR). Hence, he claims, ON lapses. Nevertheless our different discourses can still be studied in terms of the different natural functions they have in our lives; moreover, some of these explanations will involve appeal to the referring terms of the relevant discourses – roughly, the scientific or naturalistic ones – while others will not (e.g. ethics, modality and other common sense discourses). Price says that the former e-represent things in their environment – a relation not to be confused with semantic representation – while the former do not.

Price also considers the possibility of establishing ON without representationalism, but dismisses it. Roughly his reason is that once we have embraced AR there will be no pressure to physically reduce common sense quantities, rather, we can simply explain the role the corresponding terms play in our lives. However this falls short of showing that ON could not coherently and/or rationally be pursued. Moreover there would seem to be a position, at least very close to that of Quine, which could be seen as proposing precisely an anti-representationalist form of ON, of a revisionary stripe. While Carnap’s analytic-synthetic distinction would have rendered this kind of metaphysics senseless, if one rejects this distinction – and Price is clear that he is prepared to go along with Quine in doing this – it is unclear how it could be considered thus. Price might still insist such a position would be perverse – irrationally dogmatic in its physicalism, perhaps. But in fact his own naturalistic commitments that undergird GE are themselves equally arbitrary, so he is in no position to level such a charge.

On my alternative line, one embraces, along with AR, not GE, but a strongly anti-reductionist conception of science, one that applies both across scientific disciplines, and between science and common sense. This kind of view, exemplified by Chomsky, Ladyman & Ross et al., John Dupré and others, questions the idea of there being a basic scientific level, as well as reduction being an ideal of science. Further, contra people like Frank Jackson, it maintains that science has no interest in either vindicating or debunking common sense categories; it simply leaves them behind in its search for deeper theoretical explanation. This is certainly a controversial view of science, but I will argue that if defended along with AR it gains in plausibility, thus allowing us to reap the anti-metaphysical results Price seeks. Finally the resulting position is one that though anti-reductive can naturally seek to respect differences between different discourses, in a way akin though not identical to that proposed by GE. Our common sense categories are not ontologically threatened by science, nor less in the business of e-representation than science (contra Price). Nevertheless if we discover empirically that what underlies, say, ethical judgement is something intrinsically motivating we thereby gain, it seems, some understanding of why ethical thinking is unlikely to yield the kind of insight characteristic of systematic science.

---


3 From Metaphysics to Ethics (OUP 1998).
Conflicts between metaphysical theories and common beliefs are widespread. For example, nominalism conflicts with our apparent capacities to quantify and refer to abstract objects, four-dimensionalism with our apparent three-dimensionalist worldview, eliminativism with our belief that there are middle-sized artifactual objects. These conflicts can either be dismissed with a pereat mundus attitude (where the mundus are the common beliefs) or they can be taken seriously (especially in the case the recalcitrant common beliefs are “Moorean”, in the sense of being those characterising and regulating some of our fundamental conceptualisations). In such a case, a reconciliation between recalcitrant beliefs and metaphysical theories should be looked upon.

Consider, for example, the following simple argument showing the incompatibility between eliminativism about composite material objects and our common beliefs about the existence of middle-sized artifactual objects such as chairs:

1. If eliminativism about chairs is true, then chairs do not exist
2. If common beliefs about chairs are true, then chairs exist
3. Eliminativism and common beliefs about chairs are incompatible

According to semantic compatibilism, the problem with the argument is that 2 is false: common beliefs are indeed true, but chairs do not really exist. 2 is false, for semantic compatibilists, either because what common beliefs really express is better given by means of (Quinean) “reconciling paraphrases”, perfectly compatible with the non-existence of chairs (cf. von Solodkoff 2014) or because, as van Inwagen (1990, 2014) has argued, common beliefs about chairs are often expressed loosely and thus are metaphysically neutral, in a way that make them compatible with a world containing only atoms arranged chair-wise. (Moorean) common beliefs must come out as true – this is often the main worry among semantic compatibilists – otherwise a generalised form of scepticism would result.

All versions of semantic compatibilism seem to presuppose this notion of compatibility between theories and common beliefs:

**S-compatibility**: a revisionary theory about $X$, $T$ and a set of common beliefs about $X$, $B$ are compatible iff $B$ and $T$ can be true together.

We are deeply dissatisfied with such “semantic” strategies of reconciliation between common beliefs and theories (specially with their capacity to avoid scepticism, given that they themselves seems to be at the origin of a certain sceptical attitude) and in our talk we are going to defend another approach called epistemic compatibilism. According to epistemic compatibilism, to reconcile our common,
recalcitrant beliefs about X and our best metaphysical theory about X what should be done is simply to show that the “doxastic genealogy” of our common beliefs does not contradict our best metaphysical theory. To be reconciled with our best metaphysical theory are not the contents of our recalcitrant beliefs, but rather the explanation of why we have such beliefs.

Our approach is based on the following conception of compatibility (between common beliefs and theories):

**E-compatibility:** T and B are compatible iff the best explanation of why we have B, Exp(B), and M X can be true together.

From E-compatibility, it follows that T is compatible with Exp(B) about X if it is possible that, for any consequence of T, Γ, Exp(B) does not imply ¬Γ, and *vice versa*.

According to epistemic compatibilism, eliminativism and our common beliefs about artifacts are compatible in case one is able to show that the best explanation of our common beliefs about artifacts does not necessarily imply the existence of artifacts.

We believe that epistemic compatibilism is a better reconciliation strategy than semantic compatibilism and it fares better than another, quite popular, reconciliation strategy in metaphysics: *hermeneutic fictionalism* (according to which theories and common beliefs are compatible because the latter really are make-beliefs; cf. Burgess and Rosen 1997, Stanley 2001). Unlike semantic compatibilism, epistemic compatibilism does not need to assume that the content of our beliefs are not what really appears to be, unlike hermeneutic fictionalists, it does not need to assume that the mental state we are in when believing that chairs exist (or that numbers exist) is not really what appears to be.

**B. “Common sense and the many worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics”**

*Kelvin McQueen (University of Tel Aviv, Israel)*

What is the reality described by modern physics, and in particular, by quantum mechanics? Physicists have formulated many so-called "interpretations" of quantum mechanics in an attempt to answer this question. But there is no consensus as to which is correct.

Despite the name, these interpretations typically incorporate complicated new physics (new laws/ontology). But they are difficult to experimentally test with present technologies. Consequently, theory selection is based on more abstract theoretical considerations. Since these considerations are used to motivate significant research projects, they should be carefully evaluated.

The so-called "many worlds interpretation" (MWI) of quantum mechanics has a curious status in this debate. On the one hand, it refuses to incorporate complicated new physics: it takes the physical principles handed down by experimental physicists and asserts their completeness. That is, the MWI is
just modern physics in its mathematically most simplest and elegant form. On the other hand, the macroscopic implications of the theory - at least prima facie - do enormous violence to common sense. Accordingly, the conflict between common sense and the implication of many branching worlds appears to be the primary reason for the unpopularity of the MWI. As David Papineau [1995] put it, "The most obvious disadvantage is that its burgeoning world of duplicate histories seems repugnant to common sense".

I begin with a gentle introduction to quantum mechanics and the MWI. The audience need have no prior knowledge of physics. Then, I will enquire as to whether there is anything to the common sense-based objection to the MWI. I will distinguish three interpretations of the objection:

(i) There is some conflict between the theory’s implications and ordinary experience e.g. we don’t experience (ourselves) branching.
(ii) The theory is ontologically extravagant: all those worlds violate Occam’s razor.
(iii) General conservatism: it is rational to assign low priors to theories that force too radical a worldview on us.

I will argue that these are not reasonable objections. I will then consider two further common sense constraints on theory selection:

(1) Refined Occam’s razor: a physical theory should aim for simplicity in its fundamental postulates.
(2) Connection to experience: a physical theory should aim to emulate (or improve on) the success of classical physics in explaining ordinary experience.

I will argue that no interpretation can meet these constraints better than the MWI. Two general conclusions are then drawn. Firstly, Common sense goes not generate (good) objections to the MWI, but in fact favours the MWI. Secondly, alternative interpretations must justify their existence via commonsense-independent objections to the MWI. Much more research is therefore required to determine what really (if anything) is wrong with the MWI.

9. **Friday 26th, 16:30 – 17:15**

A. **“Commonsense, Beauty, and Theory Choice: The Problem of Underdetermination in Science”**

Lisa Leininger (Hobart and William Smith Colleges, USA)

It seems that science can tell us what the world is like. In addition, it is often the case that science overturns commonsense: enlightenment astronomy told us that the earth is not at the center of the universe; the standard interpretation of the special theory of relativity told us that all motion is relative,
but that the speed of light is constant; and the Everett interpretation of quantum mechanics now tells us that there is more than one universe.

Science, however, does not need to be understood as a rival to commonsense. In the first part of the paper, I show how commonsense is one way to solve the problem of underdetermination in scientific theory choice. This is the path of those who believe that we should accept those scientific theories which preserve commonsense.

I first illustrate this maneuver by appeal to the example of the passage of time. The passage of time is often taken to be the movement of the NOW, a universe-wide set of absolutely simultaneous events. The standard interpretation of the special theory of relativity denies the existence of the NOW, which then entails that there is no passage of time. Those who want to preserve our commonsense intuitions that the passage of time exists often endorse a different interpretation of the empirical evidence; the Neo-Lorentzian interpretation is one such account.

In the second part of the paper I examine attempts to justify theory choice in order to preserve the special epistemic status of science. It seems that choosing a theory based on commonsense cannot be justified; our commonsense is subject to various biases that prevent theory choice based on commonsense from being objective. But if this is the reason to reject commonsense, it seems that we also should reject any way of breaking the underdetermination: all ways of breaking the underdetermination appeal to “extra-empirical virtues” which invariably seem to bring with them biases of some sort.

However, in the third part of the paper, I argue that scientists can admit that extra-empirical criteria play a role in theory choice while also being committed to the objectivity of theory choice. To do so, I show that appealing to the extra-empirical criteria of aesthetic virtue can preserve the objectivity in theory choice. I explain that the aesthetic virtue of a scientific theory is known by rational reflection, and insofar as we can grasp the aesthetic evaluation of a scientific theory through this rational insight, our judgment of the aesthetic virtue of a scientific theory is free from the biases and presuppositions that are the basis of the subjective nature of scientific theory choice.

B. “On the Continuity and Clash between Economics and Common Sense”
Uskali Mäki (University of Helsinki, Finland)

In the spirit of comparative interdisciplinarity (Mäki 2016) my general claim is that while science generally challenges and often conflicts with common sense, the precise way in which it does so varies between disciplines and domains. As a specific example, I examine the case of economics. Unlike, say, physics that postulates electrons and other unfamiliar “unobservables”, economics does not make a radical ontological departure from the realm of what I've called “commonsensibles” such as preferences and expectations, households and business firms, wages and profits, contracts and prices, and so on. There is a sense in which economics is continuous with common sense.
Rather, “scientific economics” departs from “folk economics” in two other ways. First, the commonsensibles of folk economics are modified by means of cognitive procedures such as selection, isolation, abstraction, idealization, exaggeration, projection, averaging, aggregation. Perfectly informed and rational homo economicus with complete and transitive preferences operating in perfectly competitive markets with zero transaction costs – this is a paradigmatic example of modified commonsensibles that makes the first-year economics student puzzled. This suggestion (Mäki 1993, 1996, 1998, 2012) has been both endorsed and challenged (Guala 2012, Hands 2012, Ross 2012). Second, scientific economics suggest a causal rearrangement of the relations between commonsensibles in folk economics. Folk economics conceives of the causal structure of the economic realm in terms of small-scale “sphere of intendedness” projected onto large-scale causation. Households and other small group systems are treated as model economies, and hence oikonomia as economics. The rule is that whatever happens, it is intended. A familiar slogan captures the outlook: Country = Company. By contrast, for scientific economics, Country ≠ Company.

Large-scale causation is not to be modelled after small-scale, it is rather governed by more complex social mechanisms beyond the limited sphere of (individual or collective) intendedness. Folk economics envisages the world as governed by visible-hand and hidden-hand mechanisms, while scientific economics explains economic phenomena and institutions by invoking various invisible-hand mechanisms, some of them backhand (cf Mäki 1996, 2013; Rubin 2003).

The boundary between folk economics and scientific economics is not neither sharp nor fixed, but keeps moving, and their relations may be interactive (unsurprisingly, given that both deal with commonsensibles). Scientific economics keeps influencing folk economics, and scientific economics may also be revised under the pressure from folk economics. So on the one hand, folk economics is influenced by scientific economics by way of economics education, the overall economization / marketization / monetization / commodification of society, and the associated economic discourse penetrating society broadly. On the other hand, there is an ongoing pressure to revise theoretical notions such as that of rationality so as to bring it closer to “our intuitions” about rationality, and more generally a typical enlargement of economic theory takes place by way of inclusion (and modification) in theory of everyday notions such as trust and fairness. All of this is complicated further by the presence of rival theoretical accounts of the structure and dynamics of the economic realm.

The clash has scientific significance (how exactly to resolve it when doing scientific economics); political significance (eg consequences for democracy); and philosophical significance (for philosophy of science, social epistemology, philosophy of education, political philosophy, moral philosophy).
In his seminal “Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man” (1963), Wilfrid Sellars diagnosed the ‘clash’ that plagues contemporary thought: that between the ‘manifest’ and the ‘scientific’ image of human beings. According to the manifest, common-sense image, we are persons with beliefs, intentions and hopes; we act freely and are ultimately responsible for our actions. In sharp contrast, the emerging scientific image portrays us as complex physical machines, composed of simple elements arranged in remarkably intricate ways by the process of natural selection. Nowhere has this clash of images been more apparent than in psychiatry. Since Freud and Kraepelin, psychiatrists have vacillated between the two, often conceptualizing mental disorders as both physical illnesses and value-laden failures of persons. In his recent contribution to the topic, John Z. Sadler (2008; 2013) has convincingly argued that metaphysical ‘flip-flopping’ between these two worldviews generates many of the problems we see in the theoretical literature and psychiatric practice. These include the prevalence of hybrid and metaphysically suspect “vice-laden” disorders (e.g. Pedophilia is treated as both a disorder and a criminal behavior), the conceptual confusion concerning psychopathologies of morality, as well as the practical problems with the regulation of social deviance. Intriguingly, Sadler argues that both worldviews - the manifest (Judeo-Christian) and the scientific (Enlightenment intellectualist) - are varieties of folk metaphysics: collections of unsystematic, naive and variably shared cultural assumptions. Notably, he characterizes ‘scientism’ - the thesis that “only science can provide us with knowledge about ourselves and the world around us” - as a manifestation of folk-metaphysical views such as naturalism, reductionism and realism. The emergence of scientism - Sadler argues - goes hand in hand with the emergence of instrumentalist thinking, a style of thinking dominated by the values of efficiency, production and outcome. The dominance of instrumentalist thinking in psychiatry has disastrous consequences: marginalization of the patients’ narratives, standardization and context-insensitivity of treatments, as well as modification of personal identities in instrumentalist terms (e.g. patients who self-identify as ‘schizophrenic’).

In this paper, I argue that Sadler’s interpretation of the ‘clash’, although remarkably poignant, is deeply problematic. I make four distinct claims. (1) ‘Scientism’, properly understood, is not a variety of folk metaphysics by Sadler’s own standards. Specifically, it lacks some of the distinctive features of folk metaphysics: it is systematic, anti-pragmatic, truth-aspiring, it doesn’t structure common-sense intuitions and is open to evidence-based revision. As such, scientism is conceptually independent from the theses of naturalism, reductionism and realism. (2) Indeed, scientism is best understood as a pure epistemological thesis motivated by a specific, and remarkably well-developed, view of knowledge and justification. According to this view, science is the only source of knowledge because it provides an institutionalized set of (necessary) epistemic filters set up in ways that maximize the avoidance of systematic biases and mistakes in the accumulation of evidence (Ladyman & Ross 2007). Importantly,
scientism is independent from instrumentalism; one can - and should - endorse the former but not the latter. (3) Contemporary science provides a multi-scale picture of human beings and their behavior in which ‘proper’ functioning involves constraints at different scales: genetic, molecular, neural, cognitive, behavioral and social. Understanding this complex multi-scale organization is a first step towards the abolition of psychiatry’s troubling dependence on pre-Enlightenment metaphysics. Such understanding can help theoreticians and practitioners in alleviating some of the conceptual and practical problems that Sadler justifiably underlines. It can facilitate the elimination of metaphysically (and politically) suspect hybrid categories, as well as provide explanatory leverage in the treatment of the problematic psychopathologies of morality. (4) This conceptual progress need not be plagued by the disastrous consequences of adopting instrumentalism. (A) Scientism does not entail the abandonment of personal narratives in psychiatric practice. Quite the contrary, personal narratives are treated as key sources of evidence, which although not considered sacrosanct or infallible, provide invaluable data for the refinement of complex theories and models. (B) The development of multi-scale models and the rise of precision psychiatry illustrate how understanding the complex, multifaceted picture of human “being in the world” can lead to the development of personalized and context-sensitive treatments. (C) This picture, when supported by proper institutional mechanisms, can also lead to formation of comparably complex personal identities, not simple ‘label-based’ self-identifications.

B. “Science, Common Sense and Philosophy: A Case Study on how Scientific Findings Change Our Philosophical View of that Everyday Phenomenon We Call Our Conscience”

Maureen Sie and Frank Hindrinks (Leiden University and University of Groningen, the Netherlands)

According to many philosophers what distinguishes humans from other animals is their reflexivity, their awareness of themselves as agents who act for reasons. These reasons seem distinct from other motivational sources such as our raw desires, longings and urges and to many philosophers the fact that we act for reasons is also what makes us moral beings. In the past couple of decades findings in the behavioral sciences have led to a discussion about the legitimacy of our status as reasons-responsive beings. We think that is unfortunate. In this paper we want to move beyond this discussion by showing what it is that the empirical study of moral agency and judgment can contribute to our understanding of ourselves as reasons-responsive beings. We propose what we call 'a cognitive dissonance model of conscience' and explain (1) how this model can account for the research findings that are taken to debunk our status as moral beings, (2) how it relates to traditional philosophical models of conscience and to (3) common-sense notions of conscience and moral hypocrisy. We use the work of psychologist Albert Bandura’s on disengagement and Thomas Aquino’s work on moral identity to set up the bare bones of our cognitive dissonance model (hereafter: CDM) of conscience and refine the model by critically discussing the work of Daniel Batson on moral hypocrisy. We show that including their insights into an overarching philosophical view on moral agency (conscience), enables us to prevent oversimplification on the side of these scientist with respect to the debunking nature of their arguments, but also on the side of moral philosophers with respect to the irrelevance of these findings for moral philosophy.
We argue that Bandura’s work on moral disengagement provides insight into the role of affect and reasons in the resolution and prevention of cognitive dissonance in normal functioning adult human beings. Our critical discussion on Batson’s work, enables us to do justice to the social aspects of moral agency and judgment without painting a too one-sided negative picture of the role of individual deliberation as is the case in for example Jonathan Haidt’s Social Intuitionist Model or a too positive picture as for example is the case for Joshua Greene’s Deep Pragmatism. Our CDM, we conclude, serves to paint a comprehensive picture of reasoning, judgment, emotion, motivation and action that is more dynamic than existing alternatives in the following sense: it makes room for feedback of emotions at the motivation-and-action stage that bears on the reasoning-and-judgment stage and vice versa it makes room for feedback of the reasoning-and-judgment-stage that bears on our emotions and the motivation-and-action stage. What our CDM shows with respect to the general theme of this conference, we argue, is that empirical investigations and philosophical speculation need one another to do justice to and correct common sense notions such as our conscience.

11. Saturday 27th, 10:00 – 10:45

A. CANCELLED

B. “Clinical Knowing as a Paradigmatic Case for the Role of Common Sense in Science-based Practices”
   Gerrit Glas (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands)

Medicine is both a science and a practice. As a clinical practice it is science-based. Dominant epistemic paradigms such as the evidence-based practice approach and the biomedical/pathophysiological approach tend to the view that only science-based knowledge should guide clinical diagnosis and treatment.

In practice, however, it appears that less than half of the decisions doctors make, are in fact based on science. Common (clinical) sense, intuition, sound clinical reasoning, experience-based knowledge, knowledge based on testimony - these all appear to be important in diagnosis and clinical decision making.

How should this relatively large role of common sense be accounted for in epistemic terms?

In my presentation I will:
(a) develop a framework to locate the contribution of different perspectives (clinical, scientific) on disease and illness;
(b) zoom in on theories on ‘affective judging’ in order to explain the neglected role of sound clinical intuition in diagnosis and treatment planning.

12. Saturday 27th, 10:45 – 11:30

A. “Old Wine in New Bottles? Assessing the Role of Scientific Considerations in Evolutionary Debunking Arguments against Robust Moral Realism”

Michael Klenk (Utrecht University, the Netherlands)

Robust moral realism, the view that there are non-natural and mind-independent moral properties and facts, serves the goal of “internal accommodation” (Finlay 2007:822) well; the view does justice to a common-sense understanding of morality. However, this conception of morality is threatened by Street’s evolutionary debunking argument (EDA). Street claims that “the fact that there are any good scientific explanations of our evaluative judgements is a problem for the realist about value” (Street 2006:155). EDAs, being based on a scientific claim about our evolutionary past, may, therefore, show how science could drastically “confine the scope of philosophical imagination” (Wiggins 2002).

However, many have recently interpreted the ‘scientific/Darwinian’ premise of Street’s argument as redundant and thereby effectively reduced the EDA to an instance of a related, but fundamentally distinct epistemological challenge: the Benacerraf-Field problem. The latter is independent of scientific considerations and originates in the causal inefficacy of abstract entities, which creates the challenge to “explain the reliability of our beliefs about that domain” (Field 1989:232–233). Street’s EDA, in contrast, appears to depend on a scientifically sanctioned evolutionary premise.

For instance, David Enoch identifies Sharon Street’s EDA “as a particular instance” of the “most general epistemological challenge to realism [...] [which is a form of the Benacerraf-Field problem]” (Enoch 2010:426). Enoch is followed in this assessment by other robust moral realists, such as Cuneo et al. (2014) and Wielenberg (2014). Apart from those who explicitly associate the EDA with the Benacerraf-Field problem, many claim that the EDA does not depend on an evolutionary premise at all, such as Clarke-Doane (2012:325), and Joyce (forthcoming).

Therefore, does the EDA just add a suggestive, but ultimately redundant, veneer of scientific illustrations to an epistemological argument or does it indeed confine the scope of philosophical imagination and common-sense beliefs?

In my presentation, I argue that Street’s EDA against robust moral realism either reduces to the Benacerraf-Field challenge, and thus does not pose a novel, ‘scientically-based’ challenge for robust moral realism, or it relies on potentially question-begging first-order moral claims to get off the ground. First, I present a common schema for (evolutionary) debunking arguments and relate it to Street’s central claim, namely that moral truths did not have significant influence on our moral beliefs. Second, I
consider three candidate arguments to support the latter claim and show that all are instances of the Benacerraf-Field challenge. Finally, I consider alternatives to defend the ‘debunking’ premise of the EDA without relying on the Benacerraf-Field challenge and show why this seems to rely on first-order moral claims.

The upshot of my presentation is that Street’s EDA does not curtail our common-sense beliefs about morality. It is either an instance of a purely epistemological challenge to robust moral realism or, if interpreted in a novel way, it will be substantially weakened by relying on first-order moral claims.

B. “The Recalcitrant Case of Common Sense Psychiatry”
Markus Pawelzik (EOS-Klinik für Psychotherapie, Münster, Germany)

The conventional conception of science has it this way: Our understanding of the world starts with „common sense“ – a system of cultural practices that embodies our engagements with each other and the world. Then science takes up the folk-concepts and -models and redefines, operationalizes and tests them as empirical relations between specified parameters in order to identify the causal mechanisms that generate the phenomena in question. If the process of successive “causal elaboration” succeeds, the scientific conception trumps the common sense version: the sun does no longer “rise” at dawn and mental disorders are no longer “caused” by “witchcraft” or “sins”, (although we may still talk this way for habitual reasons.) Advanced theories of behavior make use of a strictly non-anthropomorphomic, sub-personal terminology. Its use drives a kind of detached, a-personal understanding of the other.

The domain of persons, minds and mental pathologies does not accord with this conventional wisdom. The efforts of more than 100 years of psychiatric research failed to overcome common sense psychology and its cognates – common sense psychopathology and common sense psychiatry: We don’t know how brain-mechanisms generate abnormal behavior. We are unable to specify mental disorders without relying on the normative common sense understanding of a rationally acting, coherent self. There are several reasons why we can’t do without common sense psychology, psychopathology and psychiatry in principle that I will discuss in my presentation. The most obvious reason for the non-substitutability of the common sense understanding of the mental sphere is the minds dependence on a continuous culture-behavior-brain-cognition-loop: The brain does not autochthonously “excrete” the mental like a gland excretes a hormone. Mental activities are not sufficiently determined by the use of the “natural instruments” of an inborn, species-specific “cognitive architecture” that would grant the potential success of an eliminativist perspective. On the contrary, mental activities stem from the use of learned and continuously re-calibrated “cultural instruments” that are embodied in the person, work embedded in a social niche and network and ineliminably rely on socially distributed practices. Since mental activities are as cultural as they are biological, our common sense understanding the mental is here to stay.
In everyday life, we take it that we do things for reasons and that we can tell and ask one another for these reasons accordingly. The commonsense intuition is that, most of the time, we know what we are doing and are able to account for it. In this talk, I want to discuss how empirical studies on confabulation are put to use in undermining this commonsense intuition.

Empirical results seem to demonstrate that we are often ignorant of the causes of the things we do. Additionally, even if we are not always ignorant of these things, we are often unaware of our ignorance and unknowingly mask our ignorance with confabulatory reason-explanations of our responses. The fact that we are often unaware of the difference between a genuine reason-explanation and a confabulatory one opens the door for skepticism: if we are bad at discerning our own confabulations, then we can never be certain that our reason-explanation is genuine.

In my talk, the focus will be on two examples in which this skeptical conditional plays a central role: John Doris’ skeptical argument about reflective agency (2015, 64—65) and Robin Scaife’s skeptical argument about self-knowledge of our decision-making process (2014, 480). There are two important things to point out about their use of the skeptical assumption. First, by using it, they adhere to the argument of illusion, which, as Dancy (1996) has exposed, offers no warranted conclusion. Second, they set the standards too high for being able to justifiably believe that one acted for a specific reason.

The third voyage of Jonathan Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels (to Laputa and the Academy of Lagado) contains an extended satire of scientists and their attempts to intervene in the societies that support them. In Swift’s vision, these interventions have devastating or absurd consequences for society because of epistemic failures issuing from the excessive pride of scientists. Gulliver observes, for instance, that as a result of the Laputans’ overwhelming interest and faith in mathematics, and their consequent neglect of other things, they are “very bad reasoners, and vehemently given to opposition” (Swift 1999, 166). When Gulliver says this he does not mean that the Laputans are bad at abstract speculation (roughly pure science), or producing and following mathematical proofs. He is happy enough to acknowledge and appreciate their advances in astronomy, the theory of comets, and abstract mathematics. Instead he clarifies that:

… although they are dexterous enough upon a piece of paper in the management of the rule, the pencil, and the divider, yet in the common actions and behavior of life, I have not seen a more clumsy,
awkward, and unhandy people, nor so slow and perplexed in their conceptions upon all other subjects” (Swift 1999, 166)

Gulliver instead criticizes what we might call their common sense, and their ability to reason about and manage issues outside of their areas of principle concern. The capacity for this sort of reasoning is crucial if scientists are to either be invested with extra-ordinary political power, as in Laputa, or hope to use their knowledge to intervene in society, as in Lagado. Through Gulliver’s voyage, Swift shows us how the lack of common sense-- or the diminished capacity for practical reasoning caused by excessive pride—can have tragic and absurd consequences.

In this paper, I shall detail Swift’s accounts of both how the common sense of scientists can be undermined by their hubris and how their poor reasoning can negatively impact the surrounding society. The scientists that Gulliver encounters see everything through the lens of their preferred approach. As a result of this restricted vision, Swift suggests, scientists make for poor practical reasoners. Interestingly, Thomas Kuhn similarly thinks that normal scientific research is “a strenuous and devoted attempt to force nature in to the conceptual boxes supplied by professional education” (Kuhn 1996, 5); however, he also speculates that this restricted vision is crucial to scientific progress. Here, if Kuhn is right, Swift refuses to acknowledge, or fails to see, the flip side of dogmatic devotion to a preferred system of nature – that it is the engine of scientific progress. Indeed, more generally, Kuhn, like Swift before him, recognizes an important distinction between logical or scientific reasoning and practical, more holistic, reasoning. Furthermore, while scientists can and should be quite good at the former, this is compatible with them not being so good at the later. I will therefore use the Kuhnian picture of the relationship between normal scientific reasoning and more general judgments as a way of both relating Swift’s satire to contemporary accounts of scientific thinking and bringing out some of the limitations of Swift’s perspective.
Route to the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

VU University is located close to the railroad station Amsterdam Zuid – WTC. From the city center you can reach VU with tram line 5, 16 and 24 or metro line 51.

Transportation
Travelers arriving at Schiphol can take the train to Station Amsterdam Zuid. There are direct intercity trains from Schiphol that go straight to this station. The journey takes approximately 15 minutes. You can buy a ticket:

- At the yellow self-service ticket machines. Payment can be done by debit card (Maestro) or coins. Unfortunately, not all ticket machines accept credit cards.
- At a service desk at a larger railway station. There is a €0.50 charge for using this service.
- Information on (bus/train) schedules can be found on the NS website or at www.9292ov.nl/en.

From Station Amsterdam Zuid
It is a ten-minute walk to the VU, and there are signs to the VU on the Southern exit of the station. However, if you want to take public transport, it is one stop on either:

- metro 51 (1 minute), direction Amstelveen Westwijk
- tram 5 (1 minute), direction Amstelveen Binnenhof

From Station Amsterdam Centraal:

- metro 51 to De Boelelaan/VU. Enter in the subway station under the main train station
- tram 5 to De Boelelaan/VU. Enter on the West side of the station square.
- tram 16 or 24 to De Boelelaan/VU. Enter on the East side of the station square.

Travelling by car
The A-10 Amsterdam ring road can be reached from all directions. Follow the A-10 to the Zuid/Amstelveen exit S 108. Turn left at the end of the slip road onto Amstelveenseweg: after about three hundred yards (at the VU University hospital building) turn left again onto De Boelelaan. VU University Amsterdam can be reached via city routes S 108 and S 109
Room: **Agora 1**  *Thursday February 25th and Saturday February 27th*

**Third floor** of the Main Building.
Please follow the sign in the VU and the following description:
1. Enter the VU through the Main Entrance
2. Go to the left and take
   a. The yellow elevator at the far end of the hall to the third floor; **OR**
   b. The stairs to the third floor.
3. Walk straight ahead to the end of the hallway

Room: **Kerkzaal** [Churchhall]  *Friday February 26th*

**Sixteenth Floor** of the Main Building.
Please follow the signs in the VU and the following description:
1. Enter the VU through the Main Entrance
2. Go left, take the elevator at the far end of the hall to the 15th floor
3. Walk into the hallway
4. Go left
5. Go left and take the stairs to the Kerkzaal [Churchhall]
Directions to all Parallel Sessions

NB: The elevator does not stop on every floor (it stops on floor 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14 and 15).

Thursday morning  |  Session 1 and 2

07A-33
7th floor | A-wing | room 33

From Agora 1: Take the stairs to the 7th floor or the elevator to the 6th floor and then the stairs to the 7th floor. Walk into the hallway and go left. Go to room 33.

Thursday afternoon  |  Session 3, 4 and 5

04A-20
4th floor | A-wing | room 20

From Agora 1: Take the elevator at the end of the hallway, or the stairs to the 4th floor. Walk into the hallway and go left. Go to room 20.

Friday Morning  |  Session 6 and 7

11A-33
11th floor | A wing | room 33

From the Kerkzaal: Take the lift to the 12th floor and the stairs to the 11th. Walk into the hallway and go left. Go to room 33.

Friday Afternoon  |  Session 8, 9 and 10

14A-33
14th floor | A wing | room 33

From the Kerkzaal: Take the elevator or the stairs to the 14th floor. Walk into the hallway and go left. Go to room 33.

Saturday  |  Session 11, 12 and 13

06A-32
6th floor | A wing | room 32

From Agora 1: Take the stairs or the elevator at the end of the hallway, to the 6th floor. Walk into the hallway and go left. Go to room 32.
Route Description Dinner

The dinner will take place at
Restaurant ‘Singel 101’.
Singel 101
1012 VG Amsterdam

From Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam:

By Public Transport
Tram 5, direction Centraal Station
Stop: Nieuwezijds Kolk

Walk (2 minutes) from VU University to tram 5
1. Depart from the Main Entrance and turn right
2. Cross the street and turn right at the tram station

Walk (3 minutes) from Nieuwezijds Kolk to Singel 101
1. Cross the street from Nieuwezijds Kolk toward Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal
2. Turn left onto Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal
3. Turn right onto Korte Lijnbaanssteeg
4. Continue onto Lijnbaanssteeg
5. Turn left onto Singel
Organizing committee
Rik Peels
Jeroen de Ridder
Irma Verlaan
René van Woudenberg

Visiting address
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
De Boelelaan 1105
1081 HV Amsterdam

Contact
Irma Verlaan
E. g.h.verlaan@vu.nl
T. (+31) 020 59 85283
M. (+31) 06 14605154

This conference is part of the Science Beyond Scientism Project, funded by the Templeton World Charity Foundation.