



Belief, Introspection, and Constituted Kinds. Selected Papers from the Fifth Philosophy of Language and Mind Conference

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1 The PLM Network

PLM is an international network of philosophy departments and research centres with strengths in philosophy of language and philosophy of mind. The aims of the network are to promote these areas of philosophy, and to encourage international collaboration. The current members of PLM are the Arché Research Centre (University of St Andrews), CLLAM (Stockholm University), ILCLI (University of the Basque Country), ILLC (University of Amsterdam), Institut Jean Nicod (CNRS, EHESS, ENS, PSL University, Paris), LanCog (Universidade de Lisboa), LOGOS (University of Barcelona), Institut für Philosophie II (Ruhr University Bochum), the Institutes of Philosophy in London and at the University of Warsaw, the Departments of Philosophy at the Central European University, the University of Salzburg, the University of Vienna, and the Department of Analytic Philosophy at the Czech Academy of Sciences.

Among the activities of the PLM network are regular workshops and masterclasses, and a major biennial conference. Recent events include the Fifth PLM Masterclass with François Recanati, (June 2020, Barcelona) and the Fifth PLM Workshop on Delusion in Language and Mind, (October 2020, Amsterdam). More information about PLM and its activities can be found on the PLM website: <http://projects.illc.uva.nl/PLM/>

This Special Issue of the Review of Philosophy and Psychology Consists of Papers Selected On the Basis of Presentations at the Fifth Philosophy of Language and Mind (PLM) Conference, held 29-31 August 2019 at the University of St Andrews.

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2 The Papers

This special issue consists of six papers; of these, two (García-Carpintero and Spener) were invited keynotes from the PLM conference, while the remaining four were among the 36 papers selected for presentation from 97 submitted abstracts, anonymously reviewed by representatives of the PLM member institutions. Papers were invited for potential inclusion in this special issue on the basis of the recommendation of representatives of the PLM Network who attended the conference. All six papers in the special issue were anonymously reviewed by two independent referees prior to publication.

Together, the papers represent the conference well, both in their diversity and in the relative uniformity of the themes. We see an interest in the metaphysics of kinds and belief states, in the methodology of introspection, in belief pathology as well as in rational belief revision and belief with particular contents. Underlying this diversity there is clearly a focus on aspects of belief, but more generally also an interest in the role and status of representational states: their generative potential, their role as objects of knowledge, and as subject both to rationality and irrationality. This, we feel, is also fairly representative of the state of the language and mind field, which has seen a lot of interest in recent years in the nature and status of belief and other intentional states, from several points of view. In what follows, we aim to give a glimpse of the conference and of the field by presenting a brief summary of each paper.

Manuel García-Carpintero's focus is on rule-constituted kinds: roughly, kinds that are brought into being and given their essence by rules that govern them. Plausibly, a game like chess is a rule-constituted kind in this sense. The rules of chess do not regulate some antecedently existing activity in the way that the rules of etiquette govern how we eat together; without the rules of chess, there would be no such thing as chess. And in recent literature, Timothy Williamson has argued that speech acts like assertion should be thought of as rule-governed kinds. On one understanding of what it is for a kind to be rule-constituted – what García-Carpintero calls *descriptive formalism* – it is the intentional following of the rules that makes an activity an instance of the kind. If descriptive formalism is correct, when someone intentionally violates a rule, the activity is thereby not an instance of the kind; for example, on this view, if someone attempts to cheat at chess, the result is no longer really a chess game. García-Carpintero argues that this consequence is problematic and defends an alternative view: *normative formalism*, according to which the rules characterise a norm or ideal. He then develops normative formalism by giving an account of how such norms come to be *in force*.

Maja Spener's contribution focuses on introspection. Introspection is of critical importance historically, in the work of early psychologists such as Wilhelm Wundt, William James, and Georg Elias Müller, but also to contemporary philosophy of mind. Spener observes that Wundt, James, and Müller were sensitive to methodological issues that, in her view, are often neglected in current discussions. In particular, Spener draws attention to what she calls *the modulation worry*: that employing introspection changes one's experiences, so that

introspection is problematic as a source of data about what one's experiences are like in general (when one is not introspecting).

One influential appeal to introspection in the contemporary literature has it that experience is *transparent*: in introspecting on one's experience, it is claimed, one can attend only to features of the external objects one is experiencing, rather than to features of the experiences themselves. Spener suggests that appeals to transparency face the modulation worry – proponents of transparency aim to draw a conclusion about experience in general, but introspection can only ever deliver information about experience as modulated by introspection – and therefore that such arguments require supplementation. Since Wundt, James, and Müller gave serious attention to such worries, their work may serve as a starting point to build this supplementation.

Eugenia Lancellotta's contribution is concerned with the theory that delusions are adaptive reactions to aberrant experiences. Such a view has been proposed by Fineberg and Corlett (FC) within the Predictive Coding framework. According to FC, delusions are both epistemically and biologically adaptive. They are epistemically adaptive, because they improve the patient's cognitive system, and thereby their epistemic capacities. The system is initially blocked by a traumatic aberrant experience. The delusion then offers an explanation of the experience, which integrates it into the system and thereby restores the system, albeit at an impaired level. By partially restoring the patient's epistemic capacity, the delusion is also biologically adaptive, since the improved epistemic capacity allows the patient to lead a more normal social life.

Lancellotta raises both theoretical and empirical objections to this theory. She compares it with the standard view of delusion, which is also standard in the Predictive Coding framework, according to which delusions are simply caused by the aberrant experiences and are epistemically dysfunctional, and hence also maladaptive. Lancellotta points out that the standard theory is simpler, in that it relies on fewer empirical assumptions, in particular the assumption that the cognitive system works better with the delusion than without. She notes that empirical support for this assumption would count in FC's favour, but remarks that such support is hard to come by, since it would need to be established that we have to do with the same basic dysfunction in two conditions, one with and the other without delusion. However, she also notes that some phenomena give weak indirect evidence in the opposite direction: persons developing a psychosis tend to be cognitively better off in early stages than in later stages, and a fully developed psychosis generally does involve delusion. This is weak evidence, since it does not directly target the effect of the delusion, but it nevertheless further undermines FC's theory.

Giovanni Merlo presents and elaborates a problem that he calls *The Paradox of Belief Revision* (BRP). The problem is that it seems to follow from acceptable principles that we cannot rationally revise our beliefs. The kind of revision intended is that of changing a belief that p into a belief that not- p , based on new evidence that speaks in favour of the latter. Here it is required, and crucial, that the subject *appreciates that* the evidence motivates such a revision. The problem is that as long as the subject has the belief that p , she has a basis for regarding evidence against p as *misleading*, and hence as *not* motivating a revision. Thus, the subject who believes that

p seems not to be able to satisfy the appreciation condition, and therefore not able to rationally revise her belief. This is the paradox.

After presenting the paradox, Merlo discusses possible solutions. He compares it with the structurally similar *Dogmatism Paradox* of Saul Kripke and Gilbert Harman, concerning knowledge rather than belief. Merlo also stresses that although the subject can be simply caused to lose her belief, this does not offer a solution to BRP, since it does not derive from appreciation of the counter-evidence. In the end, Merlo points out a direction to explore. The subject who realises that things could have seemed to be just the same as they actually do, if her belief that p had been false, is able to see a *risk* in disregarding evidence, and to see it as rational to adopt a policy of not disregarding apparently misleading evidence. This falls short of explaining the possibility of applying the policy, but it also indicates a crucial feature of the solution: that only a subject capable of systematic awareness of their own beliefs is capable of such applications. This, Merlo thinks, may be required for a solution to the paradox.

Krzysztof Pośłajko addresses the classic question, “What are beliefs really?” On the one hand, it is clear that attributing beliefs to people is central to our way of life. On the other hand, many philosophers find little reason to hold that beliefs are token-identical to states of the brain or that the contents of our beliefs will somehow be traceable to the properties of brain states. So, it is reasonable to ask what kind of reality mental states like belief really have. Pośłajko argues that the question has been ill-framed in a way that seems to give the extreme realist an advantage. The question should not be whether beliefs exist. Whatever the force of the eliminativist arguments, most philosophers have remained convinced that beliefs exist and, Pośłajko contends, a deflationary conception of ontology supports that conviction. But even granting that beliefs exist, we can ask about the kind of reality they possess. Cases of in-between reality can be defined in various ways. In the case of beliefs, we can expect to measure the level of their reality in several ways, in terms of the objective similarities between believers that can be identified in terms of them, in terms of the depth of the causal explanations we formulate in terms of them and in terms of their definitional entanglement with paradigmatically real physical states. Pośłajko considers it an open question how much reality, as measured in these ways, we should attribute to beliefs.

J. P. Grodniewicz’s topic is beliefs to the effect that *so-and-so has said such-and-such*. The question is the manner in which such beliefs are rendered justified when they are the result of hearing another person’s speech. According to a simple perceptual model, beliefs of this form may be justified merely by virtue of their standing in a regular relation to the sensory qualities or sensory seemings that cause them. According to the inferential model, such beliefs are justified only by means of a justification-conferring inference from other beliefs (for example, about the words uttered). Grodniewicz defends a version of the perceptual model against counterexamples put forward by Brendan Balcerak-Jackson. An especially forceful counterexample is the case of someone who reliably forms beliefs about what a person has said on the basis of speech that he purports not to understand. Grodniewicz answers that the perceptual model can be preserved if we maintain that the process that produces the justified belief produces it in a teleologically normal way.

The justification-conferring process must be one that was selected for in the course of natural selection. Although he does not say so himself, Grodniewicz's teleological account may serve as a model for accounts of the justification of other perception-based beliefs, in addition to beliefs about what another person has said.

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