



Practical Representations and Abilities

Abstracts

Vanessa Carr: On the Practicality of Practical Modes of (Re)presentation

Abstract: I discuss the resistance to the notion of a distinctively practical mode of presentation (and representation). I identify what I take the core source of resistance to be, and consider how that resistance might be staved off: either by showing that a mode of (re)presentation might be distinctively practical in some different sense, or by providing a transcendental argument for the necessity of some practical mode of (re)presentation that is unlike more familiar modes (e.g. descriptive, indexical, perceptual). I evaluate whether extant arguments for practical modes of (re)presentation succeed in doing one or other of these things.

Carlotta Pavese: Practical Representation and Procedural Control

Abstract: I here outline a theory of practical representation in order to explain procedural control. In the theory that I will develop, there is such a thing as distinctively practical representation—a sort of representation that represents practically in the sense that it represents in terms of the most basic directive capacities of the representing system. I outline a hierarchy of practical representations, from nonconceptual practical representation, to schematic practical representation, to practical concepts; I discuss its psychological reality and put it to use in a theory of procedural control.

Gabriele Ferretti and Silvano Zipoli Caiani: Practical Knowledge: Instructions for the Motor Use

Abstract: In this talk, we analyze the nature of the mental states at the basis of the practical knowledge to perform an action. This analysis requires facing what we call The Challenge of Format Dualism, that is, to understand the many formats, and relation thereof, of the mental representations underlying practical knowledge. We start from two debates for which this analysis is crucial. The first is about the opposition between Intellectualism and Anti-Intellectualism, which stems from the question about whether practical knowledge can be considered a form of propositional knowledge. The second concerns the Interface Problem, which requires explaining how motoric and propositional states can be related. We develop a unified account capable, at once, of explicitly dealing with these two debates, within the same philosophical framework, guided by the results coming from motor neuroscience. In particular, we offer a way for solving the Interface Problem that also permits to take a position on the Intellectualism/Anti-Intellectualism debate.

Antonia Peacocke: Practical Representation De Re

Abstract: Discussions of de re representations of objects usually focus on 'receptive' forms of engagement with the world: you can represent an object as an individual by perceiving it, for example. Here I introduce and develop a way of representing objects de re that is intrinsically 'productive'. I argue that in acting you represent what you are doing de re, and that this is necessary for understanding how you can take means to your intentional actions. This is an essentially practical mode of representation.

Sophie Kikkert: Knowing what you can do without practical knowledge

Abstract: We know quite a lot about our own abilities. Explaining how we acquire such knowledge raises a number of challenges. In particular, it is difficult to explain how human agents learn that they can ϕ (reliably) upon intending to, without assuming the possession of some form of prior ability knowledge. In this talk, I propose a solution to this problem: learning about our own abilities begins with engagement in unintentional behaviours. The unintentional behaviours I am concerned with are part of two processes that are essential to ability acquisition: imitation and exploration. What rests, then, is to give an account of how we get from evidence in the form of these unintentional performances to full-fledged propositional knowledge of our intentional abilities. On first sight, the notion of practical knowledge seems like a good candidate to help explain how this might work. I provide reasons to avoid appealing to practical knowledge within the epistemology of ability and advance an alternative view.