Constructing the World
Lecture 3: The Case for A Priori Scrutability

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Scrutability thesis: There is a compact class of truths C such that all truths are scrutable from truths in that class.

S is **a priori scrutable** from C iff it is knowable a priori that if the truths in C obtain, then S obtains.

Russellian propositions: composed of objects and properties.
Fregean propositions: composed of Fregean senses.
Possible-worlds propositions: sets of possible worlds.

Argument from Assertion 1

Mary says 'Hesperus is a planet', knowing that the morning star is a planet and believing that the evening star is not.

1. Mary's assertion is not knowledgeable (sincere, justified, …).
2. If the Russellian view is correct, Mary knows (believes, is justified in believing, …) the asserted proposition.
3. An assertion is knowledgeable (…) if the speaker knows (…) the asserted proposition.

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4. The Russellian view is incorrect.

Argument from Assertion 2:

1. Mary's assertion is not knowledgeable.
2. If the Russellian view is correct, Mary knows the asserted proposition.

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3. If the Russellian view is correct, it is not the case that an assertion is knowledgeable if the speaker knows the asserted proposition.

We can say: An assertion S is knowledgeable iff the speaker knows S.

The speaker knows (believes, is in a position to know) an assertion/token S iff the thought expressed by S constitutes knowledge (belief, potential knowledge, …).

The speaker knows (…) a sentence type S iff the speaker has knowledge expressible by an assertion of S.

S is a priori if S expresses a thought that is justifiable independently of experience, yielding a priori knowledge. [for sentence types: potentially expresses]

Argument from suspension of belief:

1. One can know *if PQI', then M* even upon antecedently suspending all empirical beliefs.
2. If one can know *if PQI', then M* upon antecedently suspending all empirical beliefs, one can know a priori that if PQI', then M.

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3. One can know *if PQI', then M* a priori.

Argument from reconditionalization:

1. For all ordinary truths M, one is in a position to know *if PQI', then M.*
2. If one is in a position to know *if PQI' then M*, justified by empirical evidence E, then one can know *if PQI' and E, then M* with weaker empirical evidence independent of E.

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3. For all ordinary truths M, there is basic empirical evidence F such that one can know *if PQI' and F, then M* independently of empirical evidence.

4. All basic empirical evidence is itself a priori scrutable from PQI.

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5. All ordinary truths M are a priori scrutable from PQI.

Reconditionalization: If a rational agent knows M with empirical justification from E, they can have conditional knowledge of M given E with weaker empirical justification independent of E.

Conditionalization: If $cr^*(M|E) = \phi$ at t_1, and one acquires total relevant evidence E between t_1 and t_2, then $cr^*(M) = \phi$ at t_2.

Strong reconditionalization: If $cr^*(M) = \phi$ at t2, and one acquires total relevant evidence E between t_1 and t_2, then $cr^*(M|E) = \phi$ at t_1.

Weak reconditionalization: If $cr^*(M) = \phi$ at t_2, and one acquires total relevant evidence E between t_1 and t_2, and $cr^*(M|E)$ is defined at t_1, then $cr^*(M|E) = \phi$ at t_1.

Synchronic reconditionalization: If $cr^*(M) = \phi$ at t_2, and one acquires total relevant evidence E between t_1 and t_2, and $cr^*(M|E)$ is defined at t_2, then $cr^*(M|E) = \phi$ at t_2, with justification independent of E.

Core Knowability Thesis: All knowable [non-Fitchian] truths are knowable by reasoning from core evidence.

An empirical factor E plays a **enabling role** in scrutability from M from PQI when E (or belief in E) is causally relevant to the subject's acquiring concepts in M. E plays a **mediating role** when the subject infers from PQI to E and then to M. E plays a **justifying role** when the inference (or conditional belief) is justified by E.