

Rationality, Reduction, and Luck

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Abstract: If what rationality requires is independent of how we come to know those requirements, then how can we come to know them? But if what rationality requires is fixed by our way of coming to know those requirements, then what could make it the case that one but not another way of forming beliefs about the requirements of rationality constitutes a way of coming to know them? In this paper, I explain why reductive accounts of rationality inevitably founder on one or the other of these two challenges. Roughly: both challenges are facets of an underlying challenge, which is to explain the way in which rationality is related to luck. An account of rationality must treat rational requirements and our way of coming to know them as two interrelated variables, neither being independent of the other (like solving two equations in two variables).