

METHOD AND CONVERGENCE, HELSINKI, 2–4 JUNE 2025.

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Abstract

Report on the Conference *Method and Convergence*, Helsinki, 2–4 June 2025.

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The international conference [Method and Convergence](#), recently held at the University of Helsinki, brought together scholars from diverse disciplines to explore philosophical methodology and its role in advancing both philosophy and science. Topics included how philosophy contributes to scientific progress, how developments like AI can aid philosophical research, and how methodological innovation drives intellectual advancement.

On the first day, Ilkka Niiniluoto (University of Helsinki) opened with a keynote on *Progress in Philosophy*, defending an optimistic view of philosophical progress grounded in the Socratic method: problematization, explication, and argumentation. Though philosophy differs from empirical science, Niiniluoto argued it advances through conceptual clarity, argumentative rigor, and evolving perspectives on enduring questions.

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Ron Chrisley (University of Sussex) followed with *Method and Creativity: Toward AI Tools for Constructively Divergent Thinking*. Drawing on Margaret Boden's work, he emphasized the importance of transformative thinking—radical conceptual innovation—and proposed developing AI tools that foster genuinely divergent and creative reasoning.

The second day began with Nina Emery (Mount Holyoke College), who distinguished between content and methodological naturalism in her talk *Two Types of Naturalism in Metaphysics of Science*. She argued that commitment to scientific content in metaphysics entails a commitment to scientific methods, reshaping how metaphysical inquiry should proceed.

Andrew Brenner (Hong Kong Baptist University) then presented *The Role of Simplicity in Metaphysics*, arguing that simplicity, often invoked in science, also functions as a rational guide in metaphysical debates. He illustrated how simplicity can favor certain hypotheses and offered a fresh take on the question of why there is something rather than nothing.

On the third day, Gerhard Schurz (Heinrich Heine University) gave a talk on *Inductive Metaphysics and its Abductive Methodology*, defending the use of empirical and abductive methods to support metaphysical claims. Through case studies, he showed how testable, empirically unified theories can yield meaningful metaphysical insights.

Finally, Finnur Dellsén (Universities of Iceland, Inland Norway, and Oslo) gave a talk entitled *Abduction: The Glory and Scandal of Philosophy?* He highlighted challenges in using abductive reasoning in philosophy, such as underdetermination and theory competition. He advocated strategies to mitigate the risks involved with the use of abduction.

In addition to the keynote sessions, the conference featured a wide range of plenary and contributed talks. It ended with an open panel discussion on whether progress is possible in philosophy, how to recognize it or measure it, and what methods are more conducive to philosophical progress in teaching and in research.

The conference was a great success. It showcased the richness of contemporary philosophical methodology and fostered fruitful dialogue between philosophy, science, and AI.

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