

**WORLDVIEWS, SCIENCE AND US:
STUDIES OF ANALYTICAL METAPHYSICS.
A SELECTION OF TOPICS
FROM A METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

ROBRECHT VANDERBEEKEN

*Centre for Logic and Philosophy of Science
Ghent University, Belgium
E-mail: robrecht.vanderbeeken@ugent.be*

BART D'HOOGHE

*Leo Apostel Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies
Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium
E-mail: bdhooghe@vub.ac.be*

1. Introduction

A general practical tendency of contemporary analytical metaphysics goes as follows. Research focuses on certain largely isolated topics e.g. the nature of properties, (mental) causation, actions, perception, colours, qualia, the self etc. In such a discussion, different possible ontological positions are traced and mapped in function of the capability to individuate and define the subject-matter. A wide range of methodological instruments is used in order to support or either criticise them. Such instruments are conceptual analysis, generalisations based on paradigmatic examples, a strategy of counter examples, intuitive constructs, scientific findings and thought experiments. At the same time, several criteria of legitimacy are considered in order to evaluate and defend ontological positions. Common criteria are thriftiness, simplicity, robustness, compatibility with sciences, completeness and plausibility. Judging on the number of publications, analytical metaphysics is clearly a booming business. But does the level of the debate follow this positive slope? A focal point in analytical metaphysics is

a strong emphasis on methodology. However, a diversity of methodological tools is circulating which often leads to sheer methodological chaos. This diversity is not *in se* a problem. Rather, the problem is that there is no consensus on which methods are (contextually) appropriate. Metaphysicians often criticize their opponents on methodological grounds. But while doing so, they often only discuss those criteria which are in their own advantage, using different standards depending on the topic at hand.

The aim of this volume is twofold. First, a selection of ongoing discussions on a central topic is included. Several authors are asked to bring a *précis*, i.e. to point down the contesting views, to mention the main arguments pro and contra, and to describe the origin, the evolution and the eventual offspring of a respective discussion. Second, the methodological question is addressed; What can be learned if we compare these discussions from a methodological perspective? What are the red harrings and shortcomings? Is an integrated methodology possible? Does each discussion finally awaits a pluralism of plausible positions or is an overall convincing account to be expected? And finally, can analytical metaphysics methodologically assert and investigate their basic assumptions, if not from a common sense stance?

2. Contributions

(1) *Preface*

Robrecht Vanderbeeken and Bart Dhooghe, Ghent University & Free University Brussels, Belgium

(2) *Introduction: Contemporary Analytic Metaphysics, its Crisis and Challenge*

Robrecht Vanderbeeken, Ghent University, Belgium

(3) *Holism and Structural Realism*

Michael Esfeld and Vincent Lam, Université de Lausanne, Switzerland

(4) *Common Sense, Relativity and Theories of Time*

Phil Dowe, University of Queensland, Australia

(5) *Purely Dispositional Worlds*

Sungho Choi, Seoul National University, Korea

(6) *Natural Kinds — What are they?*

Joanna Odrowąż-Sypniewska, University of Warsaw, Poland

(7) *Personal Identity, Conceptual Analysis and No-Fault Disagreement*

Caroline West, University of Sydney, Australia

- (8) *A World of Tropes?*
Anna-Sofia Maurin, Lund University, Sweden
- (9) *Causal Pluralism*
Stathis Psillos, University of Athens, Greece
- (10) *Why Social Emergence? Discussing the Use of Analytical Metaphysics in Social Theory*
Jeroen Van Bouwel, Ghent University, Belgium
- (11) *Counterfactuals, Causation and Humean Supervenience*
Paul Noordhof, University of York, UK
- (12) *Disentangling Causal Pluralism*
Leen de Vreese, Ghent University, Belgium
- (13) *Mathematical Entities*
Lieven Decock, Free University Amsterdam, The Netherlands

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