

INTRODUCTION

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Like all academic disciplines, philosophy can benefit from reflection on its aims, assumptions and methods. The difference between philosophy and other disciplines is that no-one else will do it for us: metaphilosophy is a part of philosophy. While scientists who reflect on their own discipline can invoke the help of philosophers of science, philosophers who want to reflect on their own practice can only be helped by other philosophers. The papers in this issue contain reflections on the aims, assumptions and methods of analytic metaphysics. Analytic metaphysics deals with a wide area of issues: causation, the mind-body relation, properties, time, etc. The two first papers in this volume are general in the sense that they discuss issues which are relevant in all subdomains of analytic metaphysics. The two other papers discuss issues which relate to an important subdomain: the metaphysics of causation.

In *What Problem of Universals?*, Jan Willem Wieland takes up the question mentioned in his title. He considers three problem solving settings and defines the notion of problem solving accordingly: to solve problems is to eliminate undesirable, unspecified, or apparently incoherent scenarios. Then he applies these general observations to the Problem of Universals. He singles out two accounts of the problem which are based on the idea of eliminating apparently incoherent scenarios, and then proposes modifications of those two accounts which are based on the idea of eliminating unspecified scenarios.

In *Revisionary and Descriptive Metaphysics*, Markku Keinänen first criticizes two popular ways to study the categorial structure, Strong and Weak Modelling. In the second part of his article, he presents his positive account. The systematic description of the different kinds of entities assumed by our commonsense conceptions (Descriptive

Metaphysics) forms his starting-point of the study of the categorial structure of the world. However, it is the task of Revisionary Metaphysics to seek for the best conception of the categorial structure. Revisionary Metaphysics proceeds as testing alternative conceptions of the categorial structure (different categorial schemes).

In *The Debate between Causal Realism and Causal Constructivism: Metaphilosophical Reflections*, Erik Weber discusses the debate between causal realism and causal constructivism from a metaphilosophical point of view. He argues that the debate, if it is couched in the general terms as it is traditionally done, rests on a false dilemma. Then he argues that the debate must be disentangled into several more specific debates in order to be interesting.

In *Unravelling the Methodology of Causal Pluralism*, Anton Froeyman and Leen De Vreese try to bring some clarification in the recent debate on causal pluralism. Their first aim is to clarify what it means to have a pluralistic theory of causation and to articulate the criteria by means of which a certain theory of causation can or cannot qualify as a pluralistic theory of causation. They also show that there is currently no theory on the market which meets these criteria, and therefore no full-blown pluralistic theory of causation exists. Because of this, they offer a general strategy by means of which pluralistic theories of causation can be developed.

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