

Conference Review

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***The Possibility of Metaphysics. Between Inductive, Analytic, and Transcendental Arguments*, Duesseldorf, 31 January – 01 February, 2019**

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The workshop *The Possibility of Metaphysics. Between Inductive, Analytic, and Transcendental Arguments* – held at the Heinrich-Heine University Duesseldorf, Germany, on January 31 – February 1, 2019, with support from the German Research Foundation (DFG), research unit Inductive Metaphysics (FOR 2495), the goal of which is to establish how empirical sources and inductive forms of inference play a role in metaphysical research – was organized by Kristina Engelhard (TU Dortmund), Christian J. Feldbacher-Escamilla (DCLPS, Heinrich-Heine University Duesseldorf), and Alexander Gebharder (University of Groningen). The workshop brought together expertise on Kantian transcendental philosophy and on contemporary analytical metaphysics to explore transcendental arguments as a method of addressing skepticism. The speakers discussed both the historical details of Kant's own transcendental reasoning, and the perspectives of using Kantian style aprioristic reasoning in establishing some solid grounds in contemporary metaphysics.

Matti Eklund (University of Uppsala, Sweden) gave the first talk of the conference, *Alien Structure*. He considered the question whether we can exclude the possibility that there exist alien entities that do not belong to familiar ontological categories, and whether there can be a language or system of representation, whose expressions do not belong to familiar linguistic categories.

Kristina Engelhard (TU Dortmund, Germany) gave a talk on *Metaphysics as Modelling in Kant*. She argued that Kant's theory of matter's fundamental structure is an example of model building. According to Kant, however, transcendental realism is necessary for thinking that our metaphysical models deal with the world, so even critical metaphysics of nature can not be 'cleaned' of transcendental realism.

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Cord Friebe (University of Siegen, Germany) spoke about *Kant's Lightweight Ontological Realism*. He argued that Kant's idealism of space and time, considered from a contemporary perspective, implies an ontological realism of spatio-temporal objects of a deflationary, or lightweight, character, in contrast with Leibniz' 'dogmatic' heavyweight ontological realism.

Sophie Allen (Keele University, UK) gave a talk entitled *Is there Really any Order?* She examined the status of a general principle often presupposed in metaphysics, namely, that there is order in nature. She investigated some abductive and transcendental arguments presented in favor of this principle and considered whether they support a range of realist metaphysical theories.

Thomas Hofweber (University of North Carolina, USA) spoke about *Inescapable Concepts*. He characterized a concept to be inescapable, if one can not think without it, once it has been acquired. Using these concepts, one can defend a broadly Neo-Kantian approach to metaphysics, because these concepts reveal not only how we must think reality is, but furthermore what reality must be like.

Christian J. Feldbacher-Escamilla (DCLPS, Germany) gave a talk on *Abduction and Transcendental Deduction*. He considered the formal structure of abductive inference to the best explanation and showed how transcendental arguments can be characterized as limiting cases of abductive inferences by help of their feature of providing an inference to the only explanation.

Gabriele Gava (University of Frankfurt, Germany) spoke about *Kant, the Third Antinomy and Transcendental Arguments*. He argued that the formal structure of the Third transcendental argument is domain-specific and as follows: p ; q is a necessary condition of p ; the only justification we have for q is that it is a necessary condition of p ; p is justified only in domain X (where X is a domain of objects of cognition); therefore, q is justified only in domain X . The speaker concluded that this structure justifies the possibility of freedom regardless of particular details of Kantian views on space-time.

Brigitte Falkenburg (TU Dortmund, Germany) gave a talk on *Kant's Experiment of Pure Reason*. She considered Kant's attempt to support transcendental idealism by a thought experiment, given in the preface to the 2nd edition of the "Critique of Pure Reason", based on an analogy between the 'transcendental dialectic' and the synthetic procedure of chemistry. The speaker discussed the conclusiveness of this experiment against the background of the analytic-synthetic method of Newtonian science.

Holger Lyre (University of Magdeburg, Germany) spoke about *Structural Metaphysics and Mental Representation*. He reviewed the reasons to think that structural realism is the best metaphysics for modern physics. Then he argued that the idea of structural representation is a promising approach in the debate

about the nature of mental representations. Finally the speaker considered connections between the two views and argued that in combination they can shed light on the metaphysical controversies about quiddities, the Newman problem and the problem of qualia.

Barbara Vetter (Free University Berlin, Germany) gave a talk on *The Many Kinds of Metaphysical Modality*. She argued that there are different routes to a concept of metaphysical modality, those starting from the everyday notions of what is possible, and those starting from the logical notion of possibility. And although metaphysicians tend to argue about what is metaphysically possible, their meaning might depend on which route to modality they take, so they may well be systematically talking past each other.

The talks were recorded on video and are available at <<http://dclps.phil.hhu.de>>.

The workshop presented a valuable opportunity for combining historical and systematic approaches to core metaphysical problems. The Kantian question whether metaphysics is possible as a science, which Kant proposed to justify as an aprioristic enterprise, was considered together with a more empirical question whether metaphysics can or should be conducted on the basis of scientific methods. The discussions were very lively, and indicated the need for further investigation of these issues.