

Uwe Meixner · Albert Newen (eds.)

Logical Analysis and History of Philosophy

Philosophiegeschichte und logische Analyse

Focus:
The Practical Syllogism
Schwerpunkt:
Der praktische Syllogismus


Guest Editors / Gastherausgeber
Christof Rapp · Philipp Brüllmann

mentis

Paderborn

Bibliografische Information Der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation
in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte
bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über
<http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

Gedruckt auf umweltfreundlichem, chlorfrei gebleichtem
und alterungsbeständigem Papier  ISO 9706

© 2008 mentis, Paderborn
(mentis Verlag GmbH, Schulze-Delitzsch-Straße 19, D-33100 Paderborn)
www.mentis.de

Alle Rechte vorbehalten. Dieses Werk sowie einzelne Teile desselben sind urheberrechtlich geschützt.
Jede Verwertung in anderen als den gesetzlich zulässigen Fällen ist ohne vorherige Zustimmung des
Verlages nicht zulässig.

Printed in Germany
Umschlaggestaltung: Anna Braungart, Tübingen
Satz: Rhema – Tim Doherty, Münster [ChH] (www.rhema-verlag.de)
Druck: AZ Druck und Datentechnik GmbH, Kempten
ISBN 978-3-89785-160-3
ISSN 1617-3473

We come to the following conclusion: The book plays its role as an instructive reader very well for all those who are interested in the history of Analytic as well as Austrian Philosophy. Those readers who are involved mainly in specific or basic problems of Analytic Philosophy will also read or “use” the handbook. Rich bibliographies placed at the end of each paper present valuable overviews for the curious reader, they paint an accurate picture of the *status quo* in the fields under concern.

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Gombocz / Dr. Alessandro Salice,
Institut für Philosophie, Universität Graz

Sydney Shoemaker: *Physical Realization*. Oxford University Press: Clarendon Press 2007. ISBN: 978-0-19-921439-6; £ 18.99 (hardback); x + 151 pages

In this compact book Shoemaker gives the relation of physical realization extensive treatment, elaborating upon the previous work he has done on this issue. According to the author, if physicalism is true, then the relation of physical realization must play a key role in philosophy, notably in metaphysics and philosophy of mind. Physicalists claim that all facts about the world are constituted by facts about the physical features of the world. Such a claim invites a variety of conundrums, however, many of which are central to contemporary analytic philosophy. For example, mental properties appear to be different in kind to physical properties, yet if physicalism is true this appearance must be somehow deceptive. The tension produced by such conundrums can allegedly be diffused, by the physicalist, with the help of the relation of physical realization.

Following the introduction to the book, the author spends a chapter introducing the relation of ‘property realization’, followed by a chapter concerning the relation of ‘microrealization’, the latter being the more fundamental kind of realization. The remainder of the book shows how the physicalist, armed with these relations, can begin resolving some of the most pressing conundrums facing physicalism. Amongst the problems discussed are these: how can mental properties be causally efficacious in their own right if they are realized by physical properties? If physicalism is true, how can a person have properties that are distinct from those of their body? How do microphysical entities give rise to macro-objects and the macro-properties that they have? How do objects persist; do they endure or perdure? Is physicalism compatible with the claim that there are emergent properties? Can the physicalist provide an adequate account of the phenomenal character of sensory states?

In order to accept what the author calls the ‘subset account’ (pg 12) of property realization, we are asked to presuppose that properties are individuated by their causal profiles. These individuating profiles include forward-looking causal features, which are the causal powers bestowed by a property, and also backward-looking causal features, which involve the possible causes of a property’s instantiation. The author’s own view of properties is that a certain property will have the same causal profile in any possible world in which it exists. But his account of physical realization is compatible with the weaker thesis that ‘a property is individuated by a causal profile in the sense that it and it alone has that profile in the actual world and worlds nomologically like it’ (pg 142). Some philosophers, who believe that properties have a quidditistic essence, may be reluctant to accept even this weaker thesis. But even these philosophers will be impressed by the amount of work that the author’s account of realization can do. And since theories in metaphysics often stand and fall by how much they explain and how many problems they can potentially solve, there is much about the account that is attractive.

The initial, approximate definition of property realization shows what an important role a property’s causal profile must play, and also why the account is described as the ‘subset’

account: 'property P has property Q as a realizer just in case 1) the forward-looking causal features of property P are a subset of the forward-looking features of property Q, and 2) the backward-looking causal features of P have as a subset the backward-looking features of Q' (pg 12). A property realizer thus shares some of its forward-looking causal features (or 'causal powers') with the realized property. The causal powers of the realized property are not to be thought of as being anything over and above the causal powers of the property realizer. Yet this does not mean that the instantiation of a realized property has to be identical with the instantiation of its realizer, for if the causal powers of the realized property are a *proper* subset of those of its realizer, the forward-looking causal profile of the realized property will differ from that of its realizer.

The author goes on, in chapters two and three, to elaborate the account of physical realization. But given the initial definition of property realization, one is immediately shown how, with it in play, the physicalist can respond to the question of how mental properties can be causally efficacious (pg 13, pg 17). Physicalists have often described a mental property as a second-order functional property, i.e. a property of having some property that plays a certain causal role. If a second-order property differs from the property that plays the causal role, then mental properties seem not to do any causing themselves. And if the instantiation of a mental property is thought to be identical with the instantiation of its physical realizer, it seems one cannot claim that mental properties have distinct causal efficacy in their own right. With the definition of property realization in play, one can avoid these problems. Whilst the causal powers of a realized mental property are nothing over and above the causal powers of its property realizer, the two properties may nevertheless be different. This allows one to hold that both properties play a causal role, without invoking an objectionable form of causal overdetermination.

The account is then developed, throughout chapters two and three, by offering some further distinctions. One is the distinction between a property realizing a property in the very same subject, and a property realizing a property in a distinct but coincident subject. This distinction becomes relevant for the question of how, on a neo-Lockean account of personal identity, the properties of a human body can realize properties of the person with which it is coincident (chapter five, II). In chapter three, property realization is distinguished from the realization of a property by a microphysical state of affairs, though this distinction turns out to be quite subtle, for 'every case in which a property instance is realized by a different property instance is also a case in which the property instance is realized in a microphysical state of affairs' (pg 53). From a macro-perspective, however, it is more appropriate to speak of property realization rather than microrealization. The distinction between a 'core' realizer and a 'total' realizer is also introduced, and this distinction is shown to apply differently to cases of property realization and cases of microphysical realization (pg 38). For example, the total microphysical realizer of a property includes the existential states of affairs that 'guarantee the instantiation of other properties required by the existence of the subject' (pg 38). These distinctions become relevant for the questions subsequently discussed, though we will be unable to do the author's application of these distinctions the justice it deserves here.

At times during the book, one may feel dissatisfied with the brevity of the treatment of certain issues. For example, on the issue of how it is that certain causal powers belong to the very same property, it is suggested that there must be a 'unity relation' between the powers bestowed by the property. The unity relation consists in the powers bestowed by the property nomically or metaphysically entailing each other in certain ways (pg 25). Since this is outlined only briefly, we are, via a footnote, directed to a previous article for further discussion on the unity relation. This is indicative of the fact that in order to get the most out of such a compact book, which gives many central philosophical issues treatment, one

ought to read it in conjunction with certain of the author's other works. This will especially be the case for those who are not already familiar with the author's previous eminent output.

Whilst acknowledging the last point, one might nevertheless feel that certain concepts could have been introduced in greater detail at certain points in the book. For example, when the author introduces the case of a 'thin' property realizing a 'thick' property in a distinct but coincident subject, he defines such realization thus: 'the instantiation of thin property F in a thing realizes² thick property G in a thing coincident with that thing if the coincident thing has a sortal property such that the conjunction of F with that property realizes¹ G' (pg 30). The concept of a sortal property appears here without thorough introduction. From what is said earlier about 'thick' properties (pg 7, pg 29), it is clear that the sortal properties of objects are tied to their persistence conditions. But little is said here about what persistence conditions are, and what determines that an object has a certain set of persistence conditions rather than another.

The most concerning aspect of the general characterisation of a 'realized' property stems from the second conjunct of the initial definition of property realization (pg 12). This clause allows that different instantiations of a realized property can have different backward-looking causal features. This seems to suggest that realized properties are a kind of disjunctive property. Disjunctive properties are often given a bad name in metaphysics, for it is unclear how properties can somehow enfold the logical 'or' into their nature – especially if properties are construed as universals. The author briefly discusses disjunctive properties (pg 17) and suggests that if we allow that genuine disjunctive properties are not merely logical constructs, and are such that they could enter into causal laws, the disjunctive nature of such properties becomes much less objectionable. However, it seems that given the delicacy of this issue, and its importance, more detailed argument might have been offered here. Furthermore, one suspects that the second conjunct of the initial definition of property realization could be omitted without great detriment to the project as a whole.

Another general worry concerns the speculative nature of certain claims. In a section concerning the possibility of emergentism (chapter four, IV), emergent properties are characterised as those that are not predictable on the basis of the 'micro-manifest causal powers' (pg 74) of the micro-entities that constitute the thing instantiating the emergent property. That is, emergent properties are instantiated only when certain microphysical entities come together in a special way. If there are emergent properties, then in order to make such properties physically respectable they must be viewed as being realized by microphysical states of affairs. But since these realized properties come from nowhere, so to speak, it is suggested that the physicalist would have to posit the existence of 'micro-latent powers' (pg 73), powers that only reveal themselves in very special circumstances. This would of course be an option, and one that may have explanatory appeal, but one is left wondering whether the physicalist really would be compelled to posit the existence of micro-latent causal powers. Perhaps the physicalist might equally claim that unpredictable properties emerge from the combination of ordinary non-latent micro-powers, and explain their unpredictability on account of our incapacity to often understand how different powers combine to produce further powers. In any case, it seems the question concerning the existence of micro-latent powers would be a question for the physical scientist to somehow answer, should the claims of emergentism be accepted.

To summarise, by introducing the notion of physical realization, the author sheds new light on many of the fundamental problems facing contemporary metaphysics and philosophy of mind. Anyone interested in analytic metaphysics and philosophy of mind, at graduate level and beyond, will profit from this innovative book. At times the book is difficult, but this is a reflection of the complexity of the problems it addresses, and also the sophistication of

the proposed solutions. This book will also offer a fine point of departure for many specific research projects.

Matthew Tugby, AHRC Metaphysics of Science Research Project (Ref: AH/D503833/1), University of Nottingham.

Susan Pockett, William P. Banks, and Shaun Gallagher (eds): *Does Consciousness Cause Behavior?* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press 2006. ISBN: 0-262-16237-7; £32.95, EUR 51.07 (hardback); 372 pages

According to our commonsensical, manifest image of the world, human beings are freely deliberating conscious agents that behave the way they do *because* they have the beliefs and desires they have. The possibility that the feelings of volition and agency that accompany our behavior may be illusory and our beliefs and desires only ineffective epiphenomena of the brain processes that actually cause our behavior sounds preposterous, to say the least. And yet, scientists have long cast doubt on the assumption that we are the autonomous authors of our behavior that know what they do and why they do what they do.

Back in the late nineteenth century already, Thomas Huxley (1874) famously argued that we are *conscious automata*, comparing consciousness to the steam-whistle which accompanies the work of a locomotive engine but has no causal influence upon it. In the 1980s Benjamin Libet and colleagues discovered that simple motor actions are preceded by a readiness potential in the brain which occurs roughly 350 milliseconds *before* the subject in question becomes conscious of the ‘urge’ to act, showing that what appears to be a free action, consciously initiated by the subject, is in fact fully determined by prior unconscious brain processes (Libet 1985). More recently, Harvard psychologist Daniel Wegner has argued that the feeling of ‘conscious will’ that usually accompanies our actions can be present even in cases where the subject does not perform the action, suggesting that the feeling that we have willfully caused an action is an *ex post facto* interpretation by our brain that is as fallible as any other causal interpretation and not at all the reliable indicator for the activity of an authoritative agent or self (Wegner 2002).

Quite often, philosophers interested in the implications of these experimental results have difficulties to assess and interpret them adequately because they lack an adequate training in the relevant psychology or neuroscience. Conversely, the conclusions neuroscientists, psychologists and researchers from the empirical social sciences draw from their evidence often seem premature from a philosophical point of view. For that reason, *Does Consciousness Cause Behavior?* is an interesting and important addition to the ever growing bulk of literature on consciousness and brain research. According to the editors’ introduction, the book “springs from a desire to examine, place in context, and discuss the implications for society of those lines of evidence” (p. 1), and indeed it offers both a philosophically informed and detailed but for the non-specialist still fairly approachable discussion of the relevant neuroscience and a range of original and highly interesting philosophical perspectives on its consequences for issues like free will, mental causation, agency, or self-consciousness.

Does Consciousness Cause Behavior? is divided into three parts – ‘Neuroscience,’ ‘Philosophy,’ and ‘Law and Public Policy’ – and brings together sixteen essays (including one reprint), by biologists, cognitive scientists, neuroscientists, law scholars, philosophers, and psychologists.

Part one primarily deals with the exact temporal order of and the interrelations between the neurophysiological correlates of conscious acts of intention on the one and the initiation and control of the corresponding actions on the other hand. In line with Libet’s original results, Susan Pockett argues that in the case of simple motor actions conscious volitions