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| **Meeting title:** Inductive Metaphysics and its Abductive Methodology |
| **Date:** 27.2.2025. |
| **Time:** 18.00 |
| **Place:** Zoom |
| **Zoom link:**  Join Zoom Meeting  [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83339046093?pwd=OMDG8rUSTjjWXOqDkqUhHsGUlr2x80.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83339046093?pwd=OMDG8rUSTjjWXOqDkqUhHsGUlr2x80.1" \t "https://mail.proton.me/u/5/inbox/_blank)  Meeting ID: 833 3904 6093  Passcode: 818500 |
| **Duration:** 2 hours |
| **Participants:** Boran Berčić, Filip Čeč, Matija Rajter, Danica Radoš, Vito Balorda, Mark Balaguer, Gerhard Schurz |
| **Agenda:**   1. Gerhard Schurz delivered the talk “Inductive Metaphysics and its Abductive Methodology” 2. Discussion, questions and comments |
| **Meeting summary:**  On Thursday 9.5.2024. the team of the MetPhil project gathered to listen to the visiting lecture of Gerhard Schurz titled “Inductive Metaphysics and its Abductive Methodology”. This visiting lecture was structured into two parts. In the first part Schurz gave the talk regarding the abductive methodology of inductive metaphysics, its general outline, main characteristics etc. The second part of the talk was dedicated to a Q&A session where the audience presented their questions and comments to the author. |
| **Talk summary:**  In this visiting lecture Gerhard Schurz tried to elaborate a new understanding of the methodology of metaphysics. We can situate this new understanding of metaphysics within the framework of what is called *Inductive Metaphysics*. Schurzs writes in his PowerPoint presentation the following: “Inductive Metaphysics (IM) aims at an a posteriori justification of metaphysical claims, based on ampliative induction and in particular abductive inferences from empirically given data” (PowerPoint presentation “Inductive Metaphysics and its Abductive Methodology,”: slide 1). This conception of metaphysics stands in a sharp contrast with the dominant tradition which understands metaphysics to be a conceptual a priori discipline. However, the a priori methods of traditional metaphysics still have a role to play within the framework of IM: “A priori methods such as conceptual analysis and concept explication are still considered an indispensable part of metaphysics. What IM merely claims is that the justification of many important metaphysical beliefs cannot proceed in a purely a priori manner, but needs empirical premises and abductive inferences” (PowerPoint presentation “Inductive Metaphysics and its Abductive Methodology,”: slide 2). For the purposes of IM it is important that we understand the concept of **induction** in the wide sense, as opposed to a narrow or Humean sense. Induction in the wide sense includes abduction, or inference to the best explanation (IBE). When we talk about IM we need to rely on abductions because we need to reason from observed phenomena to theoretical concepts, and “abductions are the only kind of inference that can introduce new concepts relevantly into the conclusion “ (PowerPoint presentation “Inductive Metaphysics and its Abductive Methodology,”: slide 4).  Questions and Comments  **Berčić**   * Is the author taking the threat of instrumentalism too seriously? * The question of instrumentalism vs realism is a different question from the question about the nature of causality. * Take the notion of free will as an uncaused cause of something. It seems that in 2000 years of human history this notion was widely accepted and the courts successfully operated on that notion, but the notion is hopelessly wrong. It looks like the fruitfulness of a term cannot go in his favor while doing CA. * We have a couple of notions of causation. How does abduction help us in this case? * It turns out that the ultimate judge regarding the debate about free will is cultural practice and social norms, but he expected a causal explanation regarding the phenomenon of free will. * How can inductive metaphysics help in the debate regarding the nature of truth, for instance a debate between a correspondence theorist and coherence theorist? * What about “crazy” metaphysical entities like real substance, bundle theory, trope theory etc.? * Is explanation in metaphysics always causal?   **Rajter**   * It is not exactly clear what role conceptual analysis plays within the framework of IM, especially in the given example. He asks the author to elaborate further. * Kevin Scharp says that the concept of truth is hopelessly inconsistent and deficient in everyday usage. Who should then be the arbiter about the real nature of truth or it’s correct norms of application?   **Balaguer**   * It depends what you mean by conceptual analysis. One thing you might mean is defining your words, but it seems like most of the time when we use CA we try to find out what the word really means. If that’s what we mean, the second thing, then it seems to him that to do metaphysics we never have to do CA because we can just proliferate new terminology, call terms free will 1, free will 2, etc. We can use stipulative introductions etc. * Lets just say we have two notions of freedom, freedom 1 and freedom 2. Without doing CA we establish that we are free 1 and not free 2. We can do all the abductions using freedom 1 but not freedom 2. But we have not at all tried to answer the question which of them is real free will. What is to be gained by figuring out which of these is real free will? What even determines what is real free will? * He agrees that we need a notion of freedom in our culture. But it is totally unclear that we need one notion of freedom in our culture. What’s the problem with a pluralistic view? * He is worried about doing CA at all. In the debate about personhood in the TV show Severance: Mark would say that we can say everything there is to say by saying they are the same person in the materialist sense, but different Lockean personhoods.   **Čeč**   * He is wondering whether the examples that we used, free will, personal identity, are really good examples to put his case forward. These notions are usually interest driven by what we want to mean by these words. If we want to use examples from science it might be better to put his case forward. * Is there a tension between fruitfulness and cutting nature at its joints? |
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