



Universals, Concepts And Qualities: New Essays on the Meaning of Predicates

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Are there universal properties grounding our sense of resemblance or qualitative identity among a number of distinct things or events which appear to form a class, a type or a kind of some other sort? Do universals such as humanness, triangularity, or being an Oak exist? Is being a laptop computer a universal, which has only recently come into existence? Do predicate expressions, adjectives or abstract nouns refer to objective properties or cognitive contents called concepts? The problem of universals has been at the centre of ancient, medieval, Western, and Indian metaphysics. After the logico-linguistic turn in philosophy, this problem resurfaced in the discourse on the meaning of predicate expressions on the one hand and in the theories of concepts on the other. By introducing newly commissioned essays written by the leading metaphysicians, epistemologists, philosophers of language, and philosophers of mathematics, this anthology evinces current analytic philosophy's healthy re-engagement with this perennial problem. The issues raised include: do properties and other abstract entities exist independently of human language and thought? Can we be in direct perceptual touch with properties or particular qualities? Is a higher order quantification over predicated properties intelligible or indispensable? Insights from current Western thought are compared with recent work in analytic Indian philosophy on such issues. No serious researcher or teacher of contemporary and comparative analytical metaphysics can afford to ignore the essays of this collection.

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