

2017 Essay Prize: What is structure?

The Metaphysics of Entanglement Project, University of Oxford

The Metaphysics of Entanglement Project is pleased to announce their 2017 Essay Prize. The winner of the Prize will receive £250.

Topic

What is structure?

The concept of structure is central to contemporary debates in many areas of philosophy. In the philosophy of science, structural realism has (re-)emerged as a possible middle ground between realism and antirealism. Ontic structural realists take this position to support a fundamental ontology of structure alone, and have claimed additional support from metaphysical issues in physics. In metaphysics, there has been a growing interest in structure and related issues of fundamentality and identity. Structuralist approaches to ontology—according to which structure is fundamental—have been applied to causation, identity, and the project of metaphysics more broadly.

We solicit philosophically informed papers addressing the nature of structure in contemporary analytic philosophy. We are particularly (but not exclusively) interested in work that addresses the debates mentioned above: For instance, ontic structural realists contrast their structuralist ontology with traditional pictures that comprise objects bearing properties. But how can structure be understood so as to provide an alternative to object-based ontology? Structuralists in metaphysics claim that certain entities are less fundamental than structures. How are we to understand such claims about the fundamentality of structure?

Requirements

In assessing entries, priority will be given to originality, clarity of expression, breadth of interest, and potential for advancing discussion. Papers should be under 8,000 words and anonymized for blind refereeing. Submissions are invited from postgraduate students and from early career researchers (understood as being within 8 years of receipt of PhD, though exceptions will be considered—please email for advice in the latter case).

The closing date for receipt of entries is 16 December, 2016.
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Contact

Papers (and all correspondence) should be sent to: quantum@philosophy.ox.ac.uk