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Introduction to Formal Philosophy

Springer

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Preface

In 1974, a wonderful little book came out entitled *Formal Philosophy: Selected Papers of Richard Montague*, edited by Richmond H. Thomason. The book was a beautiful testimony to the fact that formal methods may indeed clarify, sharpen and solve philosophical problems, defusing airy philosophical intuitions in clear, crisp and concise ways while at the same time turning philosophical wonder into scientific inquiry.

Today, formal philosophy is a thoroughly interdisciplinary package. Methods from logic, mathematics, computer science, linguistics, physics, biology, economics, game theory, political theory, psychology, etc. all chip in and have their place in the methodological toolbox of formal philosophy. Thus, formal philosophy is not yet another puristic philosophical province but rather a discipline gaining its momentum and content from its close shaves with the methods of science in general.

Introduction to Formal Philosophy intends to present the formal philosophy landscape in all its splendour. In self-contained entries written by experts in the field, the book introduces the methods of formal philosophy and provides an overview over the major areas of philosophy in which formal methods play crucial roles. The presentations are comparatively non-technical in the sense that definitions and theorems are stated with standard formal rigour, but much emphasis is placed on clarifying the relationships between formal constructions and the informal notions that they represent. Proofs and derivations are normally not presented. The main focus is on showing how formal treatments of philosophical problems may help us understand them better, solve some of them and even present new philosophical problems that would never have seen the light of day without the use of a formal apparatus.

Introduction to Formal Philosophy has a pedagogical but also an unabashed propagandistic purpose. While in no way denigrating other methodologies, we hope to show the versatility, forcefulness and efficiency of treating philosophical problems with formal methods. Hopefully, this will serve to increase the self-consciousness of formal philosophy for the benefit of scientific inquiry in general.

We express our gratitude to Ties Nijssen and his colleagues at Springer for taking on this project. Henrik Boensvang, Rasmus K. Rendsvig and Esther Michelsen Kjeldahl have rendered efficient editorial assistance for which we are most grateful. Last but not least, we thank the contributing authors for all the time and efforts they have spent on this project.

Stockholm, Sweden — Sven Ove Hansson
Copenhagen, Denmark — Vincent F. Hendricks
January 2018

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