

Reading Guide #18 - The Eleatic and the Indispensabilist

Mark Colyvan, "The Quinean Backdrop"

Mark Colyvan, "The Eleatic Principle"

Mark Colyvan, "The Quinean Backdrop"

1. What is naturalism? Distinguish Quine's version from Armstrong's.
2. How do naturalists disagree about mathematical objects?
3. What is the no-first-philosophy thesis? Distinguish the 'all' portion from the 'only' portion.
4. What is the continuity thesis? How might priority be a problem for the conjunction of no-first-philosophy and continuity?
5. What portion of the Quinean ontic thesis do naturalists sometimes find awkward?
6. Describe Colyvan's interpretation of the Quine's attack on analyticity as an inductive argument from the history of science. How does this argument become an attack on the *a priori/a posteriori* distinction?
7. Do scientists use *a priori* methods? Explain.
8. Do philosophy and science differ in their uses of experiments? Explain.
9. How is Armstrong's naturalism a causal version?
10. How does the Eleatic principle conflict with the no-first philosophy thesis?
11. What is confirmation holism?
12. What is the relation between confirmation holism and semantic holism?
13. Our empirical theories have the so-called empirical parts intimately intertwined with the mathematical" (36-7). Explain.
14. How do holism and naturalism support the indispensability argument?

Mark Colyvan, "The Eleatic Principle"

1. What is the eleatic principle? How does it oppose Quine's method for determining ontological commitment?
2. What is the inductive argument for the eleatic principle? How does it conflict with a spatio-temporal criterion for existence?
3. What is the epistemic argument for the eleatic principle?
4. How do considerations of objects outside of our light cone lead to worries about the eleatic principle?
5. Is causal contact necessary for justified belief? Explain.
6. What is the argument for the eleatic principle from causal explanation?
7. Describe the argument for non-causal explanation from the bending of light.
8. Describe the argument for non-causal explanation from antipodal weather patterns.
9. Describe the argument for non-causal explanation from the Fitzgerald-Lorentz contraction.
10. Can the square-peg/round-hole phenomenon be explained without appeal to non-causal entities? Explain.
11. Can the eleatic principle be supported along with a rejection of inference to the best explanation?
12. How does Balaguer's fictionalism support an eleatic principle?
13. Does the explanation of why my hand does not pass through a wall support Balaguer's fictionalism or Colyvan's indispensabilism?
14. According to Azzouni, what kinds of objects are physically real?
15. How does Azzouni respond to the problem of objects outside our light cone? Is this response successful?
16. According to Colyvan, what is the most important argument for the eleatic principle? Why does it fail?