

The normativity of generic truths

Abstract

Causal rules (or laws) are, as Sellars says in *Some Remarks on Language Games* (1963) always material (that is world-related and not merely formal). They articulate, nevertheless, general (generic) forms or norms of inferences that we should view as belonging to language. They are, as such, moments of the very *content* of words and sentences. Sellars hits here on the deep fact that our world-related *concepts* are 'dispositionally thick'. But how precisely are material default inferences 'defined' or 'declared valid'? How do they function as semantic norms? And how should we understand the contrast to merely empirical assertions informing us about singular, many or all individual events of some kind or type with 'a posteriori' truth evaluation? How does the language game of asserting presuppose generic truths and how should we understand the very notion of such truths?

Keywords

a priori, a posteriori, default rules, concept, content, material, formal, form, norm, generic inference.