

# Compositional Reductionism and Semantic Anti-Reductionism: Some Thoughts

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## Abstract

Carl Gillett has attempted to provide the reductionist camp with a new fervor by articulating a robust conception of ontological reductionism which avoids the perils of the old Nagelian reductionism and also seems to be immune to the critiques of a great many anti-reductionists. The first section of the paper, specifies the details of compositional reductionism by first laying out its account of properties, powers, individuals, and processes (all of which it takes as primitive). I then move to the importance of mechanistic explanations for the account, subsequent to which I explain comprising relations and then compositional relations themselves. At the end of section one, I try to detail how arguments against Nagelian reductionism from multiple realization and predicate indispensability lead Gillett into a rather obscure and ultimately false view about the nature of semantics, pragmatics, and descriptions of higher level, or “composed” entities. Section two presents three objections to Gillett’s position with respect to the semantics and pragmatics of scientific description. I show that compositional reductionism is ultimately false by way of reductio since it demands that we reject rather plausible views about the nature of interpretation, meaning, and the pragmatics of communication.

**Keywords:** Reductionism; Emergence; Predicate Indispensability; Multiple Realization

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