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Against Digital Ontology

Floridi, Luciano (2008) *Against Digital Ontology*. [Preprint]



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Abstract

The paper argues that digital ontology (the ultimate nature of reality is digital, and the universe is a computational system equivalent to a Turing Machine) should be carefully distinguished from informational ontology (the ultimate nature of reality is structural), in order to abandon the former and retain only the latter as a promising line of research. Digital vs. analogue is a Boolean dichotomy typical of our computational paradigm, but digital and analogue are only " modes of presentation" of Being (to paraphrase Kant), that is, ways in which reality is experienced and/or conceptualised by an epistemic agent at a given level of abstraction. A preferable alternative is provided by an informational approach to structural realism, according to which knowledge of the world is knowledge of its structures. The most reasonable ontological commitment turns out to be in favour of an interpretation of reality as the totality of structures dynamically interacting with each other. The paper is the first part (the pars destruens) of a two-part piece of research. The pars construens, entitled " A Defence of Informational Structural Realism" , is forthcoming in Synthese.

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