

Two Dogmas of Ontology

Abstract

By

Francesco Orilia

The leading ontologists, including D. Armstrong, appear to implicitly assume that (1) certain theoretical options regarding the nature of properties and particulars (eg, tropes vs. universals) are mutually exclusive. Moreover, there is a long-standing tradition, with D. Armstrong as one of its chief contemporary supporters, according to which (2) truths require states of affairs as truthmakers. Both principles appear to be held as conceptual truths on a typically a priori basis. In spite of this, as regards (1), we can legitimately interpret some empirical evidence from ordinary experience and quantum mechanics as at least suggesting that substrate, bundle of tropes and bundle of universals theories should co-exist in our ontological inventory. Similarly, as regards (2), we must admit that (a) the thesis that true propositions about the past have truthmakers is at best an in principle falsifiable empirical hypothesis and (b) without some empirical – albeit vague – assumption, truthmakers for some deep-seated logical truths are hard to find.