

Singularism, Pluralism, and Definitional Equivalence

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This talk is a presentation of joint work with Stewart Shapiro and Eric Snyder.

Atomistic classical mereology and plural logic provide two alternative frameworks for the analysis of plurals in natural language. It is a matter of dispute which framework is preferable. From the formal point of view, however, there is a strong sense in which the two frameworks are equivalent. So they have the same coverage as each other: there is a range of data about plurals that they both capture correctly. We argue that the tie is broken when we consider a wider range of linguistic phenomena, such as mass nouns and group nouns. Mereology is more flexible than plural logic and is thus more easily adapted to account for these richer fragments of natural language.