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6th Arthur Pap Lecture

Paola Cantù

Abstract

is Research Director in Philosophy at the French National Scientific Research Center. She earned a master's degree in philosophy from Milan University, a Master of Advanced Studies from the Université de Genève, a PhD from Genoa University and a Habilitation in Philosophy at École Normale Supérieure in Paris. She joined CNRS in 2011 and is affiliated to the Epistemology Center CGGG at Aix-Marseille University, where she is co-director of the Research Group in History and Philosophy of Science. She is a member of the editorial board of *Annals of Mathematics and Philosophy*, *History and Philosophy of Logic*, and *Topoi. An International Review of Philosophy*. She is the Principal Investigator of the Project *Axiomatic Definitions* funded by the French National Association (ANR 2024-2027) and has been appointed director of the French Research Group in Philosophy of Mathematics (2024-2028) funded by the French National Research Center (CNRS).

Cantù is author and editor of several books in Italian and English. She has recently co-edited collections of essays on social ontology and mathematical practice (with I. Testa, *TOPOI* 2023), on mathematical objectivity (with B. Halimi et al., *Noesis* 2022), on Peano's logic and epistemology (with E. Luciano, *Philosophia Scientiae* 2021), and is author of several articles on the foundations of logic and mathematics. Cantù's current project is a monograph on the Peano school.

Right from its name, axiomatics focuses on the role of axioms as starting points for deriving theorems. Definitions are introduced as useful conventions, but not strictly necessary for a rigorous presentation of theories. And yet the preeminent interest in definitions in authors such as Peano and Pap suggests that the issue of definitions cannot be eliminated as soon as one reflects on the epistemological role of axiomatics. What role can axiomatics still play today and, within it, what place should be reserved for definitions?

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What Role Do Definitions Play in Axiomatics?

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