

*Synthese: An International Journal for Epistemology, Methodology and Philosophy of Science*

Johan van Benthem, University of Amsterdam and Stanford University

Vincent F. Hendricks, Copenhagen and Columbia University

John Symons, University of Texas at El Paso

*Synthese* began as a Dutch philosophy journal in 1936, in a period of intense scientific and political change. It was founded by a group of philosophers, scientists, and people from other walks of society who wanted to create a forum for reflection on contemporary science and society, while improving contacts between different intellectual communities. Over the years, this broad vision has persisted, though of course in new ways responding to new circumstances. *Synthese* is now a major international philosophical journal with broad reach across topics and disciplines, but holding on to the vision that philosophy and the sciences need to interact permanently, while issues from society remain continually relevant to the agenda of academic research.

Over the course of its history, contributors of our journal have included most of the leading philosophers in the analytic tradition. *Synthese* publishes articles in all the fields covered by the subtitle. In addition to epistemology, articles tackle such methodological and foundational problems as the problems of scientific discovery and scientific inference, induction, probability, learning, causation and the role of mathematics, statistics and logic in science and formal epistemology. Insofar as they have philosophical interest, *Synthese* also includes those aspects of symbolic logic and of the foundations of mathematics which are relevant to the philosophy and methodology of science. Moreover, those facets of the ethics, history and sociology of science which are important for contemporary topical pursuits are also considered. Special attention is paid also to the role of mathematical, logical and linguistic methods in the general methodology of science and the foundations of the different sciences. In fostering all this, the journal has been characterized by its internationalist and interdisciplinary character.

From 1966 to 2002 Jaakko Hintikka served as the journal's editor. At present, the journal is edited by Johan van Benthem, Vincent F. Hendricks, and John Symons. *Synthese* is now one of the most widely read and largest journals in philosophy, publishing 18 issues with a page budget of more than 2500 pages annually. *Synthese* has published entirely in English since the 1960s and is available electronically at <http://www.springerlink.com/content/103001/>

About half of the issues are devoted to publishing unsolicited submissions while the other half is comprised of special issues and a subsection of *Synthese: Knowledge, Rationality and Action*.

In general, the editors of *Synthese* hope to model their editorial practices on those of journals in the natural sciences. Receiving more than 400 unsolicited manuscripts a year, every submission which goes out for review receives a least 2 review reports independently of whether the paper in the end is accepted for publication or not. There are two related reasons for keeping this policy in place: (1) It is an important service to the community to receive qualified feedback for a submitted paper, and (2) science is a self-regulating mechanism with respect to the avoidance of error and the pursuit of truth. Ideally, review reports are an important ingredient in the advancement of science. Not only should philosophers get qualified feedback but they should also get it in a reasonable amount of time. Given the electronic submission system (<http://synt.edmgr.com>) both authors, editors and reviewers can access information about a submission currently under review at any given time. The average time between initial submission and first verdict is approximately 3 months, and from acceptance to print publication on the order of ½ - 1 year. In the interest of making accepted articles available as quickly as possible, *Synthese* makes all corrected proofs available electronically via the ‘Online First’ system as soon as the authors’ final corrections have been made.

The number of papers which are accepted for publication after the first review is very small. Most papers go through at least one round of revisions but usually two or three revisions are called for. We see the “revise and resubmit” process in *Synthese* as another phase in the trial and error process of scientific inquiry. So papers published in *Synthese* are carefully crafted, just like special issues in the journal are carefully groomed. Special issues are required be thematically unified with an interdisciplinary outlook and are all closely overseen either by the editors-in-chief or by the relevant area editor. We have created a board of area editors in order to actively assist and advise the editors-in-chief in the editorial and review processes.

Our group consists of the following twelve area editors:

- Computability and computer science: *Luciano Floridi*
- Epistemology: *Horacio Arló-Costa*
- History of early analytic philosophy: *Paolo Mancosu*
- Language and linguistics: *Robert van Rooij*
- Logic and mathematics: *Gabriel Sandu*
- Metaphysics: *Achille Varzi*
- Methodology and general philosophy of science: *Paul Humphreys*
- Mind and cognitive science: *Lucia Vaina*
- Physics: *Sonja Smets*
- Psychology and neuroscience: *John Bickle*

- Social philosophy and the social sciences: *Raymond Dacey*
- Technology, biology and artificial life: *Mark Bedau*

It is important for us to have the active participation of energetic and knowledgeable specialists in the topics which fall within the editorial scope of the journal. While the board consists of recognized authorities in their respective areas, we have sought open-minded colleagues whose work embodies an interest in broader engagement beyond their sub-specialization. So, rather than exacerbating the problem of hyper-specialization, we hope that our editors encourage genuine interdisciplinarity in the heart of each of the twelve areas. This approach to the distribution of editorial responsibility and authority is our way of working to deepen our editorial expertise without sacrificing some of this journal's traditional virtues.

The area editors have also been carefully chosen to reflect the aim, scope and help realize our vision with *Synthese*. As the subtitle reflects, *Synthese* is a journal for epistemology, logic and philosophy, thus not a general philosophy journal. Or better yet, *Synthese* is a journal devoted to interdisciplinary inquiry in which the use of methods from the sciences takes center stage. The subtitle is thus quite an inclusive filter. It is notable that *Synthese* is one of the few philosophy journals listed in the International Science Index. The vision for *Synthese* is to continue, further articulate and develop this scientifically oriented approach to philosophical research and more specifically to the editorial practices of the journal.

Part of our active tracking of modern developments is the development of cutting-edge submission and publishing technology. In this setting, editors and publishers continuously look for new ways of letting *Synthese* fulfil its forum function. Plans include an electronic portal, and live events where philosophers and scientists meet and debate. But in the midst of all these developments, and the considerable growth in volume in recent years, the current editors keep paying close attention to the character of the journal throughout its seventy year history. We believe that we are staying true to the core principles which have guided the journal ever since its inception: they are as vital as ever.