

Preface

Plural logic has become a well-established subject, especially in philosophical logic. We want to explore its broader significance for philosophy, logic, and linguistics. What can plural logic do for us? Are the bold claims made on its behalf correct?

Different readers may want to follow different threads running through the book. Readers interested in the application of plural logic in philosophy will find Chapters 1, 2, and 8 especially relevant. We argue that plural logic has useful applications, though not all those it is commonly thought to have. Next, questions about the correct logic of plurals are discussed in Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 9–12, where we defend an unconventional view. We reject traditional plural logic in favor of a “critical” alternative. The most striking feature of this alternative is that there is no universal plurality. Chapters 1–3, 5, 7, and 9 discuss the significance of plural logic to linguistics. Advocates of plural logic often claim that linguistic semantics should avoid “singularist” prejudices and be formulated taking plurals at face value. We contest this claim.

A few words about the origin of the project may be appropriate. Both authors have for a number of years been interested in questions about the logic, meaning, and metaphysics of plurals. Many of the ideas in the book were first conceived during long runs along the River Thames in the period 2010–12. A first glimpse of the book project arose in connection with the course “Plurals in Semantics and Philosophical Logic” taught at ESSLLI 2012 in Opole, Poland.

There are a lot of people to thank. This book has benefited enormously from extensive comments given by Peter Fritz, Simon Hewitt, David Nicolas, Alex Oliver, Agustín Rayo, Sam Roberts, Timothy Smiley, Eric Snyder, Hans Robin Solberg, and Gabriel Uzquiano. For useful feedback and discussion, we are also indebted to Colin Caret, Aistė Čelkytė, Eyjólfur Emilsson, Vera Flocke, Olav Gjelsvik, Nicholas Jones, Jönne Kriener, Dan Marshall, Ian Rumfitt, Stewart Shapiro, Sean Walsh, Tim Williamson, the students in our course at ESSLLI, and the audiences of numerous talks where material from the book has been presented. Peter Momtchiloff has provided invaluable help as an editor.

We gratefully acknowledge funding from the European Research Council (Starting grant number 241098), the Leverhulme Trust, the Research Council of Norway's Toppforsk project ConceptLab, the Universities of Birmingham, London, and Oslo, and Kansas State University.

Finally, we would like to express our immense gratitude to our families for their support and patience.