

M. Eng. Maja Niestrój
(Ph. D. candidate)
Department of Philosophy
Opole University

maja.niestroj@gmail.com

AN EROTETIC APPROACH TO DEFINING THE NATURAL KIND TERMS.

A CASE STUDY OF THE TERM ‘PLANET’

Adopting the assumption that communication is one of the main functions of scientific language (similar to natural language), and that the tools of erotetic logic can be successfully used to methodologically investigate the problems of science, the author sketches a program of constructing and categorizing definitions of natural kind terms (NKTs), in accordance to explanatory reasoning. The general idea is that the search for a definition can be modeled as a process of seeking the answer to a what-question. The process under consideration is constrained firstly by theory of reference for NKTs and secondly by the principle of the inference to the best explanation (IBE). This paper is devoted to one particular problem: the formulation of a natural kind term’s causal definition based on an erotetic approach of explanation introduced by Kuipers&Wisniewski, and developed later by Grobler&Wisniewski. As a chosen case study the author discusses current proposals of the definition of ‘planet’ .