

## Section 1

### Analytic Philosophy – the last 60 years

**Organizer:** Kevin Mulligan (Geneva, Lugano)

**Participants:** Manuel García Carpintero (Barcelona), Fraser MacBride (Manchester) Gabriel Sandu (Helsinki), Peter Simons (Dublin)

#### Abstract:

Sixty years ago philosophy of language was the Queen Bee of Analytic Philosophy. Nowadays analytic metaphysics enjoys a degree of importance unimaginable sixty years ago. But then, as now, logic and the philosophy of logic were at the centre of analytic philosophy. This symposium looks critically at aspects of the developments in logic, metaphysics and the philosophy of language over the last sixty years.

#### Titles and Abstracts of the talks

1.

Manuel García-Carpintero: The Foretold Death of the Philosophy of Language

In his contribution to the centennial "Philosophy in Review" issue of *The Philosophical Review* (1992), Tyler Burge surmised the sorpasso of the philosophy of language in its preeminent place in analytic philosophy by the philosophy of mind, a view that was widely held at that time: "Gradually but unmistakably, in the latter part of the 1970s, the philosophy of language lost its place as the dominant starting point for philosophical activity. No other area of philosophy assumed quite the status that the philosophy of language had had since the 1950s. But the degree of interest in relatively "pure" philosophy of language has certainly diminished. Moreover, there has been a perceptible shift of ferment toward issues in the philosophy of mind." I think it is fair to say that the perceived shift hasn't materialized. On the contrary, intensive research over these years on vagueness, two-dimensionality, relativism, names, indexicals and context-dependence, the semantics/pragmatics divide and other topics in the area has provided a good measure of understanding, and provided fundamental resources to other areas, particularly the philosophy of mind. In my contribution, I'll venture some hypotheses about this dénouement.

2.

Gabriel Sandu: Logic from the North

Many of the formal systems of what is nowadays called "philosophical logic" (deontic logic, logic of preference and choice, logic of change and action, epistemic logic) were introduced in Northern Europe in the fifties and sixties. Typically, they proposed a modal treatment of philosophically important concepts, which settled the standards for the treatment of these notions for years to come. They also presented, from the very beginning, a tension between formal aspects and intended applications. I will look at some of the main philosophical ideas behind the work of G.H. von Wright, S. Kanger and J. Hintikka, and evaluate their significance in retrospect.

3.

Peter Simons: The Rise and Fall of Analytic Metaphysics

Metaphysics in analytic philosophy recovered gradually and patchily after the positivist onslaught: in the 1950s and '60s Quine and Strawson proposed different versions of metaphysics lite, dependent on language; only Williams in Harvard and the lowans under Bergmann pursued it for itself. By the 1980s the subject recovered in self-assurance as the metaphysics of modality was investigated, but the seeds of its returning decadence were sown by Lewis's modal realism. Since then increasingly extravagant controversies around questions such as persistence, composition and time have spawned unbridled and self-indulgent speculation, re-igniting empiricist scorn and undermining the subject's credentials. With a few honourable exceptions, analytic metaphysicians have themselves to blame for propelling their subject once more towards oblivion.

4.

Fraser MacBride: David Lewis and the History of Late 20th Century Analytic Philosophy

The history of analytic philosophy has hitherto concentrated upon the origins and development of analytic philosophy in the late 19th century and the early 20th century, especially Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, and the Vienna Circle. But this leaves the history of the development of late 20th century analytic philosophy untouched and unexplored. This paper seeks to address this shortcoming in our historical understanding by examining the development and transformation of late 20th century philosophy through the prism of the development and transformation of the work of David Lewis (1941-2000), with special reference to his correspondence and other material drawn from his Nachlass (1941-2000). Lewis is famous for his metaphysical realism about possible worlds, but this underrepresents his contribution to the discipline, which includes important work on philosophy of mind, philosophy of language and the philosophy of mathematics. What emerges from a deeper understanding of Lewis's work is a more complex picture, an equivocal relationship to metaphysics which foreshadows the current crisis in metaphysics.