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ECAP7 SEVENTH EUROPEAN CONGRESS OF ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

[Milano, 1st-6th September 2011]

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1 Overview

The ECAP (European Congress of Analytic Philosophy) is an international congress organized by ESAP (European Society of Analytic Philosophy) every three years. Previous ECAPs (from 1 to 6) took place in various cities in Europe, such as Aix en Provence (France), Leeds (England), Maribor (Slovenia), Lund (Sweden), Lisboa (Portugal) and Kraków (Poland). ECAP7 took place in Milan, Italy, between 1st and 6th September 2011, and was organized by the Vita-Salute San Raffaele University, Milan, and the University of Milan. These two universities were the main sites for ECAP7: the Vita-Salute San Raffaele University for the first four days and the University of Milan for the last two days. A workshop session took also place at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan, during the 4th day.

The congress was structured into five plenary talks and various parallel sessions and workshops. Plenary speakers were Kevin Mulligan, Dan Sperber, Agnieszka Jaworska, Tim Crane and Andrea Bonomi, whereas while parallel sessions were divided into the following topics: History of Philosophy, Epistemology and Philosophy of Science, Logic, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Mind and Action Theory, Metaphysics, Ethics, Aesthetics, Political Philosophy and Philosophy of Law, Philosophy of Religion. Plenary speakers had 90 minutes available for their talks, other speakers had 30 minutes (both including discussion). The official language was obviously English, so that every participant could follow any of the talks proposed.

Because of the huge number of talks, we decided to report here only the abstracts and a brief review from plenary talks. Any choice between the other talks (which were more than 300) would have been arbitrary and aleatory, since the sessions were parallel and we didn't have the chance to follow them all. Abstracts of parallel sessions are currently unfortunately unavailable for download. Statistics about submissions can be found at http://www.esap.info/ecap7/?page_id=412.

In the end, the organizing committee did a great job, everything worked very well and the affluence was good (there were also extra-european participants).

2 Plenary talks

2.1 *Because, Because, Because*

Kevin Mulligan (University of Geneva)

Abstract. «Because» is the most important connective about which elementary logic tells us next to nothing. It pops up everywhere in philosophy. What, then, are its properties and types? Many types of «because» and so of explanation have been distinguished, for example causal and conceptual explanation. I consider three putative examples of explanation – the normative «because», the «because» of philosophical theory and the large class of explanations which refer to the nature or essence of something and raise and attempt to answer three questions: What are the relations between these three types of explanation? Is explanation mind-dependent? When is the introduction of a type of «because» merely ad hoc?

Review. Mulligan tries to understand if a semantics for different kinds of “because” is possible. He distinguishes, at first, three types of because: the “normative because”, the “philosophical because” and the because used in explanations referring to nature or essence of something.

Afterwards he characterizes personal and impersonal explanations; the first ones are presented in the form « x explains to y ...», while the others are of the form «the fact that p explains the fact that q » or « q because p ». Even if “because” is not itself a relational word it could be said that when we say « q because p » we express a relationship between “ p ” and “ q ”. Different kinds of explanations can generate different kinds of because:

- the causal because (A can't see nothing *because* there's fog);
- the because of theoretical reduction (this is an equivalence relation *because* it is symmetric, reflexive and transitive);
- the because of subjective reasons (A ate the ice cream *because* she thought it was tasty);
- the objective reasons because (A ate the ice cream *because* it was tasty);
- the normative because (A went to prison *because* homicide is a crime);
- the essential because (the proposition p is true *because* the state of affairs described by p occurs);
- the because of essence (x and y are distinguished *because* of their essences).

Mulligan distinguishes uses of because as pure-connective, as in « q because p », as a hybrid, viz. « q because of x » and as non-connective; the last one is related to mental operations, so it's also called “mind-because”. The relation between non-connective (mental) because and because as connective (linguistic) is similar to the relation between negating and negation, conjoining and conjunction, and so on. Now, is it possible to define a semantic value for statements containing both these uses of because?

Mulligan also individuates because of essence and essential because. The because in

If <Sam is sad> is true , then <Sam is sad> is true because Sam is sad.

is different from the because in:

If <Sam is sad> is true , then <Sam is sad> is true because the state of affairs [Sam is sad] occurs.

The first kind of because expresses a relation between “Sam is sad” and a proposition, state of affairs etc., but it is not grounded in the nature of objects and properties and therefore it does not involve any because of essence, while in the second case the truth of “Sam is sad” depends on the nature of the state of affairs and obtaining. If facts make propositions true, they do so in virtue of their nature; on the contrary if Sam falls under the property of sadness, because Sam exemplifies sadness, then this is because of the nature of sadness (or because of the nature of properties in general). Necessary conditions for having an essential because are an utterance <a> and one of the following: a state of affairs (related to his obtaining), a proposition (truth-value), a concept (exemplification), a property (satisfaction), a class (membership), etc.

Different kinds of “because” produce different kinds of analyses, and Mulligan explains this view with a moral example based on Moore’s analysis of moral rightness. Moore’s analysis modified can be expressed as follows:

- (1) An action is morally right
iff
- (2) it leads to more intrinsically valuable pleasure or less intrinsically disvaluable pain than any other action open to the agent
and
- (3) if (1), then [(1) because_{essential} (2) because_{essence} of the nature of comparative value and of consequences]

In this analysis, both (1) and (2) express normative propositions. An analysis modified in a naturalistic way is the following (note the different because used):

- (4) An action is morally right
iff
- (5) it leads to more pleasure or less pain than any other action open to the agent
and
- (6) if (4), then (4) because_{normative} (5)

In this second analysis, (4) expresses a normative proposition, while (5) expresses a proposition about a wholly natural state of affairs. In the proposed analyses, we can see the difference between the normative because (which expresses a normative necessitation) and, again, the because of essence already defined.

Thanks to his analysis Mulligan can claim that mind and connective because allow a semantic value; such a thesis is possible because the members of each couple of mental acts and connectives are mutually dependent, in a range of various possible ways shown during the talk.

2.2 *The Deconstruction of Social Unreality*

Dan Sperber (Jean Nicod Institute, Paris & International Cognition and Cultural Institute)

Abstract. John Searle has famously argued (in particular in *The Construction of Social Reality* and *Making the Social World*) that social facts exist in virtue of being collectively recognized. In this talk, I deconstruct Searle’s social ontology and outline an alternative.

Review. Sperber starts by considering Searle’s works, *The Construction of Social Reality* and *Making the Social World*, where it is stated that collective recognition of a social fact is a necessary condition for the existence of the fact itself. Sperber highlights some errors in the main social ontology theories: on the one hand the attribution of a causal role to supernatural forces (in folk social ontology), and on the other hand the attribution of such a status to so-called Cambridge properties, i.e. properties which do not add anything to the individuals (in scholarly ontology). Every social ontology theory is expected to account for the distinction between institutional facts and mere Cambridge changes: in Searle’s point of view the collective recognition and the acceptance are fundamental elements in such a distinction. Following Sperber’s talk, one may ask: are these conditions both necessary and sufficient? Assuming Searle’s theory, what happens to the fact itself?

Social facts are divided into two main kinds: institutional and brute facts, and they differ upon the presence of a conceptualization and its absence (take as example rumors, which are brute facts, and verdicts, institutional). An epidemiological and environmental approach shows that social facts consist of causal chains linking events in the mind of individuals (in a sub-personal or infra-individual fashion too) and events taking place in the environment. The fundamental tools used by Sperber are the followings:

- Public and Mental Productions;
- Cognitive Causal Chains (CCCs): a very intuitive example of such a chain is the one which links an environmental stimulus to the identification of the stimulus itself by means of perception (Figure 1).

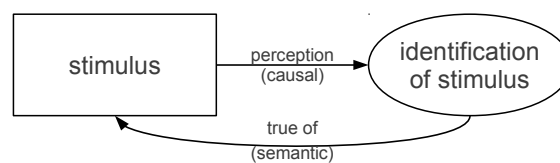


Figure 1: Basic example of a CCC.

A further example is the CCC which links two beliefs to a third one, due to inference (Figure 2);

- Social CCCs (SCCCs): these are defined as CCCs which establish content relationships between individuals through modifications in the common social environment, e.g. testimony, request, reminder, argument. Causes and effects could be alternatively mental or public. Mental links are described in terms of naturalized psychology, whereas public ones are described in material terms;
- Cultural CCCs (CCCCs): these are CCCs which establish social contents across population (Figure 3);

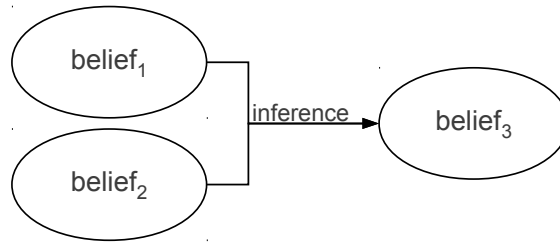


Figure 2: CCC of an inference.

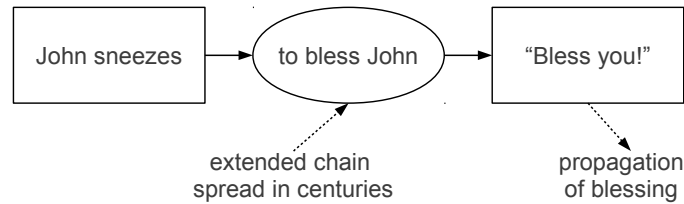


Figure 3: Example of Cultural CCC.

- Institutions (*ICCCs*): institutions are higher level representations which play a causal role in propagating lower level representations.

In Sperber’s Social Ontology, something is said to be social as long as it is embedded in a *SCCC*, and something is cultural as long as it is in a *CCCC*. In conclusion, Cambridge properties are considered in order to provide focal points for social coordination, even though they are causally inert, and institutional facts are just brute facts. No role at all is played by recognition and acceptance.

2.3 *Psychologism*

Tim Crane (University of Cambridge)

Abstract. Psychologism about logic is the view that the laws of logic should be explained in terms of laws of psychology. In the 20th century, philosophers have tended to follow Frege and Husserl in rejecting psychologism about logic. But in late 20th century analytic philosophy, Frege also inspired an anti-psychologistic approach to the study of linguistic meaning: those who follow Frege understand meaning in terms of his notions of sense and reference, or closely related notions. This is what we might call *psychologism about meaning*. Some have gone even further, and used the notions of sense and reference as foundational notions in the study of intentionality and mental content generally. This is what I call *anti-psychologism about psychology*. In this lecture, I will argue that whatever the merits of the other forms of anti-psychologism, anti-psychologism about psychology has little to recommend it. In particular, I will argue that in order to understand the relationship between consciousness and intentionality, we need to return to a fully psychologistic conception of the mind, and therefore of intentionality.

Review. Crane's talk is focused upon a defense of psychologism (P) in the field of psychology, against the attacks moved by anti-psychologistic (AP) point of view in contemporary philosophy. He starts claiming that forms of intentionality can be both conscious and unconscious (viz. perceptual experience versus perception): why is intentionalism about consciousness invisible to some philosophy? Crane suggests that AP entails a particular way to intend mental representations. Quoting Burge's analysis of perception, the idea that perception is the ascription of properties (more or less accurately) to an object, Crane claims that no feature of predication (act of predication and articulation of a symbolic structure) is related to conscious experience. We need then a new definition of perception able to account for the intentionality of our experience. He proposes to use Frege's notion of idea (*Vorstellung*): the content of consciousness distinguished from the object of the thought. Examples of ideas (forms of intentionality) are images, feelings, inclinations and also sense-impressions. The latter allow Crane to establish a relationship between perception and predication.

Rejection of P is said to be one of the most important successes of analytic philosophy in the 20th century, and it is mainly due to Frege (in the field of logic), Dummett (in semantics), and McDowell (in psychology); the latter criticizes P claiming that it is possible to reduce intentionality to *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*, so that it needs to appeal to semantic facts. Showing that some aspects in the phenomenology of perceptual experience can be related to intentionality of experience, Crane claims that not every aspect of perception is determined only by semantic elements. Hence, semantic conception of representation does not give an adequate account of the representation involved in perceptual experience, while P does so by returning to Frege's ideas.

These two theses establish a defense for psychologism in psychology.

2.4 Rearing Relationships as a Key to High Moral Status

**Agnieszka Jarowska (UC Riverside, University of California) with
Julie Tannenbaum (Pomona College)**

Abstract. In this paper we address the seemingly commonsense idea that babies and severely cognitively impaired human beings have a greater moral status than most (but not necessarily all) non-human animals. Thus far, no philosopher has successfully defended this view. We argue that the difference in their moral status can be explained by the fact that most human being who are not already cognitively (rationally or emotionally) sophisticated can, while most animals cannot, participate in what we call “rearing relationship”. When a baby or a cognitively impaired human being engages in certain activities in the context of a rearing relationship, this transforms the metaphysical nature, and so also the value of those activities. A human being’s capacity to engage in these transformed activities shares core features with the very capacity – cognitive (intellectual or emotional) sophistication – that most philosophers grant explains why unimpaired adult humans have a higher moral status than most animals. Moreover, we show that animals, such as dogs, do not have the ability to participate in rearing relationships.

Review. The main goal of Jarowksa’s talk is to argue that babies and cognitive impaired adults have a higher moral status than animals with similar cognitive capacities. The difference in moral status depends in the capacity to engage in activities transformed by so-called “rearing relationships”: while this capacity is found in babies and in most cognitive impaired human beings, it’s absent from otherwise cognitively similar animals. The talk is grounded in a strong assumption, i.e. that an action’s nature and value can be transformed by the end of the action itself: an activity is not only valuable as a means toward a valuable end, but it also has, to a certain degree, the same value of the end. This assumption is needed by the authors to establish the role of rearing relationships in transform the activities of babies and other subjects.

The most important definition (i.e. what is to be understood with “rearing relationship”) is given by means of the concept of Self-Standig Person (SSP). A SSP has sophisticated intellectual and/or emotional cognitive capacities, which are to be considered valuable, and thus he/she has full moral status. A relationship is a “rearing relationship” if:

- (1) the rearer aims to transform the reeree into an SSP (the paradigmatic case is the one involving parents and babies);
- (2) the reeree cooperatively engages in those activities the rearer proposes in order to transform the reeree into an SSP;
- (3) the reeree’s activities are incomplete versions and realizations of the activities that characterize an SSP (evaluative judgements, caring, . . .).

Now, condition (3) is a crucial one: if the reeree engages in activities transformed by some kind of rearing relationships, then the reeree’s capacities count as incomplete realizations of SSP-capacities (and so the formers share a source of the latters’ value); of course, the incompleteness of the reeree’s capacity is relevant, but only to the *degree* of the moral status they confer. As stated before, an SSP has moral status due to the value of his/her capacities, therefore a reeree too has moral status (because his/her capacities have value).

The author’s conclusion follows from the observation that the activities of most animals *are not* incomplete realizations of SSP-activities and so condition (3) is not met: animals’

activities are not embedded in rearing relationships, therefore animals are not and will not be SSPs (thus they have lower moral status).

2.5 *Non-Persistent Truths*

Andrea Bonomi (San Raffaele University, Milan)

Abstract. Temporalism is the idea that the content expressed by an utterance of a sentence S (in a given context) can change its truth-value over time. Starting from Prior's indeterminism, formalized in his tense logic, metaphysical arguments are often presented to support this view. In my contribution I discuss some independent reasons for developing a temporalist semantics, in accordance with intuitions underlying a quite common use of future oriented statements. The basic idea is that such statements involve an epistemic component (determined by plans, schedules, motivated intentions, and so on) which can change as time goes by. Hence the possible truth-value transitions required by some peculiar uses of phase adverbs like 'no longer', 'still', 'again', etc.

The main feature of the semantics developed here is that an essential ingredient of the utterance context, i.e. the utterance world, is seen as an evolving reality which can be associated to different backgrounds of assumptions and, as a consequence, to different conditions of evaluation.

Review. Bonomi's aim is to discuss some reasons for developing a temporalist semantics independently from Prior's indeterminist (future-open) metaphysics, and to sketch such a semantics. Temporalism is the idea that the content expressed by utterances of a sentence α can change its truth-value over time. Evans (1985) argued against temporalism, stating that the evaluation of utterances should be in accordance with a Stability Principle (SP): whether the evaluation (correct, incorrect) of an utterance is fixed at t so it is for every $t' > t$. So even if the proposition expressed by the utterance could change its truth value, the evaluation of the utterance is anchored to t .

Every utterance takes place into a context made by the utterance-time, and the utterance-world $\langle t, w \rangle$. Therefore, correctness could be stated as follows: the utterance of α is correct at $\langle t, w \rangle$ iff α is true at time t at world w . Indeterminists follow Prior arguing against the adequacy of this definition: if one considers a future-tensed sentence expressed by an utterance at time t , then one should consider a plurality of world, viz. those metaphysically possible at utterance time t . So the evaluation of the utterance may depend upon the world one is considering.

Independently from any metaphysical discussion of the asymmetry between past and future, Bonomi aims to argue against SP by considering some intuitions underlying the use of future-oriented statements in natural languages. Let's consider the following case:

- (1) S knew that α

where α is a future in the past sentence (as in "S knew that he would do..."). Suppose that the utterance of (1) is intuitively correct at time t ; suppose now that at time $t' > t$ something happens and as a consequence α is false at time t' . So, given that *know* is a factive verb, the utterance of (1) at t' is to be considered incorrect. This invalidates SP, showing that it is not always applicable.

How do we give a semantics for such kind of phenomena? Bonomi suggests that different moments in time should be associated with different possible worlds, in order to account for future-tensed sentences. In future in the past cases truth and reference do not depend upon the way the world will actually be, but upon the information about the expected course of the events. Bonomi gives many examples of this kind of phenomena, calling them "non-persistent truths", using temporal adverbs as "no longer", in support of a variability principle:

it may happen that the statement made, in an appropriate context, by uttering a future-tensed sentence turns out to be true (false) at a given time t , but no longer true (false) at a time $t' > t$. The evaluation of these sentences crucially depends on the context $\langle t, w \rangle$, because a change in $\langle t, w \rangle$ could entail a change in the set of available context (future possibilities).