

The Israel Philosophy Association 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
(February 18, 2013, Bar-Ilan University, Bet Harav Jakobovits  
for the Study of Philosophy, Ethics, and Jewish Thought)

In February 18, 2013 The Israel Philosophy Association organized its 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference reflecting the variety of philosophical topics. This year the conference took place at the Bar Ilan University in Israel (a campus located about 8 miles from Tel Aviv) and, as usual, hosted domestic as well as international speakers.

The conference commenced with a keynote lecture given by Professor David Heyd (The Hebrew University) entitled “Between Representation and Impression: Rousseau on Theatre and Politics” (in Hebrew). After that, the active and passive participants of the conference split up into four sessions, each of which had its own sub-sessions. The topics thorough the sub-sessions varied and included secular theology, political philosophy, philosophy of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, reasons and intentions, philosophy of mind, European philosophy, philosophy of science, metaphysics, ethics, philosophy of language, logic or Greek philosophy.

*The philosophy of mind* session started with Jens Harbecke (Witten/Herdecke University) and his paper “What is the Relation Between the Regularity Theory of Mechanistic Constitution and the Gillett’s Dimensioned Realization?”. In it, Harbecke discussed mechanistic approach to neurobiological explanation in terms of the so-called mechanistic constitution. He presented his own approach to the constitution as a second-order relation being expressible by a particular kind of conditional called a constitutive minimal theory. Assaf Weksler (The Open University of Israel) in his “Modal Intentionalism” discussed an idea according to which the phenomenal character of a mental state is determined by its content plus its psychological mode. His proposal – dispositional intentionalism – suggested that a given mental state is determined by its content, its psychological mode and its dispositions to react to other experiences. The session concluded with Malte Dahlgrün (Humbolt-Universität zu Berlin) and his “Multimodularity in Evolutionary Psychology: Rebutting Samuels’ Challenge”. Dahlgrün presented a multimodularity claim according to which the human mind contains a far greater number of “innate” domain-specific, information-processing adaptations than has been standardly assumed. As he concluded

Samuels begs a question against evolutionary psychology when he frames the debate on innate adaptations in terms of a false dichotomy.

*Reasons and Intentions* sub-session as a part of the second session started with Dalia Drai's (Ben-Gurion University) "Reasons Have No Weight". In the paper she assumed that a reason does not function in the same normative way in every context and from the determination thesis – a thesis claiming that the evaluative judgment is determined by the weight of the reasons for and against that judgment – she concluded that the determination thesis fails if reasons and their weights are construed as context-independent. Yonathan Shemmer (Sheffield University) in his "Future Reasons" claimed that assuming that the debate about the meaning of the term subjectivism between Sobel and Parfit is terminological, the former is right. Although, according to Shemmer, future looking subjectivism should be rejected subjectivists have an alternative way of dealing with reasons as to avoid future agony. In his "Practical Knowledge" David Horst (The Hebrew University) argued for the claim that in acting intentionally the agent must have practical knowledge of what she is doing as it is, for Horst, necessary in order to understand intentional action.

The third section included, among others, Melis Erdur (NYU) and her "A Moral Argument Against Moral Realism" and Christos Kyriacou's (University of Cyprus) "Pro Normative Properties as Disjunctive Properties". In the latter, Kyriacou tried to address the semantic, epistemological and ontological challenges to normative realism. In the former, Erdur made a claim that moral realism is problematic not only from a metaphysical and epistemological point of view, but also from a moral perspective itself. Both papers were followed by philosophically appealing comments by David Enoch (The Hebrew University). In them, Enoch provided overviews of the papers, pointed out their interconnections and critically evaluated some issues discussed in them.

Finally, one sub-session of the forth session – *Logic and Philosophy of Language* – began with Michal Gleitman's (Emory University) "Autistic Chairs and Davidsonian Interpreters: A New Perspective". Her paper provided a new approach to the debate about Davidson and his theory of meaning. In particular, she argued that the empirical evidence about autistics turns out to support Davidson's theory. Martin Vacek (Slovak Academy of Sciences) in his "Impossible worlds' Paradise on the Cheap?" challenged the attempts to construct *ersatz* impossible worlds out of concrete possibilia, and proposed to interpret impossible phenomena by means of concrete impossible worlds. The last paper of the session called "Can Operator Argument Support Relativism?" by Dan Zeman (Institute Jean Nicod) considered an argumentative strategy in which the operator argument – an argument for the introduction of parameters in the circumstances of evaluation – cannot support relativism.

Of course, the conference contained much more papers on even more philosophical topics. Since the sub-sessions of the particular sessions overlapped with each others, it was not possible to report all of them. However, for those interested in the rest of the papers, the organizers made all the abstracts available at the conference website <http://opalglobal.openu.ac.il/course/view.php?id=66>. In sum, the organizers of The Israel Philosophy Association 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference did a great job and we are looking forward to meet next year.

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