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NEWS

Conference Report: SOPhiA 2017

The *8th Salzburg Conference for Young Analytic Philosophy* was held from the 13th till 15th September 2017 at the Department of Philosophy, University of Salzburg, Austria. The conference brought together over 150 participants from 19 different countries to share their research and to discuss problems. The conference featured five parallel satellite workshops and included about 90 contributed talks and four plenary lectures. The SOPhiA conference covered nearly all areas in analytic philosophy. The contributed talks were divided into eleven sections. Hence, the conference was attended by a wide range of participants coming from many different areas of philosophy, unified by the idea that the methods exemplified in analytic philosophy can help to clarify philosophical problems. The first day of the conference started with the satellite workshops on September 13. The first workshop was on *Values in Science: Perspectives from Philosophy of Science, Ethics, and Language Philosophy* which was organised by Frauke Albersmeier and Alexander Christian (both from the University of Düsseldorf). The workshop aimed at bringing together philosophers working in philosophy of science and moral philosophy to discuss intersections between their areas. The second workshop *The Power to Change: Dispositions and Persistence* was organised by Florian Fischer (University of Bonn) and Thorben Petersen (University of Bremen). It focused on present and new perspectives on the metaphysics of dispositions and the persistence of dispositions. *Probabilistic Approaches to (Prototype) Concepts*, was the third workshop. It was organised by Annika Schuster and Corina Strößner (both from the University of Düsseldorf). This workshop aimed at presenting and comparing current interdisciplinary research projects with regard to prototype concepts. The workshop *Grounding in and after Bolzano* was organised by Jan Claas (University of Hamburg) and Antje Rumberg (University of Konstanz). This workshop focused on Bolzano's role as a predecessor of the current debate on grounding and aimed at uncovering interesting insights into Bolzano's account of grounding. The last workshop *Modeling Physical Reality* was organised by Florian Boge (University of Wuppertal) and brought together researchers from many different fields such as the philosophy of climate science, physics and mathematics. It was part of a collaboration with the inter-

disciplinary DFG research unit *The Epistemology of the Large Hadron Collider*. It focused on a crucial aspect of physical science, namely different scientific models, to discuss *inter alia* the relation of different types of models.

After the workshops, the winner of the SOPhIA Best Paper Award was announced in the opening ceremony of the conference. Nina Retzlaff (University of Düsseldorf) received the award for her paper *Another Counterexample to Markov Causation from Quantum Mechanics: Single Photon Experiments and the Mach-Zehnder Interferometer* (KRITERION – Journal of Philosophy, 31:2). The first plenary lecture *Laws and Powers in the Frame of Nature* by Stathis Psillos (University of Athens) focused on a current debate in metaphysics of science. Psillos introduced major and relevant arguments from the 17th century debate concerning laws of nature and natural powers. He defended a Newtonian claim, that to introduce a law is to introduce a power and vice versa. This claim was used by him to elucidate the idea of natural necessity and to clarify the relation between laws and powers in the current debate. The second plenary lecture was entitled *What is perspectival pluralism?* and given by Michela Massimi (University of Edinburgh). Pluralism was widely discussed in recent philosophy of science. In her talk Massimi focused mostly on what she calls “perspectival pluralism”, one variety of pluralism which goes back to Ronald N. Giere. According to Massimi this view deserves more attention. She then discussed the problems this view faces and how one could respond to them. The third plenary lecture was given by Johannes L. Brandl (University of Salzburg). The lecture was entitled *Why Language Matters for Self-Awareness: The Conceptual and the Narrative Route*. Brandl began his talk by examining two routes one can take in

answering the question whether language can have a formative influence on our reflective self-awareness via a conceptual route and via a narrative route. The former traces back to the

competence to use the first-person pronoun to acquire a self-concept. According to the latter our self-concept turns out to be more reflective when we see ourselves as protagonists of stories. Brandl then argued, that this second approach can be developed without being committed to strong or even implausible claims. The conference ended with a plenary talk on *Free Will as a Higher-Level Phenomenon* by Christian List (London School of Economics). In this talk List attacked the view that free will is an illusion. This view is often stated in popular science media. The argument List attacked goes like this: Free will requires the possibility to do otherwise. But if the world is deterministic, such a possibility seems not to exist. List claims that the argument is not conclusive, since free will should be understood as a higher-level phenomenon rather than a phenomenon described by fundamental physics. He then argued that if this is correct, then there might still be room for the possibility to do otherwise even if the fundamental physical level is fully determined.

The conference was organised by Albert J.J. Anglberger, Christian J. Feldbacher-Escamilla, Alexander Gebharter, Markus Hierl, Laurenz Hudetz, Sebastian Krempelmeier, Pascale Lötscher and Stephanie Orter. The SOPhIA conference offers a diversity of topics and the possibility to encounter thoughtful ideas shared in contributed talks, plenary lectures, discussions in and after the sessions and the workshops. Thus, many thanks to the organising committee, all the speakers and chairs, the workshop organisers, participants and finally all sponsors, among others: Springer, Mentis,

Metzler, DCLPS, GAP, KRITERION – Journal of Philosophy, without whom a great (free of charge) conference for young analytic philosophers would not have been possible.

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