

International Workshop
Recherche(s) en métaphysique
Research(es) in Metaphysics

Archives Henri Poincaré
Université Nancy 2
14-15 June 2007

Aesthetic Properties
Sandrine Darsel
Université Nancy 2
sandrinedarsel@yahoo.fr

Résumé

Les œuvres d'art sont des dispositifs qui fonctionnent esthétiquement: elles exemplifient, expriment, représentent et réfèrent de façon multiple. L'enjeu central est de savoir si les prédicats esthétiques attribués aux œuvres d'art renvoient véritablement à des propriétés esthétiques: les propriétés esthétiques sont-elles réelles? Une ontologie admettant uniquement des propriétés physiques (admises par la physique ou réductibles à ces propriétés) est-elle suffisante pour rendre compte des entités concrètes et familières que sont les œuvres d'art? Il s'agira de défendre une certaine version du réalisme esthétique en prenant pour principe méthodologique l'interdépendance des trois champs d'investigation que sont la sémantique, l'ontologie et l'épistémologie.

Abstract

Works of art function aesthetically: they exemplify, express, represent and refer in many ways. The main issue is: do aesthetic statements have truth-conditions? If so, what are their truth-conditions?

Are aesthetic properties real? Or, on the contrary, is a minimalist ontology which only requires physical properties adequate? In this discussion, I want to sustain a specific kind of aesthetic realism and take as a methodological principle the idea of an interdependence between semantics, ontology and epistemology.

Are There Retrospective Modal Illusions

Filipe Drapeau Contim

Université Rennes 1

filipe.dv.contim@hotmail.fr

Résumé

Dans *La logique des noms propres*, Kripke soutient que certains énoncés expriment des propositions nécessaires que l'on ne peut connaître qu'a posteriori. Ces énoncés sont typiquement de la forme " T est P " où " T " est un désignateur rigide et " P " un prédicat exprimant une propriété essentielle non triviale. Cependant, Kripke relève un certain nombre de jugements modaux qui semblent menacer la thèse de la rigidité et celle de l'essentialisme. En effet, les locuteurs ont tendance à affirmer rétrospectivement (après la découverte empirique) des contrefactuels spéciaux de la forme "il aurait pu s'avérer que T ne fût pas P mais P^* " où " P^* " exprime une propriété que T n'aurait pas pu (métaphysiquement) posséder. Selon Kripke, de tels contrefactuels sont littéralement faux et les locuteurs sont victimes d'une illusion modale rétrospective lorsqu'ils les assertent: ils se trompent sur l'objet de leur intuition modale et confondent le scénario métaphysiquement impossible dans lequel T est P^* avec le monde métaphysiquement possible où le F est P^* , où "le F " est la description définie contingente qui fixe l'actuelle référence de " T ". Dans notre communication, nous discutons et rejetons l'hypothèse kripkéenne des illusions modales ainsi que les hypothèses rivales qui lui ont été récemment opposées. Nous pensons que Kripke voit juste en jugeant que les contrefactuels rétrospectifs sont littéralement faux - nous recourons donc comme lui à une théorie de l'erreur. Mais selon nous, Kripke se trompe sur la nature de l'erreur dont sont victimes les locuteurs. Cette erreur n'a rien à voir avec notre capacité à concevoir le possible. Il s'agit bien plutôt d'une erreur sémantique, déjà relevée par Grice dans bien d'autres

domaines étrangers aux modalités, par laquelle les locuteurs en viennent à confondre ce qui est dit par de tels contrefactuels, qui est faux, avec l'implicature conventionnelle que ces énoncés communiquent, qui est vraie.

Abstract

It is well-known that in *Naming and Necessity*, Kripke defends that some true statements express necessary propositions which can be known only in an a posteriori way. Their typical form is “*T* is *P*” where “*T*” is a rigid designator and “*P*” a predicate expressing a non trivial essential property. Nevertheless, Kripke picks up some modal judgments which seem to threaten the rigidity thesis and the essentialism thesis. Indeed, speakers are inclined to retrospectively assert (after the empirical discovery) special counterfactuals whose typical form is “*T* might have turned out not to be *P* but *P**” where “*P**” express a property *T* could not (metaphysically) have possessed. According to Kripke, such counterfactuals are literally false and speakers asserting them are the victims of a modal illusion : they misidentify the object or their modal intuition and mistake the metaphysically possible world where the *F* is *P** (“the *F*” is a contingent definite description fixing the actual reference or “*T*”) for the metaphysically impossible scenario where *T* is *P**. In our paper, we discuss and reject the modal illusion hypothesis as well as its recent rivals. We think that Kripke is right about the falsity of retrospective counterfactuals; hence we propose, as he does, an error theory. But we argue that he misunderstands the nature of the error affecting speakers judgments. According to us, this error has nothing to do with our capacity to conceive possible situations. Rather, it is a semantic error - already put forward by Grice for domains alien to modality - which consists in mistaking the conventional implicature communicated by a retrospective counterfactual, which is true, for what is said or semantically expressed by this statement, which is false.

Fictionalism about Fictional Entities

Manuel Garcia Carpintero

Université de Barcelone

m.garciacarpintero@ub.edu

Carnap espoused a Principle of Tolerance: “It is not our business to set up prohibitions, but to arrive at conventions [. . .]. In logic there are no morals. Everyone is at liberty to build up his own logic, i.e. his own language, as he wishes. All that is required of him is that, if he wishes to discuss it, he must state his methods clearly, and give syntactical rules instead of philosophical arguments” (Logical Syntax §17). The last sentence of “Empiricism, Semantics and Ontology” expresses the advice in a different way: “Let us be cautious in making assertions and critical in examining them, but tolerant in permitting linguistic forms”. Quine’s (1951) influential criticism of the deflationary attitude that the principle proposes accounts in part for the contemporary unpopularity of the Carnapian principle, whose main content we could present in the following way. Let us focus on existential utterances of the form of ‘There are X ’, imagined as answers to questions as ‘Are there X ?’ Depending on the generality of the expression substituting for ‘ X ’, we can distinguish (using Quine’s terms) category questions (‘there are numbers’) and subclass questions (‘there are prime numbers about a hundred’). Now, category questions can be taken, according to Carnap, in two different ways. They can firstly be taken (in the “external” manner) as intended to make stipulations, agreement-proposals for the adoption of given representational resources; with respect to them, only practical considerations (which Carnap’s Principle suggests us to conduct with an open-minded, tolerant spirit) are in order. In particular, the attitude we should take with respect to a serious assertion (i.e., to study in earnest whether it satisfies relevant requirements to put us in a position to acquire knowledge from it) is in this case, Carnap claims, entirely misguided. The subclass questions are indeed, on the other hand, serious assertions, although they can only arise when the stipulations in some category questions have been adopted; and, in that case, the relevant category questions can also be taken (in the “internal” manner) as making serious assertions, although in that case they would be either trivially true or trivially false, which is why, out of context, utterances such as ‘there are numbers’ would be taken as expressing external questions.

In the two quotations, Carnap restricts his Principle to logical or semantic issues, more in general to issues depending on matters of

linguistic forms; and I have taken this into consideration in interpreting it. This is of course, as Quine (1951) sees, in harmony with his analytic/synthetic distinction, and in particular with his view that convention lies at the heart of analyticity. Correspondingly, Quine's (1953) general contention that there is no such distinction, together with his more specific criticisms of the Carnapian conventionalist version, lie at the heart of his objection. Most contemporary philosophers have been convinced by Quine's arguments that there is no such distinction, or at least that any one such that could be stated with sufficient clarity would be philosophically immaterial; and this is one of the sources of resistance to anything like the Carnapian Principle. For it supports the sentiment that there cannot be any epistemologically or ontologically relevant distinction between two forms of reference and quantification: the one in internal questions, which is serious in that the satisfaction or otherwise of its commitments depends on how the world is, independently of our thought and language; and the one in external questions, the satisfaction of whose commitments is sufficiently up to us for us to be thereby free to postulate.

Although I agree with what I take to be the philosophically more substantive aspects of Quine's criticism of Carnap's views on analyticity (for instance, I agree that there is no interesting sense in which we stipulate the logical principles), I think that its influence in contemporary views is overdrawn. In this paper I want to defend a restricted version of Carnap's Principle, unfortunately not in the direct and general way that I should wish, but only by trying to show its fruitfulness by applying it to a particular kind of examples, reference to and quantification over fictional entities. I will argue that a deflationary reading of statements explicitly referring to fictional characters is more adequate than critical stances like that of Walton (1990).

Nominalism, Coextensive Properties, and Genuine Realism

Ghislain Guigon

Université de Genève

guigong3@etu.unige.ch

Resemblance Nominalism is the view that what makes it true that a

particular a is F is a 's resemblance to other particulars - namely the F -particulars. Similarly, what makes it true that a and b are both F is the fact that both a and b resemble the F -particulars.

There might be two genuine properties F and G such that any actual particular that is F is a particular that is G and vice versa. In such cases, F and G are said to be coextensive properties. Whenever two properties are coextensive, the actual extensions of these properties are not sufficient to distinguish the truthmakers of " a is F " and " a is G ". This difficulty raised to Resemblance Nominalism is well-known under the label "the coextension difficulty".

The only way out of the coextension difficulty is to claim that what makes a particular have the property F is that it resembles all possible F -particulars (Rodriguez-Pereyra 2002, 99). According to Rodriguez-Pereyra, the latter claim entails genuine realism about possible worlds. In the present paper, it will be argued that while using possible world talk, as Rodriguez-Pereyra does, really is the only way out of the coextension difficulty, the resemblance nominalist's use of such a talk does not commit her *prima facie* to genuine realism. I will consider many interpretations of possible worlds talk in this paper and show that some - at least one - of them are compatible with the resemblance nominalist's solution to the problem of universals.

References

Rodriguez-Pereyra, G. 2002. *Resemblance Nominalism: A Solution to the Problem of Universals*. Clarendon Press. Oxford.

The Essence of Qualia

Pascal Ludwig

Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV)

Pascal.Ludwig@paris4.sorbonne.fr

Abstract

Qualitative mental states, or "qualia", can be seen as mental states endowed with phenomenal contents. According to the received view, those states possess their phenomenal contents essentially. The aim of my presentation will be to discuss this received view, and, eventually, to reject it.

Résumé

Les états qualitatifs, ou “qualia”, peuvent être considérés comme des états mentaux possédant des contenus phénoménaux. Selon la conception habituellement acceptée de ces états, ils possèdent essentiellement ces contenus. Le but de ma présentation sera de discuter cette conception reçue, pour, au bout du compte, la rejeter.

Time, Independence, and Connection

Frédéric Nef

École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales

fredericnef@aol.com

Résumé

David Armstrong, dans *A World of States of Affairs*, défend une thèse d'indépendance qui stipule qu'il n'y a pas de relation nécessaire entre deux états de choses. Cette thèse conduit à imposer de nouvelles conditions d'adjacence immédiate sur l'ordre temporel, pour que la transitivité de l'antériorité ne viole pas l'indépendance. Ces conditions sont largement artificielles. Je formulerai des conditions plus naturelles pour l'ordre temporel, conditions qui incluent la connectivité. Je montrerai de plus que le modèle atomiste logique à l'oeuvre dans l'ontologie de D. Armstrong n'est pas convenable pour une analyse métaphysique de la connectivité temporelle qui implique la continuité. J'élargirai, pour conclure, ces considérations à l'atomisme logique et métaphysique en général, en montrant que les problèmes posés à l'analyse de la causation par la thèse de la survenance humienne chez Lewis sont du même ordre. Le but de mon intervention est de mettre en relief la différence nécessaire que nous devons faire entre relation et connexion, pour analyser correctement le matériel temporel et causal du monde. Une conséquence de ce travail est de relativiser l'intérêt d'un retour à l'atomisme logique des Grands Ancêtres pour la recherche de la secrète connexion réelle.

Abstract

The independence thesis defended in David Armstrong's *A World of States of Affairs* stipulates that there is no necessary relation between two states of affairs. Because the transitivity of *being anterior to* must not violate independence, this amounts to imposing new

conditions of immediate adjacency on temporal order. Such conditions are highly artificial. I will formulate more natural conditions for temporal order, ones that include connectivity. I will then show that the logico-atomistic model at work in Armstrong's ontology is not convenient for a metaphysical analysis of temporal connectivity, since this kind of connectivity implies continuity. I will finally extend these ideas to logical and metaphysical atomism in general, by showing that the problems that confront the analysis of causation because of Lewis' thesis of humean supervenience are of the same order. The purpose of my talk will be to highlight the necessary difference that must be drawn between relation and connection if we want to give a correct analysis of the temporal and causal materials in the world. An important consequence of this will be a relativisation of the need to appeal to the Great Ancestor's logical atomism in the search for the secret real connection.

The Ontology of Rock

Roger Pouivet

Université Nancy 2

Roger.Pouivet@univ-nancy2.fr

Résumé

L'ontologie de la musique a fait des progrès considérables depuis quelques années, en proposant et en affinant des conceptions diverses et divergentes, quelles soient platonistes, conceptualistes ou nominalistes, qu'elles s'insèrent dans une perspective moniste (toutes les oeuvres d'art sont ontologiquement du même ordre) ou dualistes (il existe deux sortes d'oeuvres d'art, singulières et multiples), voire pluralistes (les oeuvres d'art relèvent de modèles ontologiques divers). Le scepticisme ontologique constitue également une option: nous n'aurions pas besoin d'ontologie pour caractériser les oeuvres d'art, mais une option discutable ou même malheureuse. Il me semble possible de définir le rock par sa particularité ontologique (et non par des spécificités stylistiques ou sociologiques): l'oeuvre musicale rock est essentiellement un enregistrement, compris comme une construction musicale. L'oeuvre ne préexiste pas à son enregistrement et l'auditeur du disque, CD ou fichier mp3 écoute l'oeuvre et non le témoignage plus ou moins fidèle de son exécution. Cela

signifie que le musicien-interprète n'est plus le médiateur entre le compositeur et l'auditeur, puisque l'enregistrement constructif est autographique, même si l'art musical rock est à deux étapes (construction d'un enregistrement-maître reproduit par gravure, pressage ou copiage informatique). Avec le rock, on aurait ainsi une nouveauté ontologique, un nouveau mode d'existence pour des oeuvres musicales. La discussion d'une telle thèse a déjà fait l'objet d'une réflexion en ontologie de l'art (Baugh, Davies S., Ferguson, Fisher, Gracyk, Kania, Ridley, Zak). Il s'agit ici de la poursuivre.

Abstract

As a philosophical subject, the ontology of music has made great advances in recent years, by proposing and refining various Platonist, Conceptualist or Nominalist accounts, which are metaphysically very different from one another. Some of these take a Monist perspective (all works of art belong to the same type) while others take a Dualist perspective (there are two main sorts of art works, according to whether they are singular or multiple). Ontological scepticism is also an option, although I happen to think that it is a bad one. It says that we don't need to worry about ontology in characterizing works of art. But I think that it is possible to define rock music by its ontological particularity, rather than by its stylistical or sociological peculiarities. The view may be defended that rock music is essentially a recording, understood as a musical construction. On this view, a work of rock music does not exist as a work of rock music prior to its recording (although it may exist as a work of another kind, for instance as a song). A person who listens to a record, CD, or mp3 file listens to the work itself. This means that the recording is not a mediation between the compositor and the audience. Rather, the constructive recording is autographic, even if the rock-musical work supposes two stages: the construction of a master tape and then its subsequent reproduction through various media. If this view is correct, rock would represent an ontological novelty, a new way of being for musical works. An account of this kind has already been discussed in the literature of the ontology of art (by Baugh, Davies, Ferguson, Fisher, Gracyk, Kania, Ridley, Zak). This paper is intended to advance this discussion.

On the Subtraction Argument for Metaphysical Nihilism*

Gonzalo Rodriguez Pereyra

Université de Nottingham

gonzalo.rp21@gmail.com

The subtraction argument*, a variant of the so-called subtraction argument, attempts to establish Metaphysical Nihilism, the thesis that there could have been no concrete objects. But the argument, put forward in Rodriguez-Pereyra (1997) suffers from several problems. In this paper I try to solve these problems and give an improved version of the argument.