

Third Colloquium 'Semantics and Philosophy in Europe' (SPE3)

May 27-29, 2010

Paris, France

Institut d'Histoire et de Philosophie des Sciences et des Techniques (IHPST)
and Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS)

IHPST (1st day)
13 rue du Four, 75006 Paris

ENS (2nd and 3rd day)
29 rue d'Ulm, 75005 Paris

General session:

Invited speakers:

Peter Pagin (University of Stockholm)

Graham Priest (University of Melbourne and CUNY Graduate Center)

SPE3 will include two thematic sessions:

Special session 1:

Quantification, Referential Terms, and Objects

Invited speaker:

Thomas Hofweber (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill)

About the topic:

Natural language appears to allow for quantification over and reference to a greater range of entities than one may be willing to admit in the ontology of natural language, for example intentional 'nonexistent' entities or abstract entities of a problematic sort, such as propositions. Whereas some philosophers have made distinctions between two kinds of entities, admitting 'light' (or 'pleonastic') entities besides 'real entities', others have pursued non-objectual and non-referential semantic approaches to certain kinds of natural language quantifiers and terms. This session will consist in novel philosophical contributions as well as linguistic explorations of the topic. The session may also include novel contributions to standard problems for reference that arise from phenomena of coercion within lexical theory.

Special session 2:

Propositional and Non-propositional Sentential Content

Invited speaker:

Paul Portner (Georgetown University)

About the topic:

The standard view is that the meaning of sentences consists in a proposition, construed generally either as a set of alternatives (worlds or situations) or as a structured proposition. This view faces challenges not only from the existence of different types of independent as well as embedded sentences (interrogatives, imperatives, infinitival and wh-clauses) for which other kinds of sentential contents are more appropriate. It also competes with expressivist approaches to at least certain types of sentences involving particular lexical items or constructions. Furthermore, the notion of a proposition itself is far from unproblematic on either of the two traditional conceptions. For example some of the problems for the structured-propositions view, such as the problem of the truth-directedness and the 'unity of propositions', may require abandoning the distinction between content and force, as some have recently argued. This session may also include linguistic contributions that are partly syntactic in nature as well as philosophical contributions that are partly historical in nature (addressing, for example, the traditional notion of a judgment).