

Introduction to *Forms, Formalism and Uniqueness (II)* – Thematic dossier

MIHAI RUSU*

This dossier of *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai. Philosophia* gathers four papers written by early-career researchers that participated at the first edition of the ERGO Conference of Philosophy and Humanities. This conference took place at the Babeş-Bolyai University in April 2018 and it was organized as an integrative event, aimed at highlighting and capitalizing on the diverse landscape of philosophical research and education in Cluj-Napoca. The theme of this first meeting – “Forms, Formalism and Uniqueness” – was proposed so as to encourage reflection on the meaning and role of these concepts in the two main traditions of Western philosophy: continental and analytic. We expected that the contributions would be able to trace and characterize not only the multiple guises of these three concepts inside one tradition or the other, with their respective jargon and technicalities, but that we would also succeed in finding common points of interest and similar arguments and ideas that might inspire practitioners in either tradition and foster mutuality and actual collaboration. Our hopes were at least partially confirmed and I am certain there is much to look forward to from the young philosophers that participated in the event.

Eight contributions, equally divided between traditions, were selected to be published in this journal. The first thematic dossier, which was published in the August 2018 issue, was devoted to the continental approach, while this one brings together four very diverse and challenging papers that were presented in the analytic section of the conference.

* University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca, Department for Teachers' Training, 3-5 Calea Mănăştur, Cluj-Napoca, Romania / Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Department of Philosophy, 1 Mihail Kogălniceanu str., Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Email: mihaimcrusu@gmail.com

The first paper, written by Vlad-Lucian Ile, a PhD candidate at the Babeş-Bolyai University and the University of Tours, puts one of the main structuring topics of the conference in a very interesting perspective. Vlad Ile is interested in the history of medieval logic and the various notions of form and formality that are to be found and investigated within this very rich, but also very puzzling intellectual territory. The main subject of his research is Peter of Spain's theory of supposition. In spite of a renewed interest of contemporary philosophers and logicians for the medieval logical tradition, the character and underpinnings of Peter of Spain's theory are far from being clarified. Vlad analyzes the various hypotheses that have been proposed in the literature for interpreting Peter of Spain's work, connecting them to the multiple senses of formality that have been defined in relation to the development of logic and formal philosophy. Throughout the paper, Vlad evinces the strengths, but also the limits of analyzing medieval theories with modern means and presuppositions. He argues strongly against considering Peter of Spain's theory of supposition as a quantification theory. In order to drive his point forward, Vlad compares Peter of Spain's approach to a more evolved later theory, that of William Ockham. In contrast to this achievement of maturity of the medieval logical tradition, Peter of Spain's supposition theory can only be characterized as weakly formal.

The second paper of the dossier is a substantial and detailed examination of reference in mathematical theories by Adrian Luduşan from Babeş-Bolyai University. Adrian explains the reasons behind a shift in the construal of mathematical reference, from singular mathematical terms to entire theories. There are two main arguments that have determined this major turn: the permutation argument and Benacerraf's famous identification problem. The former shows that truth-values and truth-conditions fail to fix the reference of singular mathematical terms, while the latter challenges the objecthood of natural numbers. Mathematical structuralists address these issues by moving from numbers as fundamental mathematical objects to structures. The problem of reference is correspondingly transferred to theories as a whole. In order to refer determinately to unique structures, these theories have to be categorical (i.e., have only isomorphic models). However, categoricity can be proved only in a second-order framework, but this is not tantamount to a resolution of the philosophical problems (as, most notably, Putnam's *just more theory* criticism seems to show). For the remainder of the paper, Adrian engages with one particular solution that

was proposed to the problems generated by resorting to higher-order concepts and/or theories, that is, Lavine's version of internalism. Adrian's arguments are nevertheless easily extendable to internalism regarded from a global standpoint, that is, they are forceful refutations of the internalists' idea that internal categoricity is enough to secure the determinacy of reference of Peano Arithmetic.

The next paper is written by the author of this introductory piece, who is also one of the editors of the ERGO thematic dossiers, namely Mihai Rusu. My paper, then, focuses on another vital debate of contemporary analytic philosophy, the one concerning the nature (and, perhaps, the existence) of modal knowledge. In recent years, the focal point of the debate surrounding modal notions has shifted slowly, but surely from the abstract ground of possible worlds to the epistemology of modality, and most importantly, of metaphysical necessity. I examine two well-known realist epistemologies of modality, the Kripkean picture and Williamson's counterfactual account, and I conclude that for very similar reasons, both of them fail to explain adequately our knowledge of real necessity. Both of them aim to impose excessively strong and unrealistic constraints on the exercise of our (modal) imagination. It remains to be determined if any realist theory that appeals to the imagination as a source of modal knowledge is subject to a similar critique.

Finally, Paula Tomi, a PhD candidate at the University of Bucharest, discusses yet another hotly contested issue in analytic philosophy, that of truth and its paradoxes. She argues against two deflationist treatments of the Liar paradox, that is, Dorothy Grover's prosentential theory of truth and Gupta's minimalist view. Paula holds that the prosentential theory is too restrictive and also that Grover proposes a central distinction that does not have any other function than to show why the Liar may be ignored by deflationists. Gupta favours a minimalist approach to the paradoxes, insisting that the deflationist need only concern herself with the interpretation of the truth-schema. According to Paula Tomi, ignoring the Liar, as Gupta proposes, means the deflationist has to accept that the truth-predicate applies unrestrictedly, therefore opening her theory to the paradox.

