

Michael Frauchiger
Wilhelm K. Essler (Eds.)

Representation, Evidence, and Justification

Themes from Suppes



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General Foreword

Henri Lauener and the Lauener-Stiftung*

Mr. President of the University of Bern, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen:

Thank you very much for taking part in this great event. For this is the first presentation of the Lauener Prize by the Lauener-Stiftung.

Well, what is the Lauener-Stiftung, and first of all, who is Lauener?

Of course, this question is somehow wrong; it should be reformulated either as:

* “Who *was* Henri Lauener? ”, or as:

* “Who *is* Henri Lauener *to me*? ”.

Well, I do not intend to answer the question “Who *was* Henri Lauener? ” right here and now; for that would be somehow like a belated obituary.

And, in any case, you know him: You are familiar with what he did for developing philosophy in Switzerland, and for opening this beautiful country’s philosophical activities to the philosophical world of the 20th century in several respects: by the results of his own research, presented in impressive publications, by his teachings esp. at this central university of Switzerland, and – last but not least – by the numerous conferences he organized in Switzerland. He invited important colleagues from over its borders to these conferences. Thus he gave students and colleagues of this country the opportunity to become aware of the way these guests philosophized as well as the opportunity to establish contact with them and remain in contact with them.

By the way: I am sure, you are aware of the fact that Lauener and his contributions to contemporary philosophy are considered absent – from California to India – at least [to be repeated: *at least*] as much as in his native country.

* Address of the President of the Lauener-Stiftung at the Lauener Prize Award Ceremony 2004.

But let me try to give a short answer to the second question: “Who *is* Henri Lauener *to me?*”

Well, when he died, I lost a friend, a real close friend, a comrade! Of course, he was not my *only* friend, by far not. But, by far, he was my *best academic* friend, or, to be more precise: He still *is* my best academic friend. Of course, with regard to his body, he is dead. But with regard to his mind, in some sense he is still accompanying me.

Maybe, in *some* respects it seemed *very hard* to become his friend as well as discussing with him. But, as *I* see it, it was *very easy* to become his friend and also to discuss with him. For his behaviour was not unpredictable, by far not.

To Henri Lauener, philosophy was not a mere job, a Beruf, but a Berufung, an inner call that he had to obey. And to him, therefore, presenting philosophy was much more than holding some position at the university. For him, philosophizing did not stop when he left his office; on the contrary: he insisted that a philosopher never ever must be thinking A, speaking B, and doing C. In this way, by continuously *practising* this *basic attitude*, his way of life was straightforward. And therefore, it was very easy for me to become his Freund, since in this respect we were on the same wavelength. In *this* way – and, of course *only* in this way – it was very easy to be his Freund.

How to be kind and firm at the same time is what I learned from him in being a Freund. And especially in *this* sense and in *this* aspect, Henri will still be with me as long as I am alive.

Along with that basic attitude, it was very easy to discuss with him: starting during early evening in some small restaurant at the Lac Léman, and ending that discussion perhaps sometime late after midnight. But, while it was easy to discuss with him, it was by far not easy to in the end win such a discussion. Of course, he did not use any rhetoric just for the sake of winning; nevertheless, his voice was somehow powerful. But things of that kind do not impress me.

What *was* indeed impressive to me was the following: During these discussions regarding the relations between philosophizing and developing one’s way of life he presented the sounder arguments almost every time – well, *not* exactly *every* time; in the few cases when my arguments turned

out to be more profound he eventually accepted them.

Also, it was easy to discuss with him detailed problems of philosophy, despite occupying slightly different standpoints. For his epistemological point of view was something like an undogmatic holism, whereas my position is a strictly non-holistic one, accepting of course the *accurate* results of holism as being helpful. Differences of that kind never ever became obstacles within our discussions or conversations.

Living and philosophizing, these two things were indivisible for him, like the two sides of the same coin; and he maintained both at least up to that time when he lost his beloved small daughter, his beloved wife, his beloved mother, and his beloved dog in rapid succession.

Up to that time he regarded accurate philosophizing as being most valuable to life in general and to his own life in particular, and vice versa. Of course, after the above mentioned bereavements he still regarded philosophizing and living, both being firmly interrelated, as most valuable. But with regard to his own life, an unfortunate pessimism began to arise and settle within his mind. Contrary to all that he had done and effected, he increasingly clung to the misconception that his work and therefore his life were without any value.

This was the first and, according to my experiences, the only time where he became inaccessible to well-founded rational arguments and attempts to encourage him.

Nevertheless, the *value* of *accurate* philosophizing, *this* he continued to promote and to support with all his heart. Therefore, in his last will, he decreed that all his mobile and immobile properties should be sold after his death, and that a Stiftung – a foundation – for the purpose of promoting accurate philosophizing was to be his legacy. While visiting him at Alexandra hospice, where he spent the last period of his life, as well as during telephone conversations, he explained the objective and procedure of his will:

The objective of this Stiftung is twofold: on the one hand the objective to present deserving representatives of accurate philosophizing to the younger talents so as to encourage them; on the other hand the objective to support these young talents themselves. This is to be done in the following manner:

In the 1st, 3rd, 5th year etc. the prize winner will be a deserving philosopher honoured for his life's work.

In the 2nd, 4th, 6th year etc. the prize winner will be a young talent in *accurate* philosophizing.

In exactly this sense the Stiftungsrat of the Lauener-Stiftung decided unanimously that the prize winner of this year – and therefore also the first prize winner – is to be Professor *Patrick Suppes*.

Wilhelm K. Essler

Preface

Most contributions to this book were originally talks given at the 1st International Lauener Symposium in Berne, Switzerland, on 09 and 10 September 2004. The Symposium, organized by the Lauener Foundation, was held in honour of Patrick Suppes (Lucie Stern Professor of Philosophy, Emeritus, at Stanford University), who was awarded the first Lauener Prize for an Outstanding Oeuvre in Analytical Philosophy on the same occasion.

The present volume, though, is not designed as the proceedings of that symposium nor as a Festschrift for Suppes. It is meant, instead, as a series of extended academic conversations with Patrick Suppes, which mostly started long before the Symposium in 2004 and have been carried on since. The authors have been encouraged to implicitly respond, in their articles, to what had been debated in the substantial discussions which followed their lectures. In addition, Patrick Suppes has shown himself ready to write detailed commentaries on each of the articles. His comments do not only put a different critical perspective on each paper's topic and argumentation, they also illuminate some crucial aspects of Suppes' own work which are not easily available in the existing primary and secondary literature. The interview with Suppes at the end of the book was originally made during the Symposium and has subsequently been expanded by correspondence, thereby fitting well in the frame of a prolonged academic conversation. The book's purpose is to give the reader ample scope for finding out about the present development of a wide range of philosophical and methodological themes on which Suppes has set out seminal ideas.

This collection opens a new series by ontos verlag - the *Lauener Library of Analytical Philosophy* - which will present further constructive dialogues with distinguished philosophers. The new series provides an opportunity for leading authors in the field to connect their own problems and projects with the themes and perspectives of some classical exponents of analytical philosophy – those who have been awarded the Lauener Prize for an Outstanding Oeuvre in Analytical Philosophy.

But, what does it mean to deal with analytic philosophy today? Is ‘analytic philosophy’ not becoming an increasingly inclusive label, which gets constantly stretched, growing less and less significant and eventually pointless? It appears, indeed, that there is a trend towards an inflationary use of the term ‘analytic philosophy’, but that’s exactly what makes it appropriate to assemble influential analytical philosophers of exceptional merit, making them to stand out. For their exemplary oeuvres may illustrate those elements of the analytic tradition which are clearly worth retaining and developing further.

It is true though that the analytic tradition in philosophy has always been very heterogeneous, as regards the quite different metaphilosophical, epistemological, ontological, ethical, political, etc. positions which have been advocated within it. There has of course never been any analytic school of thought, apart from some variable movements (such as logicism, neopositivism, and naturalism) that never became universal within the tradition, so that a certain openness, pluralism, and pragmatism have always prevailed at last.

On the other hand, there has always been a common methodological denominator, since philosophers fully representative of the analytical tradition have always shown a strong concern for the clarity of their concepts, the neatness of their methods, and the conclusiveness of their explanations, that is - as Suppes puts it in a nutshell in the interview - a “concern with justification, evidence, and argument”. In particular, analytical philosophers have been making a serious effort to benefit, philosophically, from the manifold developments within mathematical logics and semantics, so as to establish standards of truly intersubjective communicability, soundness, and reliability (standards which need not necessarily be universal but contextually appropriate). There are undoubtedly some significant philosophers in the 20th century, such as Husserl and Cassirer, who are not usually classed to belong to the analytical tradition, but whose works clearly have the above-mentioned characteristics of analytical, or rather accurate, philosophizing.

Surely all these qualities of an analytical philosopher are in an exemplary way possessed by Patrick Suppes. In spite of their partly opposing philosophical views, the “undogmatic naturalist” Patrick Suppes and the “open transcendentalist” Henri Lauener are both truly analytical philoso-

phers who have critically and selectively tried out, improved, and sometimes exhausted the intellectual possibilities accessible to them, without really getting confined to them.

At this point, Wilhelm K. Essler and I would like to thank the authors assembled in this collection (Nancy Cartwright, Dagfinn Føllesdal, Steven French, and Stephan Hartmann) for their exceptional commitment to the project of this book. Many thanks also to our fellow members of the Foundation Council of the Lauener-Stiftung (Alex Burri, Stephan Hottinger, Dieter Jordi, and Daniel Schulthess) for their friendly consideration and encouragement. Furthermore we'd like to sincerely thank Rafael Hüntelmann at ontos verlag for his support and willing cooperation in setting up this new series, which is being edited on behalf of the Lauener-Stiftung. Finally, we'd like to express our very special thanks to Patrick Suppes for his extremely generous, open and active way of collaborating with us on this book.

Michael Frauchiger