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INTERVIEW SOURCES OF THE ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY IN SLOVENIA



Andrej Ule (1946) was born 1946 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. He graduated 1971 in mathematics and achieved M.A. (1974) and PhD (1981) in philosophy at the University of Ljubljana. He got in 1982-3 the Humboldt grant for the study of logic and theory of science in München, at the Institute for Logic, Theory of Science and Statistics. His current position: Professor of analytic philosophy and philosophy of science at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. Fields of interest: philosophy of logic, Wittgenstein's philosophy, epistemology, philosophy of science, comparative philosophy. Some of his recent books are: *Operationen und Regeln bei Wittgenstein* (Frankfurt/M, 1998); *Logos spoznanja (Logos of Knowledge)*(Ljubljana, 2002); *Dosegljivost resnice (Attainability of Truth)* (Ljubljana, 2004), *Znanost, družba, vrednote (Science, Society, and Values)*(Ljubljana, 2006), *Circles of Analysis: Essays on Logic, Mind and Knowledge* (Berlin, 2008).

Andrew Schumann: Logical tradition as well as tradition of analytic philosophy has deeply rooted in Slovenia, a small Central European country. How can it be explained? In a word why is it?

Andrej Ule: Analytic philosophy in Slovenia has its roots in the algebraic logic of the late 19th century and in the Meinong school from the beginning of the 20th century. Our first modern logician was Mihael Markič who at the break of the 19th and 20th century developed his own unique system of algebraic logic and grammar. Mihajlo Rostohar and Franc Veber, both widely recognized Meinong's pupils, also wrote on logic and epistemology, Veber actually being our first formal philosophy professor at the newly founded University of Ljubljana. I also have to mention a well-known Meinong's pupil Ernst Mally, who was of Slovene descent, but renounced his Slovenian origin at the wake of the Second World War. Mally was an expert on deontic logic, ontology and epistemology. Unfortunately, in the aftermath of the Second World War the philosophy in Slovenia completely broke off with previous schools of thought and for some time Marxist dogmatism prevailed. Luckily enough, some philosophers and intellectuals maintained the free spirit and this is especially true of my professor of logic and methodology Frane Jerman at the Department for Philosophy at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, in the 1960's. Jerman was a real proponent of critical and rational thinking in philosophy, and he strongly supported open and democratic discussions and rejected any dogmatism. He taught (among other subjects) modern logic, methodology of science, Wittgenstein's philosophy and history of logical empiricism. His main interests were Russell's, Wittgenstein's and Schlick's philosophy and the logic of Jan Łukasiewicz. He also translated and commented some basic works of Russell and Wittgenstein in Slovene language. His lectures were characterized by unique and distinctive clearness of thought, substantial argumentation and absence of any ideologization. He inspired several students (myself included) to follow in his footsteps, embracing his philosophical method, analytical approach and critical orientation. At the end of 1970's and 1980's it became possible to study philosophy in the Western countries and some of Jerman's students took this opportunity further their studies of logic, analytic philosophy and/or philosophy of science in Western Europe and the USA. After our return to Slovenia we began with our own teaching and research in different areas of analytic philosophy. Currently, there are some bright, promising students and young researchers working in the broader field of analytic philosophy helping us spread and further develop analytical thought in Slovenia. Analytic philosophy is now one of the three main philosophical schools in Slovenia (phenomenological/hermeneutical, post-modernist/post-structuralist and analytic).

A.Sch.: What Slovenian schools of logic and philosophy of science could you talk about? What are their achievements?

A.U.: In Slovenia we have two main centers for the study of logic and philosophy of science. The first is at the Department of Philosophy at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, and the second is at the Department of Philosophy at the Faculty of Arts in Maribor. The Department in Maribor is mainly analytically oriented, while in Ljubljana there is a rich mixture of different philosophical orientations. It is also possible to study mathematical logic at the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics in Ljubljana, and (a certain amount of) applicative logic at the Faculty of Computer Sciences in Ljubljana. Some of the achievements of “Slovenian analytic school” is the establishment of two analytic journals (the international journal *Acta Analytica* and the national (Slovenian) *Analiza*), Bled’s annual international symposiums of analytic philosophy, and a myriad of books and articles in both national and international journals and publishing houses.

A.Sch.: Slovenia is one of the post-Socialist countries that were quite easily democratized and involved into the common life of the European Union. What are the reasons in your opinion? Perhaps it is connected with Slovenian ways of thinking cultured by analytic-philosophical tradition that is rational, objective, and technological in comparison with Marxism?

A.U.: Now, it is debatable whether post-Socialist countries, including Slovenia, are really fully democratized, and not merely partially or even *seemingly* democratized. One only has to take into account numerous examples of nationalism, ethnocentrism and other forms of exclusivism, which are on the uprise in Slovenia (as well as other ex-Yugoslavian countries). However, it is possible to maintain that in some general sense Slovenia did in fact witness a rather rapid decline and decomposition of the Socialist regime and the incorporation of marketing economy and pluralist democracy in its economical, social and political structures. The main reason for this was probably the long-standing and relatively strong tradition of civil right movements present in the Slovenian socialist regime which wasn’t as oppressive as it was in other parts of Yugoslavia. The main contribution of the analytic-philosophical tradition to this process was its predominantly scientific approach to economical and political issues. The resolution of the political crisis in Slovenia was therefore significantly de-emotionalized if compared to other Yugoslavian countries. I myself have written extensively on Popper’s falsificatory theory of science and his criticism of Marxism already in 1970’s and 1980’s. Some other analytical philosophers (Miščević, Potrč, Borstner etc.) have pointed out the negative effects of emerging nationalisms, serious problems pestering language ideologization etc.

A.Sch.: Slavoj Žižek is the most famous Slovenian philosopher and in general he is the only philosopher from the post-Socialist world who became a celebrity. Why did Žižek become on the crest of the wave? How is it related to his philosophical ideas, his public image, and his origin?

A.U.: I myself am not particularly fond of post-structuralist/post-modernist philosophy. I have been greatly impressed by Sokal’s critique of post-modernist and post-structuralist approaches to philosophy and science, and have even written an article on the topic. In my opinion, the main reason why Žižek has become so popular in the world was the fact that he brought out certain paradoxes and pains of modern society before anybody else did. His unique combination of different philosophical approaches (Lacanian psychoanalysis, Hegelian dialectics, Marxist criticism of Capitalism, and even fragments of analytical philosophy of language) provided him with a very flexible theoretical approach to almost any problem that was especially successful in pointing out all inherent paradoxes of a given issue. Žižek was successful in applying the Lacanian psychoanalytic theory and method on great historical events, e. g. the fall of the Berlin’s wall, at the end of 20th century. His extraordinary talent for rhetoric and humor contributed additionally to his

world-wide recognition. There is no doubt that Žižek is extremely good at bringing out problematic aspects of a situation, but his philosophy rarely provides plausible, adequate solutions.

A.Sch.: Science has rapidly changed since knowledge began to be reduced to technologies in the late 20th century. How does it influence philosophy of science? What are the new trends? Is the definition of science the same?

A.U.: The increasingly applicative value of scientific research that was reflected primarily in numerous technological achievements was responsible for temporary domination of positivist, pragmatist and operationalist conceptions of science. In this view, a scientific theory was merely a summary (or sum total) of actual and potential empirical evidences and experimental operations. In the last twenty years or so, however, it is possible to notice a revival of interest in some fundamental theoretical, even philosophical questions within the framework of fundamental scientific disciplines. For example: the nature of physical reality, the role of the observer in contemporary cosmology and quantum mechanics, the issue of emergent structures in biology, the mind-body problem in cognitive sciences etc. The answers to these questions demand a profound theoretical framework founded on serious philosophical reflection. This new approach transcends the limits of mere technological and operational consequences, and opens new and interesting horizons in the field of philosophy and theory of science.

A.Sch.: What are the perspectives of development of science? How does the role of logic increase or decrease?

A.U.: The trends suggest a renewed mutual and two-way respect and interest among scientific in philosophical schools of thought. In this process, the role of logic is not limited solely to rational reconstruction of scientific language, but also plays a key role in knowledge production. I believe that, in the future, the development of new scientific theories and even paradigms will be closely and associated with computerized modeling of scientific hypotheses and theories, and of course logics will play a fundamental role in constructing appropriate computer programs and models.