

General Outline

Reference to events—things that *happen* or *occur*, such as Brutus's stabbing of Caesar or Alf's falling in love with Beth—is a pervasive feature of human thought and language. Moreover, the event concept plays a dominant role in the formulation and analysis of a wide variety of philosophical issues, such as causation, the mind-body problem, or the nature of time. The aim of this seminar is to set up the main coordinates for an understanding of this concept and for a critical assessment of its philosophical implications and applications.

Topics to be discussed: the role of events in the logical and semantic analysis of natural language; their metaphysical status; their identity and individuation criteria; the distinction and classification of various types of events and event-like entities (such as processes and states, and perhaps facts); their role in the philosophy of action and causation; their role in the philosophy of space and time.

Requirements

The course will be run as a seminar. Requirements for E-credit: active participation, a short seminar presentation (20%) and a final paper (80%). Requirement for R-credit: active participation and short seminar presentation.

Readings

Recommended book: J. Bennett, *Events and their Names*, Hackett 1988. Other readings will be made available in electronic form. In addition, the following volumes are available at Butler Library and contain useful additional readings:

- R. Casati and A. C. Varzi (eds.), *Events*, 1996.
- D. Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events*, 1980
- J. Heil and A. Mele (eds.), *Mental Causation*, 1995
- J. Higginbotham, F. Pianesi, and A. C. Varzi (eds.), *Speaking of Events*, 2000.
- J. Kim, *Supervenience and Mind. Selected Philosophical Essays*, 1993
- E. LePore and B. McLaughlin (eds.), *Actions and Events: Perspectives on the Philosophy of D. Davidson*, 1985
- L. B. Lombard, *Events. A Metaphysical Study*, 1986
- T. Parsons, *Events in the Semantics of English. A Study in Subatomic Semantics*, 1990
- K. Pfeifer, *Actions and Other Events*, 1989
- B. Schein, *Plurals and Events*, 1993
- B. Taylor, *Modes of Occurrence: Verbs, Adverbs and Events*, 1985
- C. Tenny and J. Pustejovsky (eds.), *Events as Grammatical Objects*, 2000
- J. J. Thomson, *Acts and Other Events*, 1977
- J. E. Tiles, *Things That Happen*, 1981
- B. Vermazen and M. Hintikka (eds.), *Essays on Davidson: Actions and Events*, 1985
- S. Zucchi, *The Language of Propositions and Events*, 1993

An extensive bibliography on the topic can be found in the following volume (a copy of which will be made available in electronic form):

- R. Casati and A. C. Varzi, *Fifty Years of Events. An Annotated Bibliography 1947–1997*, 1997.

Tentative Schedule

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW (WEEK 1)

- R. Casati and A. C. Varzi [1995], 'Events – Introduction'

EVENTS AND LOGICAL FORM (WEEKS 2–4)

- A. Kenny [1963], *Action, Emotion and Will*, Chapter 7
- D. Davidson [1967], 'The Logical Form of Action Sentences'
- T. Parsons [1985], 'Underlying Events in the Logical Analysis of English'
- T. Parsons [2000], 'Underlying States and Time Travel'
- J. Bennett [1988], *Events and their Names*, Chapter 11
- T. Horgan [1978], 'The Case Against Events'
- P. M. S. Hacker [1982], 'Events, Ontology, and Grammar'

THE NATURE OF EVENTS (WEEKS 5–6)

- P. F. Strawson [1959], *Individuals*, Sections 1.6–1.7
- R. M. Chisholm [1970], 'Events and Propositions'
- D. Davidson [1970], 'Events as Particulars'
- J. L. Brandl [2000], 'Do Events Recur?'
- J. Kim [1976], 'Events as Property Exemplifications'
- M. Brand [1989], 'Events as Spatiotemporal Particulars: A Defense'
- W. V. O. Quine [1985], 'Events and Reification'
- J. Bennett [1996], 'What Events Are'
- L. Lombard [1986], *Events*, Chapters 8-9
- A. Quinton [1979], 'Objects and Events'

EVENT IDENTITY AND INDIVIDUATION (WEEKS 7–9)

- G. E. M. Anscombe [1957], *Intention* §§23–26
- D. Davidson [1969], 'The Individuation of Events'
- J. J. Thomson [1971], 'The Time of a Killing'
- A. Goldman [1971], 'The Individuation of Actions'
- J. Bennett [1973], 'Shooting, Killing, and Dying'
- D. Davidson [1985], 'Adverbs of Action'
- K. Pfeifer [1989], *Actions and Other Events: The Unifier-Multiplier Controversy*, Chapter 5
- N. Unwin [1996], 'The Individuation of Events'
- A. Varzi [2002], 'Events, Truth, and Indeterminacy'

THE STRUCTURE OF EVENTS (WEEKS 10–11)

- A. P. D. Mourelatos [1978], 'Events, Processes, and States'
- J. J. Thomson [1977], *Acts and Other Events*, Chapter 4
- J. Bennett [1988], *Events and their Names*, Chapter 10
- F. Pianesi and A. C. Varzi [1996], 'Events, Topology, and Temporal Relations'

EVENTS, CAUSES, AND ACTIONS (WEEKS 12–13)

- D. Davidson [1967], 'Causal Relations'
- Z. Vendler [1967], 'Causal Relations'
- D. Davidson [1970], 'Mental Events'
- D. Davidson [1993], 'Thinking Causes'
- J. Hornsby [1993], 'Agency and Causal Explanation'