Brice Halimi (University Paris Cité)
Genericity in Mathematics

[abstract]

My talk will devoted to defending the following claims.

1. Metaphysicians often take the possibility to refer to « things in general » or to « everything » for granted, in particular because it seems to be granted by logic. However, it is not, and « anything » is the concept to analyze first.

2. Set-theoretic genericity is the principle according to which, given any set, the reference to any (arbitrary) member of that set is warranted. It may seem to be the main figure of genericity, if not the only one. However, it is not, and other forms of genericity deserve consideration in mathematics (and elsewhere).

3. As standard modern logic has it, the domain of a variable cannot be conceived of as the result of a variation, and the notion of variation is considered to be foreign to logic. However, it is not, which is related to there being other conceptions of mathematical identity than that which underpins the standard modern understanding of variables.