

Simo KNUUTILLA and Jaakko HINTIKKA (eds.), *The Logic of Being. Historical Studies*. Dordrecht: D.Reidel, 1986.

The main object of study in this collection is the status of a theory, ascribed to Frege, popularized by Russell and widely accepted by the last two generations of teachers in logic. The theory discriminates four meanings of the term "being".

Frege, this theory claims, discovered that "is" designates (i) *Existence*: "God is"; (ii) *Predication*: The Copula in "John is ill"; (iii) *Identity*: "The morning star is the evening star"; and (iv) *Class inclusion*: generic implication in "If something is a horse, it is an animal".

However, when historians look at classical Greek philosophy, they discover that neither Greek language, nor the expressed convictions of great thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle agree completely or even partially with the Frege-Russellian orthodoxy. Philosophical logicians (more precisely the influential Jaakko Hintikka - the coeditor of this series) also attack it as being far from obvious from the point of view of the semantical and logical analysis of natural language. As a result, it becomes both necessary and useful to gather evidence against the "Fregean thesis" regarding the ambiguity of "is" in order to evaluate its force. The prosecution stands accused!

It might be a good strategy for the interested reader to start with the last essay by Leila Haaparanta "On Frege's concept of being". This essay shows convincingly that Frege's analysis of "is", far from being philosophically neutral, is strongly influenced by Kant. Kant, a staunch realist, combines with his strong conviction "that reality is", the impossibility (equally strongly asserted) to know *what it is*". He is thereby compelled to make the strongest possible distinction between "is" as copula of predication and as an expression of class inclusion on the one hand (both applications of his categories to the world of the

senses), and "is" as "exists" (simultaneously a transcategorical instrument to reach out to the transcendent external world and a "modality" (the modality of "actuality" in the fourth region of categories, the category of modality) on the other. At least more than half of the accepted "Fregean" doctrine is derivable from Kant's statement "Being is not a predicate" (and from the rest of the "Critique of Pure Reason"). The analysis of "is" in "identity" is less conclusive. Although Haaparanta discovers no less than four meanings of identity in Frege (if accepted, this would even multiply the ambiguity of "is" in the "accepted doctrine" under attack), the relations between these four meanings do not become completely clear. Here also the author discovers Kant: "An identity statement concerns objects in themselves, while predication belongs to the sphere of our reason" (p. 284). The reader who is not convinced might then immediately look into Hintikka's own "Kant on Existence and Predication". Hintikka plays down the Frege-Kant connection as much as he can, even if he cannot completely deny it. He does not indicate other roots for Frege's doctrine however.

Anyway, the reader will realize that the fourfold meaning of "is", that he has learned "dogmatically" in school, is not "evident" but an outgrowth of deep (though always uncertain) philosophical thought. Having come to this conviction, he will be motivated to consult the intricate philosophical, logical and philosophical evidence. This reviewer has more than enjoyed the painstaking and path breaking studies of Charles Kahn (summarizing his book on the topic), and of Benson Mates who is willing to take Plato not as a fool but as a thinker worthy of being taken seriously when he tells us that "Beauty is beautiful" (a source of scandal for generations). However, what is the relevance of historical linguistic studies to philosophy? Either they are relevant or they are irrelevant. If they are centrally relevant, they should not be provincial; in such a case, it is to be deplored that in a book of this type there is a thorough study of "being" in Greek, a short paragraph on English by Dancy, but no study at all of "being" in other, either classical, modern European or non European languages. If historical linguistic studies are only subordinate instruments in the study of great thinkers, then it would still be necessary to do for Latin, English, French, German (indeed all languages in which important philosophers have expressed themselves) what Kahn and Owen have done for Greek. This is no negative comment (we should be grateful to have what we have), but simply an attempt to encourage others to go further in the direction chosen here and a warning not to be immediately swayed by very incomplete

linguistic evidence.

What evidence there is in Greek, according to Kahn, points to the fact that existence is systematically subordinated to predication: "to be" is always "to be a definite kind of thing". For a man to exist (being=existence) reduces to his "being" (copula) a rational animal. According to Kahn, it is a linguistic universal in all languages that can be used in a descriptive way to distinguish between truth and falsity and to relate truth to a description of things as they are *not*! It is particular to Indo-European languages, however, that "a locution for "reality" in this sense should be provided by a verb whose primary function is to express predication and sentencehood" (p. 22).

Having arrived at the conclusion on philological evidence, this reviewer can only notice the absence of the great opponent of this theory, namely, Martin Heidegger in this collection. (He is not referred to, except in some scathing and superficial sentences by Russell M. Dancy on p. 63.) So many pages of this excellent book provide excellent ammunition against Martin Heidegger's contentions that it would have been only fair to have his point of view represented by a competent expositor.

The history of philosophy contained in this very rich collection provides us with an impressive array of philosophers some of whom subscribe to part of the Fregean doctrine; some who assert, to the contrary, the unity of all meanings of "is"; and some of whom subscribe to very different subdivisions of meanings of the same term. In a short review, I can only recommend reading these important analyses; warn that the impossibility of being able to place the doctrines of being in the global systems of the philosopher under scrutiny will compel the reader to use original and the authoritative commentators. I lack competence, time and desire to take stands on the diverse claims made by the historians of philosophy at work.

One last word regarding the evidence adduced (coming from the logic of natural languages) by Jaakko Hintikka. We are taught that Aristotle considers one eminent meaning of "is": substances capable of independent existence and characterized by singular identities are "eminently real", while other types of beings falling under other categories are in a "derived", yet authentic way, real. (E.g., essential properties "are" as characterizing substances.) Our teachers then, in general, conclude that Aristotle asserts "a systematic ambiguity of meaning for being". (This is by no means identical to the Fregean doctrine because the reality of matter and form, essence and existence, actuality and potentiality are the deep dividing lines here.) Jaakko Hintikka accepts the challenge and claims that even this

totally non-Fregean "multiplicity of meanings of being" is in fact as illusory as Frege's own. Aware of logical type theory in modern logic, having developed a theory of questions himself (by considering natural languages as many sorted languages, the variables of which range over a multiplicity of domains, something which he introduces in order to answer the different types of questions that are naturally asked), he holds the view - referred to by several of his Finnish or American collaborators, students and friends in the present volume - that "being" in Aristotle and in natural language does *not* have a multiplicity of "meanings" but is *used* in a multiplicity of "senses". We have, in the twentieth century, heard so many disputes about Wittgenstein's "the meaning is the use" that whenever a writer - in his study of other problems (like here Hintikka studying ontology) - states that the "meaning" can be *one* while the "uses" are *many*, we would expect to get a spirited defense of this "contested", even if true, hypothesis. This reviewer wants to warn the reader that he will not get this defense here. A perusal of Hintikka's other writings about the topic will be necessary.

Finishing the book, the reader will have lost innocence, i.e., the convictions about the clear and distinct fourfold way of Frege will have disappeared. Losing innocence, he will also lose certainty: no other equally systematic and clear doctrine about the many uses of "being" have appeared. Lack of innocence and absence of certainty produce freedom for construction; but they also generate confusion. The conclusion that every analysis of being is solitary within a total system of philosophy and that it cannot be derived from a neutral analysis of language is a definite, though frightening, step forward. It would be interesting to spell out the metaphysical presuppositions of Jaakko Hintikka - doing to him what his students do for others in general, and to Frege in particular. Among these philosophical presuppositions, this reviewer is struck by at least two: 1) Jaakko Hintikka believes that his own brand of philosophical logic is an adequate tool for the analysis of philosophical systems of the past on one hand, and for everyday language on the other. The methodological difficulties of performing such analyses (exhibited by the fact, that even here, only a small minority of the historians of philosophy use logic) while avoiding anachronism or projections in the understanding of alien philosophies, and avoiding logicizing in the analysis of non formal speech, are very great and deserve deeper study than has been attempted here. This reviewer believes that a case can be made in favor of the use of this tool for these purposes, but would have preferred to encounter some recognition of the problem in this

collection. 2) The crystalline abstraction of the ontology presented here, without any reference at all to the history of religion, of culture, of science and of society expresses an implicit decision to consider these factors as irrelevant (or at least as of secondary importance). The present reviewer can only state his disagreement. Historical study could easily show that ontology is, in large parts, determined by factors that are completely neglected here (except in some passing references to the relations between the being of God and the world, and the Trinitarian enigma).

I conclude: The editors are to be congratulated for bringing together such wealth of information about so many deep and intricate problems. The lack of unity is unavoidable; however any reader interested (and reasonably well versed in) either the logic of natural language, or the history of philosophy or ontology as such will read this collection with profit.

Leo Apostel