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Book Reviews

Timothy Williamson, *The Philosophy of Philosophy*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing 2007, pp. XIV + 332, ISBN 9781405133968.

If you are a professional philosopher, or a professional philosopher in training, you have probably been asked what it is you are doing when doing philosophy. Timothy Williamson's latest book is an exercise in making sense of that peculiar undertaking. The first half of the book is critical: it is devoted to undermining the idea that philosophy is an enterprise primarily concerned with analyzing the structure of language or thought. The upshot of this portion of the book is the thought that analyticity cannot do the kind of philosophical work philosophers since Frege have hoped it would. Williamson believes it is time for a different conception of the methodology characteristic of philosophy. Developing and articulating a few potential alternatives is the project of the second half of the book.

Williamson's writing is technical, dense, full of argument, and at times difficult to follow; getting a good grasp of the book is a genuine chore, and I am not fully convinced the task is worth the payoff. I will begin by sketching the two arguments central to Williamson's critique of analyticity, and then I will turn to the central features of his alternative project.

Williamson begins with a bit of recent philosophical history, specifically its turn toward linguistic and conceptual methodologies. He traces this methodological turn back to the early twentieth century work of the Vienna Circle, which was itself heavily influenced by the thinking of Frege, Russell, and Wittgenstein. This approach became canonized as the correct methodological approach as it was adopted by various individuals occupying the Wykeham Chair at Oxford University. (It is worth noting that the Wykeham Chair currently belongs to Williamson. That fact goes some way in explaining the motivation for the book: Williamson sees himself as importantly positioned to influence the direction of philosophy, and this book is a platform to make sure it is developed in the right direction.) According to this canonical approach, the object of philosophy is to understand the structure of thought, and the best way of getting at that structure is through an analysis of the structure of language. But for Williamson, such an approach misses the intimate connection between

reality and the structure of thought and language. If the methods of philosophy are not firmly planted in the way the world is, which is from Williamson's perspective the mistake of conceptual and linguistic methodologies, we end up with ideas that are no closer to the truth than those with which we began.

Despite his criticism of the linguistic turn, Williamson recognizes the need to address controversial issues about the structure of thought and language. The second chapter is devoted to explaining the tendency of philosophers to respond to tough philosophical questions by offering analyses of those structures. According to this approach paradigmatic philosophical questions tend to be debated in terms of informal argument—that is, arguments whose form and content are not wholly determinable—it is necessary to clarify and analyze the structure of thought and language. The validity of informal argumentation does not simply depend on the form of particular arguments, but is determined in part by the underlying structure of natural language and thought. Consequently, sorting out which informal arguments are valid will require taking up the project of sorting out the sticky questions involved in understanding the structure of thought and language. But Williamson argues that there is a difference between sorting out the structural issues and engaging the philosophical questions that got things started. The logical precision and semantic clarity gained by investigating the structure of thought and language are important for appropriately investigating philosophical questions. Asking what philosophical questions are about in the first place.

The next two chapters show the inadequacy of investigating philosophical questions by means of methodologies that depend upon the analysis of thought and language. Chapter Three looks at different conceptions of *metaphysical analyticity*—the idea that analytic truths are true in virtue of their meaning alone—and argues that any such conception requires truth to be grounded in the way the world is; analytic truths cannot be merely semantic. Williamson has several arguments against metaphysical analyticity, but all seem to depend on one overarching idea: semantic facts (for Williamson ‘fact’ means ‘true proposition’), which are subject to stipulation, supervene on nonsemantic facts, which cannot be stipulated. In other words, analytic truths are supposed to be merely semantic, but they too must be grounded in something nonsemantic, something substantial. Thus, attempting to answer philosophical questions by focusing on *merely* analytic truths neglects the worldly grounding of those truths, which is, after all, what philosophers seek.

The next chapter looks at conceptions of *epistemological analyticity*—the view that analytic truths are true because we understand their constituent terms or concepts—and rejects these conceptions for similar reasons: there is no way to make sense of the idea that meaning does not

rest on facts about the world. Williamson again surveys several conceptions of epistemic analyticity and offers a frenzy of arguments against each candidate. As with metaphysical analyticity, there is a common basis behind his reasons for the rejection of epistemological analyticity. The broad idea is that assenting to analytic truths requires making a plausible case for 'understanding' that does not rest on anything substantial. For Williamson, our sense of 'understanding' is either too thin to be sufficient to explain our tendency to assent to analytic truths or it is too thick to avoid bottoming out in something substantial. In short, either we do not know why we assent to analytic truths or the reasons we assent to them depend on how things actually are. Either way, epistemological analyticity is not going to be able to do the kind of philosophical work its proponents think it should.

Having argued that neither metaphysical nor epistemic analyticity are adequate to the philosophical task of telling us how things are, Williamson turns to arguing for alternative approaches. Each of the remaining chapters is dedicated to developing various methods of carrying out philosophical enquiry. However, Chapter Five is the foundation for the five subsequent chapters. It explains the connection between our inherent cognitive capacity for counterfactual thinking and our ability to think about metaphysical modality. Williamson argues that our understanding of necessity and possibility is counterfactual, i.e. our understanding of necessity is built on understanding the following counterfactual conditional: if *A* had not been the case, a contradiction would have resulted. Similarly for possibility: *A* is possibly the case if and only if it is not the case that if *A* had been the case, a contradiction would have resulted. Given these formulations of necessity and possibility, together with Williamson's view that we have an innate cognitive capacity to think in terms of counterfactuals, our capacity for counterfactual thinking provides the means for thinking about metaphysical modality. Further, because imagination and conceivability tests are appropriate for assessing counterfactual conditionals, they are also appropriate for thinking about metaphysical modality.

The next three chapters explore this capacity for counterfactual thought. Chapter Six argues that thought experiments are not merely lessons in conceptual possibility. For Williamson, discussions of conceptual possibility itself are only interesting to those who theorize about concepts. However, philosophers with far wider concerns use thought experiments and therefore have a vested interest, claims Williamson, in offering them a robust interpretation and grounding. Fortunately, our capacity for reflecting on metaphysical possibility can do the job. Williamson's methodological toolkit is growing to include not only imagination and conceivability tests, but thought experiments as well. All allow us to think counterfactually about metaphysical possibility, which is philosophy's evidential basis.

Williamson also wants to oppose the tendency to psychologize evidence in philosophy. Williamson endorses *evidence neutrality*—the idea that whether something counts as evidence for some belief is at least in principle decidable. However, evidence neutrality invites skeptical worries, forcing a retreat from assertions about the world to assertions about our own mental states (If I am not sure the proposition "The twin towers fell on 9/11" can uncontroversially be used as evidence, I can at least be certain that "I believe the twin towers fell on 9/11" can). According to Williamson, this tendency to psychologize the evidence is ridiculous in the same way psychologizing evidence in the natural sciences would be ridiculous.

Williamson thinks that we have good reason to hold that our ordinary way of acquiring beliefs generally leads to our acquiring true beliefs. Our ability to refer to objects ties our awareness of these objects to those objects in the world of which we are aware. By using a principle of knowledge maximization to describe our theories of reference, we are assured that our references have a tendency to end up having true referents, thus blocking the skeptical worries about evidence.

The final chapter is a recommendation to do better. For the most part, Williamson thinks doing better involves adopting the conception of philosophy he has just finished propounding.

Overall, the book is challenging, ambitious, and filled with argument. It provides insight into a conception of philosophy that seems to motivate one of the discipline's most innovative authors. For that reason alone, it is worth reading and thinking about even if you think that philosophy goes beyond merely figuring out what there is.

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Jonathan Baron, *Against Bioethics*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press 2007, pp. XII+236. ISBN 9780262524780.

Like a vampire, the dream of ethics as quantitative science, embodied in Jeremy Bentham's "hedonic calculus," will not remain in its grave. Bentham's notion, according to which ethics is a science like Newtonian physics, is as dead as his mummy. But Bentham's undead dream lives on in contemporary accounts of utility based upon decision analysis. Jonathan Baron's *Against Bioethics* offers a clear, accessible account of how utilitarianism and decision analysis can be applied to issues in bioethics.

Accessibility is a virtue of Baron's book. Decision theory is a highly

technical field that employs complex mathematical models. This introductory work does not cover the mathematics of decision analysis in detail, but Baron clearly explains the concepts central to decision analysis and how it is applied in contemporary utilitarianism. Topics discussed include: expanded, expected, and multiattribute utility theory. Even those familiar with such topics will gain a better understanding of how they relate to utilitarianism and bioethics.

Baron's approach is interdisciplinary. He makes good use of examples from his home field of psychology, e.g. the use of psychoactive medication on children and issues involving informed consent, as well as demonstrating familiarity with recent philosophical and economic literature on utilitarianism. Yet this interdisciplinary approach does diminish the unity of the book; Baron's work can be seen as a model of how other disciplines might work with philosophy to develop frameworks for moral decision-making.

The bulk of Baron's discussion can be divided into issues related to moral theory in general and those related to the application of moral theory in biomedical contexts. I find Baron's overall approach to ethics to be problematic. He maintains that a "single, coherent, guiding theory" is needed in bioethics. But there are a number of internally coherent ethical theories; why choose utilitarianism over, say, Kantian deontology? It is not self-evident that a consequentialist theory such as utilitarianism is the correct one.

Baron claims that an advantage of utilitarianism is that it will "never yield decisions that clearly go against the good" of the people considered in utilitarian calculation (p. 4). But how does Baron define "good"? He seems to operate with a broad notion of "goodness" in the sense of "general utility," but this leaves unanswered the question of what this broader conception of "good" consists. To say that "good consequences are, by definition, good," simply begs the question of the nature of this good (p. 7). Baron claims that those who oppose utilitarianism are dependent on mere "intuition," but without a clear account of "goodness," is not Baron also dependent on "intuition"?

Baron also dislikes appeals to human nature. But is utilitarianism free of a theory of human nature? Utilitarianism holds that "good outcomes" are better than bad ones for human beings (and for other sentient beings as well). Even though Baron's notion of "good" is vague, he still holds that human beings are better off performing actions with "good consequences." Thus, human beings are the kinds of beings that enjoy "good things" of some kind, unlike a rock or a plant. So at least Baron's utilitarianism implies a theory of human beings as beings who enjoy good experiences. Every ethical theory assumes a theory of human nature. The issue is not whether an ethical theory is based on a theory of human nature; the issue is

which theory of human nature is the correct one.

Baron's worry about human nature turns on concerns about the "naturalistic fallacy," the notion that one cannot derive a normative statement about what a person ought to do from a descriptive statement about the way things are in nature. But this claim, dating back to Hume, has been questioned by, among others, Alasdair MacIntyre, who states in *After Virtue* (1984) that it is possible to move from the statement "John is a physician" to "John ought to do the things a physician ought to do." It is also possible to say "Mary is a human being," and derive (with additional premises) "Mary ought to do the things a human being ought to do." The inability to make an immediate inference from nature to ethics, or from "is" to "ought," does not imply that such an inference is impossible given intermediate premises.

Baron is a consistent consequentialist, stating that "Outcomes have value, but states do not…. Decision theory and utilitarianism assign utilities to outcomes, not to acts." (p. 30) Outcomes are treated in the same way in utilitarian calculation whether or not they arise from people's choices. Baron's analysis implies that motives do not matter in ethics except as they relate to utilitarian calculation. Yet, if person A pushes person B off a cliff with the motive of killing person B, surely this is different than the identical physical act in which person A is playing around with B and does not realize a cliff is present.

In addition, Baron raises and answers a question the deontologist might ask about utilitarianism: "Would autonomy be important to a utilitarian?" "Autonomy" is Kant's term that captures his view of the rational being having intrinsic value as a moral agent who gives the moral law to him/herself. Baron claims there is a good utilitarian justification of autonomy: each person knows how to maximize his or her own utility better than other people. This is not as strong a justification of autonomy as Kant presents; Baron is quite open to paternalism in situations in which it could lead to the greatest "good" for the greatest number of people.

Baron applies this utilitarian decision analysis to bioethics. Several topics are worthy of note. First, children diagnosed with conditions like attention deficit disorder are often placed in smaller classes, given extra time on tests, and many are also prescribed stimulant drugs such as Ritalin. Baron argues that such interventions have limited effectiveness from a utilitarian point of view; it would be better to place *all* students in smaller classes and give them extra time on tests if such options were affordable. This would yield the greatest increase of utility for all students. Baron also holds that if stimulant drugs are eventually shown to be effective in improving student performance, safe, and non-addictive, we should consider offering them to all students.

These claims raise interesting issues. Are students with these conditions

disadvantaged enough compared to other students so that offering them extra help is just? Another issue concerns offering stimulant drugs to all students—should powerful drugs be given for enhancement purposes rather than for treating a disease?

Genetic enhancement and cloning receive similar treatment. Baron suggests, e.g., that it would be more pleasant to live in a world of attractive people rather than unattractive ones. But to whose standards of attractiveness does he appeal? Standards of human attractiveness have varied cross-culturally and, given the passage of time, vary within the same culture. The question also arises as to whether an emphasis on physical attractiveness makes us less accepting of those who are not attractive, or worse, of those who are physically deformed.

Baron is dismissive of arguments such as those of Leon Kass against reproductive cloning. Kass (2002) has argued that such cloning goes against deeply rooted human emotions regarding family relationships, and reduces a child to a manufactured product (2). Baron does not as much argue against Kass as dismiss his arguments as merely emotional or based on intuition. But are such emotions, tied into human biological and social nature, really against reason? Might there not be a deeper human wisdom that goes beyond quantitative utilitarian calculation and decision theory? Clearly, Baron is trying to reduce, in the same line of tradition as Bentham, ethics to a quantitative science, avoiding all qualitative concerns. This form of ethics might suit Mr. Spock from *Star Trek*, but it hardly seems appropriate for living, breathing human beings who interact with one another in real relationships.

Baron's discussions about the practice of medical research are also deeply outcome oriented. Baron claims that Institutional Review Boards ("IRBs") tend to micromanage the projects they evaluate in ways that have little to do with the actual safety of the human subjects involved in the experiments. Instead, Baron suggests that the IRB functions best when it punishes abuse that occurs during the course of an experiment, rather than by trying to resolve all possible issues in advance. Baron offers a similar analysis of monetary incentives for participants in pharmaceutical research studies.

In Baron's theory of ethics, expert knowledge plays an important role. Since accurate data is essential for good decision analysis and utilitarian calculation, Baron believes that people should be educated in decision theory. Part of such education would include getting people to understand "the role of experts and expert knowledge" (p. 202). For Baron, such expertise is essential for the proper allocation of health care resources. But such an appeal to "expert knowledge" opens the door for "big brother" in a wide sense. Why not allow experts to make all ethical decisions, or at least those involving public policy, since they are the ones, supposedly, who

have the knowledge to make accurate quantitative predictions of the greatest good for the greatest number? This implies an extreme paternalism, and images of "a brave new world" come to mind.

So while Baron's *Against Bioethics* contains some interesting suggestions for public policy on certain issues, such as medical research, I would not recommend his general approach to ethics. Like Bentham's mummy, this approach should stay dead, perhaps attending a few philosophical meetings as "present, but not voting." The chief value of Baron's book lies in it being a clear introduction to contemporary utilitarian theory and decision analysis and the application of this approach to bioethics.

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Ryszard Legutko, *Traktat o wolności*, [*Treatise on Freedom*], Gdańsk: Słowo obraz terytoria 2007, pp. 246, ISBN 978-83-7453-763-6.

The book is divided into three chapters, each chapter dealing with a separate notion of freedom: negative freedom, positive freedom and inner freedom. This choice is quite fortunate, since the division covers almost all major conceptions of freedom to be found in the relevant philosophical literature.

Prof. Legutko accepts the famous distinction made by Isaiah Berlin in 1958 between negative and positive freedom (Berlin, 1969). For Berlin the negative liberty is "an area within which the subject – a person or a group of persons – is or should be left free to do or be what he is able to do or be, without interference by other persons," while positive freedom answers the question "[w]hat, or who, is the source of control or interference, that can determine someone to do, or be one thing rather than the other" (Berlin, 1969).

According to Legutko, negative freedom, defined as the "absence of

external coercion" (p. 11) is the most intuitive understanding of freedom. Nevertheless, the author does also give another description of that freedom. In his view, negative freedom is a "free space" (p. 12) and I am negatively free only if "no one is forcing me to do what I do not want to do" (p. 11). Positive freedom, on the other hand, is the "set of faculties and means allowing one to achieve one's intended goals" (p. 85); it is "the possibility of setting goals and achieving them" (p. 85).

Legutko rejects the argument against the notion of positive freedom according to which positive freedom cannot be distinguished from other notions like "wisdom, capabilities, wealth, power," and should therefore be rejected for the sake of linguistic purity (p. 86).

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The difficulty and the value of the reviewed book is its attempt to link a conceptual analysis of the notion of freedom with a more general historical and philosophical approach. What I mean here can be clearly seen on the example of coercion. Legutko connects the idea of negative freedom with the theory of the state of nature, as exemplified in the work of such contractualists as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke or Jean Jacques Rousseau. He does so in order to show that the situation of "maximal individual freedom" is the situation both of Robinson Crusoe and of an individual in the state of nature, whose life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."

My view is that Robinson Crusoe is certainly free of any type of external coercion, as there is no one who could coerce him, but an individual in the state of nature is not free from social coercion, as he can potentially be coerced by other individuals. Legutko mistakenly identifies the state of maximal freedom with the state of nature (p. 29). However, as Hillel Steiner observed "[i]t is common, and similarly mistaken, to regard the Hobbesian state of nature as a condition of maximum negative liberty. Mistaken, because although in it no legal officials get in the way of a person's acting, other people do" (Steiner, 1994, p. 53).

Secondly, the hypothesis of the state of nature is philosophically extremely dubious and one may even wonder why Legutko treats it seriously enough to be willing to base his reflections upon it. The concept of the state of nature was, in my view, a rhetorical tool aimed at justifying (and not explaining, as Legutko claims on p. 37) a particular political institution understood in a particular way, through the help of a theoretical and hypothetical account of its genesis.

Therefore its role is to justify *the sovereign state* by presenting it as emerging from the hypothetical contract. No wonder that the Hobbesian state of nature cannot be treated as the domain of maximal freedom – it was designed by its theorist as a temporary and uncomfortable condition which people leave in order to establish political institutions. Even for Legutko

negative freedom in the state of nature is "something we abandon" (p. 30) through the emergence of the political state.

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His acceptance of the theory of negative freedom also leads the reviewed author to another problem. If freedom is the absence of coercion, than one is negatively free if others don't coerce him. In the case of political freedom, where the agent of legal coercion is the state, the resulting undesirable conclusion is that our freedom could theoretically be given or taken away by the state officials.

Interestingly, and with accordance to the previous point, Legutko suggests the requirement of distribution of freedom (as one of variables distributed by a theory of justice), most probably by the state. To make this postulate more meaningful various contemporary authors have tried to formulate a conception of freedom susceptible of measurement (Legutko also mentions this requirement on pp. 122-123). The results of their efforts are in my view rather ambiguous (see: Oppenheim, 1961, Steiner, 1994, Carter, 1999, Kramer, 2003).

Legutko also claims that a beggar and Rockefeller are equally negatively free and differ only with respect to positive freedom (p. 86). In my view, if there are no legal obstacles for private property, then the beggar and Rockefeller are equally legally free to buy the property *for money,* but precisely because the beggar has no money (as opposed to Rockefeller), he will be prevented from obtaining the property without it (see: Carter 1999, p. 235). Contemporary theorists of negative freedom try to include elements of positive freedom in it in order to account for the beggar's plight. According to Matthew Kramer the beggar is not free if he is unable to achieve certain things, but he is not unfree if he is not prevented from it (see: Kramer, 2003, p. 3).

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According to an influential account of freedom by Gerald MacCallum, disagreements over the nature of freedom could be fruitfully conceptualized as disagreements over who is free from what to do what (MacCallum, 1967, p. 314). Thus the negative and positive conceptions of freedom can be interpreted as emphasizing different terms of the MacCallum scheme „x is free from y to do z," where x stands for the agents, y for preventing conditions, and z for actions.

After the unpacking of the concept of freedom under the guidance of MacCallum's analysis, the distinction between negative and positive freedom can maintain its usefulness, serving as an indicator of different political stances on freedom, liberal and illiberal ones. As Ian Carter

pointed out:

> [a] loose distinction between negative and positive freedom has [...] survived MacCallum's analysis, even though the reason for calling one kind of definition of freedom 'negative' and another 'positive' has as a result become less compelling. [...] After all, it retains the virtue of classifying different understandings of the constraints that people are or are not free from, and the actions that they are or are not free to perform, in such a way as to distinguish between liberals (in the broad sense of the term) and those who see themselves as more radical critics of liberalism. Thus, it is generally thought that those in the negative (or liberal) camp define freedom as the absence of *external*, *humanly imposed* obstacles to the performance of *any action whatsoever*. They therefore characterise the relevant constraints *narrowly* and the relevant actions *broadly* [...] In contrast, those who wish to define freedom more 'positively' can be seen as wishing either to characterise the relevant constraints more *broadly*, or to characterise the relevant actions more *narrowly*, or to do both of these things. (Carter, 1996)

How does the reviewed book fit into MacCallum's and Carter's analyses? First of all, in the case of negative freedom, it seems that prof. Legutko takes into account only the relevant constraints on actions (humanly imposed coercion) and assumes that the subject of freedom is a human being. However, it is not clear what counts as "relevant freedoms," whether freedom is limited every time somebody closes off the set of available actions, or only if he limits the set of desirable actions – in the latter case the amount of freedom would be influenced by desires (see: Kramer, 2003, p. 37, Carter, 1999, p. 119, see also p. 31 on relation between freedom and goals of action). In passing I might mention that a rather weak point of the conception of negative freedom is that many objects, not only humans, can easily be described as negatively free (this is the famous freedom of a "lever," to use Charles Taylor's expression, see: Taylor, 1998).

Similarly, in the case of positive freedom it is clear that the constraints element in that conception is the lack of resources and means, but it is not at all clear whether we are free to do anything that the possession of faculties and means allows us to do, or whether our freedom depends on the possibility of achieving desired goals. Not surprisingly, the reviewed author discusses under the same heading of positive freedom such different situations as that of the philosopher Boethius, who is positively free in prison because he has a limited goal and sufficient resources to reach it (it was sufficient for him to philosophise) and that of a tyrant who has the means to fulfil whatever wish he might have (see pp. 86, 114). I also had problems with distinguishing this conception from the conception of inner freedom, as the author sometimes mentions inner obstacles like impulses, desires and emotions (characteristic of inner freedom) as relevant obstacles of positive freedom (p. 97).

The reviewed author also takes notice that the notions of positive and negative freedom are linked to distinct views on human nature, nevertheless he still curiously sees the possibility of connecting them together, as persons may possess many combinations of the various types of freedoms (p. 238).

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To sum up, the distinction between negative and positive freedom is worth retaining, as it allows us to recover the political dimension of the various stances on freedom. Negative freedom usually expresses the ideology of classical liberalism (which emphasizes the importance of limited state coercion in business affairs), while "positive freedom" is apt to express various illiberal ideologies (e.g postulating the importance of a state in providing people with resources and opportunities, see: p. 134). All in all, I will venture to say that contemporary analytical positive or negative libertarians will argue that the distinctions included in *Treatise on Freedom* should be corrected in the light of MacCallum's analysis.

I have mentioned that both the value and the difficulty of the reviewed book lies in its analysis of contemporary ideas in the light of the history of ideas. Ryszard Legutko convincingly shows in Chapter Three of his treatise, devoted to the conception of inner freedom, that the currently popular notion of inner freedom as autonomy is historically rooted in the period of the Reformation, when various religious dissidents, beginning with Martin Luther, worked out a theory of freedom understood as autonomy of one's actions and decisions, "ownership of oneself" (p. 182).

In my view the above mentioned glorification of unencumbered choice led historically to the emergence and popularity in post-Christian Europe of a morally dangerous vision of man as primarily interested in how many doors are open to him, to use Isaiah Berlin's metaphor, and not whether his free choice is good or not. Legutko accurately observes that the consequence of the popularity of both negative and positive conceptions of freedom (lack of coercion and other constraints to achieve various goals) is social homogenization and increase of state power, since propagating freedom understood as a set of open options for action while ignoring any inquiry into the moral goodness of one's choices breeds various incompatible and irrational claims. The result is war of all against all and increased intervention of the all-powerful state, the Leviathan.

The last variety of inner freedom discussed by Legutko is freedom linked to the metaphysical "strong conception of the self" (p. 203). I am glad that professor Legutko brought this concept to general attention, as metaphysics is often ridiculed by contemporary analytic political philosophers. Europeans should rediscover that what is important in social and political life is not only freedom of choice, understood as possession of

as many options as possible, but the free choice of moral good, especially given the above-mentioned consequences of the negative and positive conceptions of freedom.

In my view, freedom primarily comes from our free will, i.e. our capacity to freely choose the means to achieve happiness (Aquinas, I, q. 83), understood as a power of the rational soul. This power allows us to freely choose our courses of action, even if that choice or/and its realization is in fact constrained by various physical and mental factors. This view surely doesn't lead to a massive coercion in the name of freedom and it directs our attention to the fact that man can only fulfil his *telos* through his free choice of proper courses of action and can effectively flourish only within bonds of a community.

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Joanna Odrowąż-Sypniewska, *Rodzaje naturalne. Rozważania z filozofii języka* [*Natural Kinds from the Point of View of the Philosophy of Language*], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper 2006, ISBN 83-7507-000-7.

The book *Natural Kinds from the Point of View of the Philosophy of Language* deals with various issues concerning natural kind terms used in natural language. It combines a presentation of views held by many contemporary philosophers with the author's critical comments and original proposals. The greater part of the book discusses the theories of meaning and denotation of natural kind terms created by S. Kripke and H. Putnam. The main thesis of the book is that while their theories are successful in criticizing the descriptive theory of natural kind terms, they fail to give an adequate account of natural kind terms semantics. The author of the book proposes a different version of semantic theory for natural kind terms, one which manages to bypass the problems connected with Kripke's and Putnam's theories.

The book consists of ten chapters. In the first two chapters Kripke's and Putnam's theories and their critique of the descriptive theory are presented. They also contain the statement that Putnam's Twin Earth experiment is based on a kind of equivocation and offer critical remarks about Putnam's conception of meaning. The third and fourth chapters deal with a large variety of arguments formulated against Kripke's and Putnam's theory. The most serious arguments (*the qua problem*, the problem of the indeterminacy of natural kind terms and the problems connected with the role of internal structural features) are presented in chapter four. Chapter five discusses different conceptions of natural kinds and in chapter six the author's own theory is formulated (which I will present in more detail below). Chapters seven and eight contain a critique of semantic and metaphysical conceptions of rigid designation of natural kind terms. The ninth chapter deals with the *a posteriori* necessity of true identity statements binding natural kind terms (postulated by Kripke). In the last chapter the author presents a two-dimensional semantics (in versions created by Chalmers, Kaplan and Stalnaker) and investigates their relevance for natural kind terms semantics (and concludes that they cannot give an adequate semantics for natural kind terms[1]).

[1] According to the author, Stalnaker's two-dimensional theory is a pragmatic one and does not add anything significant to the semantic theory. Kaplan's and Chalmer's two-dimensional theory is criticized for an unclear notion of a 'primary intension' and its inability to explain how right extensions of natural kind terms in the other possible worlds are determined.

According to Putnam's theory an object belongs to a certain natural kind when it has a proper essence, which is usually some kind of hidden structure (like H_2O in the case of water). However, ordinary members of a society do not need to know such an essence to use natural kind terms properly. To be a competent user of a natural kind term one needs only to know a stereotype connected with that natural kind. A stereotype usually consist of some easily perceived macroscopic features (like, in the case of water, being liquid, being colorless, etc.). Only experts need to know what the essential features are and how to test which objects have them. A stereotype does not determine the extension of natural kind terms (which Putnam tries to show in the Twin Earth experiment).

Both Kripke and Putnam accept the so-called causal theory of reference. According to that theory the reference of a new term is determined by an act of ostension (or sometimes by using initial description) and then is passed by a communication chain. In the case of natural kind terms a new term is introduced by pointing at some similar objects which are supposed to be paradigmatic specimens of a certain natural kind. A natural kind term refers to all objects which have the same important features (essence) as paradigmatic specimens.

The author claims that there are several issues which make Kripke's and Putnam's theories very problematic. The first of them is the so-called *qua problem*. An individual object can fall under many kinds, especially under many, hierarchically organized, natural kinds. For example, the animal which falls under the kind *Oryctolagus cuniculus* (the European rabbit) also falls under the natural kind *Oryctolagus*. In such a case (and it is a very common case) ostention is not sufficient in determining a reference of a natural kind term. When introducing a new natural kind term only by pointing at some object, we do not know which of the many natural kinds we are denoting.

The second issue (in fact connected with the first) is that of indeterminacy. We can imagine a situation in which we know only one kind of apple, which is called by using the natural kind term "apple." Then an other kind of apple is discovered. In such situation we can either restrict the reference of the term "apple" to the original kind of apple, or treat it as a more general term which refers to apples of all kinds. It seems that Kripke's and Putnam's theories do not give us a criterion which tells us what should happen in such a case. More generally, it could be stated that Kripke and Putnam underestimate the role of the decision in determining the extension of natural kind terms.

Another problem is connected with the notion of the hidden structural essence. Treating structural properties as essence (like the DNA code or chemical structure) is very controversial in the case of biological kinds – there are different types of classification in biology and many of them are

not based on the DNA structure but on some relational properties. Structural essence interpreted as chemical structure is also problematic. For example, the chemical structures of graphite and diamond are the same, but they seem to be different natural kinds (there are similar problems with different isotopes of elements and with minerals whose different macroscopic features are determined not by differences in the chemical structure, but by the presence of a contamination, as in the case of rubies and sapphires).

It is also claimed that Putnam's Twin Earth example does not prove that natural kind terms are not descriptive. In the example, people who visit Twin Earth think, in the beginning, that the term "water" has the same meaning there as on Earth. Later they discover that on Twin Earth the term "water" means the substance XYZ. Because of this they start thinking that on Twin Earth the term "water" has a different meaning than the term "water" on Earth. The author notices that in Putnam's experiment the verb "to mean" is understood as "has extension" and the noun "meaning" is used in the ordinary way (for example: "bachelor" has the following meaning: an unmarried man). In that case, to get the conclusion that the meaning of the term "water" on Earth and Twin Earth are different, it must be assumed that terms which denote different objects have different meanings, but this is not an assumption that a supporter of descriptionism would accept.

The author of the book proposes the following conception of natural kinds: (1) paradigmatic specimens of a natural kind are created by nature, (2) typical examples of specimens have very complex co-properties, (3) specimens of a natural kind have a common hidden essence (it could be either structural or relational), (4) a natural kind (we can call it 'B') should be the *Millian kind*: there is no superset A, such that A satisfies conditions (1)-(3) and the co-property of the typical specimens of B is different from the co-property of the typical specimens of A only by a single property F (and so, for example, the set of white cats is not a natural kind).

The meaning of any natural kind term 'B' consists of three elements (this is inspired by Dummett's conception): (1) the criterion of recognizing the referents of 'B'—this works similarly to Putnam's stereotype, (2) the criterion of being the referent of 'B'—this plays the role of Putnam's essence, but not all essential features have to be unobservable, they can also be the macroscopic external features, (3) the relation of subordination of criterion (1) to criterion (2). Competent users of a natural kind term should know criterion (1) and be aware of the relation of subordination from point (3).

The reference of natural kind terms is determined both inductively and ostensively. The author describes the three steps of such a procedure: firstly, one should point out positive and negative exemplars of the natural kind specimens (it is the ostensive part). Secondly, it should be stated that

the designatum of the introduced natural kind term is everything what belongs to the same kind as the positive exemplars, and the relation of belonging to the same kind is a relation of resemblance in virtue of some important physical properties. Finally, it should be determined what those important physical properties are (those two parts are inductive).

It seems that Putnam's problem with hidden structural essence is resolved by simply assuming that the essential features do not have to be structural, inner or unobservable. The problems connected with the issue of indeterminacy can be successfully overcome by treating the denotation of the natural kind terms relatively to people's decisions, ways of categorization and the state of science. The author agrees that natural kind terms are indeterminate. When we face a new discovery which could alter our previous classification (as in the case of the two kinds of apple described above), we determine the denotation of the natural kind term by a decision (which is probably more or less arbitrary).

The qua problem can be solved in a similar way (however, this is not explicitly said in the book). An object can fall under many natural kinds and by mere ostension we cannot determine to which of them we are referring to by using a natural kind term. However, if we can choose the important physical feature on which the relation of belonging to the same kind is based (which is of course relative to the decision and the current paradigm in science), we can determine the denotation of the natural kind term. It seems that the main problems connected with Putnam's theory are grounded in the assumption that the extensions of natural kind terms reflect the objective division, created by nature, of existing objects into natural kinds. In the account proposed by Odrowąż-Sypniewska the division of objects into natural kinds is influenced both by the way in which nature functions and by human actions.

In the later parts of the book the author claims that neither semantic nor metaphysical theories of rigid designation can be properly applied to natural kind terms. Semantic theories, in which natural kind terms refer to abstract objects, fail to distinguish natural kind terms from other general terms (like the term 'bachelor'). Metaphysical theories assume that natural kind terms are 'rigid applicators' – they apply to the same objects in every possible world (and so they connote the essential features of objects). The author's view is that such conceptions are not adequate for biological natural kind terms because according to biological theories belonging to a kind can be a contingent property of an object.

Kripke's thesis that true identity statements binding natural kind terms are *a posteriori* necessary because natural kind terms are rigid designators also meets with criticism. In the statement like "water is H_2O" the term "H_2O" is a descriptive term, so it can be only rigid *de facto* (not *de jure*). However, the term 'H_2O' is rigid *de facto* only if it denotes the same

substance in every possible world, so saying that the term 'H_2O' is rigid we are assuming what needs to be proved. The author of the book supports the view (known from the works by Salmon) that no important metaphysical statements can be inferred from semantic assumptions.

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Edward Nieznański, *Sformalizowana ontologia orientacji klasycznej* [*Formalized Ontology inspired by Classical Philosophy*], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego 2007, pp. 126, ISBN 978-83-7072-439-9.

The reviewed book is a publication in the analytical style, making use of the formal logic methods. It is the final product of the author's research into the ontological foundations of Aristotelian philosophy. The book consists of a formalized presentation of the entire system of concepts that generate substantial ontology. The presented formalisms are the result of his interpretation of a selection of Aristotle's texts on ontology. This interpretation is constructive in the sense that in some cases it gives certain concepts of the Aristotelian philosophical system a new status and, in the end, it generates a new, original version of this system. So, in fact, Nieznański's project is actually an original version of the substantial ontology, yet a version respecting Aristotle's own presentation, as well as some chosen interpretations of classical philosophy by the following authors: J. Łukasiewicz, J. Salamucha, J.M. Bocheński, M.A. Krąpiec, A.B. Stępień, F. Rivetti-Barbo.

The presented material has been divided into six chapters and titled using the Latin terms that play a major role in Aristotelian ontology: 1. *Aliquid*, 2. *Ens, praedicare, principia*, 3. *Pars, materia, forma*, 4. *Causa, potentia, actus*, 5. *Deus*, 6. *Relatio transcendentalis*. From the metatheoretical point of view the dissertation may be divided into two parts: the attributive theory reconstructing the Aristotelian calculus of names (Chapters 1-5) and the fragment of set-theoretical description of binary relations that may be applied in certain theological considerations (the problem of the existence of the Absolute in particular) (Chapter 6).

The range of values of the variables used in the theory presented in Chapters 1-5 is the set of *essences* understood as any "'*something'*, *'anything', that in any way may be the subject of human perception or fantasy*" (p. 16). For any essence, its *extensional* and *intensional concepts* may be determined. The extensional concept of essence x is the set of all objects that are x. The intensional

concept of essence x is the set of all objects that are attributes of x. The extensional concepts of essences together with the subsumption relation form Boolean algebra. Thanks to such an interpretation, the concepts of *object* (universal concept - 1) and *contradictory essence* (empty concept - 0) can be differentiated as mutual Boolean complements. The definitionally introduced relation of *coinciding* between concepts (their mutual subsumption) precedes the definitions of infimum and supremum operations that obtain the names: *joint* and *tangle*. The second ontological relation to be considered is *inherence*. This relation occurs between two essences x and y if and only if the non-contradictory concept of x and concept of y stay in a subsumption relation to each other. The author also emphasizes the difference between the meaning of term *is* as proposed by him and as intended in the ontology of S. Leśniewski. Unlike in Leśniewski's conception, here the universals may also be elements of the inherence relation. The description of the ontological concepts being introduced is sufficient to define the Aristotelian operators, read respectively: *at least some of... are...* (i), *every... is...* (a), *none... is ...* (e), *at least some of... are not...* (o). The theses then derived code the laws of the logical square, laws of conversion, obversion and contraposition and also tautological syllogistic schemes. The next extension of Nieznański's theory is obtained by adding the definitions of *individual* object, *universal* object, *principal ideal* and *principal filter*. Next, the author adds axioms describing the concept of *a relative* frequently used by Aristotle (the relative may be for example a wing of a bird - in general, objects named as: y of x). With its help one can definitionally characterize *a possession*.

These concepts are then used in Chapter 2, which tries to specify the term *being* and the relations between the *transcendentalia*, which, in addition to being (*ens*) are: *res*, *unum*, *aliquid*, *verum*, *bonum*, *pulchrum*. In the formulation discussed here, being coincides with the joint of the individual and real object, where reality is treated as the object's *actuality* in a certain moment of time. In accordance with Aristotle's view, one can differentiate being from the categories treated here as the maximal universals of real beings. In the text under discussion, basically two categories may be distinguished: *a substance* that coincides with the joint of the real being and the subject; and *accidents* coinciding with the joint of the being and the tangle of features and properties.

In Chapter 3 the basic terms of the Aristotelian concept of hylemorphism are considered: *form* and *matter*. In Nieznański's theory, a more primary concept defining the above-mentioned terms is the concept of *a part*.

Besides matter and form, the principles of being are also *act* and *potency*, which make it possible to describe the dynamic structure of reality—the reality of the becoming substances (Chapter 4). Object x's *becoming* object y depends on the existence of *a mover* (z),

which is also the *causative reason of the change (movement)* occurring between object x and y. The explication of the concepts of act and potency is based on the characteristics of the concept of becoming, defined by a movement understood as a relation between three objects—the mover (z), the one that is subject to the change (x), and the one that is the result of this change (y). The mover is one of the causes of being, as well as its *reason*. In this presentation, the reason for the existence of x is an object without the existence of which x could not exist.

In the next chapter, the definitionally introduced concept of reason makes it possible to discuss the problem of the existence and nature of *the Absolute*. The Absolute (God) is defined here as *a sufficient reason for the existence of the material world*. In this interpretation a sufficient reason is the minimal element of the reason for existence. According to the theses that follow in this formalism we can say: the Absolute is a being, an eternal being, an independent necessary being, a minimal causative reason, a being that does not become anything and does not come from anything. In that case, if the reason for existence is a multiplicative quasi-half-structure, then the Absolute is also the first being and the minimal unique original causative reason (p. 90).

In the second main part of the work—that is Chapter 6—a set-theoretical description of the relations and some of their formal properties are presented. The choice of the presented concepts and theorems is the result of considering their philosophical connotations and their usefulness within the framework of ontological discussions on the existence of the Absolute. In accordance with these criteria, the author first characterizes the concepts required in order to introduce a definition of the extreme elements (first, minimal, last, maximal) of the transcendental relations (that is such relations that their field is an overset of all beings). Then the relations between these elements (their sets) are specified, as are the conditions of their existence and uniqueness in connection with a certain formal properties of transcendental relations (and their ancestral closures). The described properties are then referred to the various formalisms of the proofs of God's existence by St. Thomas Aquinas (formalisms of L. Clarke, K. Policki, R. Kleinknecht), by St. Anselm (formalism of K. Gödel) and by B. Bolzano (formalism of H. Ganthaler and P. Simons).

The reviewed book requires the reader to be fluent in formalized language (of the first order) and the basic concepts of formal logic and set theory. The book contains many ingenious formalistic solutions that perfectly explicate the various formulations of definitions and theorems commonly used in the classical philosophy tradition. The formalization conducted by Nieznański also performs another important role: thanks to this formalization we discover once again the significance of classical philosophy—as a way of thinking about the reality that may be reconstructed in the terms of contemporary applied logic.

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E.J. Lowe, *The Four Category Ontology: A Metaphysical Foundation for Natural Science*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006 (Paperback 2007), pp. 240, ISBN 978-0199229819.

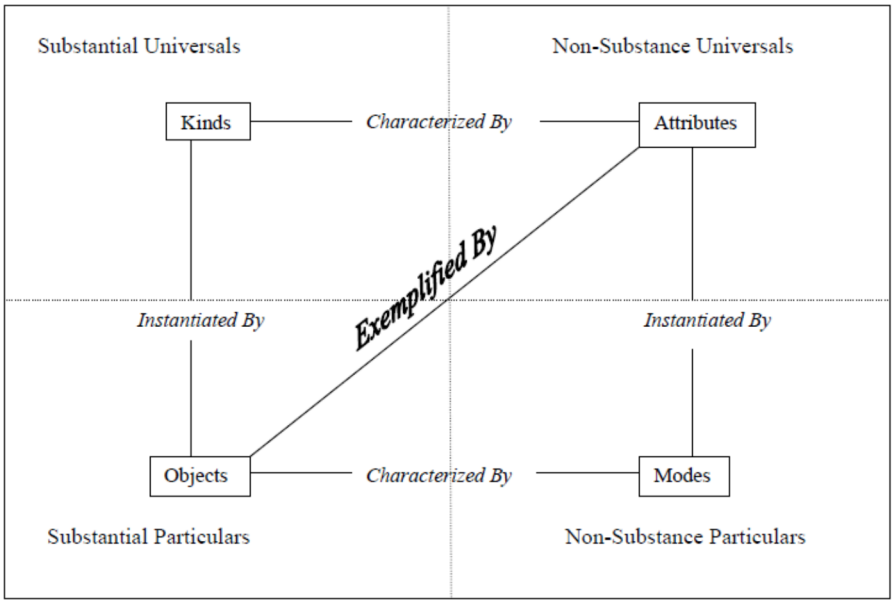

Figure 1

E.J. Lowe has defended what he terms the *four category ontology* for many years.[1] His (2006) book, *The Four Category Ontology: A Metaphysical Foundation for Natural Science,* effectively brings together that immense body of Lowe's work with added support and implications drawn. Thus, Lowe (2006) offers a neat and concise statement of his current position that those new to Lowe can easily follow, and rewards those who have followed him with new insights regarding his view, new arguments in support of the ontology, and excellent statements of the explanatory strength of his view. Anyone interested in metaphysics generally and/or the metaphysics of natural science particularly will, I think, enjoy Lowe's analytic acumen and command of the subjects he discusses.

Let's begin with a very brief overview of Lowe's ontology. *Figure 1*

[1] As he points out in the (2006) preface, Lowe formally announced his commitment to the four category ontology in Lowe (1998): *The Possibility of Metaphysics: Substance, Identity, and Time*. Oxford: Clarendon Press., but the beginnings of that particular ontological view were evident in Lowe (1989): *Kinds of Being: A Study of Individuation*. Oxford: Blackwell.

above is the ontological square that nicely lays out in picture form the view that Lowe promotes.[1] The four categories of being[2] are *kinds*, *attributes* (i.e. non-particular properties and relations), *objects*, and *modes* (i.e. particular properties). Lowe holds that *instantiated by*, *characterized by*, and *exemplified by* are basic, unanalyzable
relationships that hold between the basic categories. Further, there are distinctions that Lowe claims do not count as categories of being—namely, the universal/ particular distinction, and the substance/ non-substance distinction. Two general aspects of the categories of being are that they are "hierarchically organized and…are individuated by the distinctive existence and/or identity conditions of their members" (2006, p. 6). For instance, Lowe is committed to an immanent realism about universals—that is, no universal exists uninstantiated. Thus, the substantial and non-substantial universals are ontologically dependent upon the substantial and non-substantial particulars.[3]

While Lowe's four category ontology is carefully thought out and it is well worth taking the time to understand its intricacies, I leave aside further explication regarding the specifics of the impressive ontological system that he puts forward. Rather, I want to focus on an important peculiarity of Lowe's argumentation. Specifically, I focus on Lowe's discussions of syntax and semantics. Lowe eschews the following: (a) Using syntax and semantics as a guide for determining which ontology is correct; (b) Grounding ontological distinctions on syntax and semantics; and (c) Holding that a match with syntax and semantics is evidence for a view. The peculiarity is that Lowe often uses syntax and semantics as an ontological guide, grounds ontological distinctions on syntactic and semantic considerations, and, where his view appears to reflect language in some way, he takes it as evidence for his ontology. I fail to see the legitimacy of one's relying on syntax and semantics as a guide, a ground, and evidence

[1] *Figure 1* combines Lowe's (2006) *Figure* 3.2 (p. 40), *Figure* 4.1 (p. 60), and *Figure* 7.1 (p. 111).

[2] The categories of being are not Kant's categories of thought. See Lowe (2006, p. 5).

[3] Likewise, what it takes for something to be an object is importantly different than what it takes for something to be a kind, attribute, or mode—for one, objects are concrete, that is, they are substantial entities that are property bearers but are not borne by any property (see, e.g. Lowe, 2006, pp. 70-73), whereas kinds and attributes are abstract entities, and modes (or tropes (see, e.g. Lowe, 2006, pp. 11, 16) are concrete, non-substantial entities. Lowe also introduces three types of dependence—namely, rigid existential dependence, non-rigid existential dependence, and identity dependence. Rigid and non-rigid existential dependence are formally defined by Lowe (2006, pp. 34, 36). The formal definition of identity dependence is taken from Lowe (1998, p. 149). His footnote 1 (2006, p. 35) indicates that he still takes his (1998) definition to be adequate for his purposes here.

when s/he denies that such a reliance is acceptable. In general, it seems that a rejection of *x* as a guide, a ground, and/or evidence occludes one from using *x* as a guide, ground, and/or evidence. To see this consider that, if Gena has eschewed the notion that a failure to wear matching socks detracts from her appearance, then we would reasonably balk at accepting Gena's claim that her successfully matching her socks adds to her good looks. It seems that Gena wants to have her cake and eat it too. Call a fault like Gena's the *Gena Lapse*. My complaint is that Lowe seems to be a philosophical Gena—he is guilty of a Gena Lapse.[1]

In fact, in chapter 4, Lowe seems to conclude that *ontology* should dictate (logical) *syntax*, not vice versa. Here Lowe accepts that it is "very reasonable" (p. 56) to be suspicious of ontological distinctions grounded in syntactical considerations. In chapter 5, Lowe claims that syntax is an "unreliable guide to ontology" despite its sometimes reflecting ontology (perhaps because it has "evolved in a way that is partially sensitive to ontological distinctions") (p. 70). Later in chapter 5, we find Lowe claiming that the Ramsey-style objection put forward by MacBride (2004) suffers from and may only get off the ground in virtue of the fact that it "lays excessive emphasis on the mere surface syntax of language" (Lowe, 2006, p. 73).[2] In fact, one of the important lessons he draws from considering the Ramsey-style objection is that appealing to syntax is not the "proper way to do ontology" (p. 73). Lowe's dismissal of the use of syntax is important here, for if it goes through, then he has seriously undermined the notion driving MacBrides' objection. Consider that he also ushers in the denial that a *mismatch* with language is a disadvantage for his view against those who do not agree with him concerning his acceptance of the distinction between concrete and abstract objects.[3] Later, when explicating his position concerning the laws of nature and necessity, Lowe advises us that "[we] mustn't fall prey to the lazy assumption that we can read off the ontological

[1] Of course, if Lowe had some principled reason for paying attention to language in one area of his ontological picture, then the matter would be less serious depending on how good and well reasoned his principled reason was. Note, if Gena held that only on formal occasions were mismatched socks a reason to find her appearance lacking, and only held it to her advantage to have worn matching socks on such occasions, then it seems that Gena isn't violating any norm concerning her assessment of advantage. However, Lowe gives no such principled reason.

[2] To be clear, at this point in the book Lowe is simply laying the ground work for understanding MacBride's objection by carefully laying out the general worry that MacBride's objection relies upon. Later, when further addressing the Ramsey worry, Lowe writes: "…I have no inclination to contend that ontological distinctions can be founded upon syntactical ones or, more generally, that metaphysical distinctions can be founded on linguistic ones" (2006, p. 101).

[3] See, Lowe (2006, p. 82).

character of laws from the syntax of law statements" (p. 157). And, still later, when discussing whether we should be monists about truthmakers (e.g. taking all truthmakers to be facts or of the same ontological category) he suggests that the motivation for accepting such a view might issue from allowing "the structure of language" to "prejudice our thoughts about ontology" (p. 183). Finally, when assessing the Quinean position concerning ontological relativity he reprimands Quine and his followers for thinking that the fact that "the language of fundamental physics and the theories expressed in that language can be interpreted, without affecting their empirical content or predictive utility, as quantifying solely over numbers and sets, and so as incurring an ontological commitment only to mathematical objects" is support for their claim that no abstract entities exist except numbers and sets (p. 196). Here Lowe is pushing against those Quineans who hold that their position is propped up in large part because it matches a language.

While Lowe holds that a match or mismatch with ordinary language doesn't and shouldn't serve as evidence for or against a view[1], he also holds that where *his* position matches with ordinary language it *is* evidence that he has gotten things correct. Furthermore, it seems as though he very often uses language to point him in the right direction. Lowe does this in at least the following areas: (i) When arguing for a difference between universals as sortals and universals as adjectival[2]; (ii) When arguing for a particular account of the laws of nature[3]; and (iii) When arguing for a distinction between different types of exemplification (i.e. dispositional exemplification and occurrent exemplification) (see, for example, pp. 95-96, 124-130). In fact, regarding all of those issues it is *primarily* (and sometimes only) its match with ordinary language that Lowe takes as significant support for his view. Therefore, Lowe is not only guilty of a Gena Lapse, but he often commits the fault without giving us further reason to accept his view. True, he sometimes shows how he sees his ontology reflected in the language concerning the issues in (i) – (iii). However, while drawing out how his ontology is reflected in the language helps to present the reader with a deeper understanding of Lowe's ontological picture, it does not lend support to it, at least if we, like Lowe deny (a)–(c).

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[1] Lowe (2006, p. 128).

[2] Lowe writes: "This distinction is mirrored in language by the distinction between *sortal* and *adjectival* general terms—that is, between such general terms as 'planet' and 'flower' on the one hand and such general terms as 'red' and 'round' on the other. The former denote kinds of object, while the latter denote properties of objects" (2006, 16).

[3] See, e.g. Lowe (2006, pp. 93–95, 127–128). Lowe writes: "The fact that natural language includes occurrent predications of this sort which can be accommodated in this simple fashion by the theory now being advanced constitutes, I believe, further evidence in support of the theory" (2006, p. 128).

Moreover, Lowe believes that his ontology explains why we have ways of representing certain circumstances via particular grammatical devices (e. g. pp. 125-130). But, then, it is entirely bizarre that he also holds that language is not a guide to ontology, cannot ground ontological distinctions, and is not evidence for ontological views. If language, as he holds, has, at least partially, evolved to "reflect in its structure certain structural features of reality," why shouldn't we use it as a guide to ontology, or as grounds for making ontological distinctions, or as evidence for ontological distinctions?[1] Unfortunately, Lowe does not answer this question. Thus, the reader is left baffled over what to make of his argument, for he seems to undercut reasons he offers in favor of important and contentious portions of his view. Thus, by his own lights it seems, Lowe really gives us little or no *good* evidence that his views concerning the issues in (i)–(iii) are correct. In fact, if we eschew (a)–(c) with him, then whenever he points out that a certain ontological distinction or intricacy is mirrored in language, it seems that we should simply say, "So, what?". I take it that that is a significant worry for Lowe's project, the import of his view notwithstanding. Surely we want to and should be presented with arguments that the author himself would accept.

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[1] Lowe writes: "In point of fact, I do not at all think that metaphysics should be conducted entirely through the filter of language, as though syntax and semantics were our only guides in matters metaphysical—although it should hardly be surprising if natural language does reflect in its structure certain structural features of the reality which it has evolved to express" (2006, p. 25).