

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Kinds of Being: A Study of Individuation, Identity and the Logic of Sortal Terms* by E. J. Lowe

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Source: *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Sep., 1992), pp. 166-168

Published by: Philosophy Education Society Inc.

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20129313>

Accessed: 21-10-2019 12:16 UTC

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Kulstad, however, draws a more cautious conclusion, seeing signs of a genuine uncertainty on Leibniz's part as to how best to proceed. In this, he is perhaps a little too cautious. While some unclarity remains in Leibniz's attitude towards the role of reflection in beasts, the evidence of his later writings strongly favors the position that beasts possess a type of apperception. Thanks to Kulstad's skillful analysis it is now possible to say much more precisely how this concept figures in Leibniz's attempts to define a boundary between animal souls and rational spirits.—Donald Rutherford, *Emory University*.

LOWE, E. J. *Kinds of Being: A Study of Individuation, Identity and the Logic of Sortal Terms*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989. vi + 210 pp. \$39.95—This book is an extended reflection on a basic but far-reaching claim: "There are no 'bare' particulars" (p. 3). Because "individuals are necessarily individuals of a kind," Lowe argues, "realism with regard to particulars or individuals . . . implies realism with regard to sorts or kinds" (p. 5). A "sortal" concept (a label which Lowe borrows from John Locke) is "a concept of a distinct sort or kind of individuals" (p. 1). Lowe's purpose in this book is to examine the meaning and implications of sortal concepts, and to challenge relativist conceptions of identity and reductivist strategies in metaphysics.

Since the meaning of any given sortal concept depends on some criterion of identity for individuals of that sort, Lowe begins his argument by discussing sortal terms and criteria of identity (chap. 2). A criterion of identity is a semantic rule which specifies, in an informative way, "what it takes for x and y to be the same or different" (p. 16). While the criterion of identity associated with a given sort may make use of the notion of identity itself, the criterion can be informative "by alluding to the identity of things of another sort or sorts" (p. 20). This, of course, raises the further question: Must we acknowledge an infinite regress of criteria of identity for sorts, or is there some "basic" sort whose criterion of identity cannot be expressed in terms of any other sort? Lowe leans towards the latter of these two options, suggesting that the requisite basic sort may be that of "person" (to be discussed later in the book).

Lowe turns next to the meaning of individuals and sorts, and the instantiation relation between them (chap. 3). He suggests the following: " X is an *individual* if and only if X is an instance of something Y (other than itself) and X itself has no instances (other than itself). X is a *sort* if and only if there is something Y such that Y is an instance of X and Y is distinct from X " (p. 38). This definition, while clearly distinguishing between individuals and sorts, also allows for the possibility of one sort instantiating another, as in the relation of species to genus. Contrary to reductivist metaphysics, the meaning of "individual" here (and thus the difference between "individual" and "sort") depends upon the indivisibility of *reference*, rather than upon *material* indivisibility.

Lowe's next move is to defend the absolutist conception of identity against the relativist position of P. T. Geach (chap. 4). According to the absolutist conception of identity, "an individual of one sort or kind cannot also belong to another sort or kind with a different criterion of identity from that of the first" (p. 53). Lowe's critical response to Geach proceeds by way of a *reductio* argument: if we were to say that some individual x belonged to two different kinds, and that these two kinds had different criteria of identity (and thus different conditions of persistence), then we would be laying ourselves open to "the intolerable possibility that circumstances should arise in which [we] would be obliged to say that x both did and did not cease to exist" (pp. 56-7).

Lowe strengthens his case against the relativity of identity by arguing for the necessity of acknowledging a distinctive "is" of constitution (chap. 5). As Lowe states, putative examples of the relativity of identity arise only where the sortal terms in question are conceived as having different criteria of identity associated with them (for example, when one wants to identify "river" and "water"); however, the putative identification of individuals having different criteria of identity seems plausible only when one (mistakenly) conflates the distinctive "is" of constitution with some other sense of "is." To summarize, the relativity of identity would imply the possibility of identifying two individuals falling under two different kinds, where both (a) these two kinds have different criteria of identity associated with them, and (b) the identification of the two individuals in question does not rest on the equivocal use of "is." As Lowe argues, however, the identity relativist cannot have it both ways.

After having laid the foundations for antireductivist metaphysics and an absolutist view of identity, Lowe begins to apply his principles to some disputed questions. Concerning the relation of parts to whole, Lowe argues that one can distinguish between three different kinds of wholes (aggregates, collectives, and integrates), and that some wholes, but not all, are distinct from any sum of their parts (chap. 6). Turning to the fascinating and complex issue of personhood, Lowe argues that persons are neither identical with, nor constituted by, the physical entities in which they are embodied; in fact, since a "person" is probably not constituted by anything at all, it is most likely that the sortal term "person" is unanalyzable and "basic" (chap. 7). Discussing the role of sorts in nomological generalizations, Lowe argues that the assertion of scientific laws commits us to some version of realism with regard to sorts; Lowe himself is most sympathetic to Aristotelian realism, according to which sorts are distinct but not separable from their individual instances (chap. 8). In the penultimate chapter, Lowe articulates the revisions which would have to be implemented if orthodox formal logic is to accommodate dispositional predicates with sortal terms in subject position (which are ineliminable, on Lowe's view) (chap. 9). Finally, Lowe addresses the difficult problem of the analysis of sentences containing semantically complex sortal terms (chap. 10). Carefully argued and well written, this study will be a challenge to anyone who wants to deny that "there are no

‘bare’ particulars,” as well as to anyone who has paid lip service to this claim without thinking through its far-reaching implications.—
Michael Baur, *The Catholic University of America*.

MARGA, Andrei. *Rationalitate, comunicare, argumentare*. Cluj: Dacia, 1991. 327 pp. 99lei—Marga is the Dean of the school of philosophy at the University of Cluj, and his study seems to mark an interesting change in Romanian philosophy. In the last sixty or seventy years philosophy had been in that part of the world primarily Platonic, Hegelian, or existentialist, with an undisguised suspicion towards technological and rationalist orientations. There are a number of signs that the almost exclusive commitment to idealist modes of argument is being replaced in Romania by a much more diverse intellectual landscape.

Marga describes himself as a neopragmatist in the tradition of Peirce, James, and Dewey. His option seems grounded on two main foundations. One is that pragmatism, more than other discourses, can provide underpinnings and justifications for democratic, individualist, and rational modes of socio-political organization. The other is that overly comprehensive idealist doctrines (in the Hegelian and Platonic mold) lead to incomplete or distorted relationships to reality. In the specific circumstances of Eastern Europe (and particularly of Romania), Marga contends, these grounds are good enough to impel a pragmatic reconstruction of philosophy.

Marga does not propose a simple return to James, however. His book, which is filled with references and sometimes even comes to resemble an extended collection of review articles, filters neopragmatism through analytical philosophy, and particularly approves of the objective realism of Hilary Putnam. Marga also carefully confronts his own views with alternative positions, such as those of Habermas, Noica, or Sloterdijk. His conclusion is that while rationalism must remain the intimate core and the guiding force of any historical progress and of any modernizing process, it must also be qualified in a great many ways. The aporias of rationality ought to be, he says, the preeminent topic of contemporary philosophy. A purely instrumental and analytical understanding of reason is dated and useless, Marga concludes. Pragmatic consequentialism (“ideas have consequences”), the theory of communication and argument, and an understanding of social interaction (in the broadest sense, mythical projections and religious images also belong here, Marga admits) must shape and modify this kind of central rationalism.

Marga’s work is interesting in two ways at least: first because it suggests certain historical changes in Eastern European thinking, that is, a renewed respect for empirical and rational approaches and a desire to search for the most adequate instruments in dealing with the world. Implicit here, and not insignificant in my opinion, is the fact that Eastern Europe intellectuals are still firmly convinced that