

Forthcoming in *Mind*

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More Kinds of Being: A Further Study of Individuation, Identity, and the Logic of Sortal Terms, by E. J. Lowe.
Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. Pp. xii + 227. H/b £70.00.

More Kinds of Being marks the 20th anniversary of Kinds of Being (1989). This second expanded edition adds three new chapters as well as revised content and updated references. The new edition is very welcome, since the original book is all but a collector's item. This is a sign of the importance of the book, finally available to a new generation of readers.

Although much of the original book's content remains relevant, Lowe has also made important progress on its themes. The most significant development is his four-category ontology (developed in his The Four-Category Ontology, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), which is briefly presented in a new section of Chapter 1 (pp. 8–11). Whereas in Kinds of Being Lowe was primarily interested in the distinction between particular objects and the kinds that they instantiate, in More Kinds of Being two further categories of being are included, namely attributes (which characterize kinds) and modes (or tropes, as they are often called). However, the relevance of these additional categories is somewhat limited, as the logic of sortal terms developed in the original book remains unchanged.

One of Lowe's primary motives is to provide a basis for the individuation of natural kinds and the natural laws that they are subject to. Lowe focuses on a study of concrete and natural sorts or kinds, though he does acknowledge artefactual and abstract kinds as well. The reason for this choice of emphasis is that Lowe, quite correctly, considers the most interesting questions of identity and individuation to concern the kinds of things that 'carve at the joints'. Furthermore, Lowe thinks that our inquiry into what sorts of things 'carve at the joints' is guided by a mixture of a priori principles and scientific a posteriori elements (p. 3). These methodological assumptions concerning the 'naturalness' regarding kinds turn out to be of some importance.

Let me summarise Lowe's primary claims. Chapter 2 is concerned with the criteria of identity of sortal terms, presenting a neo-Aristotelian, metaphysical-cum-semantic analysis of sortals and the tools for individuating them. Chapter 3 clarifies the distinction between attribution and instantiation, with reference to the views of Geach and Quine. Chapter 4, new to this edition, focuses on the metaphysical basis of countability by exploring the concepts of number, unity, and individuality. Chapter 5 argues against the thesis known as 'relativity of identity' familiar from Geach, and in defence of absolute identity—a view also defended by Wiggins. Chapter 6 presents further evidence against relative identity by examining familiar problems regarding identity and constitution, such as the problem of the 1,001 cats. Chapter 7 is a brief study of the related notion of parthood. Chapter 8 puts some of the formal tools of the previous chapters to use by presenting a thorough analysis of how persons are related to their bodies. Lowe's primary claim here is that persons are 'basic' kinds in the sense that no informative identity criteria can be given for them—he argues that persons cannot be identified with their bodies. Chapter 9 is a study of the relationship between sortal terms and natural laws; Lowe holds that the latter necessarily involve the former. In fact, Lowe considers laws to be 'natural' precisely because they concern natural kinds. Chapter 10, new to this edition, specifies the implications of Lowe's views regarding plural quantification and sortal reference, pointing towards an 'objectual' rather than a 'substitutional' interpretation of quantifiers. Chapter 11 lays out Lowe's preferred system of sortal logic, 'formalized sortal language' or FSL. Chapter 12, also new to this edition, extends FSL to accommodate sentences containing sortal terms and sketches Lowe's view regarding our epistemic access to 'genuine' sortals.

Lowe has added references to his recent work and to other relevant research conducted since the publication of the original book, but the bulk of *More Kinds of Being* is still presented in the context of the discussion that was active when the first edition was published—the work of Geach and Wiggins in particular receives abundant attention. While the themes are still very much relevant, this may give a dated feel to some of the discussions, such as the discussion of parthood in Chapter 7.

As the preceding summary will have made clear, *More Kinds of Being* is a dense and rich book.

Lowe's arguments are extremely clear and to a large extent convincing, but in the remainder of this review I'd like to point out two general points in need of clarification. The first of these concerns the claim that persons are unanalysable, 'basic' kinds (Chapter 8). Lowe makes a strong case for the claim that persons are not to be identified with their bodies, as he has argued elsewhere (e.g. his *Personal Agency*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). But there is one aspect of this account that I find troubling. The following passage in which Lowe anticipates the physicalist's reaction serves to illustrate my concern.

Before one can even begin to consider what kinds of empirical evidence there might be in support of the thesis that each or any psychological state is identifiable with some physiological state, one must not only have some grasp of the identity-conditions of *physiological states* – whether stated in terms of their causes and effects, or in some other terms – one must also have some *independent* grasp of the identity-conditions of *psychological* states. (p. 136)

I think that this is exactly right. However, Lowe's conclusion is revealing, for he acknowledges that the case for persons being 'basic' kinds relies on the elimination of alternatives, namely attempts to provide criteria of identity for persons. An opponent might reply as follows: It is exactly because the criteria of identity for persons require both a grasp of the identity-conditions of physiological states and the identity-conditions of psychological states that persons appear to be unanalysable. Lowe himself identifies two likely candidates for these identity-conditions, namely 'bodily criteria' and 'memory criteria', but insists that these are not metaphysical-cum-semantic criteria; rather, they are merely 'evidential' criteria (p. 138–9). Neither of these criteria by themselves is likely to be sufficient, but why would they not be sufficient if taken together? As Lowe insists, an independent grasp of each set of criteria is required in any case. Could we not proceed with the combination of these two sets of criteria even if it is exceedingly difficult to determine how they are linked? Indeed, this link is exactly what future work on personal identity should focus on.

The second issue concerns the already mentioned, important role of 'naturalness' in Lowe's account of

sortals. I believe that Lowe is correct about this role, but his account of what constitutes a genuine natural kind requires specification. Lowe writes: 'With regard to the distinction between natural and non-natural kinds, my own view is that the crucial distinguishing feature of natural kinds is that they are subjects of *natural law*' (p. 5). Plausible as this is in cases such as the kind gold, it is less so with regard to Lowe's other favourite example, namely the kind mammal. He mentions 'distinctively mammalian laws' such as mammals being warm-blooded and suckling their young. Now, these are evidently dispositions that mammals have, which is what leads Lowe to give them the status of laws and hence mammals the status of a natural kind. However, the problematic status of biological classifications such as mammal taxa are well known and it is far from clear that such taxonomy accurately 'carves at the joints', even if we grant the dispositions that Lowe mentions.

This leads me to worry that the strong link between sortal terms and natural law on the one hand, and natural law and natural kinds on the other hand (as discussed in Chapter 9), has not been fully justified. Lowe is probably right in that 'statements of natural law unavoidably carry reference to *sorts* or *kinds*' (p. 156). But it has not been established that these kinds must be 'genuine' natural kinds. To be fair, Lowe has written about this topic elsewhere in more detail, as well as in the new Chapter 12. Still, the claim that sortals reflect, as Lowe puts it, 'real boundaries in nature' (p. 214) is of crucial importance for his project, and the unfamiliar reader might find *More Kinds of Being* lacking in argument in this regard (for further discussion, see my 'Boundaries in Reality', *Ratio* 25 (4), 2012, pp. 405–24).

The two issues I have raised only serve to highlight the originality of Lowe's work. *More Kinds of Being* is a remarkable book. It sets the stage for numerous debates in metaphysics, philosophical logic, philosophy of language, and philosophy of mind that are sure to continue much longer than another two decades.

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