Critical Notices

Philosophical Essays. RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Cambridge, Massachusetts—London, England: The MIT Press, 1987. Pp xxiii, 266.

Richard Cartwright's *Philosophical Essays* contains fifteen essays written over three decades since about 1954,[1] plus an Introduction and Appendix. Nine essays have been previously published, four are from papers or lectures; two others are new. They are arranged in roughly chronological order.

I

Each of these fifteen essays exemplifies diligent, "honest philosophical toil" (to borrow Cartwright's phrase). Frequently described as a philosopher's philosopher, he admits, "Except for beginners who want to learn and who try to say what they really think, I do not like talking philosophy with nonphilosophers and avoid it whenever I can."[2] His interest is in *doing* philosophy in writing or with colleagues or students; though philosophy, he says, "is the surely the hardest (subject) to teach. It is, at least, if you have no system to propound and you want a clear conscience."[3]

But though he admits to no system Cartwright defends a certain configuration of philosophical positions against attacks and hues to certain modes of philosophical argument. More precisely Cartwright is a twentieth century analytic philosopher's philosopher. Much of the inspiration and most of the subjects in Cartwright's philosophical dissecting laboratory come from G. E. Moore, Russell or Quine,[4] though Frege, C. I. Lewis, Tarski and Geach also get credits. Quine is the foil for careful defenses of meaning, *de re* modalities, and essentialism.

Many times Cartwright's arguments rest, as did Moore's, on meanings in ordinary language. At other times, unlike Moore, he employs the machinery of standard logic, metalogic and semantics, to give structure to his argument, sharpen his distinctions, and point out his opponents' fallacies. Throughout he shows an extraordinary fairness in presenting alternative arguments that opponents might offer on any given point. Often, as a result, his essays end with incomplete or alternative answers, or with acknowledgement that his premisses might be questioned. This, I suppose, is the price of intellectual honesty. But it does not stop him. Even the

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1 "Ontology and the Theory of Meaning" (10/54), "MacBeth's Dagger" (1957), "Negative Existentials" (10/60), "Propositions" (1962), "Propositions Again" (8/68), "A Neglected Theory of Truth" (1971), "On the Origins of Russell's Theory of Descriptions," "Identity and Substitutivity" (1971), "Some Remarks on Essentialism" (10/68), "Classes and Attributes" (1968), "Scattered Objects" (1975), "On the Logical Problem of the Trinity" (1978), "Indiscernibility Principles" (1979) "Propositions of Pure Logic" (1982), "Implications and Entailments" (1982).

2 Introduction, pp. xxi-xxii.

3 Ibid., p. xx.

4 More than half of these essays focus on these three philosophers. The Index has nine lines for G. E. Moore, twelve each for Russell and Quine and four for Frege.

"ultimate impasse"—disagreement about what philosophy is about—is no reason to rest; "metaphilosophy is, after all, part of philosophy."[5]

Underlying this fair-mindedness, however, is an unspoken bedrock of conviction reminiscent of Moore's realism and intuitionism. He seriously considers, but is unconvinced by, rigorous arguments and systems that augment or diminish "our world": "You do not improve the truth value of a false proposition by calling attention to a coherent system of propositions of which it is one. Nor by exhibiting it as the conclusion of an argument, even a valid argument: every proposition is the conclusion of endlessly many valid arguments."[6] Nor is he daunted by eschewals based on epistemology: "From the inability of either side in the dispute to persuade the other it does not follow that there is no fact of the matter...Nor does it follow that neither side *knows* what the fact of the matter is."[7]

Still, the "fact of the matter" is seldom explicitly asserted. Rather, its defense is implicit in attacks on arguments against it.

II

The longest essay, previously unpublished, is "On the Origin's of Russell's Theory of Descriptions."[8] It is devoted to Russell's efforts to characterize propositions in terms of meaning and denotation prior to his discovery of the theory of definite descriptions in June, 1905. Citing sources, Cartwright holds that the latter theory was not developed (as Quine once suggested) because Russell was fed up on "Meinong's impossible objects," but was an effort to break out of the "inextricable tangle" presented by the compositional theory of meaning and denotation in his *Principles of Mathematics*, according to which constituents of any proposition are actual entities denoted by singular terms and words in the predicate. Cartwright's scholarly efforts to find his way through Russell's confusing and ambiguous language are somewhat flawed by uneven notational devices, and are understandably inconclusive; he neither untangles the tangle, nor explains the discovery. But they clearly disclose the historical roots of many problems of meaning, reference and the nature of propositions which still await philosophical solution.

In "A Neglected Theory of Truth" Cartwright expands upon Moore's and Russell's early, briefly held, theory of truth as a simple unanalyzable quality of some propositions. Its abandonment by Moore and Russell he feels was premature, due to problems in their early view of propositions. To give this theory a "better run for its money" Cartwright suggests treating propositions as the values of a function of what Moore and Russell would have called their constituents. (Presumably the quality, truth, would belong or not to these values). But due to "grave logical problems" in extending this to elementary propositions he ends without conviction as to whether such a solution is "more attractive" than alternative theories of truth offered by Frege and the later Russell.

In "Propositions of Pure Logic" (1982), Cartwright rejects identifying the propositions of pure logic with first-order theorem-schemata, or with instantia-

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5 Introduction, p. xv.

6 Ibid., p. xi.

7 Ibid., p. xiv.

8 Cartwright writes that this, and the following essay "derive from repeated efforts on my part to cover in a term the history of analytic philosophy from 1879 to 1929. I always had trouble getting beyond June 1905." [p. xx].

tions of certain first-order theorem-schemata which talk abstractly about properties (Russell), or with closed second-order theorem-schemata (attributed to Putnam). Rather, he proposes that propositions of pure logic, are those implicit assertions, which can be expressed explicitly in the metalanguage, to the effect that instances of a certain logical schema are valid (or, possibly, are provable) in a sense connected to "follows from" and not reducible to any set of true instances.[9] This seems to me to be the right direction; but why limit the predicates to 'is valid'? Why not also 'is inconsistent' and certain binary predicates including 'implies' or 'entails'?

III

For Cartwright, essentialism merges with countenancing meanings and the defense of *de re* modalities. His arguments rely heavily upon ordinary uses of 'must', 'can', 'could', etc., as evidence of implicit recognition of modalities.

Cartwright's acknowledges an early commitment to essentialism, siding with Moore against Quine.[10] Though he takes issue in "MacBeth's Dagger" (1954) with Moore's lack of distinction between seeing an after-image and MacBeth's "seeing" when asking if "this which I see" is (or is not) a dagger, Cartwright's essentialism emerges in the argument that MacBeth's question is whether what "this which I see" refers to something of which it *could not* have been true that it was not a dagger.

In both the first and last essays, "Ontology and the Theory of Meaning" (1954) and "Implications and Entailments" (c.1982, previously unpublished), Cartwright focuses on textual occurrences of 'must', as evidence of modality. In "Ontology and the Theory of Meaning" he challenges both Quine's ontological criterion and his dismissal of theories of meaning. His argument hinges on the modal necessity implicit in Quine's statements that an entity is assumed by a theory if and only if it "*must* be counted among the values of a variable in order that the statements affirmed in the theory be true."[11] Associating 'must' with necessity and the theory of meaning, he claims that an adequate formulation of the criterion of ontological commitments will be intensional. Thus are modalities and meaning intertwined.

In "Remarks on Essentialism" Cartwright argues against Quine's suggestion that essentialism is unintelligible, though he allows that distinctions between essential and accidental attributes in many cases are "a good deal less clear than essentialists are wont to suppose."[12] Intelligibility cannot, of course, be proved, but Cartwright argues that if we do not confound modalities *de re* with modalities *de dicto*, efforts to induce bewilderment will fail. For example, some think that necessary truths are all analytic; e.g., that the meaning of '9' involves the attribute of being greater than 7, while the meaning of 'the number of planets' does not. But this identifies analyticity with *de dicto* necessary properties of "bearers of truth-value." If we make clear that we are talking about *de re* and not *de dicto* necessity Quine's example poses no problem.

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9 Cf. "Propositions of Pure Logic," pp. 232-35.

10 See Introduction, p. xviii.

11 Willard Van Orman Quine, *From a Logical Point of View*, 1953, p. 103.

12 "Some Remarks on Essentialism," p. 159.

IV

Cartwright is justly recognized for his work on propositions. But there is a question about how statements relate to propositions for Cartwright.

In eleven of the fifteen essays one or the other of the words 'proposition' or 'statement' figure extensively; he is concerned with either what propositions or statements are, or with some *kind* of proposition, or with relationships between them. But curiously, in his paper, "Propositions" (1962), and in its sequel, "Propositions Again" (1968), the word 'proposition' occurs only incidentally and rarely; his operative term for the subject-matter in these papers is 'statement'. Also, 'statement' rather than 'proposition' is employed in two other earlier essays.[13] On the other hand, in six later papers the word 'proposition', rather than 'statement', is used to denote entities under study.[14]

The fact that the two papers about statements are entitled "Propositions" and "Propositions Again" suggests that either statements are the same as propositions, or that they are a sub-set of propositions characterized by mode of expression. But careful reading suggests otherwise.

In "Propositions" Cartwright holds that a *statement* is what is asserted when a sentence (token) is uttered assertively. It is one kind of thing that is true or false. Cartwright denies that any of eight other kinds of entity, including a sentence or the utterance or asserting of a sentence (type or token) or the meaning of a sentence, are *what* is asserted (a statement) or are the kind of thing that is true or false. One thing seems clear: for a single univocal assertive utterance of a sentence, there is one and only one statement which is made, and this same statement can be made in a great many different assertive utterances by the same or different people at the same or different times or places using tokens of the same or different sentence(type)s. *Statements* differ from *propositions* on this point.

Like statements, propositions can be true or false. But they are detached from utterances and utterers, assertion and assertors. There are propositions in the universe whether or not any one thinks of them (or asserts them)[15] and propositions outrun all instances of logical schemata.[16] Further, while statements are made using sentence tokens, propositions are usually associated with sentence types.

Are statements, then, at least a mode of expressing propositions? The hitch is that at crucial junctures Cartwright holds that for any given sentence, there is *no one* proposition.

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13 Including the title, 'proposition' occurs only five time in "Propositions" while 'statement', with over 90 occurrences (plus its synonyms, "what is asserted," "assertion"), bears the entire weight of the argument. In "Propositions Again" 123 occurrences of 'statement' are used; 'proposition' has seven occurrences. No occurrences of 'proposition' in either of these essays is used to make any significant point in the discussion. The two other essays are "Ontology and Theory of Meaning" (1954), and "Negative Existentials" (1960).

14 I.e., in "Substitutivity and Identity" (1968), "Some Remarks on Essentialism" (1971), "A Neglected Theory of Truth" (1971), "on the Origins of Russell's Theory of Descriptions," "On the Logical Problem of the Trinity" (1978), and "Propositions of Pure Logic" (1982).

15 E.g., in "A Neglected Theory of Truth, pp. 80-82.

16 "Propositions of Pure Logic," p. 233.

Speculating on what the proposition "Ronald Reagan is a Republican" is for Russell, Cartwright hazarded that "there really is no...*one* proposition...that the sentence 'Ronald Reagan is a Republican'...expresses. What is expressed will vary with variations in the denoting concepts associated with 'Ronald Reagan'," (since 'Ronald Reagan' for Russell would not be a name in the narrow sense—it both means and denotes).[17] Again, "We may say with Frege,...that there is no such thing as *the* proposition with respect to Brown that he is taller than Smith."[18] Here he attributes these ideas to Frege or Russell.

In later papers Cartwright presents this view of propositions as his own, using it to fend off Quinean attacks on *de re* necessity and essentialism. For example, in defending *de re* modalities in "Some Remarks on Essentialism," Cartwright rejects a definition of essential properties by Plantinga in terms of *de dicto* modality saying that, after removing a restriction to proper names, what remains "is scarcely intelligible, since it presupposes that for each object x and each property P there is such a thing as *the* proposition that x lacks P."[19]

Again, in defending the inviolability of Leibniz' principle of Identity, as opposed to the failures of Substitutivity: "[The Principle of Substitutivity] was formulated under the useful fiction that a sentence expresses at most one proposition. It *is* a useful one."[20] But..."It ought to be clear by now that it is simply a mistake to suppose that in the case of any given object there is such a thing as *the* proposition that it is greater than 7. Ever so many propositions will qualify as propositions that it, the object in question, is greater than 7."[21]

Thus in Cartwright's account of *statements*, coextensive singular terms may be used to make the same statement. But *propositions* are said to vary with the denoting concepts used to pick out the objects denoted by the singular terms, reminiscent of Frege's concept of the "thought" as the sense of a sentence. Interchange of two denoting phrases with the same referent does not affect the *statement* made, but it yields two different propositions. Hence *statements* differ in kind from *propositions* and do not express them.

At least twice Cartwright suggests that talk about "*the* proposition..." is a useful fiction for philosophical exposition.[22] If so, it is a fiction he employs liberally. Again and again, he talks about 'the proposition, _____ ', where _____ is a sentence-type in single quotes, or a sentence-type preceded by a number (as in 'The proposition, (8) Brown is taller than Smith').[23] Maybe he sometimes forgets it is a fiction.

In some of his last essays, the words 'proposition' and 'statement' are dropped. In "Indiscernibility Principles" (1979) there are 47 sentences with prefixed numbers (plus four sentence schemata with prefixed numbers) which are talked about at length. None are labeled either propositions or statements. In "Implications and

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17 "On the Origins of Russell's Theory of Descriptions," p. 118.

18 "A Neglected Theory of Truth," p. 91.

19 "Some Remarks on Essentialism," p. 153.

20 "Identity and Substitutivity," p. 143.

21 Ibid., p. 145.

22 P. 118 and p. 143.

23 PA: sentences (9), (10), (11), (14); NTT: sentences (3), (4), also (8), (9), (10), (11), (12), (14), (15); ORTD: throughout talk is about propositions; LPT (1978): the seven propositions in the doctrine of the trinity. Etc.

Entailments" (1982) his point of departure for entailment is Moore's entailment between propositions, but he explicitly states "whereas Moore speaks of propositions, I speak instead of sentences"—in particular, he uses Quine's alternative for propositions, "eternal sentences."[24] This is strange, since he argues that knowledge of meanings is essential to entailment.[25] Was Cartwright being weaned away from propositions and statements? Maybe—save for the fact that in "Propositions of Pure Logic" (1982) numbered sentences are again labeled propositions.

V

The stance among realists and intuitionists that certain entities and truths are unanalyzable though we intuitively know what they are, can be frustrating.

"Propositions" ends with "...to say what statements are *not* is not to say what they are...There is thus an important sense in which it remains to be said *what* it is that is susceptible to truth or falsity."[26] After becoming persuaded that statements are not empirically observable entities like sentences or utterances, the question "What, then, is a statement?" is not empty. Yet in response to the question raised by Avrum Stroll, whether he thinks of statements as "mysterious ineluctable entities," Cartwright "thinks it better not to answer."[27] He never addresses the query. He rests with a non-definitive dictionary clause: "a 'statement' is that which is asserted."[28]

After discussing efforts, in "Negative Existentials," to account for statements about non-existent entities by inflationist or deflationist ontology he ends with: "it is sufficient to recognize that discourse which is not 'about reality' is 'about unreality'; and unreality is just that: it is not another reality."[29]

There is also no attempt to explain the nature of *de re* necessity, or to characterize essential vs accidental characteristics as such. Cartwright leads us by our linguistic nose to accept that there are such things, but stops short of saying what they are.

Are there indeed entities that can be talked about but not further described or analyzed? Is reticence to go further an honest recognition of ineluctable facts? Or is Cartwright inhibited by an implicit intuitionistic realism which balks at entering into possibly subjectivistic or instrumentalistic modes of inquiry?

The concept of a statement is certainly a concept of something we can think about. If we can think about statements, and they are not empirically observable entities, they at least exist for our minds. Perhaps they exist only in our minds. Perhaps, as the early Russell and Moore—and I think Cartwright—would have it, they reach out in some way to external reality. Perhaps there are instrumental reasons for thinking of statements in these ways. Must we not say such things? Must we stop with the realist's austere search for truth and rest content with linguistic redundancies?

We don't really need to answer. The beauty of Cartwright's essays lies in the subtlety, detail and rigor of many elegant arguments, in his efforts to exhaust all

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[24] "Implications and Entailments," p. 243.
[25] Ibid., p. 248.
[26] "Propositions," p. 51.
[27] "Propositions Again," p. 62.
[28] Ibid., p. 68.
[29] "Negative Existentials," p. 30.

angles that bear on whatever issue he is tackling, and in the honesty with which he claims no more than his good language sense and logical argument can support. The real virtues of his book cannot be displayed in this, or any other, short review; they lie in the specific arguments, subtle distinctions, and over-all balanced honesty which can only be known by acquaintance through reading and studying these essays.

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Intensional Logic and the Metaphysics of Intentionality. EDWARD N. ZALTA. Cambridge: MIT (Bradford Books) Press, 1988. Pp. xiii, 256.

The philosophy of logic is dominated by an extensionalist ideal, the simplest, most natural though not inevitable course for mathematical logic to have taken from the time of its inception in the late nineteenth century. The doctrine that logically equivalent and codesignative expressions should be intersubstitutable *salva veritate*, that quantifiers range over a domain of existent objects only under which atomic predications are true if and only if they designate existent objects in the extension of the predicate, thereby supporting strong and weak existential generalization, describes an ideally well-behaved fragment of logic and semantics that classical logicians have persistently but unsuccessfully tried to project onto logic as a whole.

Increasingly, there has been a desire to make logic and semantics fit the facts of language rather than the other way around, and to attempt a more serious exploration of mathematical systems in which the intensional features of language are not swept under the carpet, amputated from the corners of the extensionalist Procrustean bed, or dismissed with suspicion in a Quinean 'flight from intension', but properly represented among the irreducible semantic riches of ordinary and scientific language. There are several such programs underway, including Richard Montague's intensional grammar, George Bealer's formal system of propositions, properties, and relations, efforts by Richard Sylvan, Terence Parsons, Karel Lambert, and others, to advance a revisionary Meinongian logic of nonexistents, and Edward N. Zalta's theory of abstract objects.

Zalta's *Intensional Logic and the Metaphysics of Intentionality* offers a conservative reformulation of the logic of his earlier *Abstract Objects: An Introduction to Axiomatic Metaphysics*, in a more integrated philosophical context of concerns about four sources of intensionality, marked by the failure of four logical principles, which Zalta designates as existential and *existential* generalization, substitutivity, and strong extensionality. The study offers an historical consideration of precedents and alternative interpretations of object theory semantics in Alexius Meinong and Ernst Mally, the problem of content or *noema* in Edmund Husserl, Fregean senses, and applications to a wide range of related problems about Russell's theory of definite descriptions, substitutivity failures including Kripke's belief puzzle and John Perry's problem of the essential indexical, the logic of fiction and reference to nonexistent objects, and the connection between intensional logic and intentional states. The logic expands on the earlier system of *Abstract Objects* by incorporating a more complete formal theory of propositions, situations, worlds, and times. The book ends with a chapter comparing Zalta's system with Montague's