

Hermann Lotze Prize 2013

Laudation of Heinrich Wansing

Klaus Robering, University of Southern Denmark, Kolding

Dear colleagues, dear Heinrich!

Of course, everyone now expects me to say that it is a great honour for me to present you as this year's Lotze prize winner and to give a laudation in praise of you. And, of course, "everyone" is right in this. However, perhaps it is not sufficiently appreciated how difficult it is in general to hold an encomium, and how difficult it is especially to hold a laudation on you. Nietzsche, in his *Beyond Good and Evil*, tells us that, "if one wishes to prize at all, it is a delicate and at the same time a noble self-control to praise only where one does not agree — otherwise in fact one would praise oneself, which is contrary to good taste" (283). But hence the question: How could one disagree with Heinrich?

Heinrich started his academic career as a logician when he received his Ph. D. from the Freie Universität Berlin for a thesis on *The Logic of Information Structures* (1992, published in revised form 1993). This, then, provokes the question whether one really can disagree with a logician, especially if Leibniz is right when he says that logical laws are generally and eternally true and valid *at* and even *for* God himself. The problem then, of course, still remains how these eternal and general truths are recognized. Furthermore, though Heinrich, on his homepage, lists Leibniz in his "Academic Genealogy", I expect him not to be satisfied with the view of logical matters suggested by my allusion to Leibniz.

1. First of all, Heinrich will surely be unsatisfied with formulating the question as a problem about truth rather than a problem about truth *and* falsity. Since the days of his dissertation, Heinrich argues for the view that truth and falsity are *pari passu*, i.e., notions of equal rank. The title of his last book, written together with Yaroslav Shramko, namely *Truth and Falsehood* (2011) is programmatic in this respect.
2. Furthermore, I expect Heinrich to refute the view that the truth or falsity of a proposition is completely independent of our means to find out the truth value of that proposition. This is the thesis of realism as Michael Dummett has formulated it. In opposition to this thesis Heinrich has developed an anti-realist approach

to both truth and falsity in a recently published article (cf. *Topoi* 31, 2012, p. 93–100).

3. Finally, I think that Heinrich's preferred conception of logic will not be that of a science (*scientia*) of logical truth but rather that of an art (*ars*) for distinguishing sound arguments from bad ones. At least his concern with Gentzen methods and their generalizations seems to indicate this to me.

Many topics dealt with in the dissertation constantly re-occur in Heinrich's later work. This includes the just mentioned concern with Gentzen-style methods and besides this categorial grammar and the Lambek calculus, functional interpretations, functional completeness, substructural logics, intensionality, relevance, modality, and negation (the main topic of the present workshop). The phd-thesis from 1992 was followed by the "Habilitationsschrift" *Displaying Modal Logic* from 1997 (published 1998) which takes quite a few of the topics mentioned as well as some new ones within the framework of display logic. The book summarizes Heinrich's work on the proof theory of modal, temporal, and non-classical logics carried out in the 1990s and is a major contribution to the development of that field. I think it has changed our view upon modal logics which formerly often has been viewed just as sets of formulas, closed under some inferential operations (as, e.g., modus ponens and necessitation), and characterized by some class of Kripke-Frames with a specific kind of accessibility relation. Heinrich has shown us that there is much more in intensional logic than this by explaining to us how proof-theoretic semantics based on the meaning-as-use idea can be developed for many systems of intensional logic.

At the beginning I said that Heinrich started his career as a logician and much of his work mentioned up to now is technical work within logic. It should be emphasized, however, that it always has been Heinrich's opinion that such work, despite of its technicality, is not "merely" technical but also of an intrinsic philosophical significance. Logic is essential for philosophy as a tool for separating sound from unsound arguments. However, it bears also directly on such philosophical subdisciplines as the philosophy of language and epistemology — and, of course, ethics. Heinrich has contributed to each of these three fields. As regards philosophy of language, I have already mentioned both Heinrich's investigation into the logic of grammatical categories and his concern — *via* proof-theoretic semantics — with the meaning-of-use idea. I should add here, for instance, his "citation theory" of proper names presented in an article from 2007. Truth, falsity, proof, disproof, knowledge, belief, and justification are central topics within epistemology and have been dealt with by Heinrich in many of his articles. Ethics and the theory of action have been treated by Heinrich in his articles about agency, Belnap's stit-logic, decision making, and normative responsibility.

Ethics had a central status within Hermann Lotze's system of philosophy, too. At the very end of his *Metaphysik* (1841), his first book on philosophy, Lotze remarks: "... der Anfang der Metaphysik ist nicht in ihr selbst, sondern in der Ethik". At the end of his career Lotze published a *System der Philosophie* (1874/1879) which he introduced by *Drei Bücher der Logik*. We thus recognize a similarity in Lotze's and Heinrich's view of philosophy: logic is something like the basis of philosophy but there are also rather important philosophical disciplines beyond logic. This coincidence in their conception

of logic and philosophy is one of the many good reason to award Heinrich the Lotze prize. — Let me conclude that there is not only a connection between Lotze and Heinrich but also something like a mental connection, “ein geistig Band”, between Heinrich and this area where we are in Poland, namely Silesia. Hence Heinrich is not only the right man to honour with the Lotze prize but this here is also the right place to do so. As you might know Heinrich has an intimate relation to Poland (as his famous namesake the theologian and philosopher Heinrich Scholz also had, the “father of formal logic in Germany”). Heinrich is the managing editor of the famous Polish logic journal *Studia Logica* and the impact of the great Polish school of logic upon Heinrich’s work is obvious to everyone who has only the slightest knowledge of the history of logic. There is even a Polish influence upon Heinrich’s family life. If I remember it correctly one of his children is called Kasimir after the Polish philosopher and logician Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz. On the other hand Heinrich comes from an area in the very West of Germany (near the frontier to the Netherlands), he has been an assistant professor in Amsterdam, and is now a professor in Bochum, again in the very West of Germany. We thus recognize that Heinrich belongs to two main cultural spheres of Europe and in his intellectual work he functions as a mediator between them. Exactly the same has been true for the Silesia in the area from the Reformation to the Enlightenment when German culture was dominated by Silesian poets like Martin Opitz (from Bunzlau/Boleslawiec), Andreas Gryphius (from Glogau/Głogów), Angelus Silesius (from Breslau/Wrocław), and Silesian philosophers like Christian von Wolff (from the same city), who is also mentioned in Heinrich’s academic genealogy. In the period mentioned, the Silesians have been under Austrian, hence catholic, rule. They themselves, however, have been Lutheran protestants. Since they were not allowed to have their own university (an institution of higher education was founded in Wrocław in 1638, but was “captured” by the Jesuit counter-refomation; the university was founded in 1702), they sent their young people for academic studies in philosophy to the Calvinist universities in Holland. By this the Silesians, in that period, have been only ones in whole Europe with contact to all of the three dominating intellectual traditions of that time: the catholic from the European South and West, the nearby lutheran of Eastern Germany, and the calvinist of protestant Western Europe. And exactly this, as Herbert Schöffler in his well-known book on Baroque Silesia and his role for German culture has explained to us, was the essential cause for the development of the rich intellectual life with the Silesian culture of that period. As a Silesian intellectual 350 years ago, Heinrich, who has been influenced by both Warsaw and Amsterdam, also unites different intellectual traditions. We expect this to lead up to further interesting achievements in philosophy — now in Heinrich’s career as a productive logician and philosopher — as it has done 350 years ago.