

## SUMMARY OF THE MAIN-ARGUMENT: ON NEO-FREGEAN CONCEPTIONS OF ONTOLOGICAL COMMITMENTS

For each sentence ,S', let the *commitment set* (CS) of ,S' be the set of all abstract objects, to the existence of which one is committed by asserting ,S'. C. Wright and W. Künne favour the following criterion for an abstract object *a* being an element of the CS of ,S':

**OC** ,*a*' is a singular abstract Term in ,S'

Thus according to Künne, redness is an element of the CS of the sentence ,Red is a colour'; and according to Wright the CS of sentences of the form

(1) The number of Fs equals the number of Gs  
always contains *the number of Fs* as an element.

Following this explanation, the thesis of Platonism (which both authors condone) can be formulated as follows: there are true sentences with non-empty CS. Nominalists, for their part, deny that this thesis can be proven simply by appeal to true sentences of the form (1). Their argument appeals to sentences of the form

(2) There are just as many Fs as there are Gs  
and runs as follows:

**P<sub>1</sub>** The CS of sentences of form (2) is empty.

**P<sub>2</sub>** Sentences of form (1) are synonymous to sentences of form (2).

**K<sub>N</sub>** The CSs of sentences of form (1) are empty.

According to the nominalist, sentences of form (1) should be regarded as a mere *façon de parler* derived from sentences of form (2). To this both Künne and Wright reply that K<sub>N</sub> cannot be derived from P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>2</sub> without an additional assumption, namely that one of the two sentential forms is basic – that of (1) – whereas (1) is a mere *façon de parler*. They contend that one could equally well assume that sentences of form (2) are a mere *façon de parler*; and on that basis one could argue:

**P<sub>2</sub>** Sentences of form (1) are synonymous to sentences of form (2)

**P<sub>3</sub>** The CSs of sentences of the form (1) contains the number of Fs

**K<sub>P</sub>** The CSs of sentences of the form (2) contains the number of Fs

In fact, however, both K<sub>N</sub> and K<sub>P</sub> follow only on the assumption of the following *additional premise*:

**P<sub>OC</sub>** The OCs of synonymous sentences are identical.

For without P<sub>OC</sub>, from the CS of one sentence 'S' we cannot derive any conclusions about the CS of sentences synonymous to 'S'; by this token having a certain CS would not be a semantic – i.e. sense-invariant – property. On the other hand, if P<sub>OC</sub> is taken for granted – as Wright explicitly does – then a consideration of the sentential forms (1) and (2) reveals the criterion to be inadequate, since its application to sentences of this form yields *different* CS for *synonymous* sentences. Consequently OC stands in need of modification.

There are three principal ways of modifying OC in such a manner as to bring it in line with P<sub>OC</sub>. Thus one could lay down one of the following criteria for *a* being an element of the CS of ,S':

**OC<sub>U</sub>** For all paraphrases ,S\*' of ,S': *a* is an element of the CS of ,S\*' according to OC.

**OC<sub>E</sub>** For at least one paraphrase ,S\*' of ,S': *a* is an element of the CS of ,S\*' according to OC.

**OC<sub>C</sub>** For the canonical paraphrase ,S<sub>C</sub>' of ,S': *a* is an element of the CS of ,S<sub>C</sub>' according to OC.

Each of these modifications has its own consequence for our debate. OC<sub>U</sub> implies K<sub>N</sub>; OC<sub>E</sub> implies K<sub>P</sub>; finally, depending on which of the sentential forms (1) or (2) is treated as canonical, OC<sub>C</sub> either implies K<sub>N</sub> or K<sub>P</sub>.