

that difference must show up for it as a difference, namely, “the difference that constitutes thinking *and all determinateness*.”

In conclusion, Bowman has made quite clearly his point that the notion of “absolute negativity, and the completely altered view of logic associated with it, has a fourfold significance in Hegel’s philosophy: “metaphysical, methodological, critical, and existential.” It is a good start for new research.—Riccardo Pozzo, *Italian National Research Council*.

BRAINE, David. *Language and Human Understanding: The Roots of Creativity in Speech and Thought*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University Press of America, 2014. xv + 797 pp. Cloth, \$59.95—David Braine has written a large book on a large theme. As I understand it, the book has both a thesis and a meta-thesis. The thesis is that language exhibits freedom yet is undergirded by mechanically applicable rules. Thus linguistic unboundedness is consistent with naturalism about the mind. Part of how Braine shows this is by distinguishing *langue* from *parole*. Adapting Saussure’s terms, Braine means by them “the logical distinction between . . . the object of shared practical knowledge of a language implicit in communal language-possession and . . . its realization in language-use and in the active understanding of which users of that language have of what they say or hear, write, or read in their acts of speaking, hearing, writing, or reading in that language.”

The book’s meta-thesis is that philosophy, linguistics, and psychology are together needed for a coherent account of language and defense of Braine’s thesis. Braine appeals mostly to philosophy and linguistics, and his knowledge of philosophy in particular—analytic, Continental, and historical—is astounding. Braine’s discussion of psychology involves general claims about human cognition, including an insistence that it be explicable in scientific terms. Occasionally he also mentions tidbits from anthropology as well as from particular languages, including English, French, German, Greek, Korean, Japanese, Latin, Old English, Old French, and Old High German.

The principle audience for Braine’s book are academics working on language studies, including philosophers of language, linguists, and perhaps psychologists. Secondary audiences could include graduate students in those disciplines.

In his “Introduction and Overview,” Braine introduces his thesis, outlines his book, and motivates his project. In Part One, “Words and Their Dynamism in the Expression of Meaning,” Braine presents the data for his thesis. Chapter one distinguishes language-possession from language-use. Chapter two discusses the expressive power of words. Chapter three turns to sentences. Chapter four emphasizes the connection between language, on the one hand, and human thought and

nature, on the other. And chapter five discusses the applicability of the "scientific method," and in particular mathematical modeling, to language study.

In Part Two, "The Shape of the Psychology Required for Explaining the Learning and Use of Language," Braine discusses just that. Chapter six looks at how human and other animals are systems dynamically geared to their environment. Chapter seven applies these results to the psychology of language. And chapter eight emphasizes the role of (inner) understanding in explaining (outer) speech.

In Part Three, "Rewriting the Philosophy of Grammar and Restoring Unity to the Theory of Language," Braine analyzes particular grammatical constructions and categories and integrates them into his overall account. Chapter nine explores what Braine takes to be related distinctions between topic/comment, subject/predicate, and noun/verb. Chapter ten considers the roles of "force" and "sense," as Frege, Geach, and Dummett employ the terms. Chapter eleven discusses the notions of grammatical subjects and objects. Chapter twelve "marries" philosophy and grammar by talking about types of noun expressions and their relation to cognition and representationalism. Chapter thirteen considers different kinds of grammar, including formal and functional, and how they treat issues of reference and interrogatives. Chapter fourteen focuses on the role of verbs in sentences. And chapter fifteen discusses what Braine takes to be the distorted treatment of subordinate phrases. The book closes with brief General Conclusions.

Braine's work is comprehensive and well researched. His original contribution, as I see it, is twofold. First, Braine looks at the actual grammatical richness of language to illustrate its conventionality and potentially variable uses. Though the *langue/parole* distinction is at home in philosophy, the data that Braine provides are likely more familiar to the linguist. Second, Braine speculates on the psychological (and sometimes anthropological and biological) mechanisms that must underlie language use. Though Braine's discussion of psychology is relatively meager, his attempt to use it to defend his thesis is laudable.

My only complaint concerns the volume's size. Braine's book is mammoth. Some of this is due to its interdisciplinarity. But some of it is also due to Braine's wordiness. As an example of the latter, there is no succinct introduction. Rather the reader has to wade through seventy long pages. Moreover, while Braine's writing is mostly clear and engaging, it also tends toward the verbose. An otherwise impressive work, *Language and Human Understanding* could have used a good editing.—Nathaniel Goldberg, *Washington and Lee University*.