



STANISŁAW KAMIŃSKI MEMORIAL LECTURES

THE JOHN PAUL II CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LUBLIN
FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY
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"Being"

30 hour-course, 1 hour credit, 2 ECTS points

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Summary:

Kant has said, "'Being' is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing. It is merely the positing of a thing, or of certain determinations, as existing in themselves."

["Sein ist offenbar kein reales Prädikat, das ist ein Begriff von irgend etwas, was zu dem Begriffe eines Dinges hinzu kommen könnte. Es ist bloß die Position eines Dinges oder gewisser Bestimmungen an sich selbst."]

Frege has said, "Affirmation of existence is in fact nothing other than denial of the number zero."
["Es ist ja Bejahung der Existenz nichts Anderes als Verneinung der Nullzahl."]

Quine has said, "To be is to be the value of a bound variable."

These three statements are classic expressions of what may be called "the thin conception of being" (Frege uses the word 'existence' but none of these three philosophers sees any important difference between 'exists' and 'is'). Our topic is the thin (or merely logical) conception of being. It will be argued that being is indeed the "thin" concept that Kant and Frege and Quine supposed it to be. Consequences of this thesis will be explored, particularly as they touch on Meinongianism (the problem of objects that lie "outside being") and on the problem of universals.