In the paper "Kotarbiński's Theory of Genuine Names", which was published recently in this journal, I attempted to sketch and explain a theory of genuine names formulated by Tadeusz Kotarbiński, who is perhaps Poland's outstanding 20th century philosopher. The theory is a fundamental ingredient of Kotarbiński's nominalistic views, and it marks a development of nominalism and nominalistic semantics generally unknown to philosophers and semanticists of the West. The theory also reveals how some of the logical concepts of Stanisław Leśniewski, one of the leading members of the Warsaw School of logicians which flourished between the two Wars, influenced the development of a nominalistic metaphysics - Kotarbiński's reism.

In the present paper I shall present and analyze Kotarbiński's theory of pseudo-names, i.e., expressions purporting to refer to non-things. The discussion will be informal and will focus on the theory as it is presented in Kotarbiński's fundamental and important work of 1929 (Elementy). I shall assume the reader's acquaintance with "Kotarbiński's Theory of Genuine Names".

Perhaps this sketch and analysis of Kotarbiński's views on pseudo-names will help to stimulate an interest in his work and in philosophical developments in Poland between the two Wars.

I

According to Kotarbiński, an expression is a genuine name if it may be meaningfully predicated of a thing (an extended and resistant object) in a sentence of the form 'A is B' (wherein the copula has its so-called fundamental sense); if the result of so using the expression is a true sentence, then it is said that the expression denotes the subject of that sentence. According to this analysis, there are three types of names: singular names (expressions denoting one and only one thing),

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1 Theoria, A Swedish Journal of Philosophy and Psychology, vol. XXX, 2; 1964, pp. 80-95; reprinted also in the present volume, pp. 107-118 (Ed.)

e.g., 'Rome', 'The discoverer of the circulation of the blood', common names (expressions having multiple denotation), e.g. 'red', 'Polish King', 'man', 'mammal'; and vacuous or objectless names (expressions which may be meaningfully though not truly predicated of a thing), e.g., 'Apollo', 'The author of Slawkenburgius on Noses', 'Monarch of the Swiss Republic'.

It does not follow from this analysis that every noun and adjective is a genuine name, for not all names are genuine names; some names are pseudo-names. Kotarbiński has described a pseudo-name as being any "word (or set of words) which may indeed figure coherently as 'B' in a structure of the type 'A is B', but only if this structure fulfils a substituting-abbreviating role, not a fundamental role". The sentence

(1) Uranus is a planet

exhibits the fundamental or principal use of 'is', i.e., (1) is an instance of the schema 'A is B' (wherein 'is' functions in the fundamental sense). However, some sentences have the form 'A is B' without exhibiting this fundamental or principal use of the copula; they display a so-called derivative or secondary use of 'is', e.g.,

(2) Seniority is a transitive relation,
(3) A whale is a mammal.

Kotarbiński maintains that (2) is both meaningful and true; it has the form 'A is B', and it would seem that "transitive relation" is a name of an object, viz. seniority. He asserts that this is not so because (2) is merely an abbreviation for

(2') If some object is older than another object, and the latter object is older than some other object, then the first object is older than the third object.

In the abbreviating sentence (2) 'is' does not stand between genuine names although 'seniority' and 'relation' are substantives. In (2) we have a sentence of the form 'A is B' "but in a secondary use, wherein 'is' sounds like or looks like the copula in the sentence" (1) "but it fulfils another role, it means something different, and the set of words in the place of 'A' and 'B' are not names". These expressions are called "pseudo-names". Sentence (3) is described in the same way; it is said to be a substituting-abbreviation for

(3') Whatever is a whale is a mammal.

It may be recalled that ontologically reism countenances only the existence of things. Semantically the reist countenances among genuine names only singular, common, or vacuous names. Expressions apparently

\(^2\)Elementy, p.9. Translation of Polish texts in this paper are by V.F.S.

\(^3\)Ibid.