The Naming of Facts and the Methodology of Language-Based Metaphysics

Arianna Betti
University of Amsterdam, Netherland

According to Mulligan & Correia 2008, "any philosophy of facts owes us an account of the form of such expressions as "the fact that Sam is sad". They also suggest that expressions of the form "the fact that p" have the form of definite descriptions, and that one possible account of such expressions as definite descriptions is the one given by Hochberg 2001. According to Hochberg, 'the fact that p' is analysed as 'the fact that contains a as a term and F as an attribute and that is of the form φx exists'.

Why should we ask that *any* philosophy of facts be equipped with names for facts (or, more neutrally, with ways to refer to facts)? A descriptive metaphysician accepting facts might care about the naming of facts; but I do not see why a revisionary metaphysician should: I do not see whether a revisionary metaphysician accepting facts should care even as to whether it is at all *possible* to name them. *A fortiori*, for a revisionary metaphysician there does not seem to be any need for the expression 'the fact that p' to come out as a definite description.

So it seems that the only philosophers for whom Hochberg's analysis is relevant are those who think that linguistic analyses of that kind can be used in support of a philosophy of facts independently of theoretical considerations. But this, I argue, is misguided: since it presupposes a specific philosophy of facts from the start, Hochberg's analysis can't be used in support of that very philosophy or of any other philosophy of facts.

Hochberg, H. 2001. *The Positivist and the Ontologist. Bergmann, Carnap and Logical Realism*, Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Mulligan, Kevin and Correia, Fabrice, "Facts", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2008 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2008/entries/facts/>.