

Foundations and Philosophy of Science Unit

ASSESSMENT OF THE WORK AND PERSONALITY OF DR I L M A R T A M M E L O

1 ACADEMIC INTERESTS

It would be difficult to find another scholar with such a wide range of interests: from politics and its theory to pure logic through the law and its philosophy, the history of ideas, epistemology, metaphysics, value theory, ethics, and even the philosophy of science. Since Tammelo is continually working or talking about one or other subject in these fields, he is a source of inspiration for people working in any of them. I, for one, have received his stimulus to work on the logic of imperatives: out of a talk and a correspondence with him came my paper on "The paradox of addition and its dissolution". I have also benefited from his remarks and criticisms on matters of logic and philosophy of science occurring in my work, Scientific Research, which I find particularly remarkable because Dr Tammelo does not claim a special competence in this field. In short, Tammelo's academic profile is: sound and comprehensive learning. Such a many sided scholarly profile should prove an asset to any university at a time when overspecialisation is leading us to idiocy and alienation from youth.

2 DISTINCTIVE IDEAS OF TAMMELO'S

Because of his appreciation for systematic thought and his European background, Tammelo's universe of ideas is somewhat close to Nicolai Hartmann's - with the advantage over the latter of being clear, benefiting from modern logic, and writing in a concise and elegant way. His philosophy of logic is formalism. He is very strict about this: he won't have any of the so called informal logics or rhetorics as substitutes for logic, although he is perfectly aware that deductive logic does not exhaust all kinds of inference. Though a formalist, he is no "dry formalist": he knows logic is mainly a tool, and an impotent one unless aided by intuition. In this, as in everything else, Tammelo is no extremist. Tammelo has applied logic to the elucidation of legal and moral concepts and to the cleansing of legal and political arguments. He would have been unable to do this without a mastery of both the tool and the subject matter. What he and other applied logicians, or rather philosophers of the law, politics, and ethics are doing (and there are not many) is, in a way, more difficult than playing the logical game in a closed formal context. I am convinced that this kind of work is indispensable (though certainly not sufficient) to make any progress in these fields, which have been traditionally marred by obscurity and even sophistry.

3 PUBLISHED WORK

Tammelo is an unusually productive writer. I have read and enjoyed several articles of his as well as his books Outlines of Modern Legal Logic, Argumentation and Intransigence, Modern Logic in the Service of Law (Part I), and Survival and Surpassing. There is no doubt in my mind that the first is the only systematic work on the subject available in any language. What is more (a) it looks to me perfectly sound from a technical (logical) point of view, (b) it contains stimu-

lating thoughts on a new branch of logic of Tammelo's own invention (anapophantic logic) and, so far as I can judge, (c) it captures the nuances of legal reasoning. The second book is a delightful essay in the Cartesian spirit, or rather mood, devoted to elucidating the tricky concept of justice. The third promises to become a standard textbook in the field. I was so enthusiastic over the first book that I asked Tammelo to write a book for the Library of Exact Philosophy, which I am editing for the Springer-Verlag (Wien/New York) in collaboration with Ayer, Carnap, Feigl, Kraft, and Popper. I have advised my Argentine publisher, Ediciones Siglo Veinte, to grab the second work. Later on I was glad to have my impressions confirmed by my former colleagues at the University of Buenos Aires, Professors C.E. Alchourron and Bulygin.

4 PERSONALITY

I know Dr Tammelo for a hard-working, profound, witty, easy-going and sociable person. I have seen him chat and argue with the most diverse people, always with intensity, never with acrimony. Although he is a good conversationalist he can listen and take a passionate interest in his interlocutor's ideas. He knows how to receive criticism and learn from it as well as to criticize without hurting. For these reasons and those given above I have found him an engaging teacher and colleague. I know of only a single failing of Tammelo's: his tolerance of Scheler and Heidegger, whose influence seems to me to have been obnoxious. But then (a) Tammelo is by no means a blind and enthusiastic defender of those people and (b) I confess to a violent, perhaps emotional, dislike of them.