

Rosaria Egidì • Guido Bonino (Eds.)
Fostering the Ontological Turn
Gustav Bergmann (1906-1987)

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INTRODUCTION

On 18-19 May 2007 an international conference was held in Rome, at the Università di Roma Tre, devoted to the philosophy of Gustav Bergmann (1906-1987). The conference was the third in a series including other two meetings, in Iowa City (19-20 May 2006) and in Aix-en-Provence (9-11 December 2006), organized by the University of Iowa and by the Université de Provence Aix-Marseille 1, respectively. Gustav Bergmann, a young member of the Vienna Circle, fled to the USA in 1938, began his philosophical career as a philosopher of science much in the standard logical positivistic fashion, but after the departure from the orthodox views of logical positivism in the 1940s, he came to develop an increasingly original philosophy, which combined a deep interest for ontology with an unswerving allegiance to what he considered the true positivistic stance. Though his views were far from those of most of the American philosophical community of his time, in the 1950s and 1960s they were nonetheless object of discussion, and Bergmann himself engaged in disputes with the representatives of alternative conceptions. But in more recent decades a rather unfortunate neglect set in with reference to his works and ideas, except in some limited quarters. Not even the revival of interest for metaphysics and ontology in analytical philosophy, of which Bergmann can be regarded as a forerunner, has really changed the situation, perhaps because Bergmann's own brand of ontology seems to be out of line with those of his rivals. Hopefully the three conferences just mentioned, together with some other signs – first of all the new publication by Ontos Verlag of three volumes of Bergmann's works, edited by Erwin Tegtmeier, in 2003-2004 – are marking a recent change in the attitude of the philosophical community.

The title of the Rome conference and of this volume, *Fostering the Ontological Turn*, alludes to Bergmann's role in prompting the significant transformation which analytic philosophy underwent in its maturity, after having been baptized by a "linguistic turn" (a phrase, by the way, which was probably first used by Bergmann). It also pays a tribute to the title of a *Festschrift* presented to Bergmann in 1974 (*The Ontological Turn. Studies in the Philosophy of Gustav Bergmann*, eds. M.S. Gram and E.D. Klemke, Iowa City, University of Iowa Press). We would like to make use of the opportunity of this introduction to thank all the participants to the conference, and especially to Kevin Mulligan, whose paper could not be included

here, for the interesting discussions which took place in Rome and which certainly provided useful suggestions to be incorporated in the final versions of the contributions collected in this volume.

The volume is divided into three sections, which have been devised *a posteriori* and are not to be intended as too rigidly demarcated, but rather as a somewhat blurred grouping of papers widely varied for their topics. The first section, “Categories of a realistic ontology”, includes the contributions which are more specifically concerned with the fundamental categories of Bergmann’s ontology and, for that matter, of ontology in general. In his long essay, “Universals, Particulars, Tropes and Blobs”, Fred Wilson argues for the admittance into the ontological inventory of the world of both universals and bare particulars, while showing how that conclusion can be come to by strictly adhering to Bergmann’s empiricist and positivistic philosophical method; at the same time he shows the confusions implicit in nominalism and in trope theories and the unacceptable consequences which follow from such views. Herbert Hochberg, who could not attend the conference, but who nevertheless was so kind as to provide a paper, “The Matter of Particulars”, focuses on the notions of particular and particularity (what makes an entity a particular); many different conceptions, medieval and contemporary, are thoroughly examined, with a special consideration for Bergmann’s views, both from his middle and his late philosophy. Bare particulars are also the subject of Francesco Martinello’s contribution, “Bare Particulars: Some Remarks”, in which it is argued that Bergmann’s most compelling reason to accept bare particulars lies in his ideal language method. Pasquale Frascolla, in “On Bergmann’s Reading of the ‘Tractatus’ Ontology” critically analyses Bergmann’s interpretation of the main ontological notions of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, such as those of object and logical form, and argues that it is ultimately based on grave misunderstandings. A comparative analysis of the views of the middle and of the late Bergmann concerning the notion of function is put forward by Erwin Tegtmeier’s in “Complexes, Nexus, and Functions in the Middle and the Late Bergmann”; the connections with the question of how complexes hold together are also pointed out, while the role of exemplification in holding together facts is examined in Guido Bonino’s paper, “Bergmann on Exemplification”.

The second section, “World, mind, and relations” is somewhat heterogeneous, in that it comprises rather different topics. On the one hand there are the contributions devoted to Bergmann’s “ontology of knowing”, such as Greg Jesson’s “Is Intentionality more like Hunting or more like Hitting?

Bergmann on Skepticism and Knowledge”, and Rosaria Egidi’s “Bergmann’s Critique of Representationalism”. The former focuses on Bergmann’s conception of intentionality, and on how it has to comply at the same time with the exigencies of realism and the phenomenon of error. The latter examines Bergmann’s critical arguments against the classical representational theories of knowledge and attempts an assessment of these arguments with respect to contemporary varieties of representationalism. On the other hand, Francesco Orilia, in “The Problem of Order in Relational States of Affairs: A Leibnizian View”, is concerned with the question of how the order in a relational state of affairs is to be accounted for from an ontological point of view; many alternatives are evaluated, and among them Bergmann’s, and a new solution, in Leibnizian spirit, is put forth. The notion of state of affairs is also central in “Singular Propositions as Possible States of Affairs”, by Alberto Voltolini, where the author considers the theoretical advantages of conceiving singular propositions as possible states of affairs, first of all the possibility of proposing a deflationary view of singular propositions themselves. Finally, Venanzio Raspa, in “... The most memorable Don Quixote of a great cause’. Bergmann’s Critique of Meinong”, provides a detailed examination of Bergmann’s reading of the philosophy of Meinong, in which attention is drawn on aspects of his works that were completely neglected by Bergmann.

More compactness is displayed in the last section of the book, “Metaphysics of space and time”. In “Particulars as Areas and Durations” Laird Addis deals with one of the most debated among Bergmann’s philosophical proposals, i.e., the identification of bare particulars with extensions of space and time, putting forward a tentative solution to the problems that such a view poses. L. Nathan Oaklander, in “Is there a Difference between Absolute and Relative Space?”, points out a tension between Bergmann’s supposedly absolutist view of space and his conception of bare particulars. Giuliano Torrenzo, in “Tenseless Time vs. Tensed Truthmakers”, by making reference to a methodological suggestion of Bergmann’s, proposes a new way of conceiving of the difference between eternalist A-theories of time and serious tensor B-theories. Finally, in the joint paper “Some Troubles with the Specious Present in Bergmann’s Ideal Language”, Fabio Minocchio and Andrea Pagliardi argue for the inadequacy of Bergmann’s ideal language to cope successfully with his notion of specious present.

Categories of a realistic ontology

Fred Wilson

UNIVERSALS, PARTICULARS, TROPES AND BLOBS

Abstract. This study explores how to do ontology within a positivist framework, and specifically the issue of universals and particulars. It is argued that universals and bare particulars are pieces of commonsense within this framework. It is argued further that a nominalism of tropes makes no ontological sense within this framework, and that its degenerate form as a nominalism in which the world is an amorphous lump or consists of mere blobs is simply silly. Bergmann, Sellars, Moore, Stout and Hochberg are among the philosophers discussed.

Everyone at some time or other considers model universes, so we can start there also. But we want to consider our model in much the same way as we consider the world in which we actually live, that is, as a world which we have experienced. Our model is a world in which the things that are there are in the first instance things that we have encountered in our experience of the world – our sensible experience of the real, everyday world. (There is also inner awareness and the things that it assures us are there, also in the world, but we need not consider entities of these sorts for what we are about). Now think of an apple, as we really encounter it, an apple which is green on the one side and red on the other. Think of looking at it with the red side before us and the green side away from us. As we experience it there is a red expanse, bounded by a certain shape, and rather bulgy. Even if we know that the other side is green, that green is not given to us in our sensory experience. The model universe is like that red expanse. The things in this universe are simple expanses which have sensible features, sensible qualities and sensible shapes. Two of the expanses are red and circular, the other is green and square. Now, back in the real world of apples and other ordinary things, suppose there are three apples, two red, one green, arranged in a straight line with the green one between the two red ones. The parts of the apples that we sensibly experience are on this line. We can imagine the same thing for the expanses in our model universe. So, in our model universe let us suppose our three expanses ordered just as the sensible appearances of the apples appear in an order. Let us suppose that the green expanse is between the two red ones.

There is nothing that could be thought puzzling about this universe, save its size. For, there is nothing puzzling about coloured expanses or patches. As G.F. Stout once put it,

I may, in double vision, have two images of a single candle flame. Then there appear or *seem* to be two candle flames, whereas in fact there is only one. But the visual presentations do not merely seem to exist and be separate. Both they and their separation really appear, are really presented or given, and must therefore really exist. It is only because the images really exist and are really separate that there appear or seem to be two candle flames. (Stout, 1930, p. 390)

In this sense, as he says, «... nothing can really appear except what really is, and really is as it appears» (Stout, 1930, p. 390). Our patches are somewhat elementary as things, if you wish, but they are just things like these images that Stout describes: they are sensible, they are locally separate, and they have various sensible properties.

It is also worth noting that the things in this model universe have *sensible properties*. Indeed, so do things in the real world. These properties are given to us in experience. It is as we experience them that I want to consider these things and their properties. Thus, for example, while the things in this universe fall into various sets – and there is also the empty set into which none of them fall – and, indeed, all those things which are red form a set – the set of red things –, the point to be made is that the properties as we are going to consider them are not merely sets of things: the things in this world are experienced as having sensible properties, and not as members of sets. It is things and their properties in which we are interested, not the sets, the bare collections, into which those things arrange themselves.

So let us consider a model universe in which there are, first, two red patches both of which are circular. Let us suppose that the colour of the one is indistinguishable from the colour of the other, and that the shape of the one is indistinguishable from the shape of the other. Next, there is a green patch which is square. Here the colour of this expanse can be distinguished from the colour of the other two. The shape can also be distinguished. But we need some names. We have three things: let us call the two red things “Cebes” and “Simmias” and the green thing “Socrates”.

So we say of both Cebes and Simmias that they are red. It is sometimes said that there is a difficulty here, that there is a “problem of sameness”: in virtue of what, it is asked, are they both called the same? In virtue of what do we make the same predication “Cebes is red” and “Simmias is red” of the two things Cebes and Simmias? Well, to this is the answer not obvious? In the world as we experience it, there is a property in Cebes that

we have decided to refer to with the term ‘red’. Having made that decision, we note that in the world as we experience it there is a property in Simmias that is indistinguishable from the property in Cebes that we have decided to refer to using the term ‘red’, so the property in Cebes is the same as the property in Simmias – the same in the sense of ‘indistinguishable’ – and we therefore apply the same term, and predicate ‘red’ of Simmias just as we predicate ‘red’ of Cebes. Cebes and Simmias are the same by virtue of the fact that there is present in the one a property that is indistinguishable from one of the properties in the other. Taking the properties in things to be the same when they are indistinguishable, things turn out to be the same just in case each has a property that is the same as a property present in the others.

In the world as we experience it, then, the same property can be in several things. But in traditional terminology, if a property can be present in several things, then that property is a universal. Here is the solution to the problem of sameness. Things are the same in the sense of having the same term predicated of them by virtue of the fact that properties are universals, and the same property can be present in several things: properties as universals solve the problem of sameness.

This is how Bergmann approached the problem of sameness¹. He began with the logical positivists. Their programme was to clarify and to defend empirical science after the fashion of Mill and Comte and Mach, but to improve that defence by showing more clearly the logical structure of the language of science. The framework for this elucidation of the logic of science was that established by the developments of a newer, more adequate logic, the logic to be found in the formal language of *Principia Mathematica*. The aim was to explore the logic of scientific theories. Generally speaking, science is of course empirical: it is about the world as we experience it. The formal language was to be used to describe the world, and present to us the logical form of the theories that science developed and to validate the inferences made in science. So to do this, non-logical or descriptive constants had to be added to the language of logic.

¹ Cf. Bergmann, 1944, pp. 209-211. Note the insouciance with which he mixes talk of predicates and of characteristics (the latter can be “undefined” – p. 209 –; but surely the notion of definition applies to linguistic items, namely predicates, and not the entities to which they refer). Note, also, the equal insouciance with which Bergmann (p. 210) speaks of characteristics as “universals” on the basis of the fact that a term referring to a characteristic can appear in several sentences which truly describe the world.

These constants would refer to what is in the world as we experience it: how else could it validate logical inferences about what is in the world? how else could it show the logical structure of scientific theories? how else could science be defended against its critics?²

It is these constants that enable one to describe the world. To do this, they must be somehow hooked to the world: to the syntactical structure of the language must be added a semantics. This semantics must be such that sentences in the language can be used to describe the world as we experience it.

As in the real world, so in our model world, red is a feature that recurs. Our language must be such that this fact finds a representation in the language. We therefore, let us say, let the constant 'R' pick out this feature that recurs. But this alone will not do, not even for our model world: for, red occurs or recurs twice. In fact, it recurs with another features that also recurs, specifically a shape. Let us pick out this feature with the constant 'C'. Moreover, these two features occur or recur *together*; in our world, as often in the real world, they are *with* one another. Let us represent this sort of connection with the constant 'W'. Thus we have as an attempt to describe our model world, or at least parts of it, the *sentence* that

W(R, C).

If we make, in the language of *Principia Mathematica*, 'R' and 'C' to be of the lowest type, then we should make 'W' to be of the next higher type, so that it can represent, not features that occur and recur, but the way in which those features occur and recur in the world. Constants of the lowest type represent features that occur in the world, constants of the next higher type represent the way or ways in which those features occur or recur.

Two other features of our model world also have to be recorded. There is the feature we call "green" and that which we call "square". These are clearly distinguishable from the features we have labelled 'R' and 'C'. Let us label them 'G' and 'S'. And we note that these features are, like the features R and C, *with* one another. That is, to describe our little world we also have

W(G, S).

But we also have to note that there are features of our world that we have not yet recorded in our language. We have not yet noted that there are

² Cf. Bergmann, 1944; also Bergmann, 1942. In a note to the latter, Bergmann mentions philosophical discussions he had had with Wilfrid Sellars, whom he thanks for the vigorous debate.

two expanses which are R, red, and another, *third* expanse which is green. These expanses are distinguishable from the features we have already recorded in our language, and distinguishable from one another. Let us therefore have the constants 'X', 'Y' and 'Z' pick out these three further features of this world.

These expanses go *with* the other features in the world in several ways. We record these *ways the world is* by the *sentences*

W(X, R, C) W(Y, R, C) W(Z, G, S)

These sentences, through the ways in which the terms are organized into these sentences, *picture* the ways in which features go together or are with one another in our model world. Cebes is one of the ways in which the features go together in our model world, Simmias is another, and Socrates is a third.

This is just one of the many ways in which one can go about constructing language to make it fit for describing the ways in which the world is. One might also, for example, represent the expanses by constants of the lowest type and the other features by constants of the next higher type, and represent one feature being with an expanse by a sentence of the sort

RX.

In that case, what we before represented by the sentence 'W(X, R, C)' is now represented by

RX

and

CX

taken together. That is, that red and circular are with the X-expanse is now represented by, in effect,

RX & CX.

Being *with* one another is now not represented by a single term juxtaposed to three other terms, but rather is represented by two juxtapositions and an ampersand sign, or, if you wish, by two juxtapositions of constants and the juxtaposition of two sentences. In any case, we now have our model world represented by

RX, CX, RY, CY, GZ, SZ.

These are simply two different conventions for representing features in our model world and the ways in which those features occur and recur in that world. Both sets of conventions conform to the logical or syntactical

structure required by *Principia Mathematica*. Bergmann in fact chose the second way to represent the ways the world is. But that is not the present point: either way would do. Either way can give pictures that represent the three things in our model universe, Cebes, Simmias, and Socrates – the three ways in which the distinguishable features in this universe go together, how they are with one another.

The point that needs to be made is this: In the world as we experience it, there are various distinguishable features that occur and among them some that recur. They recur in the sense that among two or more of the ways in which the world is, there is a feature in one of these ways that is *indistinguishable* from a feature in another of the ways the world is, or perhaps several other of the ways the world is. In our model, the feature represented by R occurs once with the expanse X and, *indistinguishably*, once with the expanse Y. As one says, the feature that occurs with X is one with the feature that is with X, they are *the same*. That is what indistinguishability amounts to: and that is why we say both expanses are red, and why in our structured language we apply the same term ‘R’ to that feature that is with X as we do to that feature that is with Y.

All this is common sense, and unproblematic. In constructing the outlines of the language that is needed for the logical analysis of the language of science, one hardly notices it. It is important, but something that one can take for granted as one gets on with the further tasks required for the defence of science.

Now let us suppose that a philosopher working within this common sense context starts to read philosophers such as Russell or Moore. Here is another tradition, using language to do something other than, or something more than, explore the logic of science. This other tradition takes up issues that have their roots in patterns of thought that deal with other issues.

It turns out on this other tradition that world as we experience it and as that which our language is about consists of *entities*. And these are *simple* and *complex* – the descriptive constants are labels of *simples*, while sentences represent *complexes*. Complexes are made up of simples, simples are constituents of complexes. The features that have been labelled ‘red’ and ‘green’ and ‘square’ and ‘circle’ are *properties*. These are simple entities, and they occur in complexes. Indeed, as it turns out, in our model universe as in the real world, there are no simples that are not in complexes. Moreover, the feature labelled ‘red’ is one that *recurs* as this property red in several different complexes; that is what happens when one uses the term ‘red’ to apply to a given feature – one re-applies the same

term when there is a feature elsewhere that is *indistinguishable* from it. This piece of common sense becomes the truth that *the same property can occur and recur in several different complexes*.

Thus, the piece of common sense about the language of science and about how, in constructing that language, we use linguistic labels to pick out discernible features that occur and recur in the world as we experience it turns out to be a not unimportant *truth in metaphysics*, and in particular in *ontology*, which is that part of metaphysics that deals with what is, that is, what things or entities that are and the categories of things that are. Traditionally, if one holds that one and the same property can be in several different things, then one is holding the *realist position* that *properties are universals*, they are *realized*, and *realized multiply*, in diverse complex things in the world. That is, the world as we experience it.

Or rather: When one first comes across them, metaphysical claims are puzzling. What does it mean to say that entities are simple or complex – chairs have parts but are the legs which are parts also simple? and what about the sensible expanses of our model world, do they also have parts? Metaphysics says that they do, but those parts are certainly not like the parts of a chair. And what does it mean to say that some among the simple entities in the world as we experience it are universals? are there universals alongside chairs or alongside coloured expanses or alongside oysters or alongside rainbows? I can bump into a chair, and I can eat an oyster, and I can experience a coloured patch, and I can contemplate a rainbow: can I do any of these things with universals? But now our philosopher has discovered something – something important. When one reflects on the common sense way in which language is fit onto the world, then we discover that the metaphysical claims can be understood as claims about this language and how it fits onto the world. The metaphysical claims that puzzle us can be *explicated*, rendered as unproblematic common sense – common sense about how we fit language onto the world – how we fit the language of the empiricists and the logical positivists onto the world. So the ontological claim which we find puzzling to the effect that there are, among the simple entities in the world, universals becomes the piece of common sense that there are in the world as we are acquainted with it in our sensible experience, features that we label with descriptive constants, and some of these occur and indistinguishably recur – it is these features that we call “universals”.

What makes the claim that there are universals true is nothing more than the claim, for example, that there are two red shirts, or the claim about our model universe that there are two red patches.

Note how this commonsensical approach sets to one side as coy silliness certain claims that talk about universals is simple metaphysical nonsense, claims that quite literally are quite without any cognitive sense. Thus, David Lewis for one has said that

I have complained about the difficulty of understanding the relation that allegedly relates concrete things to the abstract simple possibilities – propositions or properties – that they realize.

[...] It's a nasty predicament to claim that you somehow understand a primitive notion, although you have no idea how you could possibly understand it [...] that's the predicament I claim others are in if they accept the alleged notion of realization of abstract simple possibilities. (Lewis, 1991, pp. 35-36)

How properties come to be “abstract” is not explained. In fact, it is perfectly clear that properties are there among the entities in the world as we experience it: they may not be “concrete”, whatever that is, but if ‘abstract’ means ‘abstracted from’, where to be abstracted from something means to be separated from it, then properties are certainly not abstract: they are simply features of the world as we experience it that occur and recur and *just for that reason* are realized in the things of our world. And what exactly is meant by a “proposition”? Since it is coupled with ‘property’, it likely means something like a complex whole represented by a sentence, the state of affairs that is meant by, and is, if you wish, the meaning of a sentence, in contrast to the simple properties which are meant by constants such as ‘red’. But we aren’t told: essentially Lewis is simply obfuscating things by sloppy and misleading use of language. He should try explicating metaphysical claims, making them commonsensical, instead of making them more puzzling than they ordinarily are by the sloppy – undoubtedly deliberately sloppy – use of language. Whatever he means by what he is saying, he is evidently trying to make the point often made by others that they do not understand what it is for one entity to be present in, or realized, in several diverse things. What these philosophers are saying – what it is likely Lewis is saying in his obfuscating way – is that metaphysical claims are intrinsically puzzling, and in particular the claim that properties are universals and that these universals can be realized in many things is a puzzling claim without any clear sense.

But our philosopher – our positivist who has learned how to do ontology – has found a way out of this predicament: explicate the problem so that its solution can be found as a way of speaking about the language we create in

order to describe about the world as we experience it. Explicated, it turns out that to say that there are universals that are realized in or by various diverse things in the world is to say that, for example, the feature we call 'red' occurs and recurs in various ordinary things. The ontological claim is no more puzzling than the claim that there are two shirts or two expanses such that each has a feature that is indistinguishable from a feature had by the other and that we call this feature by the term 'red'. Who can be puzzled by the fact that one has two shirts which are both red or two patches which are both red? Again, let us not be coy: our philosopher has shown us how to make these puzzling things common sense, perfectly intelligible claims about the world as we experience it.

Our philosopher who started out as a positivist who takes all metaphysical claims to be nonsense – someone more or less like Bergmann – has thus found out – prodded by Russell and Moore and perhaps in some complicated way by Wittgenstein³ – how to do ontology: one takes the puzzling metaphysical claim and transforms it into a piece of common sense by explicating it as a claim about the language we construct as we attempt to defend science. Defend science? But against what? Against metaphysics, of course. But that is, as it now turns out, against those claims of metaphysics that cannot be explicated as commonsensical truths about the language of science. There are universals – that is now common sense; but that does not mean that suddenly we have a way of conferring meaning on metaphysical claims to the effect, for example, that there is a God who created the universe and gave us an immortal soul, which is tainted to be inevitably evil through the presence in that soul of the effects of the original sin of pinching an apple from someone who made it for himself but who turned out not really to need it because, as it happened, he was self-sufficient and dependent on nothing. Our philosopher is still a positivist, but a positivist who has come to be an ontologist. Or better: the positivist has discovered how to be both a positivist and an ontologist.

So, there are properties which things have and these properties are universals. However, not everyone is comfortable with this claim. I am thinking of those philosophers who argue that the properties of things are not universals. Things do have features that we can, in our experience of the world, notice. We even call them by the same name. But that is ontologically misleading. In fact, it is claimed, the feature in Cebes that we label with the term 'red' is distinguishable from the feature in Socrates that we label 'green', while there is a feature in Cebes and one in Simmias that

³ And no doubt by conversations with Everett Hall and Wilfrid Sellars.

we label with the term ‘red’, where we apply the same term because the feature in Cebes and the feature in Simmias are in that way indistinguishable: they are, in other words, the same, where, in contrast, this feature is different from that other feature in Socrates, and, indeed, is different from all the other features or properties in our model universe. But the philosophers that we are now considering, while granting that the feature of Cebes that we label ‘red’ is the same as the feature of Simmias that we also label ‘red’, also argue that there is a sense in which we in fact have two features that are *different* from one another: they are the same, that is, not different, in the sense of being indistinguishable, while in another sense of the term ‘different’, they are different – the red in Cebes is the same as the red in Simmias while nonetheless they are also different – there are two reds and not just one. *Properties are not universals*. Properties, while they recur in the sense of being indistinguishable from one another, never actually recur: every occurrence of a property is different from every other occurrence. These properties that differ on their every occurrence are what these philosophers call “tropes”. And since the defender of tropes denies what the realist claims, that they are universals, such a one can correctly be said to be a *nominalist*⁴.

The nominalist holds that no two things have sensible features that are the same. Some are indistinguishable in respect of some feature, say red, to continue with our example – they are qualitatively indistinguishable we may say. But they are nonetheless different, the nominalist holds: the red in Cebes while apparently the same as the red in Simmias is not the same as the red in Simmias, and the circle in Cebes, while apparently the same as the circle in Simmias, is in fact different. These differences are delivered to us in our experience of the world – or at least that is what the nominalist should say if he or she is trying to describe in a perspicuous way features and the ways features are in the world as we experience it.

The nominalist holds that the red in Cebes is different from the red in Simmias – we have as two entities Cebes-red and Simmias-red –, nonetheless the two reds are in fact indistinguishable: although they are not the same they are still exactly similar in their redness – this is given to us in our experience of the world. It could be suggested that the two reds are simple entities. But then, why are they also the same? Some suggest that the fact that they are both reds is a matter of their standing in a *relation of exact similarity*.

⁴ For further discussion of many of these points, cf. Wilson, 2007a.

It could be argued that this relation of exact similarity is an *internal relation*, where this ontological status is reflected in language by the fact that tropes are represented by terms like ‘Cebes-red’ and ‘Simmias-red’, or ‘this-red’ and ‘that-red’, or ‘red₁’ and ‘red₂’.

But surely, one must reply to this suggestion, to represent the feature by a *complex name* like ‘Cebes-red’ and ‘Simmias-red’ or by ‘red₁’ and ‘red₂’ is to allow that there is a feature of Cebes with respect to which it is indistinguishable from the corresponding feature in Simmias. When the nominalist uses such a term to say that Cebes is red, then what he or she says is that

Cebes is Cebes-red,

which draws attention to the very same feature to which the realist draws attention when he or she says that

Cebes is red.

The nominalist is representing the very same way the features of the world are with one another as is the realist, only he or she is doing it with terms which are special or oddly different. Speaking of an “internal relation” simply obscures this fact. That is, it obscures the fact that there is a feature of Cebes which is indistinguishable from a feature of Simmias, a feature which they therefore share. Which is all that the realist claims: when he or she claims that red is a universal (and so also that other properties are universals), all that is being claimed is that the two things have a feature with respect to which they are indistinguishable.

The nominalist thus cannot claim that he or she can be distinguished from the realist by virtue of his or her tropes being supposedly different but the same insofar as they are internally related since that supposed internal relation is nothing but the feature which, on the realist’s way of speaking, and of representing things, is something common to several things or at least something which can be shared by several things. Wishing nonetheless to save the tropes as being different yet the same yet not sharing a common feature, the nominalist may hold that two tropes, e.g., two reds, are simply different yet are related by an *external relation* of *exact similarity*.

But it is not too hard to see that this nominalist is after all committed to realism, that he or she cannot avoid universals. Russell so argued⁵.

He pointed out that on the view that exact similarity is an external relation the circle in Cebes is exactly similar to the circle in Simmias just as

⁵ Russell, 1956. Cf. also Stout, 1930, pp. 388-390.

the red in Cebes is exactly similar to the red in Simmias. The relation of exact similarity is the same in the two cases. It is, therefore, a universal. But if one is going to admit one universal, one might as well have others (cf. Hochberg, 1984). So the nominalism turns out to be a sort of realism: it after all does admit universals.

But surely there is a simpler point to be made. For, surely, to say that the two reds are *exactly similar* says nothing very different than saying that the two reds are indistinguishable. Which is the same as saying that the two complexes of which the two reds are parts each have a feature where the feature in the one complex is indistinguishable from the corresponding feature in the other complex. And that is to say that they do after all share a feature, and the nominalist's attempt to avoid universals fails.

It would seem, then, that so long as the nominalist holds that what makes two tropes indistinguishable in kind, what grounds their sameness, is something that is presented to us in our experience of the world, then there is little to distinguish his or her position from that of the realist.

There is another way, however, for the nominalist to avoid universals as entities given in sense, and that is by arguing that what accounts for the sameness and difference of tropes is not known by sense at all. The nominalist can distinguish his or her view about why ordinary things are the same and different as others if he or she argues that what grounds the sameness of the tropes is not something given in sense. Stout, at times at least, seems to be a nominalist of this sort. Certainly, he tells us that «in mere acquaintance, we do not know the thing exists or what it is: we do not distinguish it from other things or from its qualities» (Stout, 1930, p. 393). What makes a concrete thing to be of a certain kind «presupposes that, in some sense, a plurality of things share in a common character», by which is meant that «each is characterised by a particular instance of a general kind or character» (Stout, 1930, p. 396). Resemblance of characters is not a relation; it «presupposes a complex unity of the peculiar type which I [Stout] call the distributive unity of a class» (Stout, 1930, p. 388). There is something which grounds this unity but it is not a relation and is not given in acquaintance, that is, in our sense experience of the world. In this respect Stout's view is akin to that of Plato. Certainly, Plato is a nominalist (see *Theaetetus*; Plato, 1987), for he holds that the entities that are known by sense are all such that «each of them is different from the other but the same as itself...» (*Theaetetus*, 184a10). This includes the properties of things, things such as, e.g., our Cebes and Simmias are, of course, known by sense: thus, «the mind perceive[s] the hardness of something by means

of touch», and so on for other sensible properties of things. It follows, Plato holds, that the red in Cebes and the red in Simmias are different from one another, which creates what is for him the problem of sameness. For, why the two things are the same, why they are similar in colour, and indeed why the colour in these two things is different as a colour from the green in Socrates, are all not given in sense. Why, therefore, do we reckon the property in Cebes as the same as the property in Simmias? In fact, the colour properties of the three things are all different as localized at three separate places, and in trying to say why there are two reds and a green Plato has for himself a problem. Plato argues that besides the localized properties, the tropes, there are non-local properties in which these tropes *participate* which account for the sameness of these tropes. These are the forms that account for the sameness of the two reds and the difference of these from the trope which is green. Cebes is red because it has a character that participates in the form of red, and Simmias is red because of the character in it that participates in the same form of red, while Socrates is green because it has a character that participates in a different form, the form of green. The forms account for what Cebes *is*, and why it is the *same* and *different* as other things. But these forms are not given in sense. Plato argues that they are known another way: in his terms they are known by the mind as such, the mind “by itself” as he speaks. As he puts it with regard to these forms, «their being (that is, that they both are)» and their «similarity, dissimilarity, identity and difference» are all «in the class of things which the mind gets at by itself» – with regard to their being, what they are in themselves and relative to other forms, «the mind by itself has the job of reaching a decision by reviewing them and comparing them with each other» (*Theaetetus*, 186b10).

There is a problem here, for both Plato and Stout. Tropes are given in sense, we are acquainted with them. Forms we are not given in sense, we are not acquainted with these entities which account for why tropes are the same and different in kind; they are known by the “mind by itself”. But if the sameness of two tropes is not given in sense but only in some other way, then we have the relationship that the red in Cebes participates in the form of red, and the question immediately arises, or should immediately arise (though unfortunately it more often does not arise), how do we know this fact? Indeed, what is it that we know when we know what we know when we say that the property in Cebes and that in Simmias are both reds? We know the tropes one way and the forms another way, but what we also have to know is the *complex* of this trope, the red in Cebes, participating in

the form red – the complex represented by the statement that “Cebes-red is red”. Besides the eye of the senses which gives us the sensible world, the tropes, and the eye of the mind which gives us the forms, we need a third eye to cognize how the materials of sense come together with the materials furnished by the acting “by itself”. But no philosopher has ever convincingly argued that we do in fact have a third “eye”. Certainly not Plato and certainly not Stout: neither of them provides a solution to this problem.

Indeed, they really do not tell us what the second sort or way of knowing is, how this special eye of the mind which we are all supposed to have really works. They claim that it exists and that through it we know those entities that ground the sameness and difference of tropes, but we are not told how precisely we are to get hold of this form of knowing. What is this *mind* that *by itself* gives us *non-sensory* knowledge of certain entities, entities which are themselves puzzling?

There is, however, a deeper point about this sort of nominalism. It seeks to defend tropes by separating them from the entities, the forms or what have you, that make them the same and different from other tropes, and holding that while the tropes are given in sense, these other entities are not and are known in some other non-sensory way. This means that *the world as we ordinarily experience it contains nothing that grounds the sameness and difference of things*. The red in Cebes is given in sense but not that which makes it *a* red. It follows that so far as sense is concerned the characteristics of things are devoid of kinds, they are simply little *blobs*. Which surely is a point of view that is not just puzzling but quite unacceptable.

This sort of nominalism can be approached another way. One can argue that precisely because the forms or what have you are not given in sense then they can be dismissed on empiricist grounds as non-existent. Certainly, for the philosopher who begins by constructing a language to describe the ordinary world given to us in our ordinary sensible experience will find it quite unacceptable to think that one’s ontology can tolerate such entities. It follows that for such a one who proposes to also be a nominalist is committed to the view that tropes are blobs. We may very well call them the same or different, but they *are* the same and different only because we *call them by different names*. The red in Cebes and the red in Simmias are indeed two, two different tropes, but they are both reds only because that is how we have *decided* to label them.

A term like ‘red’ in our language has world-word connections and word-word connections. The term itself corresponds to one of the forms of a Platonist. The world-word connections, the relations of denotation if you

wish, correspond to the Platonist's relation of participation. But now there is no form to be as it were the connotation of the term, no form to give cognitive content of the form making the form itself the same different as other forms. What replaces such connections are simply the relations that this word has to other words: the cognitive content, in other words, is given by the word-word connections.

Sellars is such a philosopher. Speaking about the tropes which are triangular (in his symbols, tropes which are labelled by the term "T") rather than as we have of tropes that are red, but making the same point, he argues that the (cognitive) meaning of a term is given by its *intralinguistic connections* to other terms:

although T' individual constants are correlated with T objects, the concept of this correlation is not the *analysis* of what it is for T' individual constants to *stand for* triangularity, nor does it explain what it is for T' individual constants to *denote* triangular objects. The correlation between objects and their linguistic pictures must not be confused with the pseudo-relations *standing for* and *denoting*. Thus, that 'triangular's stand for triangularity essentially involves the intralinguistic consequence uniformities governed by the consequence rules (axiomatics) of geometrical predicates.⁶

So Cebes-red and Simmias-red, red_1 and red_2 , and all the other red_i 's are all Red simply because they are *called red*; that is, the geometrical sign 'red' which is *correlated to* the red_i 's is what makes them all Reds, and it makes them Reds not through those world-word correlations but rather through the *intralinguistic connections* that sign 'red' has to other terms in the language. The objects red_1 and red_2 are not both red because in and of themselves they are the same in the sense of indistinguishable, that is, *objectively* the same, where this objective sameness is reflected in language by the occurrence and recurrence of the same sign, but rather they are both red because through the contingencies and accidents of language

⁶ Sellars, 1968, p. 128. This account of (cognitive) meaning, has been adumbrated in Sellars, 1953. Compare the discussions of Sellars in Wilson, 2007e; and also Wilson, 2007f.

Sellars' account of meaning as given by inference or consequence connections, that is, as he also puts it, by the axiomatics of the terms involved, shows that he accepts the doctrine that meaning can be conferred by "implicit definition". But this notion of "implicit definition" has little or less to be said for it; cf. "Implicit Definition Once Again" (Wilson, 2007c).

Sellars' concept of (cognitive) meaning is simply unacceptable. Others have offered the same general account of meaning, for example, M. Dummett (cf. Wilson, 2007b, "Dummett on the Origins of Analytic Philosophy"). The criticisms we are making of Sellars apply to these others also.

they happen to evoke occurrences and recurrences of a certain sign which has certain intralinguistic connections to other signs in the language, where this sign is the one which has the geometrical form 'red'. If we have tropes *a* and *b* where

a is red_1 ,

that is, "*a* is identical to red_1 ", and where

b is red_2 ,

then, on this view of Sellars, to say that

a and *b* are both Red

is simply to say no more than is said by predicating

'*x* is Red' =_{Df} ' $(x = a \vee x = b)$ '

of *a* and *b*.

It is evident that this is a position that is hard to take seriously. It proposes that the qualitative sameness of things is not objective, that is, not objectively there in the things as we experience them. The properties of things, in other words, are, as we have put it, nothing but blobs, made into things indistinguishable qualitatively in various respects because that is the way we have come to use language: it is the blob theory of properties.

Michael Dummett is another who holds that the world is blobbish. He, like Sellars, rejects Platonism on grounds that we are not acquainted with some world of forms that transcends the world of ordinary things, and is seeking to replace the Platonic account of sameness with a *linguistic explanation* of sameness, a linguistic account of the similarity of particulars, an account in terms of sense (word-word connections) for the reference of kind terms to different individuals. Dummett has expressed this radical nominalism as follows:

What objects we recognize the world as containing depends upon the structure of our language. Our ability to discriminate, within reality, objects of any particular kind results from our having learned to use expressions, names, or general terms, with which are associated a criterion of identity which yields segments of reality just that shape: we can, in principle, conceive of a language containing names and general terms with which significantly different criteria of identity were associated, and the speakers of such a language would view the world as falling apart into discrete objects in a different way from ourselves [...] for Frege, the world does not come to us articulated in any way; it is we who, by the use of our language (or by grasping the thoughts expressed in that language), impose a structure on it. (Dummett, 1973, pp. 503-504)

Or again,

The picture of reality as an amorphous lump, not yet articulated into discrete objects, thus proves to be a correct one, so long as we make the right use of it [...] Such a picture corrects the naïve conceptions [...] [which] presupposes that the world presents itself to us already dissected into discrete objects, which we know how to recognize when we encounter them again, in advance of our acquiring any grasp of language at all. (Dummett, 1973, p. 577)

Thus, the samenesses and differences of things is conferred on things by language. It is this that distinguishes Dummett from Stout – and from Berkeley and Hume and also Herbert Spencer. For them, it is resemblance that determines the correct range of application of a term; and resemblance is prior to language. For Dummett, on the contrary, like Sellars, language determines the reference of terms and thereby determines resemblance; language is prior to resemblance: prior to language, there are no oysters or cows, no clouds or shadows, no structure objectively there, no prior fact of any matter, all one “amorphous lump” or pile of blobs. Fraser Cowley rightly asks, he seems to presume rhetorically, «Does he [Dummett] really mean what he seems to mean? Does he really believe it?» (Cowley, 1991, p. 118). But Dummett does seem to believe it⁷. So there you have it: here is what happens to nominalism, to an ontology of tropes – the world turns out to be in itself an “amorphous lump”, which might very well also be a pile of blobs. Nominalism leads to a radical subjectivism. It has only to be stated, to be rejected – when I encounter the world in my sense experience of it, I encounter structure and patterns, I do not somehow impose this order on the world.

If it is true, as Sellars once said, that «a naturalist ontology must be a nominalist ontology» (Sellars, 1979, p. 109), and the nominalism is that of his blob theory, then one must conclude that no one can be a naturalist. But it is simply not true: the world as we experience it is simply not a bunch of blobs, and is certainly not an amorphous lump.

We see, then, that the nominalist, in defending his or her claims that the characteristics of things are tropes, has difficulties with accounting for the sameness of tropes. But the case can be made that he or she has difficulties in making clear the notion of trope itself. If he or she has a problem with the sameness of tropes, then he or she equally has a problem with making clear how it is that characteristics of different things which are indistin-

⁷ But so does Sellars; cf. Sellars, 1980, pp. 95-124, where he proposes that «universals and laws are correlative, same universals, same laws, different universals, different laws» (p. 104).

guishable and apparently the same are nonetheless different in some special sense of ‘different’.

In fact, I think that here there is a refutation of the nominalist position that is more direct than that of Russell, for example.

The nominalist position claims that there is a sense of ‘different’ in which properties which are exactly the same in the sense of being indistinguishable are also different. The nominalist has to make good his or her claim that there is such a sense of ‘different’ by directing our attention to precisely the way in which features that are apparently the same are in this sense different. If he or she cannot show how it is that we can tell in our experience of the world that features are in this sense different, then all that he or she has done is having given us a way of speaking, a syntax if you wish, without giving it an identifiable grounding in the world as we experience it – a grounding given to us in our experience of the world in the way in which sameness in the sense of indistinguishability is given to us in our experience of things. The way of speaking, the syntax, requires a semantics that ties the discourse to an experienceable way the world is.

What does the nominalist say? Consider Stout’s statement of the nominalist position. He writes that:

A character characterizing a concrete thing or individual is as particular as the thing or individual which it characterizes. Of two billiard balls, each has its own particular roundness separate and distinct from that of the other, just as the billiard balls themselves are distinct and separate [...] What then do we mean when we say, for instance, that roundness is a character common to all billiard balls. I answer that phrase ‘common character’ is elliptical. It really signifies a certain general kind or class of characters. To say that particular things share in the common character is to say that each of them has a character which is a particular instance of this kind or class of characters. (Stout, 1930, p. 386)

What we have tried neutrally to call features he refers to as characters, and these characters, even when they are the same in the sense that are indistinguishable, are all nonetheless different: that is why they are all particulars. The problem is to make clear this sense of ‘different’ by drawing our attention to what it is about the world as we experience it that makes features of the world in this way different.

Our nominalist might try to provide the required interpretation as follows. He or she will say, “This (referring to the colour and only the colour of the one thing) is one instance of (this shade of) red, and that (referring to only the colour of the other diverse thing) is another different₃ instance of red”. But, as Moore correctly pointed out (Moore, 1966, p. 56), when the

nominalist, attempting thusly to interpret ‘different’ in the special way, uses ‘this’ to refer only to the colour of the one thing, then he or she would not refer to anything different from what he or she refers to with ‘that’. For, ‘this’ and ‘that’ are used to refer to the same (indistinguishable) colour, and so far as what is presented is concerned, the first conjunct of the nominalist’s attempt to interpret ‘different’ asserts the same as the second conjunct. The nominalist insists that there are two different, yet indistinguishable, instances of the colour, but all that he or she has in fact succeeded in doing is repeating him or herself! He or she certainly has not succeeded in giving a meaning to the word ‘different’. Moore puts the point this way:

The refutation perhaps is that: When I say ‘This sensibly appears to me to be of that shade’ and ‘That sensibly appears to me to be of that shade’, I am saying the same thing of this & that. (Moore, 1966, p. 56)

Indeed, Moore puts it quite strongly: of nominalism, Moore exclaims, «Could anything be more absurd!» (*ibid.*)

The nominalist succeeds in referring twice to one and the same thing. He or she says “The colour of Cebes is one thing” and also that “The colour of Simmias is another, different, thing”. But he or she has not shown that there are two things there; all he or she has done is make two references, by means of definite descriptions, to the same thing – the thing to which the one description refers is indistinguishable from the thing to which the other description refers, and he or she has not shown that they are different, in any sense, new or old, of that term. The error is analogous to that of the person who argues that, since we have “This star rises in the morning” and “This star rises in the evening”, therefore the morning star is, in a new sense of ‘different’, different from the evening star. Or again, the error of the nominalist is like the error of the person who argues as follows. We suppose that the terms ‘Cebes’ and ‘Nikita’ refer to or denote the same red circular patch. Then there is (this person claims) a sense of ‘different’, say ‘different_o’, in which the same thing can be different from itself; for, an interpretation for this ‘different_o’ can be given in terms of what is presented, by noticing (he or she continues) Cebes and Nikita and saying (following the nominalist’s pattern) “Cebes is one instance of this thing, and Nikita is another different_o instance of this same thing”. To be sure, this philosopher has twice referred to Cebes. But this is not the same as indicating a feature of what is presented which will provide an interpretation for the proposed use of ‘different_o’.

So nominalism can be rejected by one who, like Bergmann, and like Moore, insists that distinctions in language must reflect distinctions that are to be part of what we encounter in the world as we experience it.

In fact, one can suggest that the nominalist does not construct his or her ontology on the basis of experienced distinctions, but bases it on some *a priori* principle or other.

One can find such a principle is behind some at least of Stout's reasoning. For, he argues with respect to any two perceived "concrete things", such as our Cebes and Simmias, which one "knows or supposes" to be "locally separate" and therefore different, that one must also "know or suppose" that the colour or shape which the one is experienced as having are also "locally separate" from that colour and the shape which the other is experienced as having; and since the colour and the shape of the one are "locally separate" from the colour and shape of the other, the colour and the shape which the one is experienced as having are different from the colour and the shape that the other is experienced as having (cf. Stout, 1930, pp. 389-390). Stout is in fact arguing that whatever exists, be it a "concrete thing" or a "quality" of a concrete thing, is localized at a place (and time). This *Principle of Localization*⁸ Stout takes as a *premise*, a principle that he assumes *a priori* holds of whatever exists. And so, with regard to two billiard balls, the roundness, the smoothness, and the whiteness of the one has to be "locally separate" and therefore different from the roundness, the smoothness, and the whiteness of the other (cf. Stout, 1930, p. 389).

But, as Moore points out (Moore, 1923, pp. 105-106), while it may be true that no "concrete thing" – a thing like our Cebes or Simmias – can be "locally separate" from itself, it does not follow that a feature like circularity cannot be "locally separate" from itself. Stout may assert that the «same indivisible quality cannot appear separately at different times and places», as he does (Stout, 1930, p. 390), but he gives no reason for taking that to be so: he merely accepts it as a premise from which to argue. But in fact, the same quality *can* exist "locally separate" from itself: it can do this if it is a quality of two concrete things which are "locally separate". Thus, Cebes and Simmias are "locally separate", and are both red, that quality in the one being indistinguishable from the corresponding quality in the other, and because the red in the one is indistinguishable from the red in the other, that quality does exist "locally separate" from itself.

⁸ Compare the discussion in Grossmann, 1963.

One must conclude, not that the qualities of “concrete things” are as particular as the things which they characterize, but that these qualities are universals which are simply counterexamples that establish the falsity of the Principle of Localization.

Stout has a second argument for tropes that is also worth looking at. This turns on the principle that «a substance is nothing *apart from* its qualities» (Stout, 1930, p. 390), and that «there can be no knowledge of it [a substance] which is not knowledge of its characters» (Stout, 1930, p. 391). Given these claims, he argues that

It follows that we cannot distinguish substances from each other without discerning a corresponding distinction between the qualities. (Stout, 1930, p. 391)

So, our things Cebes and Simmias cannot be discerned to be different unless we discern a difference in their qualities. They are both circular, the same diameter of circle, and both are red, the same shade of red. If the qualities of these things are indiscernibly the same, if they are universals, as the realist contends, then there is no discernible difference between them and they would be the same thing. But they are in fact locally separate and therefore are discernibly different. They must therefore be discernibly different through a discernible difference in their qualities. Hence, these qualities must, contrary to the realist, be as particular as the concrete things of which they are qualities: these qualities must be tropes.

But this does not follow at all. Concrete things are indeed complexes, of which the qualities are parts. The realist asserts that those qualities are universals. Stout claims it follows that therefore our Cebes and Simmias could not be different things. It is this which really does not follow. Stout does not allow that complexes may have all the same parts and yet be as wholes discernibly different (Stout, 1930, p. 391). So, it is possible to hold that Cebes and Simmias are complexes which have all their qualities in common and yet are locally separate. One can therefore hold that these two locally separate concrete things share all the same qualities, i.e., that these qualities are universals, and deny that they are tropes⁹.

It is evident that Stout is relying upon a certain principle which he takes to be an *a priori* axiom. This is the *Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles*:

Entities having exactly the same constituents are identical.

⁹ Compare Hochberg, 1966.

Given this principle, then two different things cannot have all their constituents in common¹⁰. But things which are different often do have all their properties in common. There must be something about the things, given the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles, that individuates them, some entities that are constituents in them and make them different. *This is the so-called Problem of Individuation.*

Notice that it is a problem only if one accepts the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles.

Be that as it may for the moment, it is evident that Stout and many other philosophers, including Sellars, introduce tropes precisely in order to solve this Problem of Individuation. But tropes won't do: they require a sense of 'different' which they cannot find anything in the world as we experience it that can give it a clear sense. It is this fact that their special sense of 'different', in which their tropes are supposed to be different, cannot be given any meaning in terms that fit properties as we experience them, that led Moore to reject the view as silly: «could anything be more absurd», he says.

But now the properties are universals, and hence, if one accepts the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles, there must be present in the two qualitatively or indiscernibly the same things which are nonetheless diverse or locally separate – things such as our Cebes and Simmias – some constituent in each such thing – some constituent other than the qualities – which are in themselves just different and which therefore individuate the things. These entities are not universals and are therefore not among the properties of the things, all of which are universals; they are, rather, simple particulars. Since they are there simply to make the two different things different, they are not properties or qualities, and are therefore said to be in and of themselves, quite bare¹¹. These bare particulars do nothing but individuate.

Here, for example, is Allaire. He considers two diverse discs with all their (non-relational) properties in common.

When presented together, [the two discs] are presented as numerically different. *That difference is presented* as is their sameness with respect to space, (shade of) color, and so on. What counts for that difference are numerically different individuals. No character or group of characters can do that. Thus, to say that they are individuals is to say that things may be merely numerically different. No matter

¹⁰ One assumes here the argument of Russell, that relations do not individuate; cf. Russell, 1963. Cf. also Hochberg, 2002.

¹¹ But one must qualify this notion of bareness: cf. Wilson, 2007c.

what description one proposes, the numerical difference of two things which are alike in all (non-relational) respects must be accounted for. (Allaire, 1963, p. 4)¹²

Notice the starting point: the two things are presented as different, that is, different in the sense of being diverse in space, locally separate. Here the difference in the sense of diversity is given to one in acquaintance. But then we are asked, what “accounts for” this difference? We are now taken to be assuming that such diversity is somehow philosophically problematic. This problem that has now appeared requires solution: an entity must be found, or rather must be there, whether found or not, which does the accounting. This entity which does that is an “individual” which is taken to be a constituent of the things, there in addition to the (non-relational) properties which are present in the things. Allaire is clearly assuming something like the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles to justify the inference to the individuals which account for the difference. And, now, given the presence of the individuals as constituents, the relation of diversity holding between the things can be defined in terms of the difference among the constituents. But notice that one is defining ‘diverse’ in terms of ‘different’ where the latter is, Allaire is suggesting, not given or not wholly given in our experience of the world. To be sure, the various properties in the things are different in the sense of distinguishable, and that is, as we have insisted, a sense of ‘different’ rooted in our experience of things: we use descriptive constants of our perspicuous language to refer to properties on the basis of the experienced distinguishability and indistinguishability of features of things in the world. But Allaire would have it that we should, on the one hand, understand that the individuals are also different from the other constituents of the things, but, on the other hand, also understand that this sense of ‘different’ cannot be rooted in our experience of the world. For individuals or bare particulars are introduced into his ontology not because they can be discerned as features of things, but for dialectical reasons that have nothing to do with discerning in the world further features of things. How then can one say that the individuals Allaire is defending are different in the sense of ‘distinguishable’? Allaire is taking for granted that ‘different’ is univocal, and that it acquires what meaning it has independently of any attempt to ground its use in our experience of the world.

¹² Compare Bergmann: «Bare particulars neither are nor have natures. Any two of them are not intrinsically but only numerically different. That is their bareness. It is impossible for a bare particular to be “in” more than one ordinary thing [...] A bare particular is a mere individuator [...] It does nothing else» (Bergmann, 1967, pp. 27-28).

For one who wishes to develop an ontology that fits the world given to one in sensible experience, that is unacceptable.

But Allaire also recognizes this point. He goes on:

To claim that both [the two things] are collections of literally the same universals does not account for the *thisness* and *thatness* which are implicitly referred to in speaking of them as *two* collections. That is, the two collections of characters – if one persists in speaking this way – are, as presented, numerically different. Clearly, therefore, something other than a character must also be presented. That something is what proponents of the realistic analysis call a bare particular. (Allaire, 1963, p. 4)

Allaire is clearly arguing that we really are acquainted in experience with bare particulars: we *must* be acquainted with them because they *must* be there. But none of this follows¹³. As Hochberg has made clear, neither of these ‘musts’ need be accepted. First, that these entities must be presented in experience because they must be there, does not follow¹⁴. Second, because the two things are diverse or locally separate, it does not follow that that diversity must be “accounted for” by a constituent: it could be that the diversity is primitive and unanalyzable, that the two things are simply diverse – that is, Allaire’s argument rests on the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles and we have been given no reason for accepting that¹⁵. As Hochberg puts it,

¹³ Some argue that none of this matters: who nowadays worries about acquaintance? Thus, J.P. Moreland, 1998 argues that it does not matter that Allaire fails to establish that we are acquainted with the bare particulars that he establishes on dialectical grounds must be there: «Today, most philosophers would not place the type of constraints on analytic ontology that was present in Bergmann’s day. The real issue for bare particulars is whether or not the arguments for and against them are sufficient to justify their adoption as a solution to individuation, not whether they are sense perceptible» (Moreland, 1998, p. 256). But for some of us, those who are still empiricists, and do ontology in a framework established by a Principle of Acquaintance, acquaintance does still matter: dialectics is not, and cannot, be everything. Acquaintance is still important even if Allaire’s argument is, as Moreland suggests, unsuccessful.

However, for some of the dialectics, cf. Moreland, 2001; Hoffmann – Rosenkranz, 1994; Metz, 2001; Loux, 1998; Oaklander – Rothstein, 2000; Davis, 2003, and Davis, 2004.

¹⁴ Laird Addis, however, has suggested otherwise, (cf. Addis, 1967) or at least has suggested that it does not matter: bare particulars must exist, and therefore whether we are acquainted with them is an irrelevant issue. But it is not, and could not be, an irrelevant issue for one doing ontology within the framework of a Principle of Acquaintance.

¹⁵ Compare Hochberg, 2002, pp. 132-134; see also Hochberg, 1966.

one can reasonably hold that different objects are simply different objects – there is nothing that is needed to, or indeed can, non-trivially, account for such difference. Nor need we seek to “analyze” such objects as being bundles of compresent qualities, substrata exemplifying qualities, or anything else. (Hochberg, 2002, p. 132)

Hochberg infers from this that there is no need to suppose that there are particulars as the constituents of things. That would follow only if we *do not* discern them as constituents of things. Hochberg is correct: the argument that they *must be* discernible is unsound; however it does not follow that they *are not* among the entities that we can distinguish in experience as the constituents of things.

I would suggest that there in fact are discernible in things features which play the role of particulars. We have already noted them as existents in our little model universe. These entities, to which we previously directed our attention, are the expanses or areas in the patches in our model universe. Oddly enough, Stout would seem to agree. At least, he would agree that these entities do exist. For, in his description of sensations that he once gave, he notes that besides qualities as features or discernible attributes of sensations there is a «further attribute» that is «variously described as ‘extensity’, ‘extensiveness’, ‘voluminousness’, ‘diffusion’, or ‘spread-outness’» (Stout, 1929, p. 127). William James also directed our attention to this feature of things: he notes that «this element [extensity] [is] discernible in each and every sensation»; and comments that

extensity, being an entirely peculiar kind of feeling indescribable except in terms of itself, and inseparable in actual experience from some sensational quality which it must accompany, can itself receive no other name than that of *sensational element*. (James, 1890, pp. 135-136)

It is this element or feature that Bergmann called the “area” in a thing (Bergmann, 1964, p. 288).

Ordinary concrete things, the patches of our model universe, for example, are individual things, we have *this* image and *that*. A concrete thing, a this or a that, is something complex. It has properties and these properties are *with* each other. An ordinary thing is thus a group of properties that are with one another. But it is *not just* a group of properties that are with one another: there is also the *area* that is in the thing. An ordinary concrete thing is thus a group of properties together with an area; and these entities are with one another forming the thing. This feature, an area, is discernible in each complex of properties, distinguishable from the other features in the complex, and, moreover, each such area is distinguishable from every other such area.

One therefore has one thing – one area. Clearly, then, these features of things can serve the role of the individuators or bare particulars of Allaire and Bergmann.

Moreover, while it is true, as Hochberg argued, that things as complexes or wholes can be taken to be unanalyzably diverse, and that there is *no necessity*, based on something like the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles, for one to accept that there are such things as bare particulars, nonetheless it is still true that *there are* experienced and distinguishably different features of things which play the role of individuators and which therefore can be used to analyze the diversity of things in terms of the distinguishability of constituents of things. One cannot argue dialectically that there must be bare particulars, but for all that there are such entities – contingently so if you wish – but still there as distinguishable parts of the world as we experience it.

And so in our model universe with which we started, we noted that there are *two* expanses which are R, red, and another, *third* expanse which is green. These expanses are distinguishable from the features we have already recorded in our language as properties, and are among themselves distinguishable one from another. Let us therefore have as before the constants ‘X’, ‘Y’ and ‘Z’ pick out these three further features of this world.

These expanses go *with* the other features red (“R”), green (“G”), circle (“C”) and square (“S”) in the world in several ways. We recorded these ways *the world is* by the sentences

W(X, R, C) W(Y, R, C) W(Z, G, S)

These sentences, through the ways in which the terms are organized into these sentences, *picture* the ways in which features go together or are with one another in our model world. Cebes is one of the ways in which the features go together in our model world, Simmias is another, and Socrates is a third, and these ways of going together, these wholes, are individuated by the expanses or areas labelled X, Y, and Z: these three distinguishable entities are the bare particulars in these three things, where the other distinguishable features – red, green, circle and square – are the universals in the three things.

And now let us return to our positivist, constructing his or her language with descriptive constants to mark features of the world as experienced. Many have found it odd that this philosopher includes bare particulars among the entities of the world we are said to experience – do we really experience these things? or are they something we have simply argued ourselves into, put there in the world in spite of what we experience? We

now see clearly the answers to these questions. And in seeing that, we recognize that we really should not be surprised that this philosopher discovers among the elements of his or her ontology those entities that have been called “bare particulars”: they are not so strange after all, not nearly so strange as tropes and certainly not blobs – the world we experience really does contain these entities, which therefore deserve a place in our ontology.

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Herbert Hochberg

THE MATTER OF PARTICULARS

Abstract. The paper considers various alternative analyses of particulars and particularity in attempts to resolve the traditional metaphysical problems posed by particulars, predication and facts. In so-doing it reconsiders Gustav Bergmann's well-known advocacy of "bare particulars" in the context of medieval and contemporary metaphysical disputes.

As Russell and Moore had argued for universals early in the 20th century, they also then argued that ordinary particulars could not be construed in terms of universals or complexes of universals, for numerical diversity and the particularity of things could not be accounted for in terms of universal attributes. The idea, reminiscent of Scotus' discussions of *haecceitas*, is that neither attributes nor a nature can capture the *particularity* of a particular object – that a particular object is just that object and not one characterized in a certain way¹. Thus one finds a later thought experiment (modeled on Kant's example of a left and a right hand) that considers a space or "world" containing only two exactly similar spheres. We cannot, purportedly, give a description in terms of properties (including relations) of one sphere that would not apply to the other. Hence one supposedly cannot construe a particular object as a complex or bundle of its properties, for

¹ In setting out his solution of the puzzles of the Trinity, Scotus seemingly took a different tack and held that the relations among the persons distinguished them. (Scotus, in translation in Bosley – Tweedale, 2006, pp. 306-307), which is somewhat like Abelard's focus on the role of "begetting" and "begotten" (Bosley – Tweedale, 2006, p. 302) to achieve that. But one must also keep in mind Scotus' three-fold construal of attributes in terms of natures, particularized properties in the object and universals in the mind. Thus, in general, he took relations "in the object" as particularized relational properties, while Abelard eventually took them as non-existents. This had a historically odd consequence in that it led Abelard to an argument against existent relations, and derivatively all attributes – an argument that was the same in form as Russell's well known regress argument for universals. The difference was that where Russell assumed that relations were *particulars or universals*, Abelard assumed that *whatever exists is particular*. Both used the same regress to then argue that "likenesses" couldn't be particulars.

one cannot specify in what way the two complexes of universals are particularized.

While often discussed in terms of Max Black's paper (1952), exactly the same argument is found earlier in a 1947 book by the Swedish philosopher Ivar Segelberg (1999, p. 160). The argument was directed against Russell's 1940 view that particulars are bundles of universal qualities. Russell had not only considered the underlying pattern of the argument early in the century, but did so again in rejecting it in 1940 and 1948. He took it up in the temporal rather than spatial case, and, instead of "identical" spheres, considered the possible "circularity" of time via the identity of "two" moments of phenomenal time. Such instants, on his view, were phenomenally temporal *particulars* that were construed as complete complexes of compresence of all simultaneously experienced qualities. Since the elements of such a complex were common qualities, the logical possibility of circularity resulted from indistinguishable particular instants of time. To meet the problems in the spatial and temporal cases, without special individuating *particulars* or *thisnesses* or "bare moments", he introduced locations and purportedly temporal phenomenal qualities. Basically he simply took it as obvious and therefore assumed that phenomenal time was not circular, on his construal of moments as complexes of compresence. The temporal and spatial qualities of temporal and spatial compresence were supposedly common since qualities that were not temporally compresent could be spatially compresent with the same location quality while qualities that were temporally compresent could be spatially compresent with different location qualities. (His amusing characterization of the assumption of the non-circularity of time in terms of a non-repeating calendar device in the visual field is not relevant). Bergmann, however, once mistakenly took him to think that he did not have to assume that temporal precedence was asymmetrical. Thus, he developed a parallel argument in terms of a form of argument that would apply to either the spatial case, without the absolute location properties that Russell used, or the temporal case, without temporal "locations". What this involved was just thinking in terms of a precedence and a "coincidence" or compresence relation holding among common attributes as terms and a possible linear arrangement of bundles of such common attributes or universals. What he proceeded to imagine was a purported counter example to Russell's analysis. In effect, what he then imagined can be illustrated by the following situation.

Let *S* be an equality or compresence relation and *P* a precedence relation, and consider three monadic universals or common properties which

are terms of such relations in Russell's "visual field" – say circularity, *c*, red, *r*, and square, *s*. Consider, next, a possible linear arrangement of red circles and squares in a visual field in terms of the elements of the objects – bundles of a color and a shape – being terms of the relations *S* and *P*:

(L) *rSc*, *rSs*, *rPr*, *rPs*, *cPr*, *cPs*, *rPc*, *cPc*, *sPc*, *sPs*, *sPr*.

The list (L) describes a linear arrangement of a red circle, to the left of a red square, which is to the left of a red square that is to the left of a red square. But it also describes a linear arrangement of a red square to the left of a red circle that is to the left of a red square, which is to the left of a red circle. Thus the list of compresence and precedence facts fails to distinguish the two "possibilities" (Bergmann, 1947, pp. 208-209). Limiting the terms of *S* and *P* to *c*, *r*, and *s*, and not allowing for Russell's "absolute" spatial locations, we have the purported failure of Russell's analysis for space, in the case of the visual field. Thus, in 1947 Bergmann had set out a type of situation that was of the kind that Segelberg would also raise that year and Black would later reiterate in 1952. If one has a "world" consisting of a "succession" of such elements, functioning as Russell's total "complexes of temporal compresence", one has the same for Russell's phenomenal time. This allows for the possible circularity of time (or Nietzsche's "eternal return," understood in one sense).

Russell, aware of the problems, ruled out both – one by absolute location properties; the other by the assumption of temporal non-circularity, since temporal repeatability was taken to be *very improbable*. He focused on the problem in terms of time, given his holding that the space of the visual field is *absolute* and that absolute location properties were objects of awareness. Thus, in a case of two exactly similar objects in the visual field, diversity would be established in terms of such location properties. Russell's view also involved a rather elaborate ideal "construction" of physical space in terms of a visual field providing a perspectival point of reference. This harked back to themes in his 1911 and 1912 books – the former considering physical objects and space as (intrinsically) unknown theoretical objects assumed to be correlated with phenomenal objects; the latter, influenced by Whitehead, taking them as constructions in terms of phenomenal objects. Both Bergmann and Segelberg in their earlier versions were concerned with an ontological issue – what individuated the

objects —, Black focused more on the identity of indiscernibles and on the possibility of denoting diverse objects in terms of their properties².

Suppose one introduces individuating basic particulars (bare particulars), as further components of the spheres, or takes the qualities to be particularized qualities or tropes (Husserlian moments). One gives an “ontological” account that distinguishes the objects in terms of their having different constituent entities. Yet, one can still not specify which sphere such individuating entities belong to without already distinguishing the spheres, which we assume to be diverse to start with. The point is that all we should conclude from the case of the two spheres is that any purported definite description that we can give of “the one” will apply to “the other”. Thus we cannot indicate by descriptions which sphere an indexical sign (name, label) would be taken to refer to. Likewise, we cannot say which sphere the supposed special individuating particulars belong to. This does not show that the spheres do not differ in that they do not stand in different relations (to each other and each to its respective “parts”) or that they do not have special individuating entities. It only shows that given the limitations imposed by the example we cannot form a definite description that will apply to one but not to both, though, by assumption, there are two.

All three attacks on Russell were concerned with Russell’s attempt to defend the “identity of indiscernibles” as analytic via a definition of numerical identity in terms of having all properties in common. As this easily goes along with Russell’s attempt to analyze particulars as complexes of properties (even, perhaps, as complex properties, which is not the same thing), one sees how rejecting the analysis of identity can lead both to the focus on not supplying a unique definite description, in terms of predicates, as well as to the idea that particulars are not analyzable in terms of complexes of universals. But the failure to provide a unique definite description in terms of universal properties does not point to a need for either bare particulars or tropes. The two spheres can be taken to be just different without any “thing” making them different, including absolute locations, for numerical diversity is indeed fundamental. This does not require that it

² To deal with related problems that many would later raise as criticisms of him, Russell had also noted, at least as early as the 1927 *Analysis of Matter*, that a two-term equivalence (compresence) relation would not do for dealing with cases involving three basic constituent properties and diverse objects “composed” of two of them. (One would not get equivalence classes.) Rather, one required a three-term compresence or equivalence relation — and so on for four, five... For a discussion of some such mistaken criticisms cf. Hochberg, 1996.

be *carried* by special individuating entities, pure individuating particulars, unless, as Bergmann did, one simply stipulates that the very conception of an “ontological analysis” requires that it does so. Yet, oddly, he is forced, ultimately, to say that such purported burden bearing entities are *just diverse*. It seems as if we start with two diverse things and simply end up with two simple diverse things to “explain” the original diversity – in terms of the added entities being explanatory constituents of the original things. In the case of the problem of universals, what is recognized as an entity is the single common feature, by construing attributes as universals. The common characteristic of diverse things, or to put it another way, the attribution of a common “predicate,” is explained by recognizing “one” entity that is “common” to diverse things (cf. Hochberg, 1965).

One further basic issue was raised much earlier by both Moore (1901) and Russell (1911). Russell argued that relations could not serve as individuating characteristics of particulars since a relation could only be taken to ground the individuation of particulars if it is assumed to be irreflexive. Taking attributes, including relations, to ground particularity would thus “presuppose” that the particulars are already distinguished as diverse subjects for attributes in order to be terms instantiating an irreflexive relation. In short, they are taken as *diverse particulars* in order to be diversified as terms instantiating the relation. This leads to the point that *diversity* is basic, which provides a motive for introducing either particularized qualities or special particularizing elements, if one seeks *to account for that* in terms of special entities. Such substrata, or bare particulars, or thin particulars (Armstrong, 2004, pp. 105-106) *can* also then serve to *exemplify* the attributes of the ordinary object to form facts constituting that object. The basic particulars are understood to have no properties *essentially* or *necessarily* – though it would appear that they must necessarily be of a kind, *particulars* and not *universals*. They are also obviously descendents of Aristotelian prime matter, but not quite *pure potentiality*, and Scotus’ *haecceitas*.

The issues about individuating particulars are found on the contemporary scene in the form of disputes about “trans-world identity” in connection with modal contexts. Does a “possible world” with Socrates as Greek-nosed “contain” Socrates or, rather, a “counter-part” of Socrates? One detects a bundle analysis of ordinary particulars as the basis for variants of the latter type of response. In fact David Lewis’ talk of “counter-parts” is a simple and obvious consequence of a bundle analysis, for any change of a quality results in a different bundle. (Just think of Sartre’s Humean style

bundle view of the self and one easily sees how he can speak of meeting a “new” self or “stranger” in the mirror each morning). Alternatively, an individuating *bare* particular, however disguised, can be seen to carry the burden of the “trans-world” identity of Socrates for others. Saul Kripke’s discussion clearly reveals that, in spite of his denial that he holds such a view. (His implicit metaphysics of bare substances is still just that, whether he recognizes it or not; cf. Kripke, 1980, pp. 52-53). The two alternative patterns of analysis for ordinary particulars are also currently prominent in the revival of the old disputes about continuants and identity thru time. In place of questions about objects in different worlds, we have familiar puzzles about objects persisting thru time in *this* world. Is Sartre, construed in terms of a series of temporal stages, a different individual as *he* confronts *himself*, as the latest stage, in the mirror? For he is one and the same individual in another sense, as a particular series of stages. Or is he one and the same “enduring” person – something that is always present as long as *he is*? If he is a bundle, in the form of a series of the items of *his* history, then given the successive additions *he* is never literally one and the same series at any two “points”. If there is a core individuating particular or particular substance that endures then *he* is literally one and the same. And so the basic confrontation between views that seek to analyze the *particularity* of particulars as complexes or bundles, without a special individuating factor, and views that take such attempts to fail, proceeds by various arguments involving indexical reference, modality, endurance, mo-ments and places.

Trope style theories were re-emphasized in the Austrian school by Franz Brentano and some of his students, in England by G.F. Stout, and, later, by Sartre in France. In one basic variant of a trope theory, ordinary particulars were construed as complex objects, ontologically analyzable into their qualities, which were taken to be simple particulars. Such a variant’s supposed strength is that it can allow one to resolve some or all of three familiar problems by (1) avoiding universals as entities; (2) avoiding a *special* connection between universal attributes and their particular instantiations in terms of a type of *part-whole* relation between ordinary things and their tropes (a move also attempted by some advocates of bundle views involving only universals); (3) avoiding bare or pure particulars to account for the diversity of ordinary particulars (cf. Campbell, 1990, and Maurin, 2004)

Since particularized attributes are particulars, not common properties, two ordinary particulars that are exactly alike, the two imagined spheres,

do not have common constituent properties. The shape and color of the one are particulars that are diverse, though exactly similar to, the shape and color of the other. Since it is assumed that such individual attributes are *simple particulars*, their diversity need not be accounted for in that simple entities are assumed to be simply or numerically diverse. The problem about accounting for the exact similarity of the tropes without appealing to universals is generally met in one of two ways. On one pattern the two individual color qualities (the tropes) are held to suffice to ground the truth of the judgment that they are exactly similar. It is, purportedly, a case of being an “internal relation”, where what is meant by that is that the terms of the relation do not require, in Russell’s terminology, a “relating relation” to relate them. In short, it is solely the existence of the two tropes, say w and w^* , that are required for the truth of “ w is exactly similar to w^* ”. Just as two bare particulars are supposedly simply diverse *particulars* as they are diverse *simple* particulars, so two tropes, as exactly similar particular qualities, are held to be simply similar while simply diverse, since they are declared to be simply-diverse-particular-qualities. There is an obvious problem, however. Though the two tropes are simply diverse as numerically different particular qualities, the truth ground for “ w is diverse from w^* ” is the existence of *both* w and w^* , which is then the truth ground for the *two* being exactly similar. Thus, two logically independent claims have the same truth ground – the existence of w and w^* .

One might hold that there is no problem since a trope is not exactly similar to itself. But then one acknowledges that the phrase “exactly similar” is used as a transitive and symmetric but not reflexive verb or, alternatively, that the *internal relation* that it signifies is both symmetric and transitive but not reflexive, yet instantiated. By appealing to the contemporary exotic domain of “possible worlds”, one may declare, invoking one’s “metaphysical intuition”, whatever that is, that there is no possible world in which w and w^* are diverse but not exactly similar or are exactly similar but not diverse. For, given the existence of w and of w^* , both statements must be true, *given that w and w^* are the kinds of things that they are – tropes*. It is, as it were, by their *nature*.

Given *two* particulars, it does indeed follow that they are diverse – that there are two of them. Likewise given the existence of *two* exactly similar tropes it does follow that they are diverse and exactly similar. What is at issue is what is packed into taking w and w^* to be *two existents*. Consider a standard use of an existential quantifier and zero level constants and variables where “ $(\exists x)(x = w) \ \& \ (\exists x)(x = w^*)$ ” is taken to express that there

is a particular, w , and a particular, w^* . That neither implies that w is a particular that is also an attribute of other particulars, nor that it is the case that $w \neq w^*$. Of course one can do two things. First, one can take variables of a certain kind to be used for particulars that are tropes, as well as certain iterations for tropes of the same kind – tropes understood in accordance with a certain philosophical account. Second, one can understand the schema one employs, as an explicatory tool in philosophical analysis and presentation, to be such that different primitive constant signs (proper names, basic predicates, etc.) are not assigned to (interpreted into) the same things (particulars of any kind, properties, etc.) and that they are all interpreted – that all signs of a certain kind in the schema in fact *name*. Then, one can speak of it *following*, by the “logic” of the schema, including the interpretation rules, that $w \neq w^*$ and that w is *exactly similar to* w^* . It is worth noting that if we consider all particulars as objects, and distinguish various kinds of particulars, ordinary particulars from tropes, then speaking of the nature of a trope – of *being a trope* – has an interesting consequence.

If one raises a question about the apparent property of *being a trope*, it would appear to be awkward, if not absurd, to consider it, in turn, in terms of a trope analysis – that is, to introduce particular tropes that are particularized instances of *being a trope*. Thus, some advocates of tropes have claimed that it is simply w and w^* that furnish the truth grounds for the truths that w and w^* are tropes, that they exist and that they are diverse. Here they interestingly follow the old medieval pattern of Abelard and other “nominalists”³. Tropes themselves account, by *their natures*, for their diversity, their exact similarity, and their *being tropes* – without having natures that they are distinct from. For a trope theorist cannot allow for the recognition of a *nature* of a trope that is distinct from the trope, just as Scotus could not allow for the particularized nature of an object being *really diverse* from its *particularity*, the particular and particularizing (contracting) *haecceitas*, or from the object, though the “three” were *formally diverse*. Hence his (in)famous “formal distinction” played its role and emphasizes that trope theories can be seen as variants of the Trinitarian accounts that created more than philosophical problems for medieval theologian-philosophers. They also employ the same move that Abelard used when he took Socrates to be the truth ground for a variety of true statements about him, following the move extreme nominalists typically make. Interestingly, realists about universals need only face an apparent, but non-

³ Cf. Abelard, as translated in Spade, 1994, p. 42; see also Marenbon, 1997, pp. 155-156.

problematic, self-predication in accommodating universals of “universality” and “particularity”.

What, then, is it to be a particular? Or, as some might put it, what distinguishes universals from particulars? Following a familiar theme, a universal is often taken as what is (logically) predicable or predicable of many while a particular is what is not, either in that it is not predicable at all (a particular red sphere) or in that it is predicable of “only” one (a particularized quality on different variations of trope theory and senses of “predicable”). Thus Russell, in the 1940s, somewhat misleadingly, spoke of *common* qualities of bundles as “particulars” since they were *contained in* complex particulars but not predicable of them. He also, like others, characterized particulars not just as the bearers of properties but as localized in space and time or at least time. Still others have taken particulars to be perceptible, while universals, by contrast, were construed as non-spatial, a-temporal and abstract objects apprehended by reason or cognition, not perception. The seemingly more “concrete” and down to earth particulars thus sometimes became the empirical objects that universals, as abstract “theoretical” objects, were introduced to explain – the latter being the basis for categorizing the former into collections (*natural* or otherwise).

The focus on the exemplification or instantiation connection (tie, relation, nexus), if one thinks of universal entities, rather than words, as having diverse particular instances, has been persistent. Russell, for example, spoke of distinguishing things from a logical point of view, from a philosophical point of view, and from a grammatical point of view – in terms of “things” that were predicable and things that were not, what was spatial or temporal and what was not, and what was representable by a predicate expression and what was not. Being a predicable (thing) for Russell was also, at times, what could only occur in a basic fact of a certain logical form – monadic, $\mathbf{Ox}$; dyadic, $\mathbf{Rxy}$; triadic, $\mathbf{[[xyz...}$ – and such facts, atomic facts, could contain only one item in that predicative role. Particulars, by contrast, did not determine the logical form of the facts they were terms *in*, and any number could be present in a basic or atomic fact. Thus universals, rather than particulars, could then be thought to embody the logical form of facts.

The problem posed by distinguishing particulars from universals in terms of a fundamental one-directional or asymmetric, in a special sense, relation, tie or connection, has been raised from the time of the Greeks thru

the medieval period and into the modern and contemporary eras⁴. But the notion of a “predicable” has been taken as more general than that of a “universal”. Thus we have the familiar predicable of many, as opposed to what is predicable of only one, permitting one to speak of particularized attributes, as well as purportedly uniquely describing or individuating attributes – Socratizing. Alternatively, universals have sometimes been characterized as *common* characteristics, as opposed to particularized attributes. But the more general notion of a predicable, taken in terms of entities rather than linguistic items, has long raised a problem associated with predication.

Berkeley’s attack on material substance is standard historical matter; less attention has been paid to his briefer, accompanying argument that the purported *inherence* of attributes, including powers, in such substances is incomprehensible. The purported two-fold incomprehensibility of bare particulars and exemplification contributed to the rejection of the particular-property-exemplification pattern by the British Absolute Idealists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This led to variants of the pattern of bundle theories in Bradley and Bosanquet and to the attraction of mereological sums and nominalism in various forms for others. Russell’s bundle theories of 1940 and 1948 were complex, allowing for qualities to exemplify basic relations while *constituting* particulars, but not being exemplified by them (cf. Hochberg, 1996). But Russell, no more than Berkeley, avoided the need to *connect* elements to form a complex, whether one thinks of such complexes as facts or simply as unique complexes or bundles. Nor do trope theorists, with talk of parts and internal relations. Berkeley simply overlooked the issue, while Russell was often unclear about facts and particulars as *complexes*, and trope theorists simply disguise facts and universals as natured, diverse tropes and declare obviously complex entities to be simple.

A common thread runs thru Aristotle’s suggestion of prime matter as a ground of individuation for basic elements, Scotus’ discussions of *haeccei-*

⁴ It is asymmetric in a special sense in that, for example, reversing the ordering of the signs “Ø” and “x” in “Øx” either does not result in a well-formed combination or is taken as just being another way of expressing what “Øx” does. Hence it is not asymmetric in the sense that, say, *longer than* is said to be an asymmetric relation. The latter sense involves taking “x is longer than y” and “y is longer than x” to both be well-formed and such that whenever one is true the other is false. Thus the *special* sense of “asymmetric” indicates a stronger sense in which exemplification is said to be *asymmetric*.

*tas*⁵, and the early Moore and Russell insisting on the need to distinguish numerical from conceptual diversity, and thus that particulars could not be *analyzed* in terms of universals. It is what led some to uniquely particularizing constituents – Bergmann’s bare particulars – and what others – Bradley, Berkeley, and the later Russell – had found unintelligible. Suppose, to consider a point, we take such a view as intelligible. Let “ β ” to be an indexical sign or “name” of a white sphere with W(hite) and S(quare) its respective color and shape attributes. Let x be taken as the individuating *haecceitas* or *marker*, and C as Russell’s compresence relation. Further, assume that the individual object, β , is *a fact*. The object β is then the fact with the marker x and the attributes W and S as its *terms*. The relation C is construed as the relational attribute *of* the fact (or object) β , and its logical form is that of a triadic or (a multi-grade) relation that takes an individuating marker and monadic attributes as its terms. Alternatively, if one seeks to work out a view more in line with the rejection of such “individuator”, or if one simply rejects the problem of individuation, β , in somewhat like Russell’s bundle view, is simply the fact that W and S stand in C.

While the above pattern fits with recognizing that Russell’s bundles of compresent qualities are really facts of compresence, one can say that both a traditional particular ground of individuation and universal attributes become terms of the fact that is the particular β , while the compresence relation is the only predicable *in* the fact. With or without individuator as entities, standard predications, such as “ β is W”, can now be said to be necessary in a specific sense. For the property W can be said to be a constituent of β . What that means, ignoring the slight complication posed by individuator, is simply that the statement “The unique fact of compresence that has only W and S as terms exists” is logically equivalent to “The unique fact of compresence that has only W and S as terms has W as a term”. It is so by assuming Russell’s account of definite descriptions. That such a description reflects the construal of the object as a fact with certain terms is part of the story. In a crucial and clear sense, however, what is stated is clearly not a necessary truth – for standard predications

⁵ Just what this is has always been problematic since Scotus seems to take it as a unique particularizing (and particularized) “something” – a *thisness* – that “contracts” a nature into an individualized nature – this human(ity), a *haecceitas* in another sense –, and “yields” the individual of the kind, Socrates, say, a *this* in another sense. The “three” are *formally* diverse but numerically one entity – thus a trinity of sorts. (Scotus, as translated in Spade, 1990).

have been *replaced* by existential claims. And those are not, in any sense, necessary or logical truths (cf. Hochberg, 2001, pp. 128-132). This simply exhibits a feature of bundle analyses of objects like β , and why it is sometimes said, in an imprecise sense, to be a “necessary truth” that the bundle composed of W and S contains W . Such an analysis of ordinary particulars and their connection to properties fits with a way of blocking the purported Bradley-Frege regress of facts, on an analysis that accepts particulars, properties and the logical form of exemplification. Take the problem to be that recognizing the fact that β is W supposedly forces us to acknowledge the additional fact that β is a term of the fact that β is W . However, as the key statement simply *reduces to* the claim that the fact that β is W exists, no further fact need be recognized.

Taking *particular substances* as facts of compresence that include an individuating *particular* as an entity that grounds the particularity of the ordinary object does not remove the entity, a pure particular or individuator, that was dismissed by Bradley and Bosanquet as the “abominable bare particular”. One argues for there being such an item, dialectically as some put it, and, in so doing, employs a premise like: *diverse complex entities cannot share all constituents* – a claim analogous to standard theorems about mereological systems and sets. Just what kind of truth such a claim is raises one question. Another question arises when we consider that an individuating item x , the individuating item of the ordinary particular β , is referred to by way of referring to β . While that seems odd in that x is *identified* in terms of what it supposedly individuates, β , no circularity is involved, though it is perhaps one reason for the long standing empiricist rejection of a particularizing entity.

Yet, as the simple particular x does not exemplify the various properties of the ordinary object, β , and thus it does not serve as a unifying *substratum* nor as a *continuant* persisting through changes of attributes – roles traditional substrata played. It only serves as a mere, trivial in its way, marker or individuating item. But, such simple particulars, with individual things like β and Plato taken as facts or states of affairs, are the only simple or basic particulars. They would be the only entities that are neither facts nor universal attributes, and thus the only particulars, in one traditional sense of that term.

Fittingly, in his posthumously published last book, Bergmann “reduced” his bare particulars to *peculiar* complex entities composed of (what amounted to a logical form of) *Particularity* common to them all – what he called a *sort* – and an individuating marker – what he called an *item*. Yet,

such a *diad*, as he put it, was peculiar in that it was not really complex. But it was not simple either. So he spoke of a *Two-in-One*. The language is odd, but the kind of claim is not.

Forget issues of compresence and the intelligibility of bare particulars, and just consider a simple atomic fact that **o** is **F** as the fact with **o** as term and **F** as attribute and **Øx** as the logical form. If one takes exemplification and the division of entities into terms and attributes in facts as basic, then we have a definite description of a fact and an adequate truth ground for the appropriate atomic sentence, but a question arises. Is the fact simple or complex? One may say that it is complex in the sense that it has terms and an attribute and a logical form like **Øx**. But it is simple in that we take a fact to stand to its terms and attributes in basic logical relations – being a term of, being attribute for – and not to a compound of term(s) and attribute (relation). Moreover, we do not take it, in the fashion of Russell and Wittgenstein’s logical atomism, as a complex formed out of connected constituents.

Wittgenstein and Russell, as many think of them, supposedly held that an atomic sentence represented a possible atomic state of affairs or fact. Whether that is right or not, let us consider an atomic fact that that would have “represented” to be “denoted” by the definite description:

- (1) The fact such that **o** is its *term*, **F** is *attributed in* it, and **Øx** *informs* it.

The implicit sentential variable of (1) is taken to range over a domain of atomic states of affairs – facts – and the predicates “term of” and “attribute in” express logical relations between facts and terms and attributes, respectively, while “informs” indicates that **Øx** is either a logical property of facts or a further logical relation between facts and logical forms. We will abbreviate (1) by “the fact **Fo**”.

Rather than follow the theme of logical atomism that takes atomic sentences to represent atomic facts, consider such sentences to be linked to such facts, or states of affairs, by general versions of truth rules along the lines of:

- (T₁) ‘**Fo**’ is true **iff Fo iff** the fact **Fo** exists.

On the present construal of atomic facts, the employment of (T₁) for atomic sentences, and the use of Russell’s account of descriptions, will not allow one to generate the Bradley paradox – where generating that “paradox” is considered to be showing that if one takes the fact denoted by (1) to be, as many now speak, the truth-maker for “**Fo**” then one must re-

cognize another fact that is a truth-maker for a claim that the fact described by (1) exists, and so on *ad infinitum*. The idea of the paradox being taken to be that if you acknowledge the fact denoted by (1) you are forced to recognize the relational fact – that **o** and **F** stand in the relation of exemplification – and so on and on. But on the present pattern, the claim

(2) $\exists x$ is the form of the fact **Fo**

does not generate the familiar ongoing series. That series is blocked, at the outset, by the familiar feature of Russell's account of definite descriptions that "equates" (2) with

(3) The fact **Fo** exists.

What one must do, instead, is insist, that if we recognize that there exists the fact denoted by (1), we are forced to recognize a further fact denoted by something like:

(4) The fact such that **o** and **F** are its terms, $\exists x$ is attributed in it, and **R(x, y)** informs it.

The claim in (4) is not simply blocked by Russell's theory of descriptions. But there is no reason to hold that it is true – that taking the fact purportedly denoted by (1) to exist forces one to recognize a fact denoted by (4). Yet, the line of thought or argument that lies behind (4) no longer does so, by another feature of Russell's theory. For what one is doing is considering the employment of the form as a term of a new type of atomic fact with the original atomic fact described by (1) as the other term. But it is not merely a matter of pointing out that something like (4) must now be assumed. Nor is it simply a matter of proposing a variant of the familiar, if somewhat hollow, claim that exemplification is not a relation among relations. The key, and new point is, that facts are not named by atomic sentences but can only be *described* – using definite descriptions. Thus no atomic sentence can have a linguistic expression naming (representing) a fact in the sense that simple names and predicates represent objects. (On a form of the bundle view we considered earlier there would also not be names of particular objects given the construal of such objects as facts). Given the use of the description, (2) is not an atomic sentence and, hence, one cannot go from (2), by any appropriate logico-semantic rule to (4). To do so would involve two assumptions: first, that the description is a genuine subject expression – correlated to or interpreted as representing some object that functions as a term – thus overlooking the distinction between descriptions and names (as well as assuming that one can treat atomic facts as terms of further atomic facts); second, that the form $\exists x$ is not to

be distinguished from a dyadic attribute. But doing that is not merely arbitrary, it is not viable. For, on the present analysis, the Bradleyian pattern of reasoning can be seen to overlook the difference between denoting atomic facts by descriptions and taking atomic sentences to be names of facts.

Distinguishing facts from both individual substances and universal properties involves recognizing the peculiarity of facts. They may be said to be compounds, as the traditional individual substances were compounds of form and matter, in the sense that they have terms and attributes and are of a specific form – but they are not complexes that are composed of a term and an attribute, or several terms and a relation, joined by a further relation. The difference between there being **o** and **F**, but not the fact, and there also being the fact, is not that in the latter case constituents are joined together. It is simply that in the latter case there is an additional entity – the fact. That additional entity is no more a compound of the other entities than it is a mereological sum of them. While the fact is not a composite of the thing and property – nor the thing and the property in a relation, it does have logical relations to them, given that they are the term and attribute *of* it. This latter claim is not empty since, if one thinks in terms of Russell's theory of descriptions, the statement that the fact has such a logical relation to such "things" is logically equivalent to the statement that the fact exists. But facts are not only additional entities, they are an additional kind of entity. Given that they are both basic and of a logical form, in view of the historical analogies one can even think of them as a kind of substance.

Russell took descriptions not to require, by their use in subject place, a "denoted" entity. This did not mean that there was not such an entity, nor that one could not say that there was such an entity. It meant that one does not presuppose that there is such by the very occurrence of the expression – hence if one asserted, using that apparent subject expression, that such a thing did not exist, no seeming paradox was involved. In a way the referential function of proper names is replaced, in the case of descriptions, by an assertion of existence.

What has been arrived at is a view taking facts to be simple substances, in various senses of that phrase, while being entities that have other entities – qualities, relations and, possibly, individuating "markers" – as terms. Facts are also taken to be of a specific logical form, as traditional substances were held to be "informed".

It is often noted, in various contexts, that the notion of simplicity is not itself simple. With respect to facts that becomes obvious in a quite precise sense. Atomic facts are simple in that (1) they do not have other facts as

constituent terms; (2) their analysis does not take them to be mereological compounds of their components; (3) they are terms of the logical relations and are of specific forms. Yet, they are not simple in that they are “determined” by the set of items specified in their analysis. The latter point requires explanation. It has been argued that facts must be recognized since, given a non-symmetrical relation R and terms a and b , we cannot, from a listing of items R , a , b , even adding the logical form, Rxy , to the list, determine its correlate to be Rab , rather than Rba , or vice versa. But, if we recognize the need for including ordering entities in the analysis of relational facts and include a representation of the order in the fact, we can determine whether Rab or Rba is the purported fact indicated⁶. That issue I simply note here, and also note that one cannot viably argue that Rab simply differs from Rba . One must give an account of relational order “in” such purported facts. Giving such an account would then indicate another sense in which facts can be taken to be complexes, and there are clearly still further senses in which they may be said to be complex.

First, facts, standing as they do in the asymmetrical relations T and A can be said to have *components* – terms and attributes (relations). Second, the logical forms of facts differs in a significant way from the logical forms of particulars, attributes and relations. The first point is one that requires no elaboration, but the second does. Particulars and universals are of different logical kinds. Forget, for the moment, the present view construing particulars as bundles indicated by definite descriptions and take the familiar view of Russell’s logical atomism phase. That can be seen as employing the familiar notion of a particular as an entity that *can* only be a term of a fact, and not what is an attribute (where attribute includes relations). An attribute, by contrast, is what can be an attribute in a fact. If one recognizes higher order facts, as Russell did not in the logical atomism essays, then an attribute is what can also be a term, of a higher order fact. Thus, particulars and attributes differ *logically* – in their *logical forms*. On the present analysis that difference is captured by basic particulars, if such there be, being entities that can only be terms in facts. Atomic facts, as well as ordinary particulars construed as facts, by contrast, can be called “complex”, in comparison to attributes and relations, in that the latter are components of

⁶ Note that the point is that facts must thus be acknowledged, not the order in them. Thus this is not to argue that the fact that the representations of certain relational facts must include certain items shows that there exist correlates of those items in the facts that are represented. That is no more viable here than in the case of representing the two spheres and the purported need for special individuating entities.

the former and are of logical forms, monadic, dyadic, etc. They are also perspicuously represented by definite descriptions and not simple labels – predicates or “names.” Yet a category of atomic fact is recognized, and the apparatus of quantification and variables is employed regarding them. In that basic sense one takes there to be a fact of a form standing in basic logical relations to terms and attributes – and hence, in that sense, facts are simple. It is as if one traditional role of an underlying substance returns in the case of facts. It is not as that which preserves identity through change nor individuation of particulars, but simply as what serves as the ground or basis of the unification of the terms, attribute and form. It thus reflects the basic purported difference from mereological sums, which supposedly are no more than their elements. Facts are clearly entities over and above their “components”. Yet they are completely determined (specified) by the latter. It can be noted that so taking facts reflects Russell’s 1913-14 notion that logical forms of atomic facts were not constituents of facts, as he took particulars, qualities and relations to be, but the “way” the constituents were “put together” (Russell, 1956, p. 52).

Without introducing a phrase like “Two-in-One,” one can see that one has arrived at an end of the exposition of a pattern. In Bergmann’s case he ended with something like Scotus – his original thisness (bare particular) became the logical or formal “fact” that such an item was of a logical kind, a particular – so it was the item, thus One, and yet the item’s being of a sort, hence Two – so Two-in-One. The phrase, of course, supposedly thwarts (or at least acknowledges) the obvious regress that “bare particulars” (along with tropes) introduce and which Bergmann, at the end, finally faced. When one thinks about it, “Two-in-One” is not that far from “Three-in-One”⁷. The present pattern has a related if not so stark peculiarity, in that facts can be said to be simple in some senses and not simple in others.

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⁷ Die-hard trope theorists who simply assume that tropes are “simple” yet have a variety of roles also end with tropes as “trinities” with a small “t”. A particular whiteness, for example, is-a-trope (hence, of a logical kind), is-a-whiteness (hence, of a nature), and is-a-thisness (hence, an individuating element) – yet the three are wrapped as one.

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BARE PARTICULARS: SOME REMARKS

Abstract. The paper shows and discusses three of Bergmann's main reasons for acknowledging the ontological category of bare particulars. The first motivation is recognized in his agreement with the principle of acquaintance, according to which the simplest entities of ontological analysis must be presented to us directly. Since it seems very hard to maintain that we are acquainted with bare entities rather than with something qualified, this argument turns out to be not very compelling. The second ground for admitting bareness is indeed that it seems to be an easy way to solve the problem of individuation. There are, however, some classical paradoxes of identity, which cannot be adequately handled with the theory of bare particulars. Finally, the strongest claim in support of bare particulars is seen in the ideal language method, which has been employed by Bergmann since his earliest works, and that has never been completely dismissed by him.

In this paper my concern is to make some remarks about the reasons which may lead a philosopher to include in his ontology such odd entities as *bare particulars*. Since Gustav Bergmann was one of the most important supporters of this ontological kind, my remarks will stand on the background of his works. I singled out in Bergmann's writings three reasons for acknowledging the ontological kind of bare particulars; each of them relates this notion to other important philosophical topics. I recognized three reasons for acknowledging bare particulars, but this obviously does not mean that they are the unique speculative motivations one could discover. Neither I want to hold that further approaches cannot be found in Bergmann's works. Quite to the contrary, I am confident that both the denial of internal relations and the topic of awareness are connected with the issue of bare particulars. Maybe they will be the subject of another paper of mine.

1. *Bare particulars and acquaintance*

The first couple of notions I would like to look at is bare particulars and acquaintance. It has been debated for a long time if an ontologist must agree to bare particulars on the ground of the so called *Principle of Ac-*

*quaintance*¹. The basic idea is the following: we know that something exists because we are acquainted with it. This suggestion has been taken to have at least two meanings. The first is that, in order to regard something as the simple entities of ontological analysis, one must be presented with them. The second is that one must be acquainted with the referents of the primitive descriptive terms of the language employed in ontological description. I assume for the moment that the two formulations are equivalent, and I will return to the second in the last section of this paper².

Consider now a green spot in the visual field and assume that we are acquainted with it. In Bergmann's ontology the spot is a fact, namely, it is not a simple entity. It is assayed as a bare particular (an entity which has no nature whatsoever) exemplifying one character or universal. So, in order to hold that we are acquainted with the ontological simples, it seems that we must grant that if one is acquainted with the spot, then he is acquainted with its constituents too. Leaving aside the issue of being acquainted with universals for the moment, it remains to show that we are somehow presented with bare particulars.

It has been doubted that we can ever be acquainted with something bare. The reason is quite obvious: bare particulars lack natures, so we would not be able to answer the question: "*What* are you knowing when you say you are presented with a bare particular?". A plausible answer could be: "I'm not acquainted with any descriptive content, of course, but I'm acquainted with particularity itself". The argument runs as follows³: consider two spots of the same colour, size, shape, and so on. Everyone will agree that, while we are seeing the two individual objects, we see both their qualitative sameness and their numerical difference. Given that universals can account only for qualitative aspects, we must acknowledge the existence of bare particulars in order to explain why we are acquainted with the difference between the two spots. For, if it would not be so, how can we distinguish the two indiscernible objects?

¹ Cf. Allaire, 1963; Chappell, 1964; Clatterbaugh, 1965; Allaire, 1965a and 1965b; Hochberg, 1965a and 1965b; Barber, 1966; Hochberg, 1966a and 1966b; Addis, 1967; Baker, 1967; Wilson, 1969; Grossman, 1974.

² It is not hard to find evidence for both of them in Bergmann's works. Cf. Bergmann, 1947a, pp. 185-186; Bergmann, 1958a, pp. 126-127; Bergmann, 1960a, pp. 45-46; Bergmann, 1960b, p. 174 and pp. 185-186; Bergmann, 1961, pp. 117-118; Bergmann, 1964c, p. 307.

³ Cf. Allaire, 1963, pp. 6-8. Hochberg also recalls this reasoning, in order to criticize it: Hochberg, 1965, pp. 124-126.

Such a reasoning can be challenged in this way. We can grant both that we are presented with two objects which differ only numerically and that we are presented with their difference. We may ask, however, whether it follows from it that we are presented even with the *ontological ground* of their difference. Bare particulars, in other words, are supposed to be the elements “in” the spots which account for their difference, but the difference we are acquainted with is primarily that of the spots, not that of bare particulars directly. In other words, we begin with the numerical difference between the two spots: this is what we are acquainted with and what needs to be explicated. The realist ontologist then describes this state of affairs by having recourse to bare particulars and characters. Other ontologists, however, can advance alternative analyses in terms of perfect particulars, for instance, or universals together with coordinate qualities. Everyone of these proposals account for the difference between the two spots by means of different ontological devices. And, if all the accounts are adequate, then it seems that we cannot prefer one ontological analysis to the other by appealing to what we are presented with⁴. I found three possible replies to this piece of argument.

(A) The realist can charge his opponents by holding that their analyses are not completely successful. He maintains that only the explanation based on universals and bare particulars correctly accounts for the difference between the two indiscernible spots. An ontology of perfect particulars, for instance, cannot fully account for the sameness between the two spots, while the ontologist which employs coordinate qualities is not in a better position than the realist, because maintaining that we are acquainted with a coordinate quality seems to be as much difficult as holding that we are acquainted with a bare particular. Therefore the realist’s ontological account should be preferred with respect to the others⁵.

It must be noticed, however, that if we are in agreement with this reasoning then the commitment to bare particulars seems to be grounded on dialectical reasons about their accounting for individuation, and not on the principle of acquaintance alone. We have not shown that we are acquainted with bare particulars; we have just shown that they are the easiest way to explain what we are presented with. Moreover, as we will see in the second part of this paper, there seem to be some problem with the bare

⁴ References to these points can be found in Clatterbaugh, 1965, pp. 273-276 and in Hochberg, 1966, pp. 50-52.

⁵ Cf. Addis, 1967; cf. also Oaklander, 1977, pp. 488-489.

particulars theory of individuation. So neither the dialectical reasons could be satisfactory at the end.

(B) Alternatively, one can hold that the whole reasoning above is misleading, because it establishes a difference which is not really there. We said that we start from being acquainted with the spot, and then we advance an ontological analysis of it. One could observe, however, that if an analysis has to be taken seriously then what has been analysed should not be something different from the result of the analysis. It is not true that there are, so to speak, first the spot (which is one entity), and then the analysed spot (namely, several entities). For Bergmann the spot simply *is* the bare particular exemplifying the universal, and not a further entity. So, while we are presented with the spot we are acquainted with two distinct elements: a bare particular and a character. To claim that we are acquainted with the spot and not with its constituents is to confuse the unity of the fact with its alleged simplicity.

The source of the confusion seems to be the interference between the principle of acquaintance and another fundamental principle ruling over bare particulars, namely the *Principle of Exemplification*. It says that particulars are never presented unqualified and qualities are never presented unexemplified⁶. So it is true that, since bare particulars and universals always go together, one cannot be acquainted with one without being acquainted with the other. But this does not mean that you are not presented with them as such. An example may help: imagine you are the referee of a dancing competition for couples. Then you will always have in front of you a man and a woman dancing together. Even though the rules of the competition don't allow a person dancing alone, what you are presented with are two distinct human beings and not, so to speak, a man and a woman melted together.

Does this reply look convincing? It seems to me that, even if we grant that in being acquainted with a fact we are acquainted simply with its constituents' being together, a difficulty remains. One of Bergmann's main lessons is that a fact is not the same as the collection of its constituents⁷. Assume, for the sake of the argument, that we can be acquainted with each of its constituents separately: we will not be acquainted with the fact too. The difference between the fact $a\epsilon Gr$ and the collection $\{a, Gr, \epsilon\}$ is that in the first case the nexus of exemplification actually ties the bare particular

⁶ This is stated by Bergmann many times. Cf., for instance, Bergmann, 1962a, pp. 73-74; Bergmann, 1964b, pp. 277-278; Bergmann, 1967, p. 88.

⁷ Cf., for instance, Bergmann, 1967, pp. 9-11, 22, 36.

and the character together; in the second case it does nothing. So we must concede that, in being acquainted with the fact, we are acquainted with something more than its constituents. Or, to put it differently, we must concede that one can be acquainted with the constituents of a fact only if they are actually “in” the fact. Consequently, it seems that there is a sense according to which the spot has some priority with respect to the elements of its ontological analysis.

(C) A further argument for maintaining that bare particulars are presented is the following. Consider Bergmann’s claim that bare particulars, at least in the case of spots in the visual field, must be conceived of as areas⁸. Then it seems hard to deny that, while a spot is presented to us, we are not acquainted with its area as well. Hence we are acquainted with bare particulars after all.

The reasoning of course is grounded in the claim that areas are particulars rather than properties. So we must try to understand why Bergmann was thinking so. For it does not seem immediately wrong to say, on the contrary, that the spot has an area in the same way it has a shape, a size, a colour, and so on. In the essay “*Synthetic A Priori*” Bergmann advanced two replies to this objection⁹. One involves the problem of individuation: Bergmann maintains that we cannot account for the difference between two spots which agree in all non-relational respects, if areas are included in them. I will deal with this problem in the next section of the paper, so here I face the other challenge only.

If I understand Bergmann correctly, he is saying that a spot in the visual field does not have an area in the same sense in which it has a shape and a size. The spot rather *is* an area which has, or exemplifies, a shape, a size, a colour, and so on. This means that, unlike having a shape and a size, being spatially extended (which I assume is synonymous to being an area) is not a further spatial property of a thing. In other words, it means that there is not a *substratum*, an “I don’t know what”, that has the properties of being extended, having a shape and having a size¹⁰.

So far so good, but after that Bergmann says both that he knows that an entity is an area because it has a shape and that to be an area is just to be an entity that has a shape. This sounds to me like the claim that to say of something that is spatially extended is to say merely that it has a shape. If the former analysis of Bergmann’s text is correct, however, then it seems

⁸ Cf. Bergmann, 1964b, p. 288; Bergmann, 1967, p. 74.

⁹ Cf. Bergmann, 1964b, pp. 289-291.

¹⁰ Cf. Wolterstorff, 1970, pp. 124-125; Grossmann, 1974, pp. 98-100.

to me that one could find an easy reply to the argument for the acquaintance with bare particulars. It runs as follows: if being spatially extended is nothing but having a shape, then when we are acquainted with the area of the spot we are acquainted with nothing but the spot's shape. Shape, on the other hand, is a character. So at the end we are acquainted only with one of the spot's characters and not with its bare particular.

2. *Bare particulars and individuation*

One further reason for including bare particulars in someone's ontology is that they are supposed to ground individuation¹¹. «A bare particular», says Bergmann in *Realism* «is a mere individuator. Structurally that is its only job. It does nothing else»¹². Consider two very simple objects, for instance, two green spots in the visual field. Assume that both of them are green and round, and that they have the same shape, size and so on. Briefly, we are presented with two objects which share all their non-relational properties. How then can an ontologist account for the difference between the two spots? It shall be quite intuitive to make appeal to the places of the spots, that is, to say that objects are singled out by means of their spatial properties. If spatial properties are regarded as relations, however, this task cannot be achieved, since relations presuppose their *relata*.

Thus it seems that our ontologist must introduce a constituent other than the ordinary properties of the spots (Green, Round and so on) in order to account for their difference. At this point two alternative options stand before him. The first is the so called theory of coordinate qualities. They are special properties of the spots which account for their position in the visual field and so for their individuation. «The second way of solving the problem of individuation», said Bergmann,

is to make the further constituent a *bare particular*. This notion [...] has two parts. Bare particulars neither are nor have natures. Any two of them, therefore, are not intrinsically but only numerically different. That is their bareness. It is impossible for a bare particular to be “in” more than one ordinary thing. That is their particularity. (Bergmann, 1967, p. 24)

¹¹ Though this debate was mostly contemporary to Bergmann (cf. Sellars, 1952 and Alston, 1954, as well as texts cited in footnote 1) it has some more recent occurrences as well: cf. Moreland, 1998; Mertz, 2001; Moreland – Pickavance, 2003.

¹² Bergmann, 1967, p. 25. Cf. also Bergmann, 1962b, pp. 92-93.

As is well known, Bergmann claimed that he preferred this option to the former because it provides a deeper ontological ground for individuation. That is because with the latter solution individuality relies on the connection between a bare particular and a universal, that is, between entities belonging to different ontological kinds tied together by the inhomogeneous nexus of exemplification. Coordinate qualities, on the other hand, are qualities among qualities. So, if they are linked to the other properties of the objects by something, it will be a thing like an a priori law that presumably will be dependent on their natures. While the first solution accounts for individuation by means of the relationship between different ontological categories, the second accounts for it by means of a homogeneous connection, and for Bergmann the first connection is indeed stronger than the second¹³.

In my opinion, however, grounding individuation only on the categorical level can lead to a couple of paradoxes which, in turn, may cast some doubts on the real advantages of employing bare particulars in order to solve the problem of individuation. Let me show what these paradoxes are. Assume, for the sake of the argument, that bare particulars really do their job and consider two spots, the first of which is white and square and the second oval and blue. Despite their difference in properties, they are different because of the two bare particulars in them:

$a\epsilon(W \ \& \ S); b\epsilon(O \ \& \ B).$

At this point, however, what prevents us from assaying the same circumstance as a single bare particular exemplifying all the four characters? This case seems to be impossible because we cannot conceive of an object which is both white and blue, and both square and oval. This answer can't be accepted, however. For it makes the individuation of the two spots dependent on the a priori law which says that no ordinary object can have at the same time more than one shape or more than one colour. On the contrary, we are under the assumption that only bare particulars provide for individuation. Thus, only formation rules are pertinent for the categorical level. Since the formula

$a\epsilon(W \ \& \ S \ \& \ O \ \& \ B)$

does not seem ill-formed in Bergmann's jargon, it should be accepted. Yet it describes a state of affair pretty different than before: there we had two facts, here we count only one.

¹³ Bergmann, 1967, pp. 24-28, 46-48. Cf. also Hausman, 1967, pp. 41, 45-46.

If solving the problem of individuation means to be able to count how many things of a certain kind there are, then it seems that we are getting in trouble. The reason is quite obvious: what has been done with the four characters can in principle be carried on for all the characters we can find in our world. So we could have, paradoxically, our world actually composed by a single bare particular exemplifying a very long conjunction of characters. Different remarks come to my mind, at the moment.

(A) Firstly, I guess that Bergmann would not rule out the case of a single bare particular exemplifying all the simple characters of the world, at least in principle. It would correspond, in his mind, to count the whole visual field as one individual. That indeed seems to be possible, although it is never the case in practice. The fundamental point is how to assay the parts of the field. In our example, since there is a single bare particular exemplifying all the four characters, we can say that there is only one object, and we can regard the two distinct spots as parts of it. In other words, we would have a strange object with a part which is white and square and a part which is oval and blue. According to Bergmann, however, there is also a bare particular for each of the two spots, and these bare particulars are in the relation part-whole with the bare particular exemplifying the whole visual field.

This assay depends on Bergmann's peculiar explanation of the part-whole relation we can find in chapter IV of *Realism*¹⁴. For Bergmann, part-whole is not a relation between objects, it is a relation between bare particulars. So it seems that the paradox arises only from my wrong attempt to single out "parts" of the visual field by means of a priori rules between qualities. If, on the contrary, their individuation is grounded on bare particulars too, then there is not a paradox at all. It remains a doubt, however. Bergmann says both that the part-whole relation holds between bare particulars and that its ground is an a priori truth about space. But if it is so, then it seems to me that the individuation of parts by means of bare particulars is subordinated to the nature of the part-whole relation which, in turn, seems to be grounded on the a priori level rather than on the categorical level.

(B) My second remark is the following: after all, the paradox arose because we were allowed to bind universals together on the right side of the formula, thus writing

$$a\epsilon(W \& S \& O \& B)$$

¹⁴ Bergmann, 1967, pp. 71-82. Further reflections about the part-whole relation can be found in Bergmann, 1958c, pp. 227-230; Bergmann, 1964b, pp. 287-290, 296-330.

instead of

$$a \in (W \ \& \ S); \ b \in (O \ \& \ B)$$

If one rejects this possibility, however, it seems to me that he must reject also the writing

$$a \in (W \ \& \ S); \ b \in (O \ \& \ B)$$

and say that the only correct description is

$$a \in W \ \wedge \ a \in S; \ b \in O \ \wedge \ b \in B^{15},$$

which amounts to say that each bare particular exemplifies every simple character independently, and that it is the presence of the numerically same bare particular in the different atomic facts which grounds the individuation of the two spots.

This is fine, but not completely satisfactory. For, if a bare particular exemplifies every simple character separately, one could think that it is just an arbitrary circumstance that the same bare particular co-exemplifies different characters. In other words, it seems that nothing prevents us from delivering a *different* bare particular to every single simple character, thus having:

$$c \in W \ \wedge \ d \in S \ \wedge \ e \in O \ \wedge \ f \in B.$$

At this point the notion of bare particular turns out to be redundant. Insofar as simple characters are distinguished as such by their natures, there is no need to introduce a bare particular to say that white is different from blue. Of course, bare particulars still serve to account for the *concreteness* of characters: here there are four instantiated simple universals and not four universals alone. It seems to me, however, that the danger of nominalism has never been as close as in this situation: just change each atomic fact with a perfect particular and say that our object is merely a conjunction of them, and the alleged advantage of accepting bare particulars vanishes.

The second paradox remains to be shown: it can be stated as follows. Recall the two indiscernible spots, and assume that the ground of their difference is their bare particulars, which are only numerically different. Then the two spots need not be in different places: they can even be *exactly superimposed*. Two different bare particulars, in the present case, would exemplify the same universals, including spatial relations. We will no more “see”, so to speak, the two green and round spots: we will see the same

¹⁵ Even though it is not particularly relevant here, I preserve the distinction between the sign “ $\wedge$ ”, which denotes the nexus of conjunction between facts, and the sign “ $\&$ ”, which denotes a pseudo-nexus connecting universals only.

thing that we would see if the spot were one. Yet, how could we distinguish between the one-particular case and the two-particulars case? Since we are not acquainted with bare particulars independently, we cannot count how many of them stay behind the same spot's presentation. It could be one, it could be two, it could be any number, finite or infinite, of them.

The point at stake is the same as before: if solving the problem of individuation is to answer the question "How many things of a certain kind are there?", then bare particulars hardly help to single out objects. One can answer this question only if he has previously assumed that there are, say, two bare particulars (and so two objects), rather than one. This assumption, I must notice, is quite arbitrary. In other words: given a presentation of a character whatsoever, it seems that there is no reason to say that there is only one bare particular which is exemplifying it rather than two or more. Yet the number of facts involved is different, so it seems that to distinguish between the one-particular case and the two-particulars case has some ontological relevance.

One could reply that the case of two exactly superimposed objects is simply absurd. According to Bergmann, for example, bare particulars must be thought of as indivisible areas (or sectors of the visual field) which exemplify properties, so that the two alleged superimposed areas would actually be the same. Yet a perplexity remains. In "*Synthetic A Priori*" Bergmann says that if we regard areas as properties and allow objects to share all their properties including areas, then we would no longer be able to single out any two of them. So we must conceive of areas as bare particulars¹⁶.

If areas are bare particulars, however, then what does prevent them from being superimposed while remaining distinct? We are no more under the assumption that areas are character-like entities: in such a case, two superimposed objects would be sharing literally the same character. Now, on the contrary, areas are bare particulars (i.e., numerically different) for hypothesis. So it seems to me that they can be superimposed without any particular problem. Obviously one can persist in denying that areas can be superimposed while remaining distinct, even if areas are regarded as bare particulars. But this looks more like an a priori truth about space than a categorical demand of someone's ontology.

¹⁶ Cf. Bergmann, 1964b, p. 289.

3. Bare particulars and ideal language

Together with the above mentioned reasons for bringing bare particulars in someone's ontology, I found in Bergmann's works a further and stronger motivation to accept them. Bergmann repeatedly states, especially in the papers belonging to *The Metaphysics of Logical Positivism*, that in ontology he applies the *ideal language method*¹⁷. The basic idea is that of a formalism which, when interpreted in a suitable way, expresses the ontological constitution of the world. It is not difficult then to find a very accurate correspondence between Bergmann's favourite formalism, namely the unproblematic parts of *Principia Mathematica*, and the elements of his ontology.

The division between logical and descriptive terms is mirrored by the distinction between subsistents and existents, which are, respectively, the form and the matter of the world. All primitive descriptive terms are names, and the remaining can be defined by means of them. Individual constants, written by lower case letters, stand for particulars. Upper case letters are predicative constants, which name universals and relations. The simple clause, expressed by the juxtaposition of these kinds of signs, has its counterpart in the fundamental nexus of exemplification, which gives rise to the atomic fact. Thus, 'This is green' both denotes a fact and is a well-formed sentence, while 'Green is this' means nothing since it corresponds to an ill-formed sentence. Just as complex sentences are built from simple ones by means of the standard connectives, so are complex facts with respect to atomic ones¹⁸. Even quantifiers and variables have, at least if we agree with what Bergmann claimed in the essay "Generality and Existence", an ontological counterpart we are acquainted with¹⁹.

¹⁷ I am making reference especially to the following papers: Bergmann, 1946; 1947b; 1950; 1952; 1953; 1954b. Later works also contain mentions of the ideal language: cf. Bergmann, 1960a, pp. 48-49; 1960b, p. 172; 1962a and 1962b.

¹⁸ Of course connectives (at least conjunction and disjunction), being represented by signs of the ideal language, denote true constituents of the world: cf. Bergmann, 1963, p. 130.

¹⁹ «Each quantifier represents something which is sometimes presented. Had it never been presented, we would not know what the quantifier meant [...]. Generality and existence subsist. That is the thesis» (Bergmann, 1962a, p. 70). «A form₃ is a geometrical character exemplified by sentences; the feature of the world's form it represents is shared (not: exemplified!) by the facts these sentences express. Each form₃ is associated with a schema. Each instance of the schema exemplifies the form₃. Take ' $f(x)$ ', the simplest of all schemata. The form₃ with which it is associated is

Thus, if ontology abides by such a biunivocal correspondence between the ontological kinds and the signs of the ideal language, it seems almost unavoidable to acknowledge the existence of bare particulars. We need something which corresponds to the primitive descriptive terms of zero-type. Since the same predicative term can be juxtaposed to any number of them, while they are not predicated of anything, they will be, ontologically speaking, particulars. Since only primitive descriptive terms of type one and higher are supposed to denote universals and relations, there is no nature left to be expressed by the zero-type terms, so their referents will be bare. The only relevant role of bare particulars, in other words, is to correspond on the ontological side to the individual constants of the ideal language. Other jobs, like individuation or accounting for being presented with particularity, are secondary and, as we have seen before, somewhat problematic.

Moreover, this biunivocal correspondence can even explain why such problems arise. Consider acquaintance: the trouble was that we cannot distinguish between being acquainted with the particularity of the spot and with bare particulars. Since we are acquainted with spots, the existence of bare particulars can only be inferred from the particularity of the spot and not be experienced as such. All of this follows from the formation rules of the ideal language. They require that the simple clause is always formed by juxtaposition of a predicative and an individual term. The ontological meaning of this is that bare particulars are always exemplifying universals, so that they can never be presented alone.

For what concerns individuation, paradoxes were born from splitting the thisness aspect of individuation and the suchness aspect, and from claiming that only the first is relevant to single out objects. The split is due to the distinction, in the ideal language, between predicative and individual terms. The one-particular world and the two superimposed spots can be conceived because in the ideal language there aren't rules which prevent them from being mentioned by well-formed sentences. More concisely: ordinary objects are usually singled out by means of laws such as 'no

exemplified by ' $G(a)$ ', ' $F(b)$ ', and so on. The feature this form₃ represents is shared by all and only those facts which consist of an individual exemplifying a character. Form₃, being a geometrical character, consists, in the sense explicated, of form₁ and form₂ [...]. Having distinguished between form₁, form₂, and form₃, we have as it were distinguished three regions in the realm of subsistence, each containing what is expressed by one of the three geometrical (syntactical) "forms"» (Bergmann, 1962a, pp. 82-83).

single object may be in two place at one time', 'no single object can have two shapes at one time', and so on. These laws stand, from Bergmann's point of view, on the a priori level which rules the natures of the characters rather than on the categorical level of well- and ill-formed sentences. So, having placed individuation on the categorical level alone, Bergmann simply has no tools to account for the individuation of ordinary objects²⁰.

My last remark is the following. Assume that Bergmann's point is simply what has been shown above, i.e., that we must concede the existence of bare particulars in order to give ontological meaning to a formalism like that of *Principia Mathematica*. One could reply, of course, that what has been advanced is just a semantic proposal. So, either the same formalism can be interpreted in another way, or a different formalism can be provided and chosen as our official ideal language. In both cases we could somehow avoid to commit ourselves to bare particulars.

It seems to me that a large part of Bergmann's philosophy can be seen as devoted to put these claims to shame. He spent a lot of time to show that both different readings and alternative formalisms dismiss the ontological ground of something which, on the contrary, was perspicuously shown by his interpretation. With his remarks against Frege, for instance, Bergmann was challenging an interpretation of the dependence between predicative and individual terms according to which predicative constants are seen as something which need to be saturated in order to gain ontological meaning²¹. With his criticism of Quine, Bergmann was, among other things, showing the troubles of a formalism which has no constants and only a kind of variables²². In his long analysis of Goodman's writings, finally, Bergmann was dealing with the disappointing ontological consequences of using a different formalism as the ideal language²³.

Since I am not sufficiently familiar with the works of Bergmann's opponents, I am not in a position to judge whether he is truly the winner of all

²⁰ I share this conclusion with Oaklander, whose essay was for me very instructive: cf. Oaklander, 1977, especially pp. 482-487. For a reply by Bergmann, cf. Bergmann, 1977.

²¹ Cf. Bergmann, 1958b; 1956 and 1963 also have some relevance here.

²² Cf. Bergmann, 1950; 1953; 1954c. On these topics cf. also Hochberg, 1957a and 1957b.

²³ Cf. Bergmann, 1967, pp. 12-17, 38-39, 44-45. Cf. also Bergmann, 1952, pp. 115-116; Bergmann, 1954c, pp. 131-132. For what concerns Bergmann's opponents, readers can see Goodman, 1951 and 1956. Moreover, Hausman, 1967 contains a reading of Goodman's ontology from a Bergmannian point of view (notice that this work appeared the same year as *Realism*).

these matches. If Bergmann's criticisms are correct, on the other side, it seems that we should agree with his interpretation of the formalism and so to commit ourselves to bare particulars. At least as long as a further ideal language which can depart from them is found.

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ON BERGMANN'S READING
OF THE "TRACTATUS" ONTOLOGY

Abstract. Three main topics of Bergmann's interpretation of the ontology of the *Tractatus* are thoroughly discussed and critically analysed: a) the idea that *Tractatus* objects, in this respect similar to Bergmann's things, divide into the two categories of bare particulars and characters; b) the semantic consequences, from the point of view of picture theory, of Bergmann's thesis that the nexus of exemplification is to be taken as a constituent of facts; c) Bergmann's claim that in the ontology of the *Tractatus* logical form would be reduced to nought. Some arguments against the reliability of Bergmann's reading are put forward.

In his famous *Introduction* to the *Tractatus*, Bertrand Russell describes the logical question with which Wittgenstein was mainly concerned in his book with the following words: «What relation must one fact (such as a sentence) have to another in order to be capable of being a symbol for that other?» (Russell, 1922, p. x). Bergmann shows that he shares Russell's opinion when he maintains that there is one question that dominates the *Tractatus*, that is, the question: «How does a sentence manage to represent a fact?» (Bergmann, 1963, p. 247). As known, what characterizes Bergmann's standpoint is his ontological turn: if one wants to find out how a sentence manages to represent a fact, one must first find out what there is to be represented, an ontological question indeed. For our present purposes, nothing will be lost if we focus on atomic sentences, on those sentences which in the *Tractatus* are called "elementary propositions": within these limits, the problem which one must cope with is, what does an atomic sentence represent? And if one sticks to the original terminology of the *Tractatus*, the problem can be restated in a familiar guise as follows: what is a state of affairs? (notice that until we come to a certain point, we will ignore the capital distinction between states of affairs and facts or, in Bergmann's jargon, between P-facts – potential facts – and facts).

According to Bergmann's reading of the *Tractatus*, there is a significant agreement between him and Wittgenstein about two fundamental points. First, they both would conceive of facts as complex entities, that is, more specifically, entities which have simple constituents: whether simples ex-

haust the constituents of a fact or not, is a further, different question, which, as we shall shortly see, has opposite answers by the two philosophers. The second pivotal theme over which, according to Bergmann, agreement would reign between him and Wittgenstein, deals with the nature itself of the simple constituents of facts, which he – Bergmann – calls “things” (as opposed to ties and other subsistents, and leaving aside derived characters), and Wittgenstein usually calls “objects” (even though sometimes he too calls them “things”, *Dinge*). In order to clearly illustrate the matter with some of Bergmann’s own examples, let us suppose that we have to do with phenomenal complexes, such as visual coloured spots; in particular, let us suppose that two red round spots occupy two different places of the visual field at the same time. If phenomenal qualities such as those of being red and of being round were the only simples, i.e., the only constituents of the two complexes, then they would yield the same assay and this would entail that the two complexes would be numerically one and the same complex, which is absurd (the presence of a nexus among the constituents of complexes is not at stake here). The problem to be solved is the problem of individuation, of course, and an alternative between two radically different solutions arises here for the ontologist: according to the first one, those momentary entities which are bare particulars are given an ontological status, and the distinction between the assays of the two spots is thus ensured by the purely numerical difference of the bare particulars included in the two spots (more accurately, in their momentary cross sections); according to the second solution, the phenomenal qualities of being at a certain place of the visual field and of being at a certain moment of phenomenal time are introduced into ontology and the two spots can be distinguished simply because they would have different spatial qualitative constituents.

Everyone knows that, faced with the above alternative, Bergmann chooses the first solution; moreover, he explicitly maintains that the same choice was made by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* (and by Stenius as well, in his influential interpretation of the early Wittgenstein’s «glorious failure»). In Bergmann’s unequivocal words: «Wittgenstein, Stenius and I have all chosen the first alternative» (Bergmann, 1963, p. 245). In another passage, Bergmann affirms that «there is no disagreement [between him and Wittgenstein] about those constituents of atomic facts which are things. The only issue are the three subsistents, individuality, universality and exemplification (Bergmann, 1963, p. 253). Leaving aside for the time being the «only issue» Bergmann recognizes, it is of the utmost importance

for our assessment of Bergmann as an interpreter of the *Tractatus* to realize that he attributes to Wittgenstein the conception of states of affairs as constituted by one or more bare particulars and one universal, a character, which may be a property, or a relation, exemplified by the particular, or by the particulars in question, whenever the state of affairs is a fact in the world (in Bergmann's opinion, the ontological status of the nexus of exemplification would be grossly misunderstood by Wittgenstein, but that is quite a different matter, on which we will come later). There can be no doubt about the above attribution on Bergmann's part, and yet it appears as groundless to my eyes. Let us see why.

It is notoriously true that, with regard to crucial points, the text of Wittgenstein's early masterpiece is cryptic in a disarming way. Nevertheless, one can safely say that nowhere in the *Tractatus* the double thesis is stated, first, that objects would divide into two macro-categories, that of the bare particulars and that of the characters, and second, that all states of affairs would uniformly result from their combining by means of the nexus of exemplification. Bergmann's misunderstanding probably derives from the fact that whenever the logical form of linguistic expressions is to be represented, Wittgenstein himself systematically resorts to the symbolism of *Principia Mathematica*. Within that symbolism, atomic sentences are constructed out of non-logical symbols by concatenating an n -adic predicate with n individual constants, and the conception of individual constants as names of particulars and of predicates as names of universals is almost inevitably brought about as a sort of ontological reflection of that syntactic procedure. In my opinion, Wittgenstein's use of the *Principia* symbolism was a use *faute de mieux*, and to a certain extent not without risks for a proper understanding of his own standpoint, because that use ends up hiding the true form of elementary propositions and, accordingly, the true composition of states of affairs.

In fact, there are several deep reasons for ruling out that the ontology of the *Tractatus* be conceived of as an ontology of bare particulars and universals. It seems to me that it is the very starting point of Bergmann's interpretation that is a false start. As we are about to see, the problem of individuation is solved by Wittgenstein according to the second alternative among the two mentioned earlier, that is the alternative which introduces phenomenal places and times as qualitative constituents of visual complexes (and times as qualitative constituents of complexes belonging to any sense realm). A different paper would be needed to satisfactorily argue for the above claim, and hence I will limit myself to show the way which can

lead us to a full comprehension of how the classical problem of the exemplification of universals effectively arises within the *Tractatus* ontological framework. Once that task is accomplished, we will be in a good position to evaluate the main accusation with which Wittgenstein's ontology is charged by Bergmann, that is his denial of the existence of subsistents, and in particular of the nexus of exemplification, what Bergmann calls «his fundamental mistake» (Bergmann, 1963, p. 253).

The phenomenalist view of the *Tractatus* ontology that I have put forward in some more or less recent articles and books can be roughly sketched along the following lines: the stream of phenomena, what is perceived, the given – what the *Tractatus* calls “the world” – is constituted by existing phenomenal complexes (phenomenal facts), which can be analysed in repeatable qualitative parts (qualia, in Goodman's sense)¹. For instance, a minimal concrete visual complex, a colour-spot-moment, can be divided into three qualitative constituents: a phenomenal time, a visual-field place and a phenomenal colour. On the other hand, a mere colour-spot, i.e., an entity lacking any temporal determination, is not a perceivable concrete entity, and neither are, *a fortiori*, its two constituents, the colour and the place in visual space: a phenomenal colour which does not occur at a certain place of visual space and at a certain moment of phenomenal time cannot be found in experience. Notice that this condition of not being perceivable in isolation agrees with the thesis in the *Tractatus* that an object can be given in the world, and can be represented in thought, only as a constituent of states of affairs or complexes. The ultimate components of a colour-spot-moment, i.e., the place of visual space, the colour and the moment of time, are qualitative parts of the concrete complex which enjoy the status of repeatable aspects of the phenomenal stream: they are phenomenal universals. I cannot help quoting a passage which appears to me as a clear confirmation of my interpretation of the nature of objects. It is a comment on section 2.01 of the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein himself made in the early '30s: «‘An atomic fact is a combination of objects (entities, things)’. *Objects etc. is here used for such things as a colour, a point in visual space etc.*: see also above, a word has no sense except in a proposition»². Conversely, an existing minimal complex, an obtaining state of affairs, in which the quale of red occurs as a constituent is a concrete instance of that abstract universal which is the quale of red. Similarly, two simultaneously existing colour-spot-moments are two different concrete instances of that

¹ Cf. Goodman, 1951.

² Wittgenstein, 1980, p. 120, my italics.

one and the same temporal quale which is a constituent of both of them; and two successive colour-spot-moments in the same place of visual space are two different concrete instances of that one and the same spatial quale which, again, is a constituent of both of them (the two complexes can possibly, but not necessarily, be two instances of one and the same colour quale).

Within this sort of atomism of qualities, the ontological distinction between qualia/objects, on the one hand, and minimal concrete complexes / states of affairs on the other, can be clearly framed. Existence can be predicated only of a minimal concrete complex or state of affairs, and amounts to the actual realisation of the combination of its qualitative constituents. Notice that the way in which a certain number of qualia are connected together within a complex or state of affairs, their way of being together within the complex, is not to be assimilated with a relation proper. For example, the colour red, a visual place *l* and a time *t* «hängen ineinander», fit into one another (Wittgenstein, 1922, 2.032) within the colour-spot-moment that they constitute, as do links in a chain, in the terms of Wittgenstein's favourite metaphor so sharply criticized by Bergmann. As Wittgenstein explains in a passage from the *Philosophische Bemerkungen*, which, in my opinion, expounds on the view of the *Tractatus*:

The forms colour and visual space permeate one another. It is clear that there isn't a relation of 'being situated' which would hold between a colour and a position, in which it 'was situated'. There is no intermediate between colour and space. Colour and space saturate one another. And the way they permeate one another makes up the visual field. (Wittgenstein, 1964, § 207)

Moreover, in the comment to section 2.01 from the *Cambridge Lectures 1930-32* which I have already quoted in part, we find him making exactly the same point when he adds that: «Objects also include relations; a state of affairs is not two things connected by a relation: 'things' and 'relation' are at the same level. The objects hang as it were in a chain» (*pace* Hintikka and Hintikka, this passage does not support the view that relations are to be included among objects but, on the contrary, puts forward the claim that no relation proper connects objects in a state of affairs or complex)³.

Once that the repeatable qualitative aspects of the totality of the given are taken as the ultimate constituents of the existing complexes forming that totality, of the facts forming the phenomenal world, they are released from any dependence on the circumstance that this or that configuration of

³ Wittgenstein, 1980, p. 120, and Hintikka – Hintikka, 1986.

the phenomenal world is the case, and even from any dependence on the more generic circumstance that at least one instance of each one of them occurs in the actual phenomenal world: they «subsist independently of what is the case». The role of elements of representation is assigned to qualia: a system of representation of the given is adopted by means of which the stream of phenomena is analysed in terms of ever changing combinations of fixed repeatable qualitative units. Substantiality of objects, explained along these lines, matches their semantic role of *Bedeutungen* of names. The *Tractarian* clear-cut division between the semantic sphere and the empirical sphere – that of the existence of concrete phenomenal complexes – is guaranteed by the abstract nature of qualia, and the strict restriction of existence to minimal concrete complexes or states of affairs rules out any further level of existence, besides and beyond that of phenomenal facts.

The clarification of some sections of the *Tractatus* which up to now have remained obscure, and which are crucial for my present purposes, smoothly springs from the conception of objects outlined above⁴. Take section 2.0232: «In a manner of speaking, objects are colourless» (and he could have added that they are not in space and are timeless as well). No doubt, a repeatable phenomenal quality is colourless, and for exactly the same reasons has no location in visual space or in time: a quale, precisely because of its nature as an abstract entity, has neither colour nor position in phenomenal space and time. Only those concrete complexes that have any one of the phenomenal qualities of colour among their constituents are coloured, and only those concrete coloured complexes that have, e.g., the quale of red among their constituents are red. This is the point of the immediately preceding section 2.0231, where Wittgenstein states that material properties of the world are produced only by the configuration of objects and are represented only by propositions, not denoted by names. For example, that a certain place *l* of visual space and a certain moment of phenomenal time *t* are combined with red, is a material property of the phenomenal world, which is depicted by the corresponding elementary

⁴ I will skip any reference to the theme of simplicity of objects (Wittgenstein, 1922, 2.02) except for the following remark: qualia are simple in the sense that they are minimal distinguished qualitative parts of experience. This characterization leaves open the question of the choice of the ultimate qualitative components of the stream of phenomena (for instance, shades of colours or degrees of their components, e.g., brightness and chroma), a typical problem which can be dealt with only at the level of the application of logic.

proposition which asserts the existence of the colour-spot-moment (state of affairs or complex) whose constituents are the three qualia: red, place *l* and time *t*. To put it all in a nutshell, objects *do not have* any colour, although some of them *are* colours, *do not occupy* any visual place, although some of them *are* visual places, *do not have* any position in phenomenal time, although some of them *are* phenomenal times, i.e., in Russell's jargon, moments of private time. On the other hand, those complexes which have a spatial quale among their constituents do have a spatial location and likewise all those complexes which have a temporal quale among their constituents (all concrete complexes) do have a position in time.

We now come to section 2.0251, which reads: «Space, time and colour (being coloured) are forms of objects»⁵. In order to achieve a satisfactory explanation of this section, it is helpful to begin with the notion of the form of an object. The common form of all objects is to be understood as their capability to combine with other objects in those broader structures which are states of affairs or complexes (Wittgenstein, 1922, 2.0141). Wittgenstein, however, also speaks of the form of a given object *o* in such a way that it can be legitimately described as the set of all specific combinations with other objects which the object *o* can enter into. With reference to the latter, specific notion of form, one can say that some objects are endowed with the same logical form, whereas others differ in form. For example, the quale of red can combine with every place in visual space and with every moment in phenomenal time, and the quale of green can occur exactly in the same combinations: thus phenomenal red and green do have the same form; by contrast, the pitch of a phenomenal sound, which is a quale, a repeatable aspect of auditory complexes, can combine with no place of visual space (with no spatial quale) and therefore has a form which is different from the one which is common to red and green.

Enough evidence is now available to account for the statement that colour, space and time are forms of objects, a statement which, if correctly construed, proves how far the *Tractatus* ontology actually is from Bergmann's interpretative schema. We saw that being coloured is a property that is enjoyed by all those concrete complexes which have a colour quale among their constituents; thus one can reasonably conclude that colour is the form of those objects which, by combining with other objects, yield coloured complexes, and this amounts to saying that it is the form which is

⁵ I will skip here some important details concerning the phrase "being coloured", which has been erroneously taken by the English translators of the *Tractatus* as a correct translation of the original "Färbigkeit".

common to the repeatable phenomenal qualities of red, green, yellow and so on (common to all colour qualia). The thesis that colour is a form of objects can be restated by saying that the concept *colour* is a formal concept, which is represented by means of a variable, the variable “colour”, whose values are the qualia of red, green, yellow etc.: in other words, it is a category of objects which collects together all objects enjoying the same combinatorial possibilities or, more specifically, the category including all those objects which can combine with spatial and temporal qualia to generate complexes. Similarly, space is the form of those objects which, by combining with other objects, yield phenomenal spatial complexes, i.e., the formal concept under which every visual-field place falls. Lastly, time is the form of those objects which, by combining with other objects, yield phenomenal temporal complexes, i.e., the formal concept under which every moment of phenomenal time falls (here I am overlooking the interesting question as to the true nature – either absolute or relative – of the locations in visual space and of the positions in phenomenal time, a problem which, certainly not by chance, Wittgenstein had to be coping with in his writings of the early '30s).

Although the favourable textual evidence is meager, we can add that even pitch, tone, hardness, phenomenal warmth, etc. should be numbered among the forms of objects, and hence among the formal concepts into which qualia split up. Furthermore, formal categories, less general than that of object but more general than those of space, time, colour, pitch, tone, hardness, warmth, could be used to classify objects under the various sense realms: in this vein, the category of visual objects would include both spatial and colour qualia, the category of auditory objects would include the qualia of pitch, tone, etc., the category of tactile objects the qualia of hardness, warmth, etc., and similarly for the category of olfactory objects (smells) and for the category of gustatory objects (flavours).

In conclusion, objects have different specific forms but, in a general sense, they are all on a par insofar as they all are combinatorial entities, whose possibilities of combination, in Wittgenstein's words, «are written into them». No trace of the sub-categorical opposition between bare particulars and characters is to be found in the *Tractatus* and, as a consequence, the problem of exemplification takes a shape which is totally different from that which characterizes an ontology *à la* Bergmann: a concrete complex or state of affairs plays the role of being an instance of each one of the qualia which are its constituents. More rigorously, being an instance of a quale is the converse relation of being a constituent of a concrete complex.

It goes without saying that, if Bergmann had realized the true nature of the *Tractatus* ontology, he could have directed many of the criticisms he later moved against Goodman's phenomenalistic system of *The Structure of Appearance* against the *Tractatus* itself. In particular, he would have classified the *Tractatus* ontology among those ontologies which, through the replacement of facts with clusters of homogeneous entities, structurally lead to reism. In my opinion, that would have been a highly questionable conclusion: it could reasonably be argued that it is the *Tractatus* that proves that the conception of complexes as constituted by phenomenal universals does not necessarily implies the abandonment of the notion of a fact and the endorsement of reism. But this is not the whole story. There is a further, deeper problem which is hidden beneath Bergmann's accusation to Wittgenstein of having overlooked the existence of that fundamental subsistent which is the nexus of exemplification: it is a problem which leads us to the root of the opposition between the two philosophers, which, in my opinion, is a semantic opposition, well before being an ontological one. Let me briefly dwell on this topic.

Let us forget, for a moment, what we have said so far regarding the mistaken attribution to the *Tractatus* ontology of the division of objects into the two macro-categories of bare particulars and characters and, for the sake of argument, let us assume that that partition holds for the *Tractatus* ontology as well. Accordingly, let us assume that elementary propositions are modelled on the atomic sentences of the first order predicate calculus. In Bergmann's view, an atomic sentence like "*Fa*" represents a fact if and only if the bare particular denoted by the individual constant "*a*" exemplifies the character denoted by the predicative letter "*F*". Now, saying that "*Fa*" represents a fact is tantamount to saying that "*Fa*" is true, and hence one is entitled to draw the conclusion that the nexus of exemplification occurs as a constituent of what the atomic sentence represents, *only on condition that the sentence is true*. The nexus of exemplification, therefore, accounts not for predication in general, but for true predication. If "*Fa*" is false, it either represents nothing or represents an entity which is different from the fact that it represents if true, that is a P-fact, and the difference lies precisely in the non occurrence of exemplification as a constituent of the latter: for, if "*Fa*" is false, the bare particular denoted by "*a*" does not exemplify the character denoted by "*F*" and, by hypothesis, exemplification is a constituent of the fact that "*Fa*" would represent if it were true.

Let us come back to the *Tractatus*, now, assuming that its ontology is that which Bergmann takes it to be. When he charges Wittgenstein with having overlooked the existence of that subsistent which is exemplification, he clearly does not realize that the nexus linking objects in a state of affairs, that Wittgenstein, like Bergmann, accurately distinguishes from any relation proper, i.e., from any relational character, plays its role of glue not only when states of affairs obtain, when they are facts, but even when they do not obtain and are merely possible combinations of objects. The nexus, that Wittgenstein compares to that which holds the links of a chain together, and that Bergmann sees as substantially reduced to nothing, is always the same, quite independently of the further circumstance that the state of affairs obtains or not. The state of affairs that an elementary proposition like “*Fa*” represents is, from the semantic point of view, the sense of the proposition, and that sense is one and the same, both in the case the proposition is true and in the case it is false. Nothing could be more extraneous to the picture theory than the idea that what the sense of a proposition is would depend on the truth-value of the proposition, but this is the very conclusion to which Bergmann’s conception of exemplification leads, if its semantic implications are followed out strictly. As known, within the framework of the *Tractatus* a clear-cut distinction between states of affairs and facts is set forth in terms of the opposition between mere possibility and actuality. The principles of the semantic theory of the *Tractatus*, however, do not allow that difference to be accounted for by introducing a further constituent into facts, which would not occur in non-obtaining states of affairs: actuality, so to speak, attaches to states of affairs from the outside.

As we have seen, according to Bergmann, states of affairs would be conceived of by Wittgenstein in terms of bare particulars and characters which the former exemplify, but at the same time the *Tractatus* conception would be undermined by the failure to recognize the ontological status of the nexus of exemplification. The reduction of exemplification to an internal relation, the general thesis of the ineffability of the domain of internal properties and relations and the implicit theoretical transition from being ineffable to being nothing would be, in Bergmann’s opinion, the steps which inevitably lead to the reduction of exemplification to nought. The treatment of the nexus of exemplification, however, is but a particular case of a general ontological strategy. It is what Wittgenstein calls “logical form”, and Bergmann calls “the world’s form”, that would be reduced to nothing in the *Tractatus* ontology, in the sense that no ontological status

would be accorded to it: «that is the fatal flaw» (Bergmann, 1961, p. 228). To spell out the reasons backing Bergmann's accusation is by no means an easy task because he is not always clear in presenting his theses. Moreover, there are several passages specially devoted to the discussion of Wittgenstein's conception of logical form that witness a deep misunderstanding on Bergmann's part of certain crucial aspects of that conception. Here is a couple of examples of those misunderstandings.

In criticizing the idea that the relation between an individual and a character that the former exemplifies is an internal relation, and that it belongs to the same logical sphere to which the properties of being a tautology, or being a necessary truth, belong (the conflation of the domain of possibility₁ and of necessity₂), Bergmann affirms that «the mistake is facilitated by the equally confused idea that if an internal relation obtains between two entities, then the sentence expressing this fact is a tautology» (Bergmann, 1963, p. 256). It is well known that, according to the *Tractatus*, tautologies are those truth-functions of given elementary propositions which express agreement with all the truth-possibilities of the latter, and which, for that very reason, are true for every assignment of truth-values to them. Since tautologies are generated by the same uniform mechanism that generates a new sense from the sense of given elementary propositions, that is, the expression either of agreement or of disagreement with each one of the truth-possibilities of those elementary propositions, they are “limiting cases” of meaningful propositions. But a sentence asserting the obtaining of an internal relation between two entities would never be a tautology in the above sense of “tautology”, which is the sole official sense that that word has in the *Tractatus*. Tautologies are *sinnlos*, because they lack any informative content, not because they try to say what can only be shown, whereas pseudo-sentence that try to assert what can only be shown, for instance the obtaining of an internal relation, are *unsinnig*, nonsensical, not *sinnlos* (senseless, devoid of sense).

Even when he characterizes Wittgenstein's notion of a tautology by saying that «a tautology [...] represents a necessary₂ fact», Bergmann betrays one of the pivotal principle of the *Tractatus* philosophy of logic, i.e., the thesis that there are no logical facts, and thus, no necessary facts at all (Bergmann, 1963, pp. 255-256). That point can be summed up as follows: according to the *Tractatus*, there are no logically compound situations (for instance those which are depicted by propositions whose logical form is displayed by the formula of sentential calculus $p \vee \neg p$), which exist necessarily, that is, which exist in every possible world. A complex proposition

of the form $p \vee \neg p$, far from depicting a logically necessary compound fact, is true in every possible world because, given any possible world m , either the state of affairs depicted by the elementary proposition p contingently obtains in m , or it, always contingently, does not. To say that it is a formal (logical) property of the world that, given any state of affairs S , either S obtains in it or S does not, is tantamount to saying that that is a property the actual world shares with all other possible worlds. Contrary to Bergmann's presentation of Wittgenstein's views, a tautology like "either it is raining or it is not raining" does not represent a purported necessary fact: a tautology does not represent anything, it lacks descriptive content, it is *sinnlos*, but its tautologousness shows that the world enjoys a certain formal property.

When he denies that metalogical properties of propositions, metalogical relations between the latter, and corresponding formal properties of the world, can be object of meaningful assertion on the speaker's part, and accordingly he maintains that they are ineffable, Wittgenstein is not implying that there is nothing concerning the world that is displayed by the tautologousness of logical laws. On the contrary, as he himself explicitly states, «it is clear that something about the world must be indicated by the fact that certain combinations of symbols [...] are tautologies. This contains the decisive point» (Wittgenstein, 1922, 6.124). The domain of the ineffable does not coincide with the unreachable, and it is presented to an ideal speaker because an ideal language would show it: that holds, for instance, of the formal properties of the world, i.e., of the properties that the actual world shares with all other possible worlds. To maintain, as Wittgenstein does, that nothing can be said sensibly on the form of the world does not mean, in and by itself, that no ontological status can be recognized to the domain of forms, even if one adopts Bergmann's methodological principle according to which everything that is presented to us has ontological status (either it exists or it subsists, as the world's form does). In the terms of a metaphor often employed by Wittgenstein, forms are susceptible of vision in an aptly regimented language, or, as he expresses himself, in a perspicuous notation. If it is true that forms in the *Tractatus* do not constitute a separate ontological domain, a realm of platonic entities, arguments other than those founded simply on the purported equivalence between ineffability and lacking any ontological status are needed to arrive at the conclusion that even an Aristotelian conception of forms is ruled out by the *Tractatus* principles.

Skipping the problem of giving a general characterization of the *Tractatus* notion of possibility and of its ontological status, I want to dwell, in conclusion, upon a particular aspect of it, that Bergmann puts in relief when he discusses and criticizes Wittgenstein's conception of the logical form of the world. It deals with the very notion of a possible world and with the pivotal thesis that «the logic of our world is that of all possible worlds», a view that, according to Bergmann, was endorsed by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* and that, in his opinion, is «patently false» (cf. Bergmann, 1960, pp. 56-57). However, one cannot hope to attain a fair assessment of the accusation moved by Bergmann against Wittgenstein, if one does not make previously clear how, and to what extent, Leibniz's notion of a possible world applies to the ontology of the *Tractatus*: this is the task I am going to accomplish now.

It is helpful to start from the notion of logical space, a key-notion which, notwithstanding its importance, is nowhere defined in the *Tractatus* but occurs for the first time, without the slightest explanation, in section 1.13: «The facts in logical space are the world». For our purposes, it is worth noting that the notion of logical space appears in several different guises within the text of the *Tractatus*, first of all in the guise of the form of the world. In section 2.013, Wittgenstein says that «each thing is, as it were, in a space of possible states of affairs»: it is the set of those states of affairs of which an object *o* is a component, that can be metaphorically described as a space where the object is placed. The general notion of logical space can be straightforwardly derived from that of the space where an object is placed: it simply is the set-theoretical union of the family to which the single spaces associated to each object belong, and therefore is the totality of states of affairs. Since the notion of logical space is substantially metaphorical, let us unpack the metaphor by going into the analogy between physical space and logical space. Physical space can be conceived of as the totality of physical places, which can be either filled up by bodies, by certain amounts of matter, or remain empty. By analogy, logical space is the totality of logical places, where “logical place” is to be taken as meaning: state of affairs, possible combination of objects. Just as a body fills an empty portion of physical space, a physical place, the obtaining of a state of affairs fills up an empty portion of logical space, a logical place. In Wittgenstein's words: «In geometry and logic alike a place is a possibility: something can exist in it» (Wittgenstein, 1922, 3.411). In the terms of the metaphor, the notion of a configuration of the obtaining and non-obtaining of states of affairs corresponds to the notion

of a distribution of matter throughout physical space, that is, to the idea of bodies being distributed throughout physical space, filling up some places and leaving others empty. The states of affairs which do not obtain are the logical places which are left empty, whereas the obtaining ones are the logical places which are filled up by matter: leaving the metaphor aside, what is either assigned or not to each single member of the totality of states of affairs is nothing but existence.

Since the combinatorial potential of an object is «written into it», is constitutive of its identity, the totality of states of affairs, of the possible combinations of objects, is given once that the totality of objects is given. Thus logical space is as invariant and unalterable as objects are, in perfect agreement with the ancient atomistic conception of atoms and space as the sole immutable metaphysical principles of any reality. Once that the fixed domain of objects is given, and with it the equally stable logical space, the actual world can be metaphorically identified with the actual distribution of matter throughout logical space, or literally, with the actual configuration of the obtaining and non-obtaining of states of affairs (with what Wittgenstein calls «reality»). Every other possible world is generated by varying that configuration, that is, by assuming that some states of affairs, obtaining in fact, do not obtain, or that some states of affairs, non obtaining in fact, do obtain, or both. More explicitly, if logical space is given, the totality of the possible configurations of the obtaining and non-obtaining of states of affairs, i.e., the totality of possible worlds, in the sole sense that Leibniz's expression can be endowed with in the ontological framework of the *Tractatus*, is generated by applying two fundamental logical principles: a) for any given state of affairs *S*, either *S* obtains or *S* does not (Principle of the Excluded Middle); b) for no state of affairs *S*, *S* obtains and *S* does not obtain (Principle of Non-Contradiction). The transition from the domain of objects to logical space, and from logical space to the totality of possible worlds, is thus made crystal clear: knowledge of objects, of logical space and of the totality of possible worlds constitutes the semantic competence of every speaker of any language such that the names belonging to its vocabulary have those objects as their meanings, and the elementary propositions licensed by its syntax have the elements of logical space as their senses.

The statement that the tautologousness of a proposition like “either it is raining or it is not raining” displays a formal property of the world, that is, a property the actual world shares with every other possible world, can be easily understood in the light of the above explanation: the fact that the

disjunction is true does not depend on which one, among the possible configurations of the obtaining and non-obtaining of states of affairs, is actually the case, because, by the very method by means of which possible worlds are constructed out of logical space, in every possible world either the state of affairs depicted by “it is raining” obtains or it does not (for the sake of argument, we are assuming that the sentence “it is raining” is an elementary one). Since the same holds of every instance of the formula $p \vee \neg p$, the conclusion can be safely drawn that the tautologousness of “either it is raining or it is not raining” shows the formal property of the world that, for every state of affairs *S*, either *S* obtains or it does not.

Now let us come back to Bergmann’s accusation. It seems to me that there is a significant similarity between Wittgenstein’s notion of logical space and Bergmann’s notion of form₁, on the one hand, and between Wittgenstein’s notion of the totality of configurations of the obtaining and non-obtaining of states of affairs and Bergmann’s notion of form₂, on the other. Nonetheless, a first important difference concerns the latter pair of notions. In characterizing the idea of a possible world as it can be found in the *Tractatus*, no appeal is made to the notion of logically compound situations which would be generated by combining states of affairs by means of a sort of logical glue. Take, for example, the sentence “it is raining and it is cold”: according to the *Tractatus*, there is no purported logically compound situation which would be depicted by that conjunction. The pictorial content of the latter is exhausted by that of the two (by hypothesis) elementary propositions which occur as conjuncts, and the understanding of that conjunction simply calls for the knowledge of the states of affairs depicted, respectively, by “it is raining” and by “it is cold”, together with the knowledge of the truth-conditions of a conjunction in general, that is, of the rule that links the truth-value of a conjunction to the truth-values of its conjuncts. If logically compound situations have no room in the ontology of the *Tractatus*, no necessary situation can be taken as depicted by tautologies, but this is not equivalent to maintaining, as Bergmann claims, that logical form is nought.

There is a second crucial difference between Bergmann’s and Wittgenstein’s views concerning the notion of a possible world. Bergmann does not realize that, according to the *Tractatus*, a possible world is nothing but a configuration of the obtaining and non-obtaining of states of affairs, which is constructed out of logical space by means of the two logical principles mentioned above. In trying to characterize a “respectable” notion, he maintains that every logical calculus can be conceived of as describing a

possible world, even a calculus in which the formula $p \vee \neg p$ is not a formal theorem and, therefore, is not a valid formula according to the interpretation of the connectives. As a consequence, the thesis that the logic of our world is that of all possible worlds would result in a falsity because of the presence of interpretations of formulae like $p \vee \neg p$ in which they turn out to be false. Bergmann explicitly rejects «an absolutist conception of analyticity», which he attributes to Wittgenstein: in his opinion, “there is nothing logical about logic». ⁶ As known, the roots of Wittgenstein’s absolute notion of analyticity are very deep and are intertwined with his conception of the limits of language and thought. But I want to make a more specific point here. Let us assume von Wright’s standpoint in extracting a modal system from the *Tractatus* ⁷. As known, that system is equivalent to the system S5 and in it one can prove that every necessary truth is necessarily so and that every possible truth is necessarily so. According to our reconstruction, the conclusion that every-thing about logic is logical, diametrically opposite to Bergmann’s view-point, appears as a mere corollary of the way in which possible worlds are constructed out of logical space in the *Tractatus*.

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⁶ Bergmann, 1960, p. 57; and Bergmann, 1961, p. 233.

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COMPLEXES, NEXUS, AND FUNCTIONS THE MIDDLE AND THE LATE BERGMANN

Abstract. The Middle Bergmann advocates complex-ontologies with nexus and rejects function ontologies. He takes functions and nexus to be alternatives. Thus the Late Bergmann seems to have changed sides since entities called functions are pivotal in his ontology. However, it turns out that the functions the Late Bergmann accepts are different from the functions the Middle Bergmann rejects. Nevertheless, the functions of the Late Bergmann are not nexus though they bear the same names and Bergmann's assay of complexes has changed radically. The complexes of the Late Bergmann are complexes without nexus. Their cores are held together by diversity which consists of nothing but the diverse entities and hence needs no connector to form a complex.

There are at least two turning points in the development of Bergmann's ontology. The first is the introduction of facts as the only category of complexes, the second the introduction of a second category of complexes (circumstances). Before the first turning point Bergmann had only simple entities in his ontology. I refer to the Bergmann between the first and the second turning point as the Middle Bergmann and to the Bergmann after the second turning point as the Late Bergmann. Pivotal to the Middle Bergmann are facts and nexus. But there were nexus before in his ontology. Now, facts having been introduced, nexus are taken to be indispensable for facts as complexes. Nexus are supposed to ground complexes by tying their constituents together. Bergmann takes nexus to be additional constituents which nevertheless ground the togetherness of all the constituents of a complex. The Middle Bergmann holds that all complexes are facts and that to acknowledge nexus and to acknowledge facts entail each other. It follows that those ontologists who do not acknowledge nexus do not have genuine complexes in their ontologies. Bergmann contrasts ontologies with facts (fact ontologies) and ontologies with things only, i.e., with simple entities only, also called by him "reistic ontologies". He equivalently characterises reistic ontologies also as those without nexus. The Early Bergmann, i.e., the Bergmann before the first turning point, defies the equivalence as he advocates nexus but acknowledges only simple entities. The equivalence is used by Bergmann to argue that a given ontology if it

doesn't have nexus can have only simple entities. He need not argue this way against Brentano who exerts all his ingenuity to avoid complexity and to be able to countenance only things (*Dinge*). But Bergmann also refers to the lack of a nexus in Meinong's objectives to argue that objectives though they closely resemble facts must be simple and cannot be complexes as Meinong claims.

According to Bergmann's diagnosis all traditional ontologies are reistic. They try to ground complexity on functions in Frege's sense. Bergmann thus suggests that when Frege took the notion of function from mathematics, explicated it ontologically and generalised in with respect to all kinds of having attributes was quite traditional and fixed a core principle of the mainly Aristotelian ontological tradition. That can be extended also to analytical philosophers who draw on set theory and make ample use of functions. What Bergmann emphasises with respect to function ontologies is that «some entities are as one says "coordinated" to some others, without any connotation whatsoever of the one being "in" the others, being either a constituent or a part or a component of it» (Bergmann, 1967, p. 7). Functions map arguments on a value. In contrast to nexus which tie the constituents of a complex together, functions do not imply that their values consist of their arguments. Thus the values could be simple. The traditional view of complexity is mostly genetic. The whole is taken to arise or result from its constituents without the assumption that the constituents are present in the whole. According to Aristotle they are definitely not present in the whole. When they become present the whole disintegrates. Bergmann reconstructs the reistic ontologies in terms of a function gamma and the non-reistic or fact ontologies in terms of a nexus epsilon. However, there is a twist about gamma. Bergmann describes it as a function mistaken for a nexus. He thinks that the reistic tradition does not clearly distinguish between things and facts and that the traditional category of substance is a mixture of thing and fact¹. In the last part of *Realism* (1967) dealing with Meinong Bergmann represents Meinong as a gamma ontologist and thus as a function ontologist in Frege's sense.

The Middle Bergmann clearly and vehemently advocates nexus and rejects functions in ontology, particularly in his book *Realism*. He finds the mapping of arguments on functions and its ontological grounds incomprehensible. Moreover, in *Realism* it goes without saying that being a nexus and being a function are incompatible. It comes therefore as a surprise or even a shock for readers and followers of the earlier book to meet in Berg-

¹ Cf. Bergmann, 1964, p. 181.

mann's Late ontology entities which are called "functions". Not only are functions admitted, it even turns out that most of the entities of the category of nexus in the ontology of the Middle Bergmann are categorised in the *New Foundations of Ontology* (1992) as functions. The first choice of a designation for this category introduced in the *New Foundations* is "makers" and this term is used on the first 130 pages. But then it is explained that the designation is anthropomorphic. That seems to me a concealed indication and recognition that the conception of nexus, which in the Middle Bergmann is pivotal, is anthropomorphic and it is substituted by the more technically sounding word "function". Nexus in the middle ontology make complexes, i.e., facts, by tying their constituents together. Bergmann spares no effort to make clear that the existence of the constituents is not sufficient for a complex to exist.

No apology is offered to the readers and followers of *Realism* for reclassifying "nexus" as "functions". However, they are soothed by the explanation that the functions are not Fregean functions (F-functions) but Meinongian functions (M-functions). Like in *Realism* Fregean functions are rejected. The objection to them is also similar. Bergmann accuses Frege of relationism². His objection to relationism is that it does not make sense for the function to determine its value without being present in it. Now the *New Foundations* is not Bergmann's last word. The term "M-functions" is in the latest papers substituted by that of "subdeterminates" which has not exactly the same extension yet. It seems that the transition from nexus to M-functions is an attempt to adopt Meinong's assay of complexes. The transition is also an implicit apology to and a compensation for Meinong to whom he wrongly attributed in *Realism* F-functions and complexes which on closer scrutiny turn out to be simple.

Obviously, Bergmann did not change the sides of *Realism*. He did not go over from fact to function ontologies. But something happened which should be as shocking for the reader of *Realism*. Though Bergmann continues to call functions also "nexus" or "ties" it turns out rather clearly that the nexus now termed "functions" are no longer nexus. If one takes one of his definitions of reism in *Realism* seriously, one would have to classify the Late Bergmann as a reist. "Reism" is defined there by the statement: "there are no nexus". The Late Bergmann never makes his dropping of the nexus clear but it is definitely implied by what he says. An official innovation of the Late Bergmann is the category of circumstance. Circumstances are complexes without nexus. All circumstance have two constitu-

² Cf. Bergmann, 1992, p. 125.

ents and are therefore also called “diads”. The two constituents go together *per se* and do not need a nexus to be tied together. There are diads of diversity which consists of any two entities which are either things, facts, or circumstances. There are diads of meaning uniting a mental act and its intention and there are diads of elementhood which unite an element and its class. The introduction of the category of circumstances entailed that two basic tenets of the Middle Bergmann are no longer true: all complexes are facts, and all complexes are tied together by a nexus. It does not entail that there are no nexus and that facts are not tied together by nexus. While there are no nexus in circumstances, there might still be nexus in facts. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that complexity is no longer dependent on nexus in the ontology of the Late Bergmann. Looking more closely at the ontological assay of facts of the Middle Bergmann, however, it turns out that there is already a component of the togetherness of facts which is not based on a nexus namely the connection of the nexus itself with the fact. Bergmann argues that nexus are dependent and therefore need no additional nexus to be connected. That is his way of avoiding Bradley’s regress. Bradley had objected to complexes tied together by external relations that the tying relation needs to be tied to what it ties together and therefore requires another external relation for that task which starts an infinite regress. According to Bergmann the dependence of nexus is essential with all subsistents. Nexus is a subcategory of the category of subsistents. The Middle Bergmann contrasts the dependence of subsistents to the independence of things and facts. He defines the independence of the latter by their need of nexus to form a complex.

I don’t think that Bergmann’s way of avoiding Bradley’s regress fails. But it leads into another severe problem which may have caused among other the changes in Bergmann’s ontology to the late system, though Bergmann does not address it explicitly. I suspect that he felt the pressure of the question: on what entity is a nexus which connects things *a* and *b* dependent? Obviously, not from *a* or on *b* but rather on *a* and *b* together. Now, *a* and *b* are supposed not to be together in the respective fact apart from the connecting done by the nexus. The dependence of the nexus is highly questionable since the entity on which it could depend is lacking. In the ontology of the Late Bergmann that problem is solved. An entity is furnished on which a nexus, or rather what was in the Middle Bergmann a nexus, depends and that dependence again grounds the connection between the (former) nexus and the entity on which it depends. The latter belongs to the category of circumstances. However, the former no longer plays the

role of nexus since it is connected to the circumstance as a whole and not to its constituents. These constituents are internally connected without a connector, without the need of a connector. They are connected “per se”, as Bergmann says. The solution of the problem of the dependence of the nexus costs it its role as nexus.

The nexus of the Middle Bergmann are exemplification, conjunction, disjunction and the meaning nexus. Exemplification is characterised as the fundamental nexus. It connects particulars and universals into atomic facts. The other nexus connect facts and thus form molecular facts. Entities with the same names as the nexus reappear in the ontology of the Late Bergmann. They are collected in the category of functions. What role do they play there if don’t play the role of nexus? What has been said about their dependence in the late ontology implies that its ontological assay of facts is different. In the Late Bergmann there are two kinds of complexes, facts and circumstances, as was mentioned already. Circumstances have no nexus nor any other connector. But the same is to a large extent true also of the facts. The universals and particulars in atomic facts and the facts in molecular facts are connected *per se* in diads of diversity. That means that any fact contains a diad of diversity. To this diad, to this circumstance “clings” a function, as Bergmann says, i.e., it is connected to the circumstance by its dependence. The core of any fact in the ontology of the Late Bergmann is a diad of diversity and thus a circumstance. Hence, one can say that what according to the Late Bergmann holds the world together is mainly diversity. And that togetherness is a connection without nexus, without connector.

The ontological role the Late Bergmann assigns to functions is to ground certain differences between facts, e.g., that between a fact of a possession of a property by a certain individual and a conjunctive fact. Or the difference between a conjunctive and a disjunctive fact which may have the same constituent facts. The functions thus ground certain conspicuous characters which facts exhibit. Such characters are lacking with circumstances. It should be mentioned that the meaning nexus is not turned into a function. Rather it is no longer an entity in the Late Bergmann. The facts with the meaning nexus in the Middle Bergmann are substituted by diads of meaning each consisting of a universals and a fact in the Late Bergmann. The universal is exemplified by a mental act and the fact is that act’s intention. The Late Bergmann does not officially give up nexus. He even uses the word “tie” which is a synonym for “nexus” in *Realism* for functions. But clearly the functions do not play the role of nexus in his

ontological assay of facts. And he confirms that by noting that all functions are monadic³. “Monadic” is used customarily with respect to attributes (properties or relations). It means “having in any case only one thing as a bearer”. The opposite is “polyadic”. Relational attributes are polyadic. They have more than one relatum. If nexus were relations then they would be polyadic in that they connect in any case more than one entity. That the functions of the Late Bergmann are monadic cannot but mean that they always have only one entity to cling to. As we saw, the entity the functions cling to are always circumstances, more precisely, they are diads of diversity.

We see that Bergmann did not change the sides of the opposition established by the Middle Bergmann. He did not become a function ontologist and did not cease to be a fact ontologist. There are still facts in the Late Bergmann and there is a clear distinction between things and facts and between thing and complexes. But another change did occur which would have been as unacceptable for the Middle Bergmann: the conception of the complex whose constituents are tied together by a nexus has been dropped. Even facts are no longer complexes tied together by a connector. I am convinced that Bergmann was right to give up the conception of complexes with nexus, with connectors which tie the constituents together. It leads into difficulties. I do not mean Bradley’s overrated regress. Another difficulty comes to surface in Bergmann’s book *Realism*⁴. Bergmann writes that the fact that a thing has a certain quality is the same as the circumstance that the nexus of exemplification actually connects the thing and the quality. The word “circumstance” does not refer in this context to the category of the Late Bergmann. It is not a technical term in *Realism* at all. The most fitting of the categories of the Middle Bergmann would be that of fact. However, if that circumstance were a fact it would start an infinite regress. Bergmann blocks it by the same move by which he blocks Bradley’s regress namely by categorizing exemplification not as a relational universal but as a nexus and hence as a mere subsistent. And the rules of categorial combination of the middle ontology exclude subsistents as relata of relational facts. The difficulty is that the talk of a connector and its connecting is essential to the middle ontology but it cannot be ontologically unpacked in it. The term “connect” is not meant to refer to a relational universal or any other entity and that the connector (the nexus of exemplification) is an entity does not help either because, as was men-

³ Bergmann, 1992, p. 126.

⁴ Bergmann, 1967, p. 10.

tioned, it is a mere subsistent.

Like the Late Bergmann I do not adopt the conception of complexes connected by a connector but I do not want to suggest that it is a hopeless conception. It seems that Bergmann's move designed to strengthen the conception against Bradley's attack, namely the categorisation of exemplification as a subsistent, actually weakened it. Look at how Grossmann, a student of Bergmann, parries Bradley's attack⁵. Grossmann insists that it is the role of relations to relate. That is why, he argues, they relate without being related and without need to be related to what they relate. He even tries to draw support for his view of relations and complexes by taking Bradley's regress argument to prove that relations obtain between entities without being related to them in turn. Grossmann mostly uses "relate" instead of Bergmann's term "connect". I suppose each of them uses his preferred word in such a way that the two words are synonyms as they are in ordinary use. Presupposing that, one can note important differences between the Middle Bergmann and Grossmann. In Grossmann all relations connect (to use Bergmann's term), in Bergmann only nexus. This is basically true. However, there is a terminological oddity in Bergmann. He acknowledges relational universals and so does Grossmann. Grossmann means by "relations" those relational universals and when I just wrote that in Bergmann only nexus connect I meant the same. But in his book *Realism* Bergmann distinguishes between relational universals and relations and defines a relation as a relational universal together with a connector, i.e., with a nexus. Now, there is no category in the ontology of the Middle Bergmann in which a universal together with a nexus would fit. Hence strictly speaking the so-called relations of *Realism* are non-entities. One thing is clear though: if they were entities those relations would be connectors. Presumably, Bergmann wanted to be able to say like Grossmann that relations relate, that relations connect. That is the customary understanding.

As was mentioned, Grossmann's connectors are universals. That they are relational universals means in Grossmann's ontology that they form facts together with more than one particular or universal. If a relational fact consists of the relation r and two particulars b and c , it is r which connects the fact into an entity, into a fact. What about a non-relational fact such as the fact that the particular b has the property f ? The fact would have b and f as constituents but neither of them is a connector since both are non-relational. Hence, if b and f were all the constituents of the fact it would

⁵ Grossmann, 1983, pp. 166 ff.

lack unity. Without another constituent there would be no connection between the constituents and the additional constituent has to be a relation, i.e., a relational universal. Grossmann assumes that property facts are connected by a relational universal which he calls “exemplification”. He also calls the relation of exemplification a “nexus”⁶. However, that does not conflict with its being a universal as it does in Bergmann. Grossmann’s nexus are merely relational universals which can bridge main categories, i.e., which can obtain between entities of different main categories. A relation such as ‘near’, e.g., holds according to Grossmann between entities of the same category, namely between particulars, which entails that it is not a nexus.

Now, in the ontology of the Middle Bergmann all atomic facts, the non-relational as well as the relational ones are connected by exemplification, in Grossmann’s ontology that is the case only with the non-relational ones. Bergmann’s ontological assay is in correspondence with the view that relations as well as properties are attributes of things and stand in an attribution connection to them. Grossmann’s assay is not. But this view is not ontologically neutral and not a phenomenological datum. Hence it is not inescapable for an ontological assay to be in accordance with that view. Advocates of it might expect to be able to show that Grossmann’s relation of exemplification is superfluous because they presuppose that if it exists it has to accompany all attributes. They would argue that for the relation of exemplification to obtain (e.g., between a particular and a non-relational universal) the exemplification of the exemplification relation is presupposed and that therefore an infinite regress is inevitable. But in Grossmann’s ontology no such regress threatens because relations are not exemplified, i.e., they are not connected by the exemplification relation.

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⁶ Grossmann, 1973, p. 182.

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BERGMANN AND EXEMPLIFICATION*

Abstract. Bergmann's acceptance of a nexus of exemplification has often been criticized with arguments involving Bradley's regress. The same kind of arguments has also been used to refute any realist theory of universals, such as Bergmann's. The paper aims at understanding whether and how Bergmann's views can be defended against such arguments. It is claimed that the case of universals and that of the nexus of exemplification are really different from each other, and an attempt is made at finding out the relationships between Bergmann's doctrine of exemplification and his more general views concerning the nature and the purpose of ontology.

1. *Bergmann and Bradley's regress*

Gustav Bergmann was a forceful opponent of both nominalism and reism. That means that he acknowledged the existence of both universals and subsistents. Among the latter he recognized the existence of nexus, and among nexus that of the nexus of exemplification. The ontologization of exemplification is one of the reasons of Bergmann's renown. Yet it has also been one of the most controversial among his views, since it is usually regarded as an evidence of his somewhat perverse inclination toward reification.

The endorsement of the existence of both universals and exemplification has sometimes been criticized by means of arguments that in some way resemble Bradley's famous regress argument. What the import of Bradley's argument exactly is, is not a question easy to settle. The argument itself has many aspects, has been reconstructed in several ways, and has also been used for very different purposes. No attempt is here being made at providing the correct interpretation, from an exegetical point of

* This paper has a remote ancestor in a talk ("Bradley's Regress, Facts and Universals") I gave at the conference "Early Analytic Metaphysics – Hochberg's Analysis", held at the Université de Genève from 30 June to 2 July 2006. My warm thanks go to the organizer of the conference, Kevin Mulligan, and to Herbert Hochberg, with whom I could profitably discuss about the questions which are here under consideration. Another source of inspiration has been Achille G. Varzi's talk "Universals as *Nomina*" at the workshop "Universali e oggetti astratti" held at the Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane at Firenze on 9 January 2006.

view, of Bradley's argument¹. Rather, reference is made to a family of arguments, as are commonly used in contemporary philosophical literature. The aim of the paper is not one of Bradleyan scholarship, and the so-called regress argument is only considered as an instrument whose employment may turn useful to analyse and understand better Bergmann's views. The attention is focused on the "middle Bergmann", i.e., on the theories put forth approximately in the 1960s, with a particular regard for *Realism. A Critique of Brentano and Meinong* (1967).

2. Universals

Bradley's argument has sometimes been used to support nominalism. The main line of reasoning underlying such a use seems to be that the introduction of universals does not provide any genuine explanatory progress. Let us consider the fact that Socrates is wise. The realist's analysis of such a fact involves the exemplification of the universal *wisdom* by Socrates, so that we can say that Socrates is wise *in virtue of* such an exemplification. No one usually holds that there must be something *in virtue of* which Socrates exemplifies wisdom, because in such a case we would embark upon an endless regress along familiar Bradleyan lines. Some nominalists think that the reasoning concerning the regress can be pushed a step further. Why not say that it so happens that Socrates is wise and that there is nothing *in virtue of* which he is wise? The nominalistic objection is that the introduction of the universal *wisdom* does not allow for any explanatory progress, and that therefore we can stay safely with the primitive and irreducible fact that Socrates is wise.

Bergmann would not have regarded this as a good argument. The point is, from Bergmann's perspective, that the predicate 'wise' clearly has a distinct informative role, to which a universal must correspond on the ontological level. The fact that Socrates is wise undoubtedly differs from the fact that Socrates is, say, generous, and it is a task for ontology to account for such a difference. Universals are the entities that account for such differences; they are, in Bergmann's terminology, the *ontological grounds* of such differences.

Bergmann's ontology is a complex-ontology, i.e., an ontology in which the ontological grounds are to be conceived of as constituents "in" a complex. Let us consider the case of a red spot. The ontological ground of its

¹ For a recent and persuasive account of Bradley's views cf. Candlish, 2007.

being red consists of the universal *redness* and of its being a constituent of a complex (i.e., a fact) whose other constituent is a particular. The assay '*Ra*', where '*R*' stands for the universal *redness* and '*a*' for the bare particular that individuates the spot, perspicuously represents the ontological ground of the spot's being red, whereas a mere proper name such as '*a*' would not be an adequate assay, since it would not allow for the distinction between the case in question and that, say, in which the spot is blue. The fact that a certain spot is red cannot be assayed simply as '*a*', for in that case the same assay should be used even if the spot in question were blue, and then the assay would miss some of the differences which are in the world, i.e., the difference between this spot's being red and this spot's being blue. In other words, something would lack an ontological ground, so that the fundamental principle of ontology, according to which two different entities must not yield the same ontological assay², would be violated. Neither can the difference in question be reflected by transcribing in the ideal language the first fact (that this spot is red) and the second fact (that this spot is blue) with '*a*' and '*b*' respectively, since we are dealing, by hypothesis, with the *same* spot, and that too must be reflected in some way in the assay, whereas the signs '*a*' and '*b*' have nothing in common. From Bergmann's point of view, these assays are inadequate, because they do not allow for some of the distinctions required to "ground ontologically" the distinctions which are in the world.

Wilfrid Sellars, whose views on the role of the ideal language in ontology were not very far from Bergmann's, tried to devise a language which does without predicates, called Jumblese³. If the attempt succeeded, one could legitimately claim – from Bergmann's point of view as well – that the introduction of universals is useless. In Jumblese the fact that *a* is to the left of *b* is represented, say, by the fact that the sign '*a*' is written to the left of the sign '*b*':

(1) *ab*,

rather than by

(2) *aRb*.

In Jumblese no written sign occurs standing for the relation *to the left of*. Yet it seems that something else stands for such a relation, i.e., the spatial relation holding between the signs '*a*' and '*b*'. And that, from Bergmann's point of view, is enough to undo Sellars' argument. Jumblese does possess

² Cf. Bergmann, 1967, pp. 22, 238.

³ Cf. Sellars, 1962, and Sellars, 1980.

predicates, after all: only, they are not graphic signs, but spatial relations holding among signs. It seems that in a fully developed version of Jumblese a complex system of conventional correlations must be established between the spatial relations holding among linguistic signs on the one hand and the relations holding among things, exactly as it happens with names (*'a'*, *'b'*) and the things they stand for (*a*, *b*). But then the spatial relations holding among the signs of Jumblese play exactly the same role that is played by names, and so they are to be regarded as being on a par with them⁴. Of course, the same holds if we consider properties instead of relations.

Sellars objected against such a criticism⁵. He insisted that it is based on a mistake. The mistake consists in believing that the spatial relation holding between the signs *'a'* and *'b'* in (1) plays the same role that in (2) is played by the sign *'R'*. The reason why the two roles cannot be equated is simply that not even the sign *'R'*, by itself, plays any role in (2). In fact, according to Sellars, what has a representative role in (2) is not the sign *'R'*, but the fact that it stands in a certain relation with respect to the signs *'a'* and *'b'*. In other words, what represents in (2) is the obtaining of a certain relation between the signs *'a'* and *'b'*; such a relation is that of standing in a certain spatial relation to the sign *'R'*. Thus (1) and (2) really “work” in the same way, according to Sellars: in both cases the representative elements are just two: (i) the names *'a'* and *'b'*; (ii) the obtaining of a certain relation between *'a'* and *'b'*. By contrast, Bergmann splits the second element into *two* elements. Let us consider again the fact that *a* is to the left of *b*. Such a fact is to be conceived of as a combination of objects. In order for the fact to obtain, the objects must be connected, otherwise there would be no fact at all, but a mere “collection” of objects. But in order for *that* fact to obtain (i.e., the fact that *a* is to the left of *b*, and not, for instance, that *a* is larger than *b*), the objects must be connected *in a certain way*. The universal *to the left of* takes care for (i.e., ontologically grounds) such a *mode of combination*. One thing is that objects are combined, and another thing is that they are combined in a certain way. In other words, one thing is the relation, one thing is its obtaining (its being

⁴ The example considered probably makes Sellars's claim concerning the absence of predicates in Jumblese more persuasive than it deserves, since an identity holds between the two relations (i.e., that holding between the names and that holding between the named things). What about the case, for instance, of *killing*, instead of *being to the left of*?

⁵ Cf. Sellars, 1980, p. 51.

exemplified)⁶. Sellars mistakenly unifies the two things, and in that way he violates the fundamental principle of ontology. The fact that *a* is to the left of *b* is different from the mere collection of *a*, *b* and the relation *to the left of* (not exemplified by *a* and *b*). In (2) the juxtaposition of the signs ‘*a*’, ‘*R*’ and ‘*b*’ to form a sentence – as opposed to the mere list of the signs ‘*a*’, ‘*R*’ and ‘*b*’ – reflects such a difference. But the fact that *a* is to the left of *b* is also different from the fact that *a* is larger than *b*. In (2) the occurrence of the predicate ‘*R*’ – rather than, say, ‘*L*’ – reflects the latter difference. In (1), according to Bergmann’s interpretation, the same role of the sign ‘*R*’ is played by the specific spatial relation holding between the signs ‘*a*’ and ‘*b*’. Regarding the qualitative aspect of this relation and its obtaining as just *one* thing – as Sellars does – means conflating two differences into one, thus overlooking universals⁷.

In the light of what has been said so far, we can come back to the question of the explanatory value of universals. We have seen why Bergmann thought that universals must be admitted into the ontological inventory of the world. Yet according to the nominalistic argument based on Bradley’s regress, recognizing or postulating the existence of universals does not *explain* why, for instance, Socrates is wise rather than generous. In a sense, of course, the nominalist is right. Saying that Socrates exemplifies *wisdom* is simply another way to say that Socrates is wise. It does not add anything, it does not *explain why* Socrates is wise. According to those who uphold this argument, that is an irremediable defect of the realist’s analysis. Quite to the contrary, for Bergmann everything is as it should be. If the sentence ‘Socrates exemplifies wisdom’ said something different (or something more) than the sentence ‘Socrates is wise’, that would be an evidence that something has gone wrong with the analysis.

The disagreement between Bergmann and his critics probably has its roots in a different view both of explanation and of the purpose of onto-

⁶ An interesting prefiguration of this distinction can be found in Wittgenstein’s *Notebooks 1914-1916* (1979), 4.11.1914: «One name is representative of one thing, another of another thing, and they themselves are connected; in this way – like a *tableau vivant* – the whole images the situation. The logical connexion must, of course, be one that it is possible as between the things that the names are representative of, and this will always be the case if the names really are representatives of the things. N.B. that connexion is not a relation, but the *holding* [*das Bestehen*] of a relation».

⁷ For a similar criticism of Sellars’ argument cf. Hochberg (2001), pp. 109-110, and Hochberg (2003), pp. 156-160. For an application of these reflections to the interpretation of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* cf. Bonino, 2003, Bonino, 2004, and Bonino, 2008, III, 2.

logy. From Bergmann's strictly positivistic perspective, the only clear sense of 'explanation' is that according to which a singular event is explained when it is identified as an instance of a law (or a less general law is subsumed under a more general one)⁸. Science provides explanations, and it is obvious that that is not what ontologists are trying to do when they say that Socrates is wise in virtue of the exemplification of the universal *wisdom* by Socrates. Probably, Bergmann would not even consider the phrase 'in virtue of' quite appropriate: Socrates is wise not *in virtue of* something else, as if the exemplification of the universal *wisdom* by Socrates were something different from Socrates' being wise, or perhaps its cause. Rather, the sentences 'Socrates is wise' and 'Socrates exemplifies wisdom' should be regarded as different ways of describing one and the same fact. At most, one could claim that one sentence is more perspicuous than the other. The point is that for Bergmann ontology does not *explain* anything; rather, it is a *descriptive* discipline. When the Bergmannian ontologist says that the fact that this apple is red has as constituents, among other entities, a bare particular and the universal *redness*, he is not trying to explain *why* the apple is red. He is neither subsuming the fact that this apple is red under some general law, nor is he revealing some hidden cause or mechanism which is responsible for the apple's being red. If that is what we are interested in, we do not resort to ontology, but rather to optics, chemistry, or some other scientific discipline. Ontology only describes.

3. Exemplification

We have seen that according to Bergmann the difference between the fact that *a* is red and the fact that *a* is white is ontologically grounded by the different universals *redness* and *whiteness*. But we have also hinted at the difference between the fact that *a* is red and the mere collection of *a* and *redness*. As has already been said, Bergmann's ontology is a complex-ontology. That implies that entities can be distinguished into simple and complex. Complex entities are made up of other entities, which are said to be constituents of the former, or to be "in" them. According to Bergmann facts are typical complex entities; indeed they are the only kind of genuinely complex entities. The constituents of the fact that *a* is red include the

⁸ For Bergmann's conception of explanation cf. especially Bergmann, 1957. For a detailed account of the significance of Bergmann's positivistic stance cf. Wilson, 2007; cf. also Wilson's contribution to this volume.

(bare) particular *a* and the universal *redness*. But a mere list of these two constituents cannot be the ontological assay of the fact that *a* is red, since it does not say that *redness is exemplified by a*. The mere existence – so to speak – of *a* and *redness* does not amount to the fact that *a* is red; *a* may well exist and be blue, and *redness* may well exist and be exemplified by *b*.

Thus it seems that facts are not mere collections of entities, or – to put the matter linguistically – that sentences are not mere lists of names. According to some interpreters, that is the main teaching of Bradley's regress argument, i.e., that facts must be recognized as a distinct and primitive ontological category. Kenneth Olson is among these interpreters. According to Olson, with his argument Bradley wanted to point out that introducing a relation as a constituent of a fact is not helpful at all in explaining the unity of the fact itself, since the same problem that arises with reference to the original collection of constituents (which does not include the relation) arises again with respect to the new collection (which includes the relation), and no explanatory progress is made. Taking all that into consideration, if relations are to be useful at all in explaining unity, they must be conceived of as the concrete acts of connection, not as terms. In other words, as Olson says, «the connection is not a constituent of the fact; it is the fact itself» (Olson, 1987, p. 61).

According to Olson, the conception of relations as dependent entities, i.e., such that they cannot be thought of as separated from the fact to which they belong, could account for the unity of facts, but that amounts to the recognition of facts themselves as a primitive ontological category, different from that of their constituents:

Bradley's point is simply that any attempt to reduce a fact to terms and relations will either leave their connection out of the picture entirely, thereby missing what is most essential, or will wind up reintroducing it at a higher level. In the latter case we have only exchanged one fact for another; we have made no progress towards the reduction of facts to more basic entities. (Olson 1987, p. 61)

Bergmann certainly subscribed to the idea that facts must be recognized as an ontological category of their own. Yet his acknowledgment of facts took a strange twist. But let us proceed with order. According to Bergmann, an adequate ontology, besides accounting for the difference between the fact that *a* is red and the fact that *a* is white, must also account for the difference between the fact that *a* is red and the mere existence of both *a* and *redness*. In a world in which *a* is blue and *b* is red, both *a* and *redness* exist, but the fact that *a* is red does not. That is only another way to say that facts are not mere collections of entities, or that sentences are not mere

lists of names. Bergmann holds that in accounting for facts one must also account for their unity, i.e., for their not being a mere collection, but a genuine “complex”. And in order to do that, he introduces the nexus of exemplification, which belongs to the ontological category of subsistents. The nexus of exemplification is to be conceived of as a further constituent of facts in addition to things (particulars and universals) which are “in” the fact itself. Thus, for instance, the constituents of the fact that *a* is red include *a*, *redness* and the nexus of exemplification; those of the fact that *a* is to the left of *b* include *a*, *b*, the relation *to the left of* and the nexus of exemplification.

Coming back to the terminology that has been used before, one could say that the nexus of exemplification is the ontological ground of the mere combining of things into facts, whereas universals (which are themselves things) account for the “mode” of combination. That is clearly an asset for Bergmann, since different ontological grounds are provided for different differences – if I may so express myself. On the other hand, regarding the nexus of exemplification as being itself a constituent of the fact is rather suspect. One could think that, after all, Bergmann had not learnt Bradley’s lesson well enough, since the regress argument can be used against his view concerning exemplification in a way similar to that in which it has been used against universals. The main thrust of such a criticism is that no real progress is made in accounting for the unity of facts with the introduction of the nexus of exemplification, since the same old problems crop up again. In fact, before the introduction of the nexus of exemplification we had to account for the unity of particulars and universals into a fact, now we have to account for the unity of particulars, universals *and the nexus of exemplification* into a fact. Of course one can reply, as Bergmann forcefully did, that nexus – contrary to universals – do not need other ties to tie them to what they tie. But at this point a second objection comes in: Bergmann’s seems to be a merely *ad hoc* solution; why not say that *universals* do not need any other tie, thus getting along without the introduction of a new kind of entity?

It seems to me that the two objections must be taken care of separately. Let us start with the second one, i.e., the alleged *ad hoc* character of Bergmann’s distinction between nexus on the one hand and relations, or more generally universals, on the other. In fact Bergmann points out a genuine difference between the nexus of exemplification and ordinary universals. According to Bergmann the difference comes to the fore when one considers the way in which we can represent nexus and ordinary relations (or

properties). Whereas in the ideal language the latter are represented by predicates, the nexus of exemplification is reflected by the juxtaposition of the other signs occurring in the sentence. The introduction of a relational predicate to stand for the nexus is “futile” according to Bergmann⁹, since (i) it adds nothing, and (ii) we must in any case have recourse to the juxtaposition. We understand that ‘ Ra ’ means that a is red (i.e., that a exemplifies the property *redness*) because of the juxtaposition of the signs ‘ R ’ and ‘ a ’ in the sentence. If ‘ Ra ’ is replaced by ‘ $Ex (R, a)$ ’, where ‘ Ex ’ stands for the nexus of exemplification, nothing is gained, since we still need to have recourse to juxtaposition to indicate that Ex is – so to speak – exemplified by R and a . With a Wittgensteinian terminology, one could say that the exemplification of R by a is *shown*, but not *said*, by the juxtaposition of the signs ‘ R ’ and ‘ a ’.

It is to be noted that the “futility” of the relational predicate standing for the nexus of exemplification does not extend to the normal predicates, i.e., those standing for universals, either relations or properties. The reasons are those which have been examined in connection with Sellars’ Jumblese argument. The point is that universals have a qualitative aspect (or, as Bergmann says, a *nature*): *redness* is intrinsically different from *larger than*. A particular can be red, white, etc., and these are all different facts; in the same way, two particulars can be one to the left of the other, or one larger than the other, etc., and these are all different facts. Since there are many different universals, we need different predicates in our ideal language, which otherwise would not be adequate. It is a relatively minor question whether the predicates are words or spatial relations between words. In the case of the nexus of exemplification, things are different. Given one or more particulars and a universal with an appropriate adicity, at least if we do not consider questions of order, there are not many ways in which they can be connected together: the universal can just be exemplified by the particular(s) or not. Any qualitative aspect of the connection (i.e., the “mode” of combination) has been “absorbed” by universals. Thus there remains only one phenomenon that must be accounted for: the circumstance that the entities in question are connected into a fact or not. In other words, there is only one nexus that can connect things into a fact, i.e., the nexus of exemplification. No specific sign is needed for it, since we do not need to distinguish it from other ties. Juxtaposition is enough. In other words, according to Bergmann juxtaposition is not a name, in the sense

⁹ For this argument concerning the “futility” of a sign for exemplification cf. Bergmann, 1960.

that it does not stand for a constituent that can be replaced by another constituent, since exemplification is the only member of its ontological (sub)category. If there were more than one way of connecting entities into complexes, such ways should presumably become genuine (nameable) constituents¹⁰.

Bergmann was not always consistent with his own recommendation concerning the futility of the introduction of a sign for the nexus of exemplification. In certain contexts, especially in later works, he freely uses the sign 'ε' standing for exemplification. It seems to me that these violations, in most cases at least, are not truly significant. I would suggest that they are mainly due to *expository* reasons. In *Realism*, for instance, Bergmann's main aim in speaking of exemplification is that of contrasting exemplification itself, as he conceives of it, with alternative ways of conceiving analogous ties, such as that which he calls the "pseudo-nexus γ". He is thus forced to introduce a label for exemplification in order to distinguish it from other notions, which he regards as radically mistaken. In a sense, one could say that in such expository contexts, the correlation of juxtaposition with exemplification is not automatic any more, contrary to what happens in the ideal language, since there are other candidates. In other words, when Bergmann uses a notation that includes the sign 'ε' standing for exemplification, he is not using the ideal language, but rather a sort of metalanguage devised for expository purposes.

On the whole, it seems that the objection according to which Bergmann's distinction between nexus and relations (or more generally universals) is *ad hoc* is not fair towards Bergmann's intentions, notwithstanding some tensions in his views and in his ways of presenting them. But that only makes the other objection more serious. Bergmann thought that Bradley's regress argument does not apply to the case of universals, but he also held that nexus are not like universals, so that perhaps the regress can be legitimately invoked against them.

In the same way in which the mere collection of *a* and *redness* does not amount to the fact that *a* is red, neither does the mere collection of *a*, *redness* and the nexus of exemplification. Exemplification is in the world, according to Bergmann, but its mere presence is not enough to guarantee

¹⁰ Perhaps Bergmann came to think again of these questions in the late phase of his philosophy (cf. Bergmann, 1992), where exemplification does not seem to account for the unity of complexes, but rather for a particular mode of unity; in fact a sign for exemplification is not futile if exemplification is only one among several modes of unity. Cf. Heald, 2007.

that *a* exemplifies *redness*, otherwise every particular (or ordered *n*-tuple of particulars) would exemplify any (appropriate) universal. The point is that exemplification actually connects some things into a fact, and not others. Obviously Bergmann is well aware of all that: the ontological assay of a fact is not a list of constituents (not even if it includes the nexus of exemplification), but a sentence, in which names of things are actually juxtaposed. In a passage of *Realism* Bergmann recognizes that in order to ground ontologically a fact, one must take into account (in addition to the constituents, which include the nexus of exemplification) the *circumstance* that exemplification actually connects the other constituents into a fact (Bergmann, 1967, p. 10). The circumstance cannot be listed among the constituents, on pain of regress. Rather it is itself a fact; worse than that, it is the very fact it is supposed to account for. Thus the whole issue of the nexus of exemplification seems a useless detour. Since we are in any case compelled to have recourse to a circumstance, i.e., to a fact, why not stay content with it, and getting along without the nexus of exemplification?¹¹ From such a perspective one could simply say that the fact that *a* is red is made up of *a*, *redness*, and the *circumstance* that *a* is actually red; but the circumstance that *a* is red is nothing but the fact itself that *a* is red. The whole argument points toward the conclusion that facts are primitive, and that they cannot be reduced to their constituents, which is – at least according to Olson – the main thrust of Bradley’s regress argument. And all that does not involve any reference to bizarre entities such as nexus.

Maybe Bergmann’s talking of both nexus and circumstances makes things confused and unnecessarily complicated. Yet I would like to put forth some suggestions concerning the motives that may have led Bergmann to the introduction of the nexus of exemplification. It seems to me that these motives have to do with his conception of the ontological undertaking, and more specifically with his complex-ontology view. As has already been said, complex-style ontologies distinguish entities into simple and complex. Complex entities are somehow “made up” of other entities, which are “in” them, or are “constituents” of them. In a sense, being a constituent or being “in” a complex is the fundamental notion or, if you prefer, the fundamental metaphor on which Bergmann’s ontology is based.

Bergmann has learnt Bradley’s lesson concerning the irreducibility of facts to their constituents, and thus he wants his facts to be distinct from

¹¹ By making reference to the terminology of Vallicella, 2000, why not accept an identity view of the connector, according to which the entity responsible for the unity of a fact is the fact itself? On these issues cf. also Orilia, 2007.

their constituents, or from the collection of their constituents. Taking into consideration the circumstance that the nexus of exemplification actually connects the other constituents into a fact just serves this purpose. On the other hand, Bergmann also wants that his facts are somehow “made up” of their constituents. A fact has with its constituents a peculiar connection; it is not simply *another* entity, in the same way, for instance, in which the universal *whiteness* is different from the universal *redness*. Whereas *whiteness* and *redness* are completely external to each other – to use a somewhat metaphorical way of speaking –, that cannot be the case for facts according to Bergmann. Thinking of a fact as being simply a distinct entity with respect to its constituents fits well with a function-style ontology¹². It is as if facts were thought of as values of a function, since the value of a function is in no sense “made up” of the arguments of the function itself. But it is well known that Bergmann rejects function-style ontologies for reasons «deeper than argument can reach» (Bergmann 1967, p. 8)¹³.

In a sense, for Bergmann facts are primitive – as Bradley held –, since they cannot be reduced to their constituents; but in another sense they are not primitive, or at least, they are not primitive in the same sense in which things (particulars and universals) are, since they are “made up” of things. Thus a fact is an entity which is *both* distinct from the collection of its constituents *and* made up of the constituents themselves: that is what Bergmann means when he says that facts are *complex* entities. Bergmann’s conception of ontology, which is based on the principle of the ontological ground, requires that we find an ontological ground – i.e., an entity – to account for the difference between a fact and its constituents: such an ontological ground is the nexus of exemplification *actually connecting the other constituents*.

If we simply say that the fact that *a* is red is the complex of *a* and *redness*, we are in danger of leaving unexplained the difference between a fact and the collection of its constituents, or even of confusing the fact and the collection (that was Bradley’s charge against Russell). On the other hand, if we simply say that a fact is *another* entity with respect to its constituents, we are in danger of losing sight of the notion of a complex, and of making the peculiar connection between a fact and its constituents wholly unintelli-

¹² On function-style ontologies cf. Bergmann, 1958, and Bergmann, 1967, chapters I and II.

¹³ All that does not apply to functions conceived of as *makers* in the late phase of Bergmann’s philosophy; on this matter cf. Tegtmeier’s contribution to this volume.

gible¹⁴. Bergmann's solution is that of saying that the fact that *a* is red is the complex of *a*, *redness*, and the nexus of exemplification *connecting them*. Of course, all that is reflected in the symbolism of the ideal language. The sign which represents a fact (i.e., a sentence) is a complex sign, whose constituents stand for constituents of the fact: it is not simply a sign that is *different* from those which stand for the constituents. That is why according to Bergmann the correct understanding of the notion of complex (i.e., of fact) and the acknowledgment of the ontological category of nexus go hand in hand.

I do not know whether Bergmann's view is wholly coherent or whether his fundamental metaphors are truly perspicuous. Maybe there are moments in ontology – as Panayot Butchvarov suggested long ago in a paper contributed to Bergmann's *Festschrift* – in which any metaphor is bound to break down¹⁵.

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¹⁴ That is in a sense Meinong's mistake in his account of facts, according to Bergmann, 1967. Cf. Bonino, 2006.

¹⁵ Cf. Butchvarov, 1974.

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World, mind, and relations

Greg Jesson

IS INTENTIONALITY
MORE LIKE HUNTING OR MORE LIKE HITTING?
GUSTAV BERGMANN ON SKEPTICISM AND KNOWLEDGE

Abstract. This paper explores how Gustav Bergmann, following an Aristotelian paradigm of knowledge, propounded a realist ontology of knowing that accounts for our knowledge of the world and explains why science has been so successful. However, non-veridical acts make it appear as if we are not acquainted with physical objects, but, rather, with some kind of mental objects. What else could it be that we are perceiving when having a hallucination? If such objects must exist in order to account for non-veridical thinking and perception, then intentionality is more like hitting than hunting, because one cannot hit what does not exist. Once it is maintained that the immediate objects of experience are private mental objects, this places a veil in between us and the alleged world of public objects, which are forever beyond our knowledge. On the other hand, if some kind of “philosophers’ objects” do not need to be introduced to account for non-veridical thinking and perception, then thinking is more like hunting than hitting, because one can hunt for something – say, a lion – and there exists no lion that one is hunting for. Bergmann held that materialism, skepticism, representationalism, idealism, and phenomenism all had inadequate ontologies of intentionality to account for what we know.

For as the eyes of bats are to the blaze of day, so is the reason in our soul to the things which are by nature most evident of all.

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 993b, 9-10

[Many] philosophers and mathematicians alike [...] have not seen through the twin follies of skepticism on the one hand and the search for an elusive kind of absolute certainty (an irrecoverable philosophic use of ‘certain’!) on the other.

Gustav Bergmann, “Analyticity”, in *Meaning and Existence*, p. 78

1. Introduction

Although Gustav Bergmann’s physical and philosophic journey led from the University of Vienna, where he and Kurt Gödel were graduate students in mathematics, to the burgeoning philosophy department at the University of Iowa, there were two lessons from those early days he never forgot. As

the youngest member of the Vienna Circle, Bergmann helped articulate the tenets of logical positivism. Its principal core was that any philosophy untethered from science and mathematical logic inevitably slips into speculative nonsense. Consequently, the positivists argued that philosophical progress requires that any viable philosophy be capable of providing a theoretical foundation for the possibility of scientific knowledge. Science and philosophy are not incompatible: rather, philosophy, properly conceived, should account for how our knowledge of the world is possible and why the scientific enterprise is so stunningly successful; and science, again properly conceived, should provide a framework beyond which philosophy cannot go without engendering gibberish. Unfortunately, philosophy has too often been defined as the poetic creation of such gibberish. Is it any wonder why so many simply dismiss it? Bergmann became convinced that the early positivists were mistaken in their desire both to eliminate metaphysics and to identify philosophy as a branch of science. Nevertheless, he found these motives forgivable, insofar as philosophy had customarily been conceived as if there were no methodological relations between it and the scientific description of the world. These two tenets – the possibility of objective philosophic advancement and the development of a philosophy constrained by a robust science – were never abandoned by Bergmann. Paradoxically, Bergmann was both the greatest critic of logical positivism, in particular in *The Metaphysics of Logical Positivism* (1954), and the most relentless and dedicated defender of its two core tenets.

To this end, Bergmann toiled for five decades both to elucidate the structure of mind, particularly the intentionality of consciousness that enables it to have the phenomenological and referential qualities that make conscious experience possible, and to describe the ontological structure of the world of which we have knowledge. The positivists had the right motives, but the wrong method to accomplish their goals. Bergmann wrote:

The logical positivists, whether they knew it or not, were all either metaphysical materialists or phenomenologists. The former hold that there is nothing mental; the latter, that everything is mental. The contrast seems extreme, yet it really isn't [...] [T]he phenomenologist's and the metaphysical materialist's are both one-level worlds. That is why [...] some logical positivists found it quite easy to shift from one of these apparent extremes to the other. The realist's is a two-level world of minds and of bodies, in which the former are capable of intending the latter as well as themselves and each other. (Bergmann, 1954, pp. ix-x)

Bergmann's two-level realism affirmed both the subjective realm of the mind and the objective realm of the world. He argued that the objective realm exists independently of the subjective realm of human thought and

language and that, therefore, what objectively exists is not produced or structured by human thought or language. Such a robust realism requires that the world is what it is whether or not it is the object of thought, and that neither the mind nor the world is reducible to the other.

Further, Bergmann held that, insofar as scientific inquiry is possible, we are not sequestered within a private realm of mind-dependent objects and that we can, therefore, think of, and be perceptually acquainted with, ordinary physical objects. Historically, this line of argument has been difficult to maintain because hallucinations and other non-veridical acts make it appear as if in perception we are not acquainted with such objects, but, rather, with some kind of mental or mind-dependent objects. What else could it be that we perceive when hallucinating? If mind-dependent objects (images, ideas, or sense data) are required for non-veridical thinking and perception, then thinking is more like hitting than hunting, because one cannot hit what does not exist. On the other hand, if some kind of “philosophers’ objects” do not need to be introduced for non-veridical thinking and perception, then thinking is more like hunting than hitting, because one can hunt for something – say, a lion – and there exist no lion that one is hunting for. Once it is maintained that non-veridical thinking and perception require that the immediate objects of experience are private and mind-dependent, a veil is placed between us and the world of common public objects and facts, which are then forever beyond our immediate and direct knowledge.

The fundamental question is where to begin. Should we start out with an ontology of mind that requires all acquaintance be of some existent object (thereby precluding direct apprehension of the world), or should we start out with knowledge of objective realities and then inquire into what the mind must be like in order for such knowledge to be possible?

The persistent appeal of realism is that it preserves both the objective and the subjective realms. Physical objects, mathematics, and logic seem to belong to an objective realm, while experiences of these things seem to belong to a subjective realm. Those infatuated with naturalization programs argue that, despite all appearances, what seems intrinsically subjective is completely reducible to what is objective, while phenomenologists and idealists, driven by Cartesian epistemological concerns, argue that, despite a different set of appearances, what seems to be objective is completely reducible to what is subjective. According to Bergmann, genuine scientific inquiry precludes both extremes; therefore, both *must* be wrong. Bergmann wrote in “Acts”:

In philosophy as elsewhere, the most attention is not always given to the most profound. Ontology, during the last three hundred years or so, is a case in point [...] [Ontological questions are,] I am convinced, the most formidable as well as the most profound [...] Some classical philosophers, intent on dialectically securing the “existence” of physical things, thought it necessary to deny that acts “exist”. Quite a few of these ended up as materialists [...] Some others, equally intent on dialectically securing the “existence” of acts, found it necessary to deny that physical things “exist” [...] Both sides were deceived. (Bergmann, 1964, p. 13)

A sufficiently informed realism requires that an adequate account of thought be possible. Such an account would explain how the distinction between the subjective and the objective can be defended, and how the subjective can grasp the objective in acts of knowledge. Bergmann was convinced that nothing less could provide a foundation for the knowledge we clearly have of the world, and explain why science is such an increasingly successful method of inquiry.

The synoptic view of Bergmann’s most concentrated efforts are in his writings during the ten-year period beginning with *The Metaphysics of Logical Positivism* (1954), followed by *Meaning and Existence* (1959), and culminating in *Logic and Reality* (1964). This essay will focus on that period.

2. *An Aristotelian paradigm of knowledge*

More than anything else, philosophic progress is made by asking the right questions. Obviously, this immediately raises the issue of what constitutes the right questions. This much is certain: insofar as philosophy has consistently displayed more deep disagreements than any other academic discipline, it is evident that someone is asking the wrong questions. Provisionally, in the absence of anything else that is in the least bit compelling, it seems reasonable to claim that the right questions are the ones that arise from what is best known and lead to what is not known. Accordingly, the wrong questions are those that arise not from those things that are known, but from unjustified beliefs, assumed epistemic criteria, or mere possibilities. Too much of philosophy, both past and present, uncritically assumes a metaphysics that does not accurately depict our epistemological position in the world. For Bergmann, an adequate study of the mind and its capacities can never be done in isolation from knowledge of everything else. We understand what the mind is by being directly acquainted, not with a phenomenological content that is philosophically tainted by egocentric as-

sumptions, but with an unprejudiced examination of what must be the case to account for the kinds of things we are aware of. It would be as serious a mistake simply to assume that we are sequestered in the subjective as it would be simply to assume that we are acquainted with mind-independent facts¹.

Aristotle said that philosophy begins with wonder, and certainly the most singular fact of human existence is what appears to be our indescribably rich knowledge of both subjective and objective facts, which all philosophers have, whether or not they use that knowledge in their philosophic reasoning. Bergmann wrote in “Ineffability, Ontology, and Method”:

Each of us is *acquainted* with some things and facts (states of affairs). Synonymously, these things and facts are *presented* to us. What one is acquainted with he knows. Each of us also knows much else. These things and facts, however, he knows only *by means of* what is, or has been, presented to him. (Bergmann, 1964, p. 45)

We are not just conscious and self-conscious, but we also cognitively grasp a remarkable array of what seem to be both private and public facts. This knowledge, wherein objects are brought before our consciousness, is what is the “most evident of all”. However, such knowledge does not conform to a widely accepted philosophic ideal; it is not the conclusion of an argument that deduces an informative conclusion from indubitable premises. Such knowledge does not require argument to establish it, and, therefore, argument cannot undermine it. We do not need philosophy – specifically we do not need epistemology – to tell us whether or not we have any knowledge; and all declarations made by epistemological inquiry beyond a report of an individual’s subjective states must presuppose some knowledge of objective facts. Judging that such facts are either epistemologically unjustified or philosophically irrelevant, many philosophers have dismissed such knowledge. Along these lines, Roderick Chisholm remarked:

I assume that we should be guided in philosophy by those propositions we all do presuppose in our ordinary activity [...] [and, this claim] would produce two very different reactions. One may say, on being confronted with the list, ‘But these things are too obvious to mention. Let us get on with our philosophy’. Yet when we do get on with our philosophy and appeal to one or another of these propositions in order to criticize a philosophic theory, *then* we will hear the objection: ‘But you have no right to assume anything like *that!*’. The reply is, of course, that whatever

¹ Husserl’s called the method of not prejudging whether the objects of experience are subjective or objective, “bracketing” or “phenomenological reduction”. Cf. Husserl, 1931.

we are justified in assuming, when we are not doing philosophy, we are also justified in assuming when we *are* doing philosophy. (Chisholm, 1976, pp. 15-16)

Bergmann deepened this insight by emphasizing the logical priority of ontology over any epistemology. He argued:

[The Cartesian revolution preserved the claim that] *A mind knows only what is in it*. For the tree's nature, while a mind perceives it, is an attribute of this mind. Thus it is "in" it. Nor is there in the classical schema any other way to account for knowing. That illustrates how the ontological ground plan determines the account of the knowledge situation. Epistemology so-called is indeed merely the ontology of that situation. (Bergmann, 1964, pp. 264-265)

According to Bergmann, because the Cartesian "gambit" has an inadequate ontology of consciousness, «the mind and its intention [object] have fallen apart, [and] are no longer connected» (Bergmann, 1964, p. 265). Cartesian-like epistemologies hold that our knowledge is strictly confined to our experiences and, therefore, do not include the possibility that the objects presented in our experiences could be of something objective. Certainly, just to pronounce without argument or evidence that our knowledge is of objective realities seems dogmatic. In contrast, egocentric epistemologies sought to discover absolutely unimpeachable grounds for empirical knowledge that logically connect private mental states to public facts, but, had they been successful, would have the puzzling result of rendering all such truths synthetic *a priori* truths. Clearly, this cannot be correct. It is not just that «skepticism [...] and the search for an elusive kind of absolute certainty» are, in Bergmann's words, «twin follies», but that they are inexorably linked. It is our inability to secure absolute certainty, aptly demonstrated by the history of philosophy, that leads to skepticism. Bergmann remarked that, «Historically, it would be foolish indeed to underestimate the impact of the revived skeptical arguments [of the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries]» (Bergmann, 1964, pp. 265, 264). Ideas were introduced by Descartes and the British empiricists as the key by which knowledge is gained, but insofar as ideas were conceived as the objects, rather than the means by which knowledge is gained, skepticism was sure to follow. Bergmann remarked that:

The way of ideas leads to idealism or, for those who can stomach it, materialism. The only way out is to break the stranglehold of (I) [i.e., the claim that a mind knows only what is in it]. (Bergmann, 1964, p. 265)

The Cartesian error is to think one can begin with premises that purportedly describe only our experiences and validly deduce conclusions that transcend those premises by describing something other than those expe-

riences. If the premises of an argument are limited to the subjective, then the conclusions must be also.

The same principle applies to another feature of skeptical arguments. Surely, Descartes meant for the conclusion of his dream argument to be a synthetic truth informing us about the world, but then at least one of the premises must be synthetic. However, this just means that in order to argue for skepticism about the world, we must have some knowledge of the world present in the premises. The conclusion must contradict at least one of the premises. If the skeptical conclusion is taken to be analytic, then it is uninformative; if the conclusion is taken to be synthetic, then it is unjustified. In Bergmann's words, either way «the gambit fails».

Bergmann, following Aristotle, Aquinas, Reid, Frege, Husserl, and Moore, never had a problem of getting out of skepticism because he never saw a good reason to get into it. Bergmann's Aristotelian insight was to understand that thinking about the world in general, and philosophy in particular, cannot even begin, let alone fruitfully proceed, by assuming that we are sequestered within the subjective. The logical positivist's core tenet regarding the centrality of scientific, mathematical, and logical knowledge was somewhat vitiated by their overreaching solution of eliminating metaphysics. In fact, the philosophers mentioned above were positivistic in maintaining that the philosophical enterprise must begin with knowledge of some objective facts.

It is a wide-reaching error to think one can deduce objective facts from premises concerning only subjective facts. In the *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle argued «that not all knowledge is demonstrative: on the contrary, knowledge of the immediate premisses is independent of demonstration» (Aristotle, 1941, p. 114). If we did not know something without proof, we could not know anything by means of proof, for this would require an infinite number of proofs to know anything (cf. Aristotle, 1941, p. 113). Further, Aristotle argued that the modal status of conclusions is always limited by the modal status of the premises:

We must therefore be content if, in dealing with subjects and starting from premises thus uncertain, we succeed in presenting a broad outline of the truth: when our subjects and our premises are merely generalities, it is enough if we arrive at generally valid conclusions [...] [I]t is the mark of an educated mind to expect that amount of exactness in each kind, which the nature of the particular subject admits. It is equally unreasonable to accept merely probable conclusions from a mathematician and to demand strict demonstration from an orator. (Aristotle, 1934, p. 9)

Although Aristotle is referring to the futility of attempting to derive necessary conclusions from probable premises, the same principle can be extended to attempting to draw conclusions concerning objective facts from subjective premises. Strictly speaking, the conclusion of a valid argument can only make explicit what is implicit in the premises. Along these lines, Aristotle wrote:

So since the primary premises are the cause of our knowledge – i.e. of our conviction – it follows that we know them better – that is, are more convinced of them – than their consequences, precisely because our knowledge of the latter is the effect of our knowledge of the premises. (Aristotle, 1941, p. 113)

The epistemic status of skeptical conclusions can never rise above the epistemic status of the premises. If we begin with nothing we can go nowhere; and, if we begin with the subjective we can never go beyond the subjective.

Certainly, some will say that the Aristotle/Bergmann paradigm of knowledge simply does not take skepticism seriously. What would it mean to take skepticism seriously? According to Bergmann, “epistemologism” always accords epistemological questions philosophic precedence over ontological questions; it presupposes an ontology of the mind and its capacities that makes knowledge of objective facts impossible. I would argue that it is Cartesian skepticism that does not take skepticism seriously. How so?

In addition to every argument offered, must we also supply an argument proving that we are not now insane in order to establish our rationality? More specifically, do I need to prove that *I* am not insane? But, to whom should this proof be presented? To myself? To someone else? The insane often think they are completely sane. Requiring me to provide a proof for myself (at each moment) that I am not insane is as ridiculous and pointless as anything can possibly be. But, what possible guarantee could there be that anyone else (or any group of persons) is in a better epistemological position than oneself? To have grounds to evaluate this argument one must begin by tentatively trusting his or her cognitive capacities, independent of any proofs or evidence to establish these capacities, because evaluation of *any* proof, inference, or evidence must presuppose such capacities. Certainly, any particular cognitive capacity can be examined, questioned, rejected, or refined – but only by means of one’s other cognitive faculties that are not concurrently under scrutiny. It is a confusion fostered by dubious philosophical requirements, and divorced from what we actually do, that presumes all our beliefs are suspect until proven true.

Are there any things that are known better than what our own cognitive states are about and our capacity to evaluate our evidence for our beliefs? When Aristotle wrote of «the things which are by nature most evident of all», what else could he be referring to other than this realm of knowledge? To claim that our knowledge is only of appearances, or that logic is simply a description of how we happen to think, is necessarily to make a claim involving facts beyond both appearances and a privatized, psychologistic logic. Our epistemological position in the world is not one wherein, in order to be rational, we can, or need, doubt everything except our immediate experiences.

The philosophic nirvana of being able to question all beliefs except one's immediate experiences cannot exist, because justification of any claim minimally requires knowledge of objective truths concerning logic. For example arguments, such as Descartes' dream and evil genius arguments, not only presuppose a highly questionable doxastic voluntarism, but also, more importantly, must be carefully designed to undermine empirical beliefs without having logic and math swept away in skepticism. Logic and math are either objective or not. If they are not, then our brief, pointless, philosophic excursion ends in self-contradictory nonsense. If logic and math are objective, they must be as "external" to the individual human mind as trees, because neither trees, nor logic, nor math are constituted by an individual's mind. The only relevant difference here between logic, math, and trees is that logical and mathematical facts do not occupy space. To question consistently whether or not there are facts besides one's subjective experience thrusts logic and math into the same doubt.

Descartes' argument in the first *Meditation* centers on the claim that if we cannot determine whether or not we are dreaming, only beliefs concerning empirical objects are affected. Descartes wrote:

For whether I am awake or asleep, two and three together always form five, and the square can never have more than four sides, and it does not seem possible that truths so clear and apparent can be suspected of any falsity or uncertainty. (Descartes, 1970, vol. I, p. 147)

Whether our understanding of arithmetic, geometry, and logic requires us to ascertain if our beliefs are about existent objects is beside the point. It is also irrelevant that «whether I am awake or asleep, two and three together always form five». Two plus three necessarily equals five, but the pivotal issue is whether we can know that two plus three equals five if we cannot be assured that we are not now dreaming. Descartes' point is that if we cannot provide a deductive proof with indubitable premises that we are

now not dreaming, we cannot be justified in claiming that we do not know that we are not dreaming, and, consequently, we cannot *know* that we are not now dreaming. However, Descartes was mistaken in thinking that this argument refutes only the justification of empirical beliefs. In dreams one can be utterly convinced of the most ridiculous things; and because evaluation of any evidence, whether logical or empirical, requires steps, the fragmentary nature of dreams does not allow for the kind of experiential unity that the process of justification requires. A state in which one can be convinced of the most preposterous things is a state in which justification is impossible, and, therefore, a state in which knowledge is impossible. If we cannot tell whether or not we are dreaming, we cannot tell whether or not we are in a state in which knowledge is possible. (In the evil genius argument, Descartes does not mention the epistemological status of our logical and mathematical beliefs. If there were an evil genius determined to deceive us, he could easily give us false beliefs concerning logic and math. One only has to teach a beginning course in symbolic logic to see how easily students get confused).

We can have knowledge of these facts concerning the nature of dreams only by remembering what dreams are like, but it is impossible to gain knowledge of these facts while dreaming. If we are dreaming, we cannot know anything; consequently, if we know anything, we are not dreaming. Certainly, a proof that there are no proofs is contradictory, whereas a proof that there are proofs is an example of *petitio principii*. Therefore, another one of «the things which are by nature most evident of all» is that we can discover what the objective, logical facts are. The possibility of doing philosophy at all, in fact the possibility of any kind of sound reasoning, entails knowledge of objective logical truths. In a slight variation of Moore's famous conclusion from "The Refutation of Idealism", we could argue that there is, therefore, no question of how we are to «get outside the circle of our own ideas and sensations» (Moore, 1922, p. 27). Merely to have a thought that purports to be anything other than a mere description of one's subjective states is already to be outside that circle. (Even the claim that one is describing only one's subjective states is to presuppose knowledge of the objective, logical truths being utilized). The skeptical or post-modern philosopher absurdly attempts to provide evidence and arguments to undermine the relevance of evidence and arguments.

But, how does this relate to Bergmann's ontology of mind? In the preface of *Logic and Reality*, Bergmann wrote:

One who has struck out on his own, either ignoring or challenging the fashions of the day, will not, if he is sober, be certain that everything he has gradually come to believe is true. I am very sober. Yet there is one belief I have come to hold very firmly. One cannot arrive at a dialectically adequate realism without recognizing that the world's form exists. Logic is but a reflection of the world's form. Hence, one cannot fully articulate one's realism without ontologizing logic. That accounts for the title of this book and, more importantly, for its thematic unity. (Bergmann, 1964, p. vii)

A subjectivized logic is even more problematic than a subjectivized mathematics, because the claim that logic is subjective can be justified only if logic is not subjective. Psychologism confuses the activity of thinking with the logical facts that thinking grasps. It errs by misinterpreting objective logical facts that are necessary and mind-independent as contingent and subjective. Consequently, psychologism confuses the objective with the subjective, and thereby eliminates the act because it entails that there are no mind-independent logical facts to grasp. We are left with only the objects within one's subjectivity. Sounding somewhat like Aristotle, Frege claimed, near the beginning of his career, in his 1893 book *The Basic Laws of Arithmetic*:

If we want to emerge from the subjective at all, we must conceive of knowledge as an activity that does not create what is known but grasps what is already there. The picture of grasping is very well suited to elucidate the matter [...] [T]hat which we grasp with the mind also exists independently of this activity, independently of the ideas and their alterations that are a part of this grasping or accompany it; and it is neither identical with the totality of these events nor created by it as a part of our own mental life. (Frege, 1967, pp. 23-24)

Bergmann applied this principle to our apprehension of the objective nature of the form of the world. The various different kinds of form (form₁, concerning facts; form₂, concerning connectives; and form₃, concerning expressions)² are all parts of the world's form, «which in some sense [are] presented to us». According to Bergmann:

They represent an aspect of what some philosophers, using the word philosophically, call the world's "form". This is the gist of my argument. My critic at this point finds his worst fears exceeded. I began by claiming *some sort* of "ontological status" for exemplification, and so on, which to him seemed bad enough. Now I am about to do the same for negation, disjunction, and so on, which to him seems even worse. (Bergmann, 1964, p. 52)

² The details of Bergmann's intricate analysis on these points are beyond the scope of this paper, but are addressed at length in "Ineffability, Ontology, and Method"; "Meaning"; "Ontological Alternatives", especially pp. 149-157; and "The Glory and the Misery of Ludwig Wittgenstein". These essays are in Bergmann, 1964.

According to Bergmann, if logic is divorced from the way the world is, then it is «merely a calculus». Further, «[a] calculus acquires philosophical import only if its author claims that it is an ideal language (*Begriffsschrift*), i.e., that it perspicuously reflects an adequate ontology» (Bergmann, 1964, p. 151). Formal truths have intellectual application and «are what they are» because the world is a certain way, and the world is as it is only because «the subsistents of our world are what they are» (Bergmann, 1964, p. 90).

Bergmann rooted knowledge of these ontological forms in the various kinds of things we are acquainted with. He said Wittgenstein's greatest error was making logical form out to be nothing. Rather,

What must be represented has ontological status [...] The furniture of the world is not all of one kind. The different kinds, even the glimpse we had taught us that, are represented very differently [...] [T]hat is how I explicate the traditional ontological vocabulary. (Bergmann, 1964, p. 232)

Without having the logical form of the world presented to us, all thought would have absolutely no basis on which to argue for one account of reality rather than another. According to Wittgenstein, because logical form is nothing, it holds for every possible world, but leaves “possible world” unanalyzed. Either it uninformatively means that «Every world which has the same form as ours has the same form as ours», or it means «any world *must* have the same form as ours», but what is the force of ‘must’ here? In classical Bergmannian fashion, he claimed:

If the logical is to be identified with the necessary, in some unexplicated and inexplicable sense of ‘necessary’, then, if you permit an aphorism, there is nothing logical about logic. (Bergmann, 1964, p. 233)

Bergmann argued that, because Wittgenstein does not conceive of logical form as the structure of the world, he can propose only a “psychologism”, which, following Kant, reduces possibility to conceivability. At this point, any hope of securing a realism that accounts for our knowledge of reality is lost, and the wonder that gave rise to our intellectual lives is thwarted.

If logic has any justified application, it must express objective truths, and consequently, psychologism must be false. Philosophy is a rational discipline only if logic is objectively grounded beyond the individual's subjectivity. If logic does not express objective truths then it cannot be more than how one's mind just happens to work, and consequently, there would be no reason to believe *anything*. Every claim, even the claim that $A = A$, rests on the objectivity of logic, and, therefore, every claim rests on our minds being able to grasp objective, mind-independent reality. If we know

anything, it must be the case that the mind can intend objective logical truths.

There are only two possible starting points for philosophy:

1. We can begin with philosophical assumptions about knowledge, the mind, thought, or the world; or,
2. We can begin with the various things we know then infer what the mind must be like in order to know these things. If we cannot determine how we know the things we do, it does not follow that we do not know those things.

According to Bergmann, by following the first option the last three hundred years of analytic philosophy have uncovered these ontological and epistemological options, namely:

Materialism

Phenomenalism

Idealism

Skepticism

Representationalism

Nominalism

Realism

However, Bergmann further contended that each of these options except realism founders on the facts we know to be true. Materialism, phenomenalism, and idealism all, in different ways, tear apart the act and its object. Materialism, mistakenly identifying science with scientism³, denies an intrinsic, subjective realm. Phenomenalism and idealism, motivated by the obvious skeptical problems engendered by representationalism, conceive of physical objects as subjective. Skepticism presupposes an all-or-nothing approach to empirical knowledge and presupposes an ontology of knowing that makes knowledge of the objective impossible. Representationalism requires that we must infer the objective from the subjective. Finally, nominalism mischaracterizes the things we are presented with as all being individuals. To formulate an adequate account of the intentional capacity of the mind, and to discover why realism is the most reasonable option, we must be constrained by the pre-philosophic things we know. An adequate account of the epistemic act must provide an explanation of:

³ Bergmann said that materialism was «not only absurd but also very dull», and that it is a «philosophy for nonphilosophers» (Bergmann, 1964, pp. 336, 338).

1. How the distinction between the subjective and objective can be drawn, so that the mind is not eliminated or reduced to the objective, and so that the world is not eliminated or reduced to the subjective;
2. How it is possible to have direct acquaintance with subjective facts;
3. How it is possible to have direct acquaintance with objective facts;
4. How it is possible for many persons to have direct acquaintance with the same objective facts, and how it is possible for the same person to have direct acquaintance with the same objective facts at different times;
5. How it is possible to think of, or perceive, that which does not in any sense exist;
6. How it is possible that veridical and non-veridical mental states can be phenomenologically indistinguishable from the first-person perspective;
7. How it is possible to find in principle a way to distinguish between veridical and non-veridical perceptions; and
8. How the distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* truths can account for the epistemic difference between them (i.e., explain how error is possible).

Because Bergmann was a realist at heart who insisted that every kind of entity in his ontology was justified by the principle of acquaintance, I believe that he would have insisted that a plausible philosophy of mind must account for each of these issues.

3. *The emergence of the act*

Philosophy, like all intellectual endeavors, necessarily begins with experience. This truism can be interpreted only in two ways, neither of which is a truism. On the one hand, it could be taken to mean that philosophy must begin with our acquaintance with private perceptual states, experiences, and sensations (the egocentric perspective). On the other hand, this claim could be taken to mean that philosophy must begin with our acquaintance with the objects that our private perceptual states, experiences, and sensations are of or about (the realist perspective). According to the egocentric perspective, each person's direct apprehensions are limited to one's private mental states, and, knowledge of anything else, if possible,

can only be inferred from those states. In contrast, according to the realist perspective, our direct apprehensions are of objects that are neither a part of, nor a property of, nor have any necessary connection to, those apprehensions. From the fact that all experiences are subjective, it does not follow that everything that is an object of experience is subjective. This perspective, in contrast to the egocentric perspective, draws a necessary distinction between the apprehension of the object and the object of apprehension, it insists that they are never the same thing. According to the realist, the existence and nature of the apprehended object does not depend on being apprehended, nor does the apprehension of the object depend on the existence of the apprehended object.

Realism has always been a precarious but valiant ontology, because even though it derives from commonsense, it lacks the appeal of monistic ontologies that would fit everything into one category. Repeatedly, one can find Bergmann stating that various ontologies have the disastrous result of tearing the act and its object apart (Bergmann, 1964, pp. 234-235, 339, 340). Once this is done, the only two options left are either retreating into the subjective or pushing everything out into the objective.

Bergmann argued that the roots of modern skepticism were epistemological because the dominant account of mind at the time, the Aristotelian-Thomistic account, could not account for non-veridical perception. Bergmann wrote:

At the time of Descartes, the new science and, not unconnected with it, the resurgence of skepticism, had made perceptual error a major problem, if not the major problem, of philosophy. Such concern is the mark of epistemologism. By that time, the Aristotelian-Thomistic assay of perception, which is realistic in structure, had collapsed, partly because it could not account for perceptual error. (Bergmann, 1964, pp. 304-305)

Aristotle and Aquinas never considered the philosophical implications of non-veridical thought, nor were they troubled by the possibility of skepticism. However, when Aristotle stated in *De anima* that «the soul is analogous to the hand», he was certainly headed in the wrong direction (Aristotle, 1941, p. 595). A hand cannot grasp what is not; consequently, the analogy of the mind being like the hand cannot account for non-veridical acts, or even non-veridical acts are of an existent object (or an object of some ontological status) for the mind to grasp. Bergmann clearly saw that the whole issue of skepticism and, with it, the possibility of having an account of how it is possible to know the objective world, stands or falls on this point.

4. *Is intentionality more like hitting or more like hunting?*

In 1963, Bergmann wrote in “Stenius on the *Tractatus*”:

Speaking of skepticism, I might as well mention another attempted way out. This gambit assays the perceiver and the physical intention [object] as things, perceiving as a relation jointly exemplified by them. Perception is fallible, what it presents as existing does not always exist. (That is the modest sound core of skepticism.) But, then, what does not exist, or so only exists in the mode of possibility, cannot exemplify a relation. So the gambit collapses. The only way to keep it alive is to introduce such noncommonsensical things as propositions and construe perceiving as a relation connecting the mind and this sort of thing. (Bergmann, 1964, p. 265)

Intentionality has been so puzzling to philosophers because it seems to have contradictory features. On the one hand, intentionality is unquestionably referential (i.e., the act always is of or about something); but, on the other hand, it seems that what the act is of may not exist. Oceans of ink have been spilled on this problem, and, as I have argued at length elsewhere, Bergmann held substantially different views on this at different times (cf. Jesson, 2007). In “Acts” and “Stenius on the *Tractatus*” Bergmann defended a view in which intentionality is more like hunting than hitting, because one need not «crowd the ontological inventory with such entities as ‘false facts’» for acts to have the referential capacity they have (Bergmann, 1964, p. 25). He added that «The revulsion from such overcrowding was another cause for the decline of the act in recent philosophy» (Bergmann, 1964, p. 25). However, by the time of “Realistic Postscript,” in which Bergmann asserted that there «must [be] some ontological status to the intentions of all acts» (Bergmann, 1964, p. 308), he was arguing that intentionality is more like hitting than hunting. By maintaining that «the intention [object] of, say, a false belief is a possibility (*p*-fact) and as such has ontological status (exists)» (Bergmann, 1964, p. 308), Bergmann contributed to the very overcrowding that he had once rejected. Bergmann’s view hardly seems adequate. We can think of impossibilities, but would this then mean that impossibilities are possible?

I believe that Bergmann’s earlier view was correct, and that his later view reverses the idealist’s error. The idealist errs by conceiving of the object of cognition as being logically dependent on the act of cognition. To insist that intentionality requires an existent object, or an object of some ontological status, however defined, is to conceive of the act’s intentional capacity as being logically dependent on the object. A robust realism requires that the object can exist without the act, and that the act can exist

without the object. Only such a realism can satisfy the eight constraints listed above.

Of those constraints, materialism cannot account for 1 and 2, because materialism does not acknowledge a distinctly subjective realm. It cannot account for 5, because intentionality must be conceived as a naturalistic process, such as causation, but one cannot be causally related to what does not exist.

Phenomenalism and idealism cannot account for 1 and 3, because they do not have an adequate account of what is objective⁴. They cannot account for 5, because objects are collections of ideas, and, because thoughts and perceptions are of ideas, it is not possible to think of what does not exist. If 5 is denied, it would seem that all perceptions would be of something that has ontological status. It may be possible for one to maintain that, even though the object perceived must exist, because the belief formed on the basis of the perception does not cohere with other well-founded beliefs, the object presented is not as it appears. It seems very odd, however, to claim that an object like an idea could be different from how it appears.

Skepticism cannot account for 3, 4, and 7. Representationalism cannot account for 3, 4, 5, and 7. Finally, nominalism cannot account for 4. Only an uncompromising realism can account for all of 1-8. I believe that it is in the spirit of Bergmann's realism to claim that anyone who does not think these eight constraints represent our epistemological position in the world is selecting the facts by means of a theory instead of selecting a theory by means of the facts.

The view of intentionality that requires that every act must have an existent object (in some sense) cannot account for 5; and, as argued above, consequently a veil exists between us and the world, from which it follows that it cannot also account for 3, 4, and 7. Any view entailing that all mental acts are of something that exists certainly departs from the core of realism. Bergmann called the mind-independence of act and object the deepest core of realism. In "Acts" he wrote:

A thing is what it is irrespective of whether or not either you, or I or any one else perceives it, remembers it, thinks of it, and so on. This is the deepest core. Notice that I said thing, not just physical thing, thus including phenomenal ones. That alone shows how deeply the issue cuts. Commonsensically, the proposition is a

⁴ Of course, some idealists, such as Berkeley, affirmed objective entities such as other minds, both humans and God's, but few would think Berkeley's account was viable after Hume's criticisms.

truism. I, for one, am as intent as the most embattled classical realist on securing it dialectically. (Bergmann, 1964, p. 19)

Even though Bergmann struggled with finding an adequate ontology of the act to preserve this realism, up to the last page of *Logic and Reality*, Bergmann called himself a realist in the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition (Bergmann, 1964, p. 340).

But how is it possible to think of, or perceive, that which does not in any sense exist? As Laird Addis says in *Natural Signs*, «the strangeness of a state of consciousness lies in its profound *difference* or *apparent difference* from everything else we encounter or know about in the universe» (Addis, 1989, p. 3). If this is correct, many of the ways we usually attempt to describe intentionality are misleading. Words such as ‘relation’, ‘connection’, ‘pointing’, ‘referring’, ‘grasping’, and ‘representation’ must be used carefully, and with qualifications. Even though it seems like the most natural thing in the world to draw an arrow in order to illustrate that every act is of or about something, this is misleading, because an arrow cannot point to what does not exist.

From the fact that intentionality is an essential reference or connection to an object, it does not follow that it is an existential connection to an object. The uniqueness of intentionality is that only it can be relational without being a relation between existents. (However, veridical cognition such as knowledge does require an existential connection). In other words, the ofness commitment of the act does not imply a necessary existence commitment. This quintessential feature of intentionality can be expressed in two different, but consistent, ways: One can define ‘relation’ as a two-or more-place property, which can, in these special intentional cases, have only one place that is instantiated with something that exists. Or, one can define ‘relation’ such that all relations require two (or more) existing relata, from which it follows that intentionality is not a relation. Admitting that intentionality is a relation defined in this way would, in cases of non-veridical cognition, imply that there can be an instantiation of a two-term relation by only one term. This would be like claiming that someone is a father although there is nobody who is, or ever was, his offspring. While avoiding a semantic dispute about how to use ‘relation’, it is important to insist on the uniqueness of intentionality. We most certainly do not want the ontology of intentionality settled by possible connotations of ‘connection’ and ‘relation’, nor by drawings of arrows, nor by analogies such as those that claim that the mind is like a hand.

If the object of a non-veridical act must exist, what reason could there be for calling that act non-veridical? Either there are different levels of existence, or every act is veridical, or some acts are referential without requiring an existent object. Positing different levels of existence is obviously *ad hoc*, and claiming that every act is veridical is epistemologically disastrous. Only the third option allows for an affirmation of all eight realistic constraints above. This requires that intentionality is a mental determination, or a “natural sign,” that does not require that the object of the act exists. As Husserl wrote:

I have an idea of the god Jupiter: this means that I have a certain presentative experience, the presentation-of-the-god-Jupiter is realized in my consciousness. This intentional experience may be dismembered as one chooses in descriptive analysis, but the god Jupiter naturally will not be found in it [...] But it also does not exist extramentally, it does not exist at all [...] If, however, the intended object exists, nothing becomes phenomenologically different. It makes no essential difference to an object presented and given to consciousness whether it exists, or is fictitious, or is perhaps completely absurd. I think of Jupiter as I think of Bismarck, of the tower of Babel as I think of Cologne Cathedral, of a regular thousand-sided polygon as of a regular thousand-faced solid. (Husserl, 1970, vol. II, pp. 558-559)

Suppose that we and Shakespeare’s Lady Macbeth are looking at her raised hand. We see an empty hand but she sees a hand holding a dagger. If this is possible, it follows that someone is seeing something that does not exist. We need not posit a veil of mental objects between us and the world to account for non-veridical acts; consequently, we need not adopt an ontology of the mind that leads inexorably to skepticism.

5. Coda

Philosophy cannot make significant progress while ignoring our epistemic position in the world. To be sure, almost boundless reams of philosophic articles have been, and will be, produced without acknowledging these facts; but it has been the burden of this paper, and I believe the burden of Gustav Bergmann’s work, to argue that, without these facts, almost all of philosophy is otiose. Without knowledge of the distinction between subjective and objective facts, and without knowledge of the intentional connections between them, philosophy cannot rise above mere intellectual fashion. The mistake has been to think that philosophers must reason themselves out of the egocentric position and then deduce the entire objective world from the subjective. That has been seen to be impossible. Bergmann

offered a way to be faithful to our epistemological position in the world. No philosophy could be on a firmer foundation. The defense of realism requires taking the world as it is presented to us, and then describing the “intentional tie” (as Bergmann called it) that connects the subjective to the objective. On the last page of *Logic and Reality*, Bergmann warned that there was a rising tide of «ignorance, antiscience, and mediocre literature» (Bergmann, 1964, p. 340). Postmodernism, in all its tyrannical irrationality, is now upon us. The philosophical vision of the logical positivists was that progress was possible, and that it depended on philosophy being informed by our knowledge of the world. These were the two core tenets that Bergmann defended. Certainly, the positivists were mistaken in thinking that such a task required a denial of the possibility of metaphysics; it is also certain that such a denial is not as bad as any philosophy that fails to begin with what we actually do know. Nevertheless, there will always be serious ontologists who, beginning with Aristotle and best represented in our time by Gustav Bergmann, want to know what the world is actually like.

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BERGMANN'S CRITIQUE OF REPRESENTATIONALISM

Abstract. The critique of representationalism that Bergmann presents in his 1967 book *Realism. A Critique of Brentano and Meinong*, is directed against the traditional ontologies from Descartes, Locke, Brentano, to the first Meinong and introduces an alternative ontology, an ontology “without representations”, which he calls realism₂. The first part of the paper examines Bergmann’s reconstruction of a prototype of representationalism with particular regard to the role that intentional relations play as intermediaries between minds and world. The ontological alternative of realism₂ consists in a different way of conceiving the intentional nexus or in general the nature of intentionality. In the analysis of the knowing situation that Bergmann proposes there is no room for intermediaries. The role of intentional nexus is not played by ideas, images or representations, but by an analytic, logical and specific nexus, which he symbolizes with *M* (*means*). Therefore intentionality is not a matter that has to do with internal mental states, but it is a matter of a logical kind that concerns the “meaning” of the knowing situation. The second part of the paper aims at comparing the most recent conceptions of the Mental, known as representational theories of mind, with the prototype of ontology criticized by Bergmann as classical representationalism. The keystones of those theories and Bergmann’s counter-arguments are critically discussed.

The critique of representationalism that Bergmann developed in the second chapter of his *opus magnum*: *Realism. A Critique of Brentano and Meinong* (1967) is ideally composed of two parts, a *pars destruens* and a *pars construens*. The first is directed against the traditional ontologies of Descartes and Locke, and to some extent, of Brentano and Meinong; the second consists in formulating an alternative ontology, one “without representations”, that Bergmann calls realism₂. In the history of ontology the attempt to link a radically realistic concept of the world to the critique of representationalism is nothing new. It is no secret that Gottlob Frege vigorously asserted the independence of the truths of logic from mental representations¹, something that the founder of the “Würzburger Schule”, Oswald Külpe did even more thoroughly when he developed his realistic

¹ Cf. Frege, 1884, § 26; Frege, 1918.

theory of “imageless thought”². Bergmann quotes Külpe in an essay of 1955 while he does not cite Wittgenstein, perhaps due to his scant appreciation for the philosophy of the *Investigations*. It is true, however, that the non mentalistic but “grammatical” version of intentionality propounded in the *Investigations* and, even before that, in the writings collected in the *Philosophical Grammar* is quite close to Bergmann’s anti-representationalist concept of the intentional nexus³.

I. According to Bergmann, representationalism is the hegemonic model, well established in the context of theories of the Mental, from Descartes and Galileo. However, as we shall try to demonstrate later on, representationalism turned up in other guises also in several influential philosophies of mind that have gained currency in the closing decades of the last century. In fact, around the ’60s and ’70s the barycentre of philosophical interests underwent a marked shift, due to the emerging cognitive sciences, from the problems of the language-reality relationship to those of the mind-world or mind-reality relationship. It was then that what we might call “the return of the representationalists”⁴ took place, or better, the establishment in the philosophy of mind of several updated versions of representationalism, known as representational theories of mind. The keystones of these theories reveal a peculiar affinity with the prototype of ontology attributed by Bergmann to the “classical” representationalists – one of his main polemical targets. A target, however, that cannot be characterised or even understood if not within the context of the two other battles he conducts in *Realism* against reism and nominalism.

First off, it must be said that the prototype of ontology proposed by the representationalists is located in the ontological investigation that contemplates a world inhabited by minds, a different context from that in which minds are not taken into consideration, and therefore from a kind of world “without minds” that Bergmann significantly calls “truncated world”. The expressions “truncated world” and “world including minds” do not, however, refer to two distinct worlds but to a single world characterised by the same categorical apparatus but explored from a double perspective.

² The theory of the “unanschauliches oder anschauungsfreies Denken” was conceived by Külpe, 1912-1920-1923 in his masterpiece (Erster Band, I. Kap., 5, pp. 137 ff.) and developed by his School.

³ Cf. Wittgenstein, 1953, I, §§ 428-465, and Wittgenstein, 1969, pp. 112a-113a.

⁴ In the same vein Kitcher, 1992, has spoken critically of a revival of naturalism in recent analytic theories of knowledge.

In the analysis of the truncated world the ontological alternatives that are set against reism – the doctrine according to which the entities of the world are “things” (simple entities) and therefore neither properties, nor complexes, nor facts, nor universals – are realism and nominalism. The realistic ontology that Bergmann calls realism₁ admits, instead, particulars (individuals) and properties (universals), “connected” by a nexus he calls “exemplification”. In a realistic perspective, the need for this nexus is felt since it alone contemplates different entities (particulars and universals) that, as we have said, must be connected, while in reism and nominalism that need has no *raison d’être*, since entities of any other type are not admitted, like for example the universals. Bergmann’s realistic ontology is the only one that explicitly assigns an ontological state to the exemplification, obviously not the state of “existent”, which belongs instead to the particulars and universals, but the state of “subsistent”. A term, this latter, that is derived from Meinong’s “theory of objects”, who used it to denote *sui generis* entities, which unlike objects and things, are not entitled to be called “existents” but which benefit from the *Daseinsfreiheit* (Meinong, 1904, § 2, pp. 485-488).

Realism₁ is set against nominalism, according to which properties are not universals, and the particulars it admits are interconnected by a “homogenous” nexus, insofar as the entities that it connects are of the same kind, therefore all simple things. Accordingly it is a pseudo-nexus that actually connects nothing, unlike exemplification, which instead is a genuine nexus, and “inhomogeneous” insofar as the entities it connects are of a different kind, i.e., particulars and universals. Unlike what happens in the case of reism and nominalism, as we mentioned earlier, representationalism can be collocated in a context of analysis that has to do with the world that counts minds among the entities that inhabit it. According to the representationalists, in the knowing situation in which the minds know what is not mental, they enjoy a special position, in the sense that every other entity depends on them – it’s a position that has, as we will see, many undesired consequences.

Against the representationalists Bergmann opposes the ontological alternative that he calls realism₂ to distinguish it from realism₁, which is more properly the alternative to reism and nominalism. The fundamental prerequisite of realism₂ is that in the analysis of the world that includes minds there is no need for additional ontological categories with respect to those used to analyse the truncated world. In fact, favouring the role of minds with respect to other entities of the world by introducing new categories,

would mean opening the way to idealism (Bergmann, 1967, p. 141). According to Bergmann, representationalism is nothing more than a variant of idealism, more precisely of the concept according to which no entity is independent of minds. In its analysis of the mental world, the ontological alternative of realism₂ envisages, instead, a nexus that connects minds to the physical world, an intentional nexus which, in the same way as exemplification, is neither a mental nor a physical entity, but a “subsistent”. Bergmann denotes it with the symbol *M* (*means*), that connects the two constitutive parts of expressions such as “my desire/idea/belief/expectation that it will rain means (*M*) that it rains. In other words “rain” is the event that makes my desire for rain true (Bergmann, 1967, pp. 127-128, 215-216). In one of the characterisations of the intentional nexus *M*, included in the essay *Acts*, and even before that in *Intentionality*, Bergmann had said:

A world in which there are minds contains not only characteristic “existents” but also a characteristic logical constituent. This constituent is expressed by ‘means’, whenever it is used in such sentences as ‘(The thought that) Peter is blond means that Peter is blond’. (1960, p. 10)

The nature of the intentional nexus and of its role in the knowing situation is vital in order to understand the difficulties of representationalism and the reasons for the realistic₂ alternative. We will see later on the role played by this element of the mental world within the anti-representationalist perspective. Bergmann qualifies the intentional nexus as “analytic” and “logical”, to distinguish it from relationships such as “on the right of” or “bigger than”, which instead are synthetic and not logical. In fact, the proposition in which it occurs has no empirical or synthetic connotation, i.e., it is true with respect to its form and not with respect to experience. Moreover, in a world that is not truncated, the intentional nexus is also called “specific” with respect to the many different species of intentional acts (thought, belief, desire, expectation, and so on).

The ontology of a world in which there are minds is therefore centred on the issue of intentionality: it must resolve the problem of the relation that connects minds to the world, explaining how the mind can know what is not mental. According to Bergmann, it must explain how in the knowing situation the various species of mental acts (thinking, believing, hoping, doubting, etc.) can refer to intentional contents. In the realistic perspective, epistemology, as defined by Bergmann, is actually nothing other than “the ontology of the knowing situation” and accordingly it does not identify itself with science and in particular with the science that studies mental states and processes: psychology, as the naturalized theories of knowledge

claim⁵. The difference between the ontology of representationalism and the ontological alternative of realism₂ consists, therefore, in the different ways of conceiving intentionality or rather the nature of the intentional nexus.

In the *pars destruens* of his analysis Bergmann examines a prototype of representationalism, which is a tripartite ontology, based on the presence of three differently interconnected elements, which he calls “the First”, “the Second” and “the Third” (Bergmann, 1967, pp. 132-137). How is it possible that the minds, which comprise that part of the world known as the “First”, directly know the objects of the physical world, of that part of the world known as “the Second”? The representationalists maintain that the connection between the “First” and “Second” is guaranteed by a “Third”, comprising what the Austro-German philosophical tradition calls *Vorstellungen* and the Anglo-Saxon *ideas* or *images*. The “way of ideas” is the option which, according to Bergmann, classical representationalism developed when put under pressure by the problems posed by scepticism, nominalism and modern science. But in what way can the admission of ideas or representations help to give a plausible collocation to false, unreal or imaginary objects of thought, perceptual errors or secondary qualities? The answer to this question lies at the heart of the representationalist perspective and the kind of relationship that it proposes between mental acts and intentional contents. This is set against the analyses of the knowing situation that propose an alternative view of intentionality, irrespective of the admission of representational intermediaries, between acts and contents. According to Bergmann, the possibility for avoiding the idealistic consequences of representationalism and accrediting the alternative of realism₂ depends solely on the success of this proposal.

The determination of the concept of “content” that appears in the expression “intentional content” will be crucial in order to clarify the importance of the representationalist prototype and, as we will see, the version of the most recent representational theories of mind. This concept is generally used in two ways. When used to indicate meaning or reference to mental states, such as thoughts, beliefs, desires, fears, expectations, then in general we speak of “mental content”, where by “content” we intend the meaning or reference of expressions such as A thinks/believes/desires/fears/expects that *p*, with the content symbolically represented by *p*. In other words the statement that linguistically expresses the thoughts, beliefs, desires, fears and expectations of A, is called “propositional content” and sometimes, in representational theories of mind, “linguistic content”. This

⁵ The canonical text of the naturalized epistemology is Quine, 1968.

is the definition of “content”, which was widely debated in the nineteenth century by the theorists of psychologism, as well as by Brentano, Frege, Meinong, Twardowski and Husserl, to whose doctrines recent twentieth-century philosophers of the mind have added little in the way of sophistication or analytical depth.

According to both the representationalist prototype and the representational theories, the mental content and the propositional content have at least one property in common: they are both intentional, in other words they both tend towards (or refer to) something. In Brentano’s classic interpretation, to say that a mental state has a content is another way of saying it is intentional. The intentionality of the mental content is, in fact, the property that Brentano in his *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* called “in-existence”, where the states of intentional things are “immanent objects”, i.e., internal mental states. The intentionality, instead, of the propositional content is the property of the content expressed in the subordinate phrases depending on “that”, i.e., the intentional content. In representational theories of mind, the propositional or intentional content obeys a similar Brentanian inspiration, insofar as the intentionality of the propositional content has a derivative or secondary character with respect to the mental content. Also, the relation between the elements comprising propositions depending on “that” is a triadic relationship, according to a schema that Russell sanctioned in 1913 and reiterated in 1921. “A thinks/believes/desires that *p*” (symbolically: AR*p*) is a relation between A and the proposition *p*, where R acts as mediator between A and *p*. The function of R is to direct this mediation and in the end to enable the derivation or explanation of *p* from A or in terms of A.

By contrast, in the analysis of the knowing situation that Bergmann proposes there is no room for intermediaries, for entities that play the role of a “Third”. The role of intentional nexus between “First” and “Second” is not, in fact, played by *ideas* or *Vorstellungen*, but by *M* which, as we know, is an analytic, logical and specific nexus. To put it simply, intentionality is not a matter that has to do with internal mental states. Nor is it, as Meinong claimed, a substantially psychological “internal relation” between mental acts and intentional contents. Rather, it is a matter of a logical kind that has to do with the “meaning” of the knowing situation.

II. As we recalled at the beginning, in theories of the Mental over the past decades, i.e., the “representationalists’ return”, there have been new proposals of theories and arguments that are particularly suited to what Berg-

mann attributes in *Realism* to the tradition of the classical representationalists from Descartes to the first Meinong.

To give a synthetic account of the general direction of this new representationalism, and of its conception of intentionality, we will also use a prototype of representational theories of the mind, that refer to the views of Jerry Fodor and other American philosophers of mind. Beginning with the prototype it will be easier to highlight both its nature and the difficulties it has in solving the issue of intentionality. Like the theories of the Mental inspired by Brentano, the new form of representationalism offers a concept of intentional content centred on several basic theses: (i) the *internal* character of mental states and processes; (ii) the role of *causal intermediaries* of the representations; (iii) the *primacy* of mental content over propositional content, and in particular the privileged role of the mind over the world or reality. On the basis of these three theses, what is the relation between mind and world, or as Bergmann would put it, between “First” and “Second”?

(i) According to the first thesis, the internal character of mental states and processes is a characteristic of the mentalistic postulate of representational theories, according to which mental states are bearers of the primary intentionality, also called “intrinsic”. If the mental content is, for example, my desire that it rains, the fact that my desire has to do with the event of rain is something “intrinsic”, i.e., is an essential property of the mental state (my desire) having that content. In representational terminology “intrinsic” is opposed to “derived”, which is a property attributed instead to propositional (linguistic) contents, and is therefore also opposed to “conventional” – in fact, the meaning of linguistic expressions derives from conventions. Insofar as it is “unconventional”, “intrinsic” is frequently also used as a synonym of “natural”. According to these theories, the mental contents are at first glance exclusively based on what happens in the head of the persons, as Putnam said with an expression perhaps borrowed from Wittgenstein⁶. But how is it possible to determine the content of a thought, a belief, a wish, an expectation by looking inside the head of the persons? This is where the fundamental problem of intentionality arises: what is the state of propositional contents and, in general, of subordinate propositions depending on “that”?

⁶ Cf. Putnam, 1975, p. 227: «“Meanings” just ain’t in the *head*». Cf. Wittgenstein, 1967, §§ 605, 606: «One of the most dangerous of the ideas for a philosopher is, oddly enough, that we think with our heads or in our heads»; «The idea of thinking as a process in the head, in a completely enclosed space, gives him something occult».

First of all, we consider that thoughts, beliefs, desires and expectations have a content independent from any reference to states of affairs. Thoughts, beliefs, desires, expectations, for example, have a content even when false, even if there is no object to which they refer, and therefore, irrespective of the fact that what I think or believe or desire is true or false and that the expression of these contents is correct or not. Accordingly the content is not identified with a situation that occurs or an existing state of affairs, because even if it doesn't rain tomorrow, my desire will not have been false and the expression of what I desired incorrect. To explain how thought, desire, belief or expectation in some way prefigure the intended situation or past or future state of affairs, it is necessary to postulate the possession of an internal language, a kind of *Begriffsschrift* of the mental content, intended as a "language of thought" or, as one says, "mentalese" (Fodor, 1975). The idea is not new. Underlying it there is a reference to Frege (1879) and the model of the *Begriffsschrift*, of a language created to express, according to Fregean thought, not a mental but a conceptual content (*begrifflicher Inhalt*). The allusion to Wittgenstein is equally clear, who maintained in the *Tractatus* and reaffirmed in the transitional writings that thought is a sort of language. In this way, however, the language of representations is condemned to remain a "solipsistic" language of formal properties, "locked in the head of the persons", guaranteeing, substantially, only a standard of internal coherence. Accordingly, it does not respond to the question of how thoughts, beliefs, desires and expectations can connect themselves to external reality and how mental contents are linked to states of affairs, nor therefore, resolve the problem of intentionality.

(ii) Representational theories of mind do not lack awareness of the solipsistic implications of their assumptions; in their language "solipsism" is the preferred term, while in the versions up to Moore and Wittgenstein the term "idealism" is used as a synonym. For his part, Bergmann insists, as we know, on the hidden but significant idealistic tendency inherent in the representationalist prototype. In the representational theories the need to avoid the solipsistic implications of their theses and to highlight the relationship between acts and contents is at the basis of the introduction of a "Third", a function attributed to representations, that mediates between the "First" and "Second". In these theories the admission of a "Third" is connected above all with the idea of a double intentionality. In a first interpretation, we speak about intrinsic, ontologically independent, intentionality, that is not derived (also called "natural"); in a second we refer to intentionality that is derived, indirect and inferred from the first (also called

“linguistic” or “conventional”). In short, we speak about a primary intentionality and a secondary intentionality. In this sense the propositional content (secondary intentionality) is simply derived from the mental content (primary intentionality), and in principle can therefore be explained or summed up in terms of the first.

The assignment of the role of causal intermediaries to representations would serve to resolve this difficulty. The propositional content can, in other words, be clarified as the result of representations that mediate between mind (mental states) and the world (states of affairs). My desire that it rains is a relation between my mental state and the desired event, or better, the expression (the image, idea, representation) of the desired event: rain. I can, however, desire this event by virtue of its being in relation with my representation of the rain, and its being in that relation is only possible if we conceive it as a causal relation with an “internal formula” that expresses the proposition and is therefore able to exert the mediation between the person that desires and the desired event, between *A* and *p* or, as Bergmann would say, between mental acts and the intentions of the acts.

(iii) In the representational prototype the need to attribute a role to causal intermediaries follows from the idea that mental states which have a content, for example “*A* wants” in “*A* wants that *p*”, are internal mental states, endowed with an intrinsic intentionality, ontologically independent from the world or reality, and in this sense unable to connect themselves to what is extra-mental. This is a plausible reason for admitting intermediaries, which enable us, in the analysis of the knowing situation, to explain the connection between Mental and non-Mental. In this way a model is offered for the explanation of propositional content, i.e., of secondary intentionality, in terms of the mental content, i.e., of primary intentionality. According to Bergmann, the “classic” representationalist theories that attribute to a “Third” a role of causal mediation introduced a conception of intentionality of the propositional content (secondary intentionality) as being causally determined or “derived” from the primary or “intrinsic” intentionality of the internal mental states. It constitutes the premise to the last theory that affirms the priority of mental over propositional content, or the dependence of the world or reality on the mind. Assigning to minds a special role in the knowing situation is the conclusion of the thesis of double intentionality and the causal intermediation of representations. At the same time it reveals that tendency to idealism which, according to Bergmann, is part and parcel of all the analyses of the knowing situation

that attributes to a “Third” a mediating function between minds and world or reality.

Let us try to synthetically list Bergmann’s counter-arguments, which are, essentially, the *pars construens* of his critique of representationalism: (a) the reference to internal mental states is irrelevant for the purposes of determining the propositional content; (b) between mental acts and intentional contents, between “First” and “Second” there is no “Third” that acts as causal intermediary; (c) the intentional nexus is not an entity to be added to mental acts and the intentions of acts, i.e., to the “existents” of the mental world qualified by its asymmetry with respect to the “existents” of the truncated world.

(a) What does it mean that the propositional content, i.e., the content expressed by p in the proposition “A thinks/believes/expects that p ”, is independent from the existence of internal mental states? In ordinary terms, what does it mean that the content of a thought, desire, belief or expectation is not determined by what happens in the mind of people and, for example, the fact of rain cannot be derived from my desire that it rains? We can say that in the anti-representationalist perspective the internal mental states do not causally determine the propositional contents and are irrelevant for the purpose of determining those contents. So they are independent not only of the occurrence or non-occurrence of the situation that is thought, believed, wanted, expected, but also of its truth or falsity, as well as the correctness or incorrectness of the expression of those contents. In short, this means that intentionality does not belong to the sphere of reference of internal mental states, i.e., to the sphere of immanence or in-existence, if by this we mean, in the Brentanian way, the special realm of psychic phenomena.

(b) From the theory of the independence of the propositional content from mental content, Bergmann derives a special role for the intentional nexus in the knowing situation expressed by phrases such as “A thinks/believes/expects that p ”. Being neither physical nor mental, the intentional nexus M has no causal efficacy, despite being a genuine nexus that links entities belonging to different ontological categories. The fundamental motive justifying the explicative utility of the representations as causal intermediaries thus collapses, i.e., the appeal to a “Third”, and at the same time both the idea of a double intentionality and that of an explanation of the propositional content in terms of states or mental acts, also collapse. The propositional contents accordingly cease to be characterized by secondary or primary intentionality. The plea for causal intermediaries, i.e.,

the plea for a “Third”, neither helps explain the connection between a mental state (intrinsic or primary intentionality of mental contents) and a propositional content, nor does it give meaning to or indicate a correct use for the same propositional content (derived or secondary intentionality)⁷.

(c) From theses (a) and (b) arises the important corollary according to which in the analysis of the world inhabited by minds there is no need for additional ontological categories with respect to those employed for analysing the truncated world. Besides leading to the collapse of the theory of the specific role that mental representations are supposed to play in determining the relation between mental acts and the intentions of acts, (between “First” and “Second”), and so helping to resolve the problem of intentionality, this also refutes the idea of the asymmetry that, according to the prototype, characterises the constitutive entities of the truncated world with respect to the mental world. The anti-representationalist alternative, realism₂, substitutes this with the idea that the two types of analysis are, instead, perfectly symmetrical. The intentional nexus that links minds to the world, the “First” to the “Second”, is not the product of an internal relation between minds and the world, but an ontological category which, just like exemplification, has the status of a subsistent, whose nature is, as we have seen, analytic, logical and specific. In this way realistic₂ ontology also presents itself as the strongest antidote to the tendency to idealism implicit in the representationalist prototype, precisely in the same way that the realism of universals became the strongest alternative to nominalism.

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⁷ Wittgenstein, 1953, I, §§ 316-397 denied the possibility of a causal explanation of mental contents as well as the coordination of mental states or processes with internal brain mechanisms. See also Wittgenstein, 1937.

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THE PROBLEM OF ORDER IN RELATIONAL STATES OF AFFAIRS: A LEIBNIZIAN VIEW*

Abstract. States of affairs (facts) involving non-symmetric or asymmetric relations such as loving or fatherhood exhibit something like an “order” in accordance with which the *relata* are related. But what precisely is, from an ontological point of view, the order of a relational fact? Different views of relations and relational facts have been devised in an attempt to answer this question, notably by Russell in *The Principles of Mathematics* and in *Theory of Knowledge* and by the later Bergmann in *New Foundations of Ontology*. After discussing the shortcomings of some of the extant approaches, the Russellian ones in particular, this paper presents an alternative inspired by Leibniz, which takes advantage of ontological counterparts of the Leibnizian Latin connective *quatenus* and of thematic roles, such as “agent” and “patient”, often invoked by linguists.

1. *Introduction*

Consider these sentences:

(1) Romeo loves Juliet

and

(2) Juliet loves Romeo.

Let us neglect, for simplicity’s sake, issues of tense and time and take them as true, as the legend has it. Since they are true, they represent, we shall assume, two corresponding states of affairs or facts, i.e., Romeo’s loving Juliet and Juliet’s loving Romeo, respectively. Clearly, these two *relational* facts are different. Yet, at least *prima facie*, they do not differ by virtue of what we could call their *canonical constituents*, namely, in Russell’s terminology, the *relating relation* (loving in both cases) and the two *relata* or *terms* (Romeo and Juliet in both cases; they may also be called the *logical subjects* or *arguments* of these facts). How then should we characterize their difference, if it is not a difference in (canonical) constituents?

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Sentences (1) and (2) differ only in the order with which the singular terms “Romeo” and “Juliet” occur in them and many other pairs of true English sentences with this mere difference of order can be easily found. Thus, an English speaker could be tempted to say that, similarly, the difference we are after lies (merely) in the “order” with which Romeo and Juliet are related in the two relational facts in question. The same could be said of course for other relational facts, at least for those involving non-symmetric relations like loving or hating or asymmetric relations such as being on or being a father. For example, to express the fact that Eva is standing on Adam’s shoulders in an attempt to pick a certain apple, we could say:

(3) Eva is on Adam.

This sentence can be taken to correspond to a certain state of affairs. When they subsequently decide for a different arrangement, one with Adam on Eva’s shoulders, to speak truly we can say:

(4) Adam is on Eva.

The corresponding state of affairs is now a different one, and this simply because, we could again be tempted to say, it differs in “order” from the previous one. In fact, again, the two sentences that we have used differ merely in the order with which the relevant singular terms occur in them (alternatively, had Adam and Eva decided for the different arrangement to begin with, there would have been a state of affairs differing merely in order from the actual one).

As regards states of affairs involving a symmetric relation, such as being a sibling, or being adjacent, one could arguably maintain that no order occurs in them, witness the equivalence of sentences such as

(5) William and Henry are siblings

and

(6) Henry and William are siblings,

which surely do not stand for facts that differ in some canonical constituent. Indeed such sentences seem to stand for one and the same fact.

We could thus say that there is something like a *relational order* with which a non-symmetric or asymmetric relation R relates two items, an order somehow involved in the relational fact arising from the two items’ being related by R . This is fine as far as a rough and ready preliminary characterization goes. But what more precisely is, from an ontological point of view, this relational order with which a relation relates? This is the

problem of the order of relations, or, as I prefer to say, of relational states of affairs.

The one who first recognized it with utmost clarity, at least in contemporary philosophy, was perhaps Bertrand Russell in *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903; hereafter, POM), where he presented an account of the matter that was later to be rejected and replaced by a different view in his now well-known *Theory of Knowledge* 1913 manuscript (1984; hereafter, TOK). Bergmann failed to acknowledge this issue in his masterpiece *Realism* (1967), but subsequently the problem of order drove him to considerable changes in his later ontology (cf. his 1981 and 1992): to account for order he came to introduce the primitive notion of *diad*, something like an unordered set of two distinct objects. Bergmann students or scholars such as Hochberg (1987, 2001), Wilson (2007) and Tegtmeier (2004) have criticized this diad-based approach and have recommended other views. Hochberg opts for an amended version of that in TOK, Wilson prefers to go back to POM and Tegtmeier (2004) invokes a theory of his own based on the primitive notion of “ordinator”. Like Hochberg, Wilson and Tegtmeier I myself shall defend a view different from Bergmann’s, while maintaining in its essentials the spirit and methodology of his formal approach to ontology. In particular, like Bergmann, I shall appeal from the perspective of a given ontological theory to formal representations of states of affairs by means of complex symbols involving sub-symbols that correspond to entities that the theory in question is committed to. This will give us representations that can be said to be perspicuous, to the extent that the theory is accepted. As we shall see, my specific point of view on relational order, and relations in general, is inspired by Leibniz and, roughly speaking, exploits at the ontological level the linguist’s notion of thematic role.

2. *Some conventions and preliminary issues*

Although in due time I shall use, as promised above, theory-laden formal representations of states of affairs, I find it convenient to also appeal to semi-formal representations of states of affairs that are not meant to involve a commitment to a specific theory of relations. To get them, I enclose into asterisks a paraphrase of a sentence that purports to correspond to a state of affairs, a paraphrase obtained by singling out a name *R* for the relating relation of the state in question and by using a locution of

the form *R relates x to y*. Thus, for example, the facts corresponding to (1)-(6) are, respectively,

- (1a) *love relates Romeo to Juliet*,
- (2a) *love relates Juliet to Romeo*,
- (3a) *on relates Eva to Adam*,
- (4a) *on relates Adam to Eva*,
- (5a) *Sibling relates Henry to James*,
- (6a) *Sibling relates James to Henry*.

A fact of the form **R relates x to y** is taken to have *R*, *x* and *y* as (canonical) constituents, but, beyond this, at the pre-theoretical level at which this notation is meant to be used, no assumption is made as to which other constituents it may have¹.

These conventions can be useful for various purposes. In particular, they allow for the following definitions²: *R* is *symmetric* iff the existence of **R relates x to y** entails that **R relates y to x** also exists, *R* is *non-symmetric* iff it is possible that **R relates x to y** exists and **R relates y to x** does not, *R* is *asymmetric* iff the existence of **R relates x to y** entails the non-existence of **R relates y to x** (we can call a fact *symmetric*, *non-symmetric*, etc., depending on how we classify its relating relation). However, when there is no special need or is not appropriate to use a locution of the form *R relates x to y*, we may designate a state of affairs by simply enclosing into asterisks an English sentence. For, example, “*Romeo loves Juliet*” and “*Socrates is wise*” can be taken to stand for states of affairs. In the one corresponding to the latter there is a property *predicated* of Socrates, rather than a relating relation. We can also use asterisks to designate properties and relations that can occur as predicated or relating in states of affairs. For example, **on** is the relating relation of (3a).

¹ It is worth emphasizing that canonical constituents are identified at the pre-theoretical level (with the help of the “pre-theoretical notation” of the form **R relates x to y**), and thus in a sense whatever theory of relations we end up accepting, there are relating relations. For example, given that there is the fact (1a), there is the relating relation **love**. Different theories however will give us different accounts of relating relations. As we shall see, the Leibnizian approach that I shall propose views them as “attributive contents”, in a sense to be explained.

² In these definitions we presuppose that *R* is a relation for which it is possible that there are *x* and *y* such that **R relates x to y** exists.

It is customary to assign in a rigid way a degree or “arity” to a relation. Thus, for example, *love* and *hate* are taken to be dyadic, *give* and *between* triadic, and so forth. As we shall see, at least from the standpoint of the approach that I will propose, this may not be quite correct, but at any rate it may be taken as a convenient way of speaking for some purposes. Let us then say that we concentrate, for simplicity’s sake, on dyadic relations and thus on *dyadic* relational states of affairs, i.e., states involving as constituents just two *relata*. Whatever results we get can be generalized to relations and relational facts of higher degrees.

It is appropriate to make a distinction between *ordinary* and *formal* relations and accordingly between ordinary and formal states of affairs. Relations that link concrete individuals (*love*, *hate*, *on*, *adjacent*, etc.) are paradigmatic cases of ordinary relations. Relations that connect abstract entities to other entities, e.g., *exemplification* (which relates a property to a (concrete) instance of the property) and *determination* (which relates a determinable property, e.g., *red*, to each of its determinates, e.g., *crimson*) are paradigmatic cases of formal relations³. A state of affairs such as (1a), whose relating relation is ordinary, is an *ordinary* state of affairs. In contrast, a state of affairs involving a formal relating relation is a *formal* state of affairs. Thus, *Socrates is wise* is an ordinary state of affairs (on the assumption that it does not contain exemplification as a constituent). In contrast, *Socrates exemplifies wisdom* is formal (if it is taken to involve exemplification as a relating relation)⁴. Similarly, the state of affairs, *crimson is a determinate of red* is a formal state of affairs, if it is taken to have the determination relation as a relating relation. We shall concentrate in this paper on ordinary states of affairs. In fact, for reasons that will emerge in the following, relational order may be absent in formal states of affairs. Or at least, if there are formal states of affairs with relational order, the same Leibnizian approach to ordinary states of affairs that will be proposed below, could be transferred, *mutatis mutandis*, to the formal ones.

³ By and large, formal and ordinary relations are what Mulligan, 1998 calls “thin” and “thick” relations, respectively. Mulligan argues that “there are [...] no irreducibly thick relations” (p. 326). This claim is in the spirit of the Leibnizian view to be presented below. Unfortunately, I have no room here to discuss how his arguments connect to the view in question.

⁴ Whether we should distinguish between the ordinary *Socrates is wise* and the formal *Socrates exemplifies wisdom* is a complicated issue that has to do with Bradley’s regress. See note 18 below on this.

3. *States of affairs versus propositions*

Before we proceed, I should make it clear that I am committed to a sharp differentiation of propositions and states of affairs. Both are taken to be complex entities, i.e., they have constituents which are somehow combined together in a structure. However, intuitively, propositions are fine-grained entities in the conceptual realm and thus the properties and relations that occur in them as constituents are (in paradigmatic cases) *concepts* or *type I properties and relations* (in the terminology of Bealer, 1982). We might also say that they are *conceptual* properties and relations. On the other hand, typical states of affairs are coarse-grained entities in the natural world. The properties and relations that occur in them are not conceptual in nature, but are rather universals in the sense of Armstrong, 1997 (in Bealer's terminology, they are *qualities* and *connections*, or *type II properties and relations*).

I assume that for every sentence there is a corresponding proposition (its meaning), but only for true sentences there is a corresponding state of affairs. Thus, had Romeo not loved Juliet, the fact (1a) would not have existed and “*love relates Romeo to Juliet*” would have been an empty term⁵. Yet, the proposition expressed by (1) would have still existed. In order not to confuse this proposition with (1a), we could designate it, by appealing to bars rather than asterisks, as follows:

(1b) |Romeo loves Juliet|.

We can also use bars to designate the conceptual properties and relations typically occurring in propositions. Thus, |love| is a conceptual relation somehow corresponding to the relation *love* out there in the natural world, or at least something like that may be assumed for present purposes. Since propositions are more fine-grained than states of affairs, there could be different propositions corresponding to one and the same state of affairs. For example, the sentences “this statue is made of gold” and “this statue is made of Au atoms” may be taken to express different propositions that correspond to the same state of affairs. The idea is that, in turn, there are two conceptual properties, |made of gold| and |made of Au atoms|, which correspond to one and the same natural property.

⁵ My asterisk notation can in the end be interpreted by means of Russell's theory of description and thus there is no need to view, e.g., “*Clinton and Bush are siblings*” as referring to something like a Meinongian non-existing fact or as a non-referring term to be handled by a free logic.

I shall be concerned in this paper with states of affairs, although the approach that I present can be carried over, *mutatis mutandis*, to propositions. Not all philosophers accept a similar distinction between propositions and states of affairs and thus discuss the problem of order from the point of view of propositions, or perhaps from the point of view of a hybrid category of propositions / states of affairs. The Russell of POM is a clear-cut example of such a philosopher (although he uses the term “proposition” in appealing to this hybrid category). For present purposes, however, I treat these philosophers as if they espoused a distinction between propositions and facts in the way I do. And thus I consider their theories of relational order as views concerning states of affairs.

4. *Converse relations*

It is often assumed that every relation R has a *converse*, R^{-1} , a relation such that, if x is related by R to y , then necessarily y is related by R^{-1} to x . This surely makes sense for conceptual relations and propositions. For example, there is no problem in saying that the conceptual relation |loves| has a converse, |is loved by|, such that any two propositions of the form | x loves y | and | y is loved by x | are necessarily equivalent. Similarly, we can say that the conceptual relation |on| has a converse, |under|, such that, any two propositions of the form | x is on y | and | y is under x | are necessarily equivalent. The members of pairs of propositions of this kind can be said one the *converse* of the other. For example, (1b) has a converse, i.e., the proposition:

(1c) |Juliet is loved by Romeo|.

Similarly, in relation to (3a), we can distinguish two propositions, namely

(3b) |Eva is on Adam|

and its converse

(3c) |Adam is under Eva|.

Nevertheless, nothing like this can be taken for granted, if we are talking about non-conceptual relations and states of affairs. For it can quite plausibly be asserted that there is just one state of affairs corresponding to two true propositions, one of which is the converse of the other. And, if this is correct, there can hardly be in nature two non-conceptual relations corresponding, respectively, to a conceptual relation and its converse. Thus, one could say, there is just one fact, corresponding to both (1b) and

(1c), namely (1a), which we can designate equally well with both “*Juliet is loved by Romeo*” and “*love⁻¹ relates Juliet to Romeo*”. Similarly, there is just one fact corresponding to both (3b) and (3c), which could be designated equivalently by “*on relates Eva to Adam*”, “*under relates Adam to Eva*”, “*on⁻¹ relates Adam to Eva*”, “*under⁻¹ relates Eva to Adam*”. According to this perspective, the distinction between a relation and its converse should be operative only at the conceptual level. At the natural or non-conceptual level where states of affairs are at home, there is just one “neutral” relation **R** (e.g. **love** or **on/under**), possibly corresponding to different “biased” conceptual relations such as $|R|$ (e.g., $|loves|$ or $|on|$) and $|R^{-1}|$ (e.g., $|is\ loved\ by|$ or $|under|$). These are biased in that they have, so to speak, opposite “directions” (this use of the terms “neutral” and “biased” is adapted from Fine, 2000). We can resort to either $|R|$ or $|R^{-1}|$, in talking about a state of affairs, depending on the order with which we decide to refer to the *relata* of the state in question, but the fact that our linguistic and conceptual resources allow for both options should not be taken to imply that there are in nature, so to speak, two distinct relations corresponding to $|R|$ and $|R^{-1}|$. In other words, for example, the states (3a) and

(3a') **on⁻¹* (i.e., *under*) relates Adam to Eva*

are one and the same. Contrariwise, someone could argue that there is in nature a distinction corresponding to conceptual relations that differ only in direction, thereby implying, e.g., that there isn't just one (neutral) relation **on/under**, but two biased relations **on** and **under**. It seems plain that the former view is more economical, and thus, *ceteris paribus*, it should be preferred to the latter, by Ockham's razor.

5. Four principles

There are some crucial principles that emerge from § 1. They provide criteria of adequacy that a theory of relations must comply with. Here they are.

P1. If *R* is a non-symmetric relation, a fact **R* relates *x* to *y** can have a “reciprocal fact” **R* relates *y* to *x**, which differs from the former just in relational order. In synthesis, **R* relates *x* to *y** $\neq$ **R* relates *y* to *x**. Thus, for example, (1a) $\neq$ (2a).

P2. If *R* is an asymmetric relation, a fact **R* relates *x* to *y** can be replaced at a subsequent time by an “inverse fact” **R* relates *y* to *x**,

which differs from the former just in relational order (or, so to speak, in a possible world wherein $*R$ relates x to y^* does not exist, there can be the inverse fact $*R$ relates y to x^* in its stead). In synthesis, $*R$ relates x to $y^* \neq *R$ relates y to x^* . For example, (3a) $\neq$ (4a).

P3. If R is a symmetric relation, any state $*R$ relates x to y^* involves no relational order, and thus is identical to $*R$ relates y to x^* (since it does not differ from the latter in canonical constituents). In synthesis, $*R$ relates x to $y^* = *R$ relates y to x^* . Thus, for example, (5a) = (6a).

Moreover, the discussion in § 4 suggests that, *ceteris paribus*, we should prefer a theory that complies with this further principle:

P4. The distinction between a relation and its converse is only at the conceptual level, i.e., $*R$ relates x to $y^* = *R^{-1}$ relates y to x^* . Thus, e.g., (3a) = (3a')⁶.

We should provide at the very least a theory that complies with P1-P3. An approach that neglects P4 could be accepted only in the absence of a good theory that accommodates it. Before moving to my Leibnizian approach, it will be instructive to see how Russell's two theories deal with these principles.

6. Two Russellian views

As is well-known, in POM Russell rejects the doctrine that all relations are internal. Russell identifies two versions of it, the *monadistic* and the *monistic* (p. 221). The former, attributed to Leibniz and Lotze⁷, asserts that a relational fact, $*R$ relates x and y^* , is the conjunction of two monadic facts, $R_y(x)$ and $R_x(y)$, where R_y and R_x are two distinct properties somehow referring to y and x , respectively, and exemplified by x and y , respectively. The latter, attributed to Spinoza and Bradley, claims instead that $*R$ relates x and y^* is the monadic fact $R(xy)$, wherein xy is a whole composed of x and y and exemplifying R , taken to be a property. As the outlines of these views already illustrate, in dealing with a specific theory of relations and more generally facts, I use parentheses to indicate that we are dealing with

⁶ At the conceptual level we may notice that a relation R is a function, but its converse is not. Given P4, this point may have no obvious counterpart at the level of states of affairs.

⁷ Tegtmeier, 2004 calls this view "the property-view" and attributes it to Aristotle and Brentano.

a state of affairs resulting from the exemplification of a certain property (or, as we shall see, relation, if this is accepted by the theory in question). It is a characteristic of both the monadistic and the monistic approaches that all facts (or at least the most fundamental ones) are monadic (they have a subject/predicate form), since they all involve just one logical subject, which exemplifies a property.

We shall dwell here neither on the details of these two views nor on the good reasons put forth by Russell against them (cf. Wilson, 2007). In reacting to these approaches, Russell defends the thesis that there are external relations. By this he essentially means (at least in this context) that a relational fact, $*R$ relates x and y *, is best understood as involving at once two logical subjects, namely the two *relata* x and y , as exemplifying in one fell swoop, so to speak, the relating relation of the fact. Thus, given our convention about the use of parentheses, the fact in question is simply $R(x, y)$ (this view should be taken to imply, it seems to me, that different kinds of exemplification can be “activated” when a fact is brought about, depending on the number of logical subjects in the fact; this is somehow signalled by using commas to separate from one another the symbols corresponding to logical subjects in the representation of a fact, as in “ $R(x, y)$ ”). This acceptance of external relations will never be abandoned by Russell, but it is accompanied, in POM and TOK, by two different accounts of relational order. According to the view espoused by Russell in POM § 219, the difference in relational order between two otherwise identical states of affairs is due to their involving two relating relations that differ from one another merely in “sense” or “direction.” Hence, we could call this approach *directionalism*⁸. From its perspective, for example, the difference between the non-symmetric facts (1a) and (2a) is due to their “hosting” two relations, say love^d and love^{-d} , which differ from one another merely in direction (direction d in the first case and $-d$ in the second). That is, the two facts in question are, respectively:

(1a/D) $\text{love}^d(\text{Romeo}, \text{Juliet})$

and

(2a/D) $\text{love}^{-d}(\text{Romeo}, \text{Juliet})$.

Asymmetric facts can be dealt with in the same way, thereby taking, e.g., (3a) and (4a) as distinct. This suggests that directionalism complies with

⁸ Fine, 2000 calls it “the standard view”, but it is not obvious to me that this approach is any more standard than the one Russell defends in TOK. Actually, I would say the opposite.

P1 and P2. As regards symmetric relations, a directionalist may perhaps propose that they have no direction, in an attempt to comply with P3. For example, if there is just one relation, *sibling*, with no direction, then (5a) and (6a) must be identical, as required by P3. However, in essence, all this is achieved by admitting that at least some relations are, in their having directions, biased. That is, they have converses even though they belong to the non-conceptual realm (with which we are concerned now). The cost then is the rejection of P4. For example, (3a) and (3a') must be taken to be two distinct facts (differing only in the direction of their otherwise identical relating relations), namely:

(3a/D) on/under^d(Eva, Adam)

and

(3a'/D) on/under^d(Adam, Eva).

According to the view defended by Russell in TOK (Part I, ch. 7 and Part II, ch. 1), the difference in relational order between two otherwise identical states of affairs is due to their having the same *relata* as occurring in different “positions” in the two states. Hence, we can dub this view *positionalism*⁹. Thus, for example, the very same relating relation, love, and the same *relata*, Romeo and Juliet, occur in both (1a) and (2a). However, two positions can be distinguished in these states, which we can conventionally call the *first* and the *second* position, respectively. The two states differ in that in the former Romeo occurs in first position and Juliet in second, whereas the opposite is true as regards the latter. The states in question accordingly are:

(1a/P) love(Romeo, Juliet)

and

(2a/P) love(Juliet, Romeo).

Facts such as (3a) and (4a) can be similarly distinguished. As these examples illustrate, this approach complies with P1 and P2. To deal with P3, the positionalist may want to claim that symmetric relations do not give rise to difference in position, which explains why, e.g., (5a) and (6a) are identical¹⁰. As Russell sees it (1984, p. 111), positions are relations between terms and states of affairs that have the terms as constituents. These

⁹ This is the name chosen by Fine, 2000, who however does not attribute this approach to Russell. Armstrong, 1997, § 8.2, accepts this view.

¹⁰ In TOK Russell says explicitly something like this (1984, p. 112), but, as we shall see, there may be reasons to question this point.

relations must obtain for the state of affairs to exist, thereby giving rise to other facts. For example, the existence of (1a/P) requires that, in addition to it, there also exist these further (formal, we may say) states:

(1a/P1) Romeo is in first position in the state (1a)

and

(1a/P2) Juliet is in second position in the state (1a).

Russell notes (1984, pp. 111-112) that there is no vicious regress in this explanation, since these new states of affairs are, in my terminology, “necessarily asymmetric” (see below). In fact, as we shall see in more detail below, these states of affairs can be taken to lack relational order.

7. Criticism of the Russellian views

Apart from reasons that need not concern us here, Russell comes to prefer positionalism to directionalism, because the former, contrary to the latter, complies with P4 (1984, p. 87). For clearly, according to positionalism, all relations are neutral. Thus, for instance, (3a) and (3a') are indeed one and the same state, which we could however represent in two different ways, depending on which convention we adopt regarding who is in first position and who is in second:

(3a/P) on/under(Eva, Adam)

and

(3a'/P) on/under(Adam, Eva).

Principle P4 has been questioned (Tegtmeier, 2004). But even if we neglect it, directionalism is not satisfactory. First of all, it is ontologically committed to directions that allegedly characterize relations, but it is not clear what they really are. And without fully understanding this, it is not clear why non-symmetric and asymmetric relations should have them, whereas symmetric ones should not. Except for the fact that by denying directions to the latter we comply with P3. But this seems rather *ad hoc*. Further, there is a more serious problem with non-symmetric relations. For example, since both (1) and (2) are true, directionalism appears committed to acknowledging, in addition to (1a/D) and (2a/D), these other states of affairs:

(1a'/D) love^{-d}(Juliet, Romeo)

and

(2a'/D) love^d(Juliet, Romeo)

(intuitively, the four states in question are: *Romeo loves Juliet*, *Romeo is loved by Juliet*, *Juliet is loved by Romeo* and *Juliet loves Romeo*). We now have the following problem. There are facts, e.g., (1a/D) and (2a'/D) (intuitively, *Romeo loves Juliet* and *Juliet loves Romeo*), which involve the very same *relata* and the same relating relation, love^d. Yet, they are different. It looks as if they differ just in relational order, and yet we cannot say that this is due to the different directions of their relating relations, for they have the very same relating relation, love^d, with the same direction, d. Hence, directionalism does not really succeed in explaining what it was supposed to explain and Russell was certainly right in abandoning it in favour of the more sophisticated positionalism.

But how is it possible that terms can have different positions in a state of affairs? The fact that they can suggests that relations must have an inner structure. It should then come as no surprise that Russell speaks, metaphorically, of “hooks” and “eyes” in a relation:

It would thus seem that a relation must have essentially some “from and to” character, even in its most abstract form, like a goods-truck has a hole in front and an eye behind. The hook and the eye are of course merely symbolic; but they have the merit of illustrating the main fact about relations, which is that there is something in their nature that cries out for terms, some sort of grappling apparatus which is always looking out for things to grapple on to. (Russell, 1984, p. 86)

In presenting positionalism, Fine speaks, instead of hooks and eyes, of something like Fregean holes of different shapes. Less pictorially we can say, following Fine, that relations have “argument places” that can be filled by *relata* and that occur in no particular order in a relation. They are fixed in number, so that we can speak of dyadic relations, triadic relations, and so forth¹¹. Thus, says Fine, *love* has (with no order) a “lover” argument place and a “beloved” argument place. The idea is, e.g., that a fact such as (1a/P) comes around in that Romeo and Juliet fill the *lover* and the *beloved* argument places, respectively. Accordingly, we could add, it cannot exist without bringing with it the further facts (1a/P1) and (1a/P2) (here we assume that we have conventionally decided to use “first” to indicate the filling of the *lover* argument place and “second” to indicate the filling of the *beloved* argument place).

Fine, 2000 presents an argument against positionalism, which I reconstruct as follows. It is part and parcel of this view that all relations, including symmetric ones, must have argument places. Indeed, this should be

¹¹ Cf. Russell, 1984, p. 80, and Fine, 2000, p. 10.

conceded, if we recall Russell's claim that relations have «something in their nature that cries out for terms». The argument places would be precisely what gives relations this kind of nature and thus all relations must have them. In particular, dyadic symmetric relations would have two of them. Since they are not given in any particular order, they must intrinsically differ from one another. Thus, for example, the symmetric relation of adjacency should be assumed to have two distinct argument places (*Next* and *Nixt*, says Fine). If this is right, positionalism cannot really comply with P3. For instance, it must admit that (5a) and (6a) are two distinct facts. In the former, let us say, Henry fills the *sibling_1* argument place and James the *sibling_2* argument place, whereas things go the opposite way in the other fact.

There is a further problem. Positionalism seems committed to argument places as ultimate ingredients in the ontological furniture of the world, «entities in their own right», as Fine (2000, p. 16) puts it. But, just as it is not sufficiently clear what the directions of directionalism are, a similar charge can be put forward with respect to the argument places of positionalism. For even if we describe argument places as what accounts for the fact that relations «cry out for terms», we are still too much in the dark about their nature. This emerges if we consider this question. Can two relations have the same argument place in pretty much the sense in which a property such as roundness (understood as a universal) can be shared by different round objects? To put it otherwise, are arguments places something like particulars linked to a specific relation or are they something like universals spread across different relations? For example, is the *lover* argument place of the relation *love* the same as the *hater* argument place of *hate* or are they distinct? According to Fine, each relation has its own particular argument places (2000, p. 12), except perhaps in special cases (note 6, p. 12). But it is not clear at all on which grounds this question could be answered one way or another and in fact all that Fine says on behalf of his answer is: «I doubt that there is any reasonable basis, under positionalism, for identifying the argument-place of one relation with an argument-place of another» (Fine, 2000, p. 12)¹².

As an alternative to directionalism and positionalism, Fine, 2000 tries to account for relational order without assuming that relations have an internal structure, whether coming from directions or from argument places (p. 20). He does this, by proposing that two relations can be “completed” in the same manner by two groups of *relata* (p. 20). In turn, this “co-

¹² For further criticisms of positionalism see Wilson, 2007 and Tegtmeier, 2004.

mannered completion” (p. 23) is explained by recourse to the idea that two facts can be seen as resulting from one another by simultaneously substituting the *relata* of the first one for the *relata* of the second one and vice versa (p. 25). These substitutional operations are supposed to explain co-mannered completion without presupposing that there really are manners of completions, recourse to them being out of place if relations have no internal structure. Yet, in spite of Fine’s efforts to argue to the contrary, I feel that we can hardly dismiss the impression that there cannot be co-mannered completion without manners of completion and thus internal structure in relations.

In sum, it seems to me that there are problems in the two Russellian views and in Fine’s alternative to them. And I believe that the same can be said of the other alternatives in the extant literature mentioned above¹³. Perhaps the problems can be defused, or perhaps there are other approaches in the literature¹⁴, which, for lack of space or mere ignorance, have not been considered here and that work perfectly well. Be this as it may, in the comparative spirit of Castañeda’s (1980) dia-philosophical methodology, it is always legitimate to work out a new account of a problem or cluster of problems, to the extent that the account complies with the relevant data and criteria of adequacy (in our case, mainly, P1-P4). Of course, when we spot problems in some if not all of the already available approaches, the motivations in favour of the new theory are stronger. A commendable dia-philosophical attitude and the foregoing criticisms of some of the extant views should then incline us to seriously consider the Leibnizian view promised in the introduction, or so I hope. Accordingly, I shall reserve to it the remaining sections of this paper.

8. *Leibniz’s quatenus*

To honour Leibniz, let us switch for a moment from Romeo and Juliet to the characters of a stock example of the great German philosopher,

¹³ The troubles in the monistic and monadistic views have not been considered explicitly, but I have referred to Russell’s criticism of them. Moreover, a problem for the latter will be discussed below. As regards, Bergmann’s diad-based accounts, I have referred to criticisms by Hochberg, Tegtmeier and Wilson. Tegtmeier’s approach based on ordinator awaits further clarification of what these entities are and in any case a theory not committed to them seems, *ceteris paribus*, preferable.

¹⁴ There is for example the approach in Dorr, 2004, which in effect neutralizes the problem of relational order by arguing that all relations are symmetric.

namely, Paris and Helen. In the original Latin formulation, the example¹⁵ is:

(7) *Paris amat Helenam* (Paris loves Helen).

According to Leibniz, a perspicuous paraphrase of (7) is given by:

(7a) *Paris est amator et eo ipso Helena est amata* (Paris is a lover and by the same token Helen is beloved).

Sentence (7), when appropriately placed in the whole body of Leibniz's writings on relations, reveals an important point that Russell neglects in attributing monadism to Leibniz, namely the fact that, according to the latter, there is a connective corresponding to the Latin expression *et eo ipso*, which is crucial in perspicuously expressing relational facts. It may be easily confused with conjunction, but, as we shall see, its role cannot be fulfilled by conjunction¹⁶. As a variant of *et eo ipso* Leibniz also uses *quatenus*, a Latin word translatable as *insofar as*. Let us then use the latter expression as our canonical way to express in English the connective that Leibniz has in mind. At the propositional/conceptual level the connective then is: |insofar as|.

The risk of confusing it with conjunction comes from the fact that both connectives obey rules of simplification and transposition, as we may call them. For instance, we can infer, by simplification,

(8) John is eating

from

(9) John is eating insofar as the best meal ever cooked is being eaten,
just as we can infer (8) from

(10) John is eating and Mary is drinking.

And we can infer, by transposition, (9') and (10') below from (9) and (10), respectively.

(9') the best meal ever cooked is being eaten insofar as John is eating.

(10') Mary is drinking and John is eating.

¹⁵ For the Leibnizian sources inspiring the approach defended here, including the text with the example in question, see Orilia, 2000 and Mugnai, 1992. In that paper the issue of relations is tackled from a semantic point of view. Here I focus on ontology.

¹⁶ In fairness to Russell, it must be added that the famous Leibnizian passage that he considers in POM, § 213, when he attributes monadism to Leibniz, makes no mention of the special connective in question.

However, that these two connectives are different can be most readily seen by noting that conjunction grants a rule of composition that has no analogue with |insofar as|. In fact, given (8) and

(11) Mary is drinking,

we can infer (10). But we cannot similarly infer (9) from (8) and

(11) the best meal ever cooked is being eaten.

For all that (8) and (11) tell us, someone other than John may be the lucky one who is eating the best meal ever cooked. In contrast, (9) tells us that this lucky man is John.

The above examples tell us that |insofar as| can link two propositions, such as the ones expressed by (8) and (11). But in fact it can link more than two of them, as illustrated by

(12) John is eating insofar as the best meal ever cooked is being eaten insofar as Mary's spoon is used,

which renders more perspicuously, from our Leibnizian perspective, the proposition expressed by "John is eating the best meal ever cooked with Mary's spoon". As this example suggests, this is a perspective wherefrom there is no fixed degree for relations: |eat| may be viewed as triadic (example (12)), dyadic (example (9)) or even monadic (example (8)). The same, I propose, is true of *eat* and other ordinary relations at the non-conceptual level of states of affairs, to which we move in the next section.

9. Some Leibnizian laws

The basic claim I want to make is that we can understand relational facts by acknowledging in our ontological inventory at the non-conceptual level a formal relation corresponding to the concept |insofar as|. The idea is that for there to be an ordinary relational state of affairs this formal relation must be, so to speak, activated. We can appropriately call it *RFC*, by taking this name as an acronym coming from "Relational Fact Constitution". I shall represent RFC by resorting to slashes and commas so as to signal its activation, as we shall see below. RFC is activated when it puts together appropriate monadic states of affairs, thereby generating a relational state of affairs. In Leibniz's classical example the monadic states are *Paris is a lover* and *Helen is beloved*. Monadic states of affairs involve, I also want to claim, an *attributed* property (or more simply *attribute*), corresponding in typical cases to nouns such as "lover", "eater", "beloved",

“eaten”, etc. Attributed properties are complex in the sense that they result somehow from the composition of an *attributive content* and an *onto-thematic role*. The former is the component shared, e.g., by attributes such as *lover* and *beloved* on the one hand and *eater* and *eaten* on the other hand. The latter is what is shared, e.g., by the properties *lover* and *eater* on the one hand and *beloved* and *eaten*, on the other hand. Onto-thematic roles are so-called because, intuitively, they are the ontological counterparts of the thematic roles invoked by linguists (e.g., “agent”, “subject”, “patient”, “object” or “theme”, “instrument”, “beneficiary”, etc.).

We can distinguish two kinds of attributed properties, those that result from an attributive content characterizable as a property, say, *wisdom* and those that result from an attributive content characterizable as a *neutral relation*, e.g., *love* or *eat*. Those of the former kind, for instance the one corresponding to “wise”, can be called *autonomous* attributes. Those of the latter kind, e.g., those corresponding to “lover” or “eaten”, are instead *relational* attributes. Linguists often treat the thematic roles “subject” and “agent” as interchangeable, but perhaps it is more appropriate to use “agent” only to indicate the presence of some sort of activity. I thus propose to use “agent” to indicate an onto-thematic role adequate to relations such as *love* or *eat* and the more generic “subject” to indicate an onto-thematic role suitable for properties such as *wisdom*. To represent the composition of an attributive content and an onto-thematic role, which generates an attributed property, we can use brackets. Thus, for example, “love[agent]” stands for the attribute corresponding to “lover” and “wisdom[subject]” for the attribute corresponding to “wise.” It should be admitted, I think, that the brackets in a locution such as “love[agent]” or “wisdom[subject]” indicate the presence of a formal relation linking an attributive content and an onto-thematic role. Such a relation I call *attribute constitution* (AC, in short).

With all this in mind, the state of affairs (1a), *love relates Romeo to Juliet*, is:

(1a/L) /love[agent](Romeo), love[patient](Juliet)/.

As with the Russellian theories considered above, I have used parentheses to indicate that a relation of exemplification is at play. In other words, the existence of the state of affairs (1a/L), according to the present proposal, involves the existence of two further states of affairs as constituents, namely love[agent](Romeo) and love[patient](Juliet). They exist in that Romeo and Juliet exemplify the properties of being lover, love[agent], and

of being beloved, love[patient], respectively. These two states of affairs are combined into a further state of affairs by the formal relation RFC, represented by “/...,/.” Accordingly, we get the relational fact (1a/L). Similarly, we could get a fact with more than two “sub-facts,” e.g., /eat[agent](John), eat[patient](M), eat[instrument](S)/ (corresponding to sentence (12))¹⁷.

It is particularly appropriate in this approach to emphasize the distinction between *primary* and *secondary* (or more generally *nested*) constituents of a fact. Roughly, the former are combined by a formal relation so as to give rise to a fact. The latter are constituents of the former. Thus, for example, the primary constituents of (1a/L) are love[agent](Romeo) and love[patient](Juliet). Romeo, Juliet and *love*, occur in this state of affairs only as nested constituents. In other words, the *relata* and the relating relation of (1a) (i.e., (1a/L), according to the present view) occur in that state as nested constituents. The distinction between primary and nested constituents helps us dismiss a possible objection against this Leibnizian approach, namely that it merely tells us that two facts such as love[agent](Romeo) and love[patient](Juliet) are related (by RFC), rather than explaining to us how the *relata* Romeo and Juliet of *love relates Romeo to Juliet* are related¹⁸. We can answer that, by being nested constituents of (1a/L), Romeo and Juliet are in effect related by a relation that “emerges” from this fact and that we can represent by using dots: /love[agent](...), love[patient](...)/¹⁹.

Clearly, RFC must be viewed as a relation that can connect only monadic states of affairs such as love[agent](Romeo) and love[patient](Juliet),

¹⁷ We may wonder whether the formal relations needed to generate a fact such as (1a/L), namely exemplification, RFC and AC (i) are in some sense constituents of (1a/L) or rather (ii) ground the existence of a fact from outside, e.g., by being constituents of other facts that “back up” (1a/L). The issue has to do with Bradley’s regress and may be sidestepped as far as most of the concerns of this paper go. However, the view defended in Orilia, 2007 leads to option (ii), which I somehow presuppose in the final section below.

¹⁸ Tegtmeier, 2004 considers a similar objection against monadism.

¹⁹ One might think that, given that (1a) turns out to be analyzed as (1a/L), the relating relation of (1a) is not really *love* but RFC or, more specifically, the emerging relation /love[agent](...), love[patient](...)/. This is not quite correct, however, because a relating relation is identified at the pre-theoretical level. It is more appropriate to say that, according to the Leibnizian view, a relating relation such as *love* turns out to be an attributive content, which is relating insofar as it contributes, *qua* attributive content, to the fact (1a/L).

which can be called *relationally* monadic in that they involve relational attributes, love[agent] and love[patient] in our example. More specifically, RFC can connect relationally monadic states of affairs which are mutually *homogeneous* in the sense that they all involve the same neutral relation, *love* in our example. In other words, we must obviously rule out (i) state of affairs such as /dog[subject](Fido), cat[subject](Felix)/ (Fido is a dog insofar as Felix is a cat), because *dog* and *cat* are properties and not neutral relations; and (ii) facts such as /love[agent](Romeo), hate[patient](Helen)/ (Romeo is a lover insofar as Helen is hated), because love[agent](Romeo) and hate[patient](Helen) are not homogeneous in that they involve different neutral relations.

On the basis of what we have just said and the discussion about |insofar as| above, we can assume these “Leibnizian” laws for states of affairs:

(Ex Cond) The fact $/s_1, s_2/$ exists only if there are a neutral relation R , onto-thematic roles r_1 and r_2 and items x and y such that $s_1 = R[r_1](x)$ and $s_2 = R[r_2](y)$.

(Simpl) The existence of the relational fact $/s_1, s_2/$ entails the existence of both s_1 and s_2 .

(No Comp) The existence of two monadic facts s_1 and s_2 does not entail the existence of the relational fact $/s_1, s_2/$.

(Transp) $/s_1, s_2/ = /s_2, s_1/$.

10. *A comparison with monadism and the conditions of adequacy*

It is instructive to briefly compare the present approach to monadism. According to the latter, rather than relational properties such as love[agent] and love[patient], there are properties such as lover_{Juliet} (lover with respect to Juliet) and beloved_{Romeo} (beloved with respect to Romeo), which are relational by way of involving a reference to a certain specific entity (Juliet or Romeo in our example). Moreover, instead of appealing to RFC, monadism appeals to conjunction (at the ontological level). Thus, monadism, in contrast to my Leibnizian view, has the problem of explaining how there can be a property with a reference to another entity such as lover_{Juliet}. If this hurdle is eschewed by simply appealing to properties, such as *lover* and *beloved*, devoid of any such reference, the following problem arises. Given the truth of (1) and (7), there should be, according to this “simplified

monadism,” facts involving conjunction (at the non-conceptual level) such as these:

(1a/SM) lover(Romeo) AND beloved(Juliet);

(7a/SM) lover(Paris) AND beloved(Helen).

Since these two facts are each a conjunction of two “smaller” facts, it seems to follow that there is, e.g., this other conjunctive fact:

(1+7/SM) lover(Romeo) AND beloved(Helen).

But, if so, according to simplified monadism, we should also accept the unwelcome conclusion that this other sentence is also true:

(1+7) Romeo loves Helen.

To avoid this, we can resort to RFC rather than conjunction, but as we do this we have in practice abandoned monadism in favour of the Leibnizian approach that I am defending here, or at least something similar.

And to embrace this Leibnizian approach is not too bad after all, since, as we can easily verify, it complies with the principles P1-P4. In general, it claims that an ordinary relational fact, $*R$ relates x to y^* , has a relational order when it amounts to $/R[r_1](x), R[r_2](y)/$, i.e., contains as constituents two facts, $R[r_1](x)$ and $R[r_2](y)$, such that r_1 and r_2 are two different onto-thematic roles. Clearly, two relational facts such as $/R[r_1](x), R[r_2](y)/$ and $/R[r_1](y), R[r_2](x)/$ are different (as they have different primary constituents) and, on the basis of what we have just said, we can add that they differ (just) in relational order. Thus, P1 is complied with, for this approach appropriately distinguishes between two non-symmetric relational facts such as (1a) and (2a). The former is, as we have seen, (1a/L). The latter is

(2a/L) /love[agent](Juliet), love[patient](Romeo)/,

differing from the former in relational order. Similarly, we can distinguish between an asymmetric relational fact such as (3a) and its subsequent or hypothetical counterpart (4a) and thus P2 is also dealt with. As regards P3, note first that nothing in this approach precludes RFC from putting together two relational facts involving the exemplification of the very same attribute $R[r]$. Indeed we can claim that this is precisely what happens when a symmetric state of affairs is brought about. For example, we can assume (at least for illustrative purposes) that “sibling” corresponds to a (rather specialized) onto-thematic role that should go together with a neutral relation corresponding to “consanguineous”. With this in mind the fact (5a) is

(5a/L) /consanguineous[sibling](Henry),
consanguineous[sibling](James)/.

Similarly, the fact (6a) is:

(6a/L) /consanguineous[sibling](James),
consanguineous[sibling](Henry)/.

As required by P3, (5a/L) and (6a/L) are, by (Transp), one and the same fact. Finally, as regards P4, note that, from the present perspective, it is appropriate to distinguish at the non-conceptual level between a relation and its converse only in the sense that we can have two relational attributes such as $R[r_1]$ and $R[r_2]$. For example, by assuming that “on” and “under” correspond to onto-thematic roles that can be coupled with a neutral relation corresponding to, say, “relative-position,” we can have an attribute, relative-position[on], and a corresponding converse, relative-position[under]. With this in mind, we could say that the facts (3a) and (3a′) are, respectively:

(3a/L) /relative-position[on](Eva), relative-position[under](Adam)/,

(3a′/L) /relative-position[under](Adam), relative-position[on](Eva)/²⁰.

And this shows that P4 is complied with, for, by (Transp), (3a/L) and (3a′/L) are identical.

11. *No circularity*

The present view crucially appeals to three formal *relations*, RFC, AC and exemplification, in order to account for relational order. In order to avoid the charge of circularity, we must verify that they do not give rise to relational order. If they do not, we have a licence to use them²¹. The matter is

²⁰ Note that treating “sibling,” “under” and “on” as corresponding to onto-thematic roles at this *theoretical* level is not in contradiction with the assumption, made in §§ 1-2, that there are, at the *pre-theoretical* level the relations *sibling*, *under* and *on*. At the pre-theoretical level we understand that “sibling” somehow corresponds to something relational and at the theoretical level we decompose this something into an attributive content and an onto-thematic role and we decide to use “sibling” for the onto-thematic role rather than for the attributive content. The Leibnizian view need not be committed to these details, of course. For example, we may identify the pre-theoretical *sibling* with sibling[subject], thereby using “sibling” for an attributive content.

²¹ In TOK Russell takes advantage of analogous licences in his defence of positionalism.

easy as regards RFC. As the law (Transp) testifies, RFC is a symmetric relation and *qua* such it cannot give rise to relational order: $/s_1, s_2/$ and $/s_2, s_1/$ are one and the same fact, a fact with no relational order. The issue becomes more complicated when we come to exemplification and AC. Let us consider them in turn.

Take exemplification first. It is involved somehow in a monadic state $P(x)$, which exists to the extent that x exemplifies P . If it were possible that a state of affairs $P(x)$ could co-exist with a state $x(P)$, someone could say that we have two facts that differ only in relational order, namely *exemplification relates P to x^* and *exemplification relates x to P^* . In other words, relational order is brought about already by monadic states of affairs, as they require the relation of exemplification. And thus we should not freely appeal to them in explaining relational order. If we focus on the case in which x is a concrete object, we may simply dismiss the objection by noting that there just cannot be a fact such as $x(P)$, which shows that exemplification is necessarily asymmetric. For a relation R is *necessarily asymmetric* iff it is possible that the fact $*R$ relates a to b^* exists (a fact which we can also call *necessarily asymmetric*), but it is impossible that $*R$ relates b to a^* exists. The point is that there is no need to assume that there is relational order in a necessarily asymmetric state of affairs $*R$ relates a to b^* , for there just cannot be a reciprocal or inverse state $*R$ relates b to a^* that differ from the former in relational order. Intuitively, Socrates exemplifies wisdom and other properties, but he cannot be exemplified by anything, since he is a person and not a property. Hence, there is no relational order that differentiates *Socrates exemplifies wisdom* from *wisdom exemplifies Socrates*, for the latter just cannot be around.

Yet, someone might insist that there are “type-free” cases of exemplification, which show that the formal relation in question is not necessarily asymmetric after all. For example, one might say, there are two states such as abstract(property) (corresponding to the proposition |being abstract is a property|) and property(abstract) (corresponding to the proposition |being a property is an abstract entity|) which differ only in relational order. However, even if we admit this type-free exemplification, it is sufficient to look at the matter more closely to see that there is no real problem from the present perspective. For exemplification always requires, according to our Leibnizian approach, not just a property P , but an attributed property $P[r]$. Thus, $P[r](Q)$ can exist, but $Q(P[r])$ cannot, which shows that exemplification is, in general, necessarily asymmetric. It can relate $P[r]$ to Q but not Q to $P[r]$. Thus, we should consider, rather than property(abstract) and

abstract(property), these two states of affairs: property[subject](abstract) and abstract[subject](property). With states of this form there is no need to appeal to relational order to explain why they differ, for they have different primary constituents.

Let us now deal with AC. Someone might argue as follows. The existence of an attribute $P[r]$ presupposes a fact such as $*AC$ relates P to r^* . But why should we exclude the existence of $r[P]$? If there is such a thing then there is also a fact such as $*AC$ relates r to P^* , which differs from the former fact in relational order. We can defuse this objection, by noting that onto-thematic roles are best viewed as very generic properties that can be “adverbially modified” so as to render them more specific. For example, $*walking^*$ is a determinable property that can be adverbially modified by determinants such as $*quickly^*$ or $*slowly^*$ so as to generate more determinate properties, i.e., $*walking quickly^*$ and $*walking slowly^*$. Similarly, we can say that $*agent^*$ and $*patient^*$ are very generic determinable properties with respect to which $*love^*$ and $*hate^*$ can act as determinants, so as to produce the more determinate properties $love[agent]$, $hate[agent]$, $love[patient]$, $hate[patient]$. In other words, the AC relation is necessarily asymmetric, since it can only relate a determinable to a determinant, but not vice versa. Thus, there cannot be, for instance, $agent[love]$, in addition to $love[agent]$.

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SINGULAR PROPOSITIONS AS POSSIBLE STATES OF AFFAIRS

Abstract. In this paper I will maintain that from a *metaphysical* point of view, singular propositions are nothing but possible states of affairs. This idea has various merits: it accounts for the spurious propositional character of singular propositions, it enables one to avoid Bradley's regress, and, last but not least, it can vindicate one of the probably most obscure theses of Meinong, namely that objectives may be underfactual (*untertatsächlich*). Moreover, this metaphysical view of singular propositions will enable me to defend, from an *ontological* point of view, a deflationary view of singular propositions, along the way recently developed by Schiffer (2003) yet originally pursued by Wittgenstein (1961²) precisely with respect to possible states of affairs: once we admit in our ontology both objects and modal properties, it is trivially the case that we also admit possible states of affairs, i.e., singular propositions.

I. Following the wake of the 'direct reference'-theory in philosophy of language – the theory according to which the truth-conditional contribution of at least certain singular terms such as proper names and indexicals is just their reference –, singular propositions have recently become very popular. For they have been proposed to be what the truth-conditional meaning of a sentence containing a directly referential term really amounts to: for a sentence to have that truth-conditional meaning is to express a singular proposition¹. Yet their nature has remained rather controversial. In the standard interpretation, they are ordered, or even structured, couples of objects and properties: the respective referents of the directly referential singular terms and of the predicates occurring in the sentences that express them².

In this interpretation, however, singular propositions raise traditional objections, for example the one according to which a nonsensical sentence such as

(1) Alberto kicks 2

¹ In point of fact, however, it is not mandatory for a direct reference theorist to equate that truth-conditional meaning with a singular proposition. Cf. on this Almog, 1991, and Marti, 1995. I will come back on this later.

² For these proposals, cf. notoriously Kaplan, 1989, pp. 483-486, 496 and fn. 23, and Braun, 1993.

would turn out to express a singular proposition of the form $\langle \{ \text{Alberto} \}, \{ 2 \}, \text{kicking} \rangle$ and therefore appearances notwithstanding should be counted as a meaningful sentence³. Thus, let me propose here a different interpretation, according to which singular propositions are nothing but *possible states of affairs*. Let me explain.

As is well known, the notion of a possible (atomic) state of affairs has been gloriously mobilized by Wittgenstein (1961²)⁴. According to a suitable interpretation of Wittgenstein's conception, a possible state of affairs is an immediate nexus of certain metaphysically simple objects, i.e., it is nothing but such objects' having a certain modal property, the property of *being possibly combined (in a certain way W)*⁵. Possible states of affairs may well subsist as well as not subsist. Those possible states of affairs which actually subsist are facts, the actually nonsubsistent ones remain instead mere possibilities; they might have subsisted. Moreover, given this conception there are nothing but possible *atomic* states of affairs. Properly speaking, in fact, there are no possible *complex* states of affairs, for those states would have to contain propositional connectives among their constituents; yet such connectives cannot be for Wittgenstein referents of directly referential terms ("names", in Wittgenstein's terminology), hence they cannot be constituents of possible states of affairs. Atomic possible states of affairs are moreover what atomic sentences ("elementary propositions", in Wittgenstein's terminology) present, their meaning; they coincide with those sentences' truth-conditions.

Here I do not intend to buy Wittgenstein's articulated metaphysics, if not for the following points. To my mind, a possible state of affairs is nothing but the instantiation of a certain modal property of the form *being possibly F* on some individuals' part. In this respect, both the instantiation on Berlusconi's part of the modal property of *being possibly a communist* and the instantiation on G.W. Bush's and Osama bin Laden's part of the modal property of *being possibly allied with* are two distinct possible states of affairs, the first one being a definitely actually nonsubsistent item – i.e.,

³ As Wittgenstein, 1961², 5.541, 5.5422 puts it, if a proposition were something like an object a subject is in a cognitive relation with, it would be possible for one to judge a nonsense.

⁴ But not only there. The notion was very famous in the Austro-German philosophy at those times. Cf. Mulligan, 1985.

⁵ The reason why I put this specification into brackets is that according to certain interpretations of Wittgenstein's text, simple objects possibly combine together *directly*, i.e., without the mediation of any mode of combination. I cannot delve into these subtleties here; for more about that, cf. Frascolla, 2007.

a mere possibility – the second one, well, who knows. Moreover, in my interpretation these two possible states of affairs are the two singular propositions that the sentences:

(2) Berlusconi is a communist

(3) G.W. Bush is allied with Osama bin Laden

respectively express, insofar as those possibilities coincide with the two sentences' respective truth-conditions.

In point of fact, I tend to read the original notion of a singular proposition Russell, 1937² actually defended (though not under this label) as being pretty close to this notion of a possible state of affairs. As is well known, Russell's original conception of a singular proposition is that of a complex which is not conceptual or anyway specifically semantic. Even though the way in which Russell addressed the problem of how the complex's elements are tied together in a singular proposition does not resort to modal properties *à la* Wittgenstein⁶, the similarities between the two accounts are impressive. First, the constituents of a singular proposition are for Russell worldly entities such as objects and properties, not conceptual or anyway specifically semantic entities like Fregean senses⁷. Second, Russell took *being true* and *being false* as primitive properties of (singular) propositions in the very same sense as Wittgenstein took *subsisting* and *nonsubsisting* as primitive properties of possible states of affairs⁸; a singular proposition may be true as well as false in the very same way as a possible state of affairs may subsist as well as not subsist⁹; true propositions are facts precisely as subsisting states of affairs are¹⁰.

⁶ At that time Russell thought that there are two ways for elements to enter into a proposition, either as terms or as concepts, i.e., as entities that play the role of connecting terms in a proposition. (In point of fact, unlike things, concepts can also enter into the propositions as terms, but then they have no longer the connecting role). Cf. Russell, 1937², pp. 44-45. In this respect, when concepts so entering into the proposition are relations, they work as relating relations. Cf. Russell, 1937², pp. 49-50, 100.

⁷ Cf. the answer Russell notoriously gave to Frege: «I believe that in spite of all its snowfields, Mont Blanc is itself a component part of what is actually asserted in the proposition 'Mont Blanc is more than 4000 metres high' [...] We assert the object of the thought, and this is, to my mind, a certain complex (an objective proposition, one might say) in which Mont Blanc itself is a component part» (Russell, 1980, p. 169).

⁸ Cf. Russell, 1904, pp. 523-524.

⁹ To be sure, as Nick Griffin made me note, Russell limits himself to saying that some propositions are true while other propositions are false, thereby allowing for the interpretation that the actual truth-value of a proposition is a necessary property of its, not a contingent one as the property of subsisting instead is for a possible state of affairs *à la*

In order to show that singular propositions are nothing but possible states of affairs, this historical convergence between the apparently different notions mobilized by the two philosophers in their respective positions may be strengthened by a simple theoretical argument, that shrinks the difference between the two positions to a mere terminological one. To begin with, genuine propositions are made of conceptual entities. In order for something to be a genuine proposition, it must contain no worldly entity, but entities having to do with the meaning of linguistic expressions in the sense of “meaning” according to which dictionaries give the explanation of the meaning of one such expression. Moreover, as we have already seen, singular propositions are indisputably made of nonconceptual entities, such as objects and properties. Hence, we can easily get to the preliminary conclusion that singular propositions are not genuine propositions. Let me now add the plausible assumption as to the effect that what is made by objects and modal properties of the kind *being possibly F* are possible states of affairs. Given all that, the best account of singular propositions is that they are possible states of affairs (an inference to the best explanation).

This account of singular propositions has various merits. First of all, according to it singular propositions are possible states of affairs which, if they subsist, are part and parcel of reality: as we have seen, they are just facts. Hence, singular propositions are no longer intermediate entities between language and reality, as not only any conceptually-based entity obviously is, but also singular propositions conceived according to the traditional conception as ordered (structured) object-property pairs are still forced to be. As is well known, that traditional conception of propositions has been seen by many, even people defending a directly referential approach to meaning, as unnecessary. Definitely, one does not need such mediators in order to give a sentence a meaning depending on the reference of its directly referential terms. In point of fact, that meaning is just truth-conditional meaning; in order for one such sentence to have certain truth-

Wittgenstein. Yet I am unclear whether at that time Russell still endorsed the picture that would support for such an interpretation, namely the Leibnizian picture according to which an item has its properties necessarily insofar as it is not a substance but something like a property bundle. In the very text which is relevant for these matters, namely Russell’s review of Meinong’s (1910²), Russell writes: «it *seems* to remain that, when a proposition is false, *something* does not subsist which would subsist if the proposition were true» (Russell, 1904, p. 523), which apparently ascribes to Russell the thesis that propositions have their truth-value contingently.

¹⁰ Cf. Russell, 1904, p. 523.

conditions, i.e., in order for it to be true just in case something extralinguistic obtains, no appeal to propositions is needed. A sentence of that kind, having the form “Fx” (or “Rxy” etc.), is true just in case what the directly referential term replacing the variable “x” designates has the property the predicative term replacing the variable “F” designates¹¹. But this in turn is nothing but saying that the sentence is true iff the possible state of affairs such sentence presents subsists, namely iff what that directly referential term stands for has the property that the predicative term stands for, which in turn means, iff what that directly referential term stands for has the nonmodal property that corresponds to the modal property of the form *being possibly F* featuring that state.

Moreover, according to this account the famous “infinite regress”-problem – originally raised by Bradley (if not by Plato) yet made again popular by Russell (1937²) – as to what makes the unity of a proposition, i.e., of what a sentence expresses, turns out to be solved. As is well known, the problem stems out of the trivially correct remark that a proposition cannot be the simple list of the elements for which the subsentential terms of the sentence expressing it stand. Yet if you add to those elements another element that supposedly plays a connecting role between them – typically, a relational factor – the problem immediately arises as to what connects the original element with this further element, the supposed glue, and so on *ad infinitum*. Yet if what the sentence expresses is a possible state of affairs, this problem no longer arises. For its constituent objects *necessarily* possess the other element of the state of affairs, the modal property of the form *being possibly F*; in Wittgenstein’s original terminology, the objects have that property as one of their *internal* properties. In an alternative formulation, one may say that the objects are in an internal, not in an external, relation with that property. This formulation might sound dangerous, for one might think that it means that the objects stand in some instantiation relation with that property, so that Bradley’s problem arises again – what is it that connects objects and instantiation?¹² Yet no such problem subsists. For, if what is involved is a relation of instantiation, it is a *necessary* instantiation. This precisely means that the objects are not bare particulars that have further to be connected with such an instantiation relation, but are constituted (at least in part) by the fact that they have a modal property of the form *being possibly F* as one of their necessary properties.

¹¹ For this position, cf. Almog, 1991. Cf. also Marti, 1995.

¹² For a formulation of this doubt, cf. Vallicella, 2002.

Furthermore, and this is the third merit, this way of conceiving singular propositions allows me to vindicate one of the probably most obscure theses of Meinong, namely the one according to which objectives may also be underfactual (*untertatsächlich*), in the sense that there are objectives which neither subsist nor fail to subsist. As matters here are rather subtle, let us see things in detail.

To begin with, one may well suppose that, as I said before, the two proposals that were put forward at the beginning of the twentieth century by the early Russell and by the early Wittgenstein respectively in order to account for the nature of the meaning of sentences containing directly referential terms, i.e., to appeal to singular propositions and to possible (atomic) states of affairs respectively, are no more than notational variants of each other. At first glance, one might think that a third proposal that was put forward on this or rather on a similar concern at those times, namely Meinong's (1910²) appeal to *objectives*¹³, is nothing but a further notational variant. In point of fact, Meinong's objectives may subsist as well as not subsist, precisely like Wittgenstein's possible states of affairs.

Yet there is subtle difference between singular propositions a.k.a. possible states of affairs on the one hand, and objectives on the other. Rather than being *constituted* by the referents of the directly singular terms occurring in the sentences that have them as their meaning, objectives for Meinong merely *existentially depend* on such referents – they would not exist if there were no such things as those referents. In Meinong's formulation of the matter, one such referent is merely what an objective is about¹⁴. Thus, the constituents of an objective are entities of another kind. Yet it is unclear what they actually are¹⁵. This may leave one with some

¹³ I say “a similar concern” for it is clear that Meinong puts forward objectives as an answer to the question of what is the content of a propositional intentional state rather than as an answer to the question of what is the meaning of a sentence. Yet although the latter was Wittgenstein's main concern, it is definitely not the case that it was such for the early Russell as well (as the previous quotation from his letter to Frege abundantly shows). As to an interpretation that puts the early Russell in the context of the philosophy of mind rather than in that of the philosophy of language, cf. Makin, 2000.

¹⁴ Cf. Meinong, 1910², p. 51. On these Meinongian ideas, cf. Farrell Smith, 1984/85, pp. 331-332, and Simons, 1990, p. 164.

¹⁵ One may well conjecture that objectives are alike neo-Fregean thoughts. For neo-Fregean thoughts, the meanings of sentences containing genuinely referring singular terms, are precisely object-dependent entities in the above sense, in that they depend for their existence on the existence of the referents of those singular terms. Cf. on this

suspicion, as Bergmann was, as to whether one has to be really committed to entities whose nature is so unclear¹⁶.

Whatever those constituents are, anyway, referent-dependence might be regarded as useful to explain a further feature that according to Meinong, 1916 objectives may possess, namely their underfactuality. Let me explain.

For Meinong, not only objectives may subsist as well as not subsist; they may also fail both to subsist and not to subsist, be as he says underfactual (*untertatsächlich*). In this respect, underfactual objectives contravene the ontological counterpart of the logical principle of bivalence, according to which a sentence must be either true or false: it is not the case that an objective must either subsist or not subsist, precisely because there are underfactual objectives.

Now, what can be a plausible example of an underfactual objective? In order to answer this question, one might look for a case of an objective that contravened the ontological counterpart of the principle of excluded middle as well, for if it is not the case that either a certain objective subsists or the negation of that objective subsists, then, given the standard meaning of negation, it is also not the case that that objective subsists or does not subsist, that is, that objective contravenes the ontological counterpart of the principle of bivalence insofar as it is underfactual.

At this point, one might well guess that in Meinong's ontology, objectives that contravene the ontological counterpart of excluded middle are those which are about nonexistent objects, that is, objectives that depend

notoriously Evans, 1982. This is a well-grounded conjecture but for the fact that, as we will see immediately below in the text, unlike neo-Fregean thoughts, objectives also admit of nonexistent constituents. This is why the dependence of objectives on objects must be a *non-existentially loaded* dependence: as I just put it in the text, an objective would not exist if *there were* no such things as the referents of the singular terms that contribute to express it. Yet objectives' dependence on nonexistents makes the question of what their constituents are even harder to address. By construing objectives as neo-Fregean thoughts, one might have conjectured that their constituents are precisely nonexistent entities that are somehow embedded into a real one, as its aspects or facets. By so doing, one would have more or less followed the lines of Meinong, 1916 conception of incomplete objects (on which, cf. McIntyre-Smith, 1982). Yet the fact that an objective may depend not only on an existent, but also on a nonexistent, entity, without being constituted by it, leaves the above question unanswered. For incomplete nonexistent objects are precisely not the objective's constituents. An objective about a nonexistent entity must therefore be constituted by something else, whose relation with the nonexistent entity remains undetermined – the risk of something like a Fregean infinite hierarchy of senses becomes palpable.

¹⁶ On Bergmann's criticism of Meinong, cf. Bonino, 2006.

on such entities. For nonexistent objects are incomplete entities, in the sense that with respect to various properties, they fail to both possess those properties and their complements. For instance the golden mountain, one of Meinong's favourite examples of a nonexistent entity, is such that it neither lies in the Australian desert nor does not lie in such a desert.

Yet unfortunately for this conjecture, nonexistent objects are for Meinong incomplete not in a *propositional*, but rather in a *predicative* sense of the negation: as I just hinted at before, an object is incomplete iff for any property P and its complement $non-P$, which involves the predicative sense of negation, it is such that it does not possess either. Yet this precisely means that those objects do not violate the principle of excluded middle, that involves propositional negation. For as far as one such object is concerned, insofar as it does not possess P , it is not the case that it has P , and insofar as it does not possess $non-P$, it is not the case that it possesses $non-P$ ¹⁷. Thus, it is not the objective to the effect that one such object has a certain property P that leads to a violation of the (ontological counterpart of) excluded middle, hence to a violation of the (ontological counterpart of) bivalence.

But there is no need to invoke a failure of (the ontological counterpart of) excluded middle to obtain the desired failure of (the ontological counterpart of) bivalence. For one may straightforwardly obtain the latter failure if, by sticking to nonexistent objects, rather than appealing to problematic genuinely proposition-like objectives depending on such entities, one appeals to spurious propositions such as singular propositions *qua* possible states of affairs having such objects as their constituents. That is, possible states of affairs may support Meinong's original thesis that proposition-like entities may be underfactual, if one accepts the further thesis that merely possible objects, i.e., objects that actually fail to exist although they might have existed, are legitimate constituents of possible states of affairs – an idea almost definitely shared by the early Russell and possibly shared by the early Wittgenstein as well¹⁸. Once we resort to mere *possibilia*, we may definitely have possible states of affairs with those *possibilia* as constituents which are such that they neither subsist nor fail to subsist: that is, underfactual possible states of affairs.

¹⁷ For this way of putting things, cf. e.g. Simons, 1990, pp. 182, 185.

¹⁸ As to Russell, cf. Russell, 1937², pp. 43-44, 449-450 and especially Cocchiarella's interpretation of those passages (cf. Cocchiarella, 1982). As to Wittgenstein, the idea that his simple objects are, or work as, mere *possibilia* has been defended (though in different ways) both by Bradley, 1992, and Voltolini, 2002.

What are precisely those underfactual possible states of affairs? Well, they are the possible states of affairs that a certain mere *possibile* is *F*, where *F* is an *existence-entailing property*: that is, in order for something to be *F* it must exist¹⁹. Since the merely possible constituent of one such possible state of affairs does not exist, it is not the case that the possible state of affairs to the effect that that *possibile* is *F* subsists, but it is not even the case that that possible state of affairs does not subsist. For instance, take the case of Humbeth, the possible offspring of a certain gamete of Elisabeth II of England (as well as of Scotland, Australia, New Zealand...) and of another gamete of the last king of Italy, Humbert II of Savoy. In point of fact, Humbeth does not actually exist: for better or worse, the two Majesties did not generate such an individual. But nothing prevents that individual from possibly existing and so reigning over both the ex-Commonwealth nations and Italy. Now, the property of *reigning over such nations* is precisely an existence-entailing property: in order for something to possess it, that something must exist. Since Humbeth does not exist, it is not the case that Humbeth reigns over such nations, i.e., it is not the case that the possible state of affairs that Humbeth reigns over such nations subsists, but it is not even the case that Humbeth does not reign over such nations, i.e., it is not the case that the possible state of affairs that Humbeth reigns over such nations does not subsist.

You can now note that here we have just the ontological counterpart of the pragmatic phenomenon of presupposition, according to which in order for a sentence to be either true or false, another sentence must be true, in this case a singular existential sentence of the kind “*O* exists”. Now, as is well known, presuppositions may be invoked not only as far as singular existential sentences are concerned²⁰, but also in many other cases. For instance, in order for the sentence

(4) Obama has resigned as the Italian Prime Minister
to be either true or false, it must be the case that the sentence

(5) Obama has been the Italian Prime Minister

¹⁹ One might think that all properties are existence-entailing, but this idea is controversial. For example, as Chisholm originally envisaged (cf. Chisholm, 1957, p. 170), converse-intentional properties of the kind *being thought of by S to be F* do not appear to be such. An object *O*’s being thought of by *S* neither entails that there exists something which is thought of by *S* nor that it is not the case that there exists something which is thought of by *S*.

²⁰ As Frege, 1892 notoriously did.

is true.

This is very important for my purposes, for it allows for underfactual possible states of affairs whose objectual constituents are only actually existing individuals. In point of fact, as we implicitly saw before, appealing to mere *possibilia* is just a sufficient, but not a necessary, condition for getting underfactual possible states of affairs. Once we indeed switch from linguistic sentences to the extralinguistic conditions for those sentences to be true, we again get that in order for the possible state of affairs that Obama has resigned as Prime Minister either to subsist or not to subsist, the possible state of affairs that Obama has been the Italian Prime Minister has to subsist. If the latter state does not subsist, the former is such that it neither subsists nor it fails to subsist. Since Obama is of course an actually existent individual, this shows that the thesis that there are underfactual possible states of affairs does not depend on the (admittedly controversial) thesis that there are merely *possibilia*²¹.

II. Up to now, what I have proposed is merely a *metaphysical* account of singular propositions, namely an account that aims at investigating what the nature of a certain thing is, provided that there is any such thing. As such, a metaphysical account is not an *ontological* account, i.e., an account that aims at checking whether, in the overall domain of what there is, there are things of a certain kind; in our case, whether there are singular propositions²². Yet once one endorses the previous metaphysical account of propositions as possible states of affairs, as necessary instantiations of modal properties of the form *being possibly F* on some objects' part, it is easy to see what the ontological account of propositions must be. It must be a *deflationary* account, in the sense that, given the entities one has already assumed in the overall domain, it is trivially the case that singular propositions also occur in that domain. This is precisely the case with singular propositions if singular propositions are possible states of affairs: once you assume both objects and modal properties of the form *being possibly F*, it is trivially the case that you also assume possible states of affairs. As Wittgenstein magistrally said, "if all objects are given, then [since they necessarily have the above modal properties] at the same time all *possible* states of affairs are also given" (Wittgenstein, 1961², 2.0124).

²¹ For an attempt at proving that there are such entities, cf. my Voltolini, 2006.

²² For this distinction between metaphysics and ontology, cf. e.g. Chisholm, 1996, Gracia, 1999, Johansson, 1989, Thomasson, 1999, Varzi, 2002.

For, as I said before, possible states of affairs are nothing but the necessary instantiations of one such modal property on objects' part.

One may wonder whether it is possible to give an alternative account of what it means that once you assume both objects and modal properties of the form *being possibly F*, it is *trivially* the case that you also assume singular propositions as possible states of affairs. Here an answer is provided by Schiffer (1996, 2003). A (kind of) entity is ontologically deflationary, or *pleonastic* in Schiffer's preferred terminology, insofar as its existence, in the sense of its allowance in the overall domain, *conceptually supervenes* on the allowance in that domain of other entities. In other terms, its allowance is warranted by the necessary a priori, or conceptual, truth of a 'something-from-nothing'-transformation, a conditional whose consequent commits to pleonastic entities of a certain kind, in the sense that, if one does not accept such a transformation, one does not even have the concept of that entity²³.

For example, take properties. According to Schiffer, properties are deflationary entities insofar as the conditional of the kind "if a is F, then a has the property F" is a 'something-from-nothing'-transformation, that is, it is a necessary a priori truth that commits to properties whoever understands what "to be a property" means; she who does not accept one such biconditional does not even understand what "to be a property" means.

Now, possible states of affairs can well be seen as pleonastic entities in the very same sense. For any conditional of the kind "if a is F, then the possible state of affairs that a is F subsists" is another 'something-from-nothing'-transformation, another necessary a priori truth that commits to possible states of affairs whoever understands what "to be a possible state

²³ I do not want to say that this is the only way of defending a *general* ontologically deflationary position about entities of a certain kind. While in Wittgenstein, 1961² he limited himself to be deflationary with respect to possible states of affairs, in Wittgenstein, 1953 Wittgenstein endorsed a different more general approach of the same kind, according to which it is trivially the case that there are entities of a certain kind insofar as it is a commonsensical truism that there are such entities. Or so I claim: cf. Voltolini, 2007b. To be sure, one must bear in mind that the two approaches are not extensionally equivalent: the domain of deflationary entities is definitely broader for Wittgenstein than for Schiffer (in point of fact, as I have argued elsewhere with respect to fictional entities – cf. Voltolini, 2008 – it may well turn out that even lesser entities than what Schiffer believes pass his own criterion). But this is irrelevant for my present purposes.

of affairs” means; she who does not accept one such biconditional does not even understand what “to be a possible state of affairs” means²⁴.

Let me take stock. I have first endorsed a metaphysics of singular propositions which is very consonant to that appealed to by both the early Russell (perhaps implicitly) and the early Wittgenstein (almost explicitly). According to that metaphysics, singular propositions are possible states of affairs. Moreover, that endorsement enables me to accept *eo ipso* that there are such entities, provided of course that I assume that there are objects and modal properties. I can further support this commitment to singular propositions a.k.a. possible states of affairs by taking these entities to be precisely ontologically deflationary or pleonastic entities, whose existence conceptually supervenes on the existence of already admitted entities such as objects and modal properties. Since singular propositions often figure in arguments in favour of our commitment to even further entities²⁵, this is definitely a welcome result.

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²⁴ Schiffer himself puts not only propositions, but also events, in the list of deflationary entities in his sense: cf. Schiffer, 2003, chapter II.

²⁵ I have provided one such semantically-based argument in favour of fictional entities in my Voltolini, 2006, chapter VI.

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Venanzio Raspa

“... THE MOST MEMORABLE DON QUIXOTE OF A GREAT CAUSE”
BERGMANN’S CRITIQUE OF MEINONG*

Abstract. At first, I explain *how Bergmann reads Meinong*. As regards his method, Bergmann’s stated aim is to examine Meinong’s thought through all the stages of its development; but he is very selective in choosing exactly what to consider, not just within each of Meinong’s texts, but equally among his texts – indeed he completely ignores Meinong’s mature works. Moreover, he often alters Meinong’s thought by translating it into his foil ontology. As regards the content, Bergmann interprets Meinong as a reist and a nominalist. I try to show that such a view is not correct. I then discuss this interpretation by focusing on *which Meinong Bergmann reads*, that is, which writings he refers to and at the same time which of Meinong’s theories he criticizes. I sketch the four phases of the development of Meinong’s thought distinguished by Bergmann: his first theory of relations, the theory of the objects of higher order, of objectives, and finally object theory. I present Bergmann’s critique and compare his distinction of different degrees of independence, which establish differences of status among categories of existents, with Meinong’s distinction between kinds of being. Finally, taking into account also Meinong’s mature work, I offer an *assessment* of Bergmann’s proposal to rethink object theory. Considering Meinong’s theory of incomplete objects, I show that Bergmann would have found in Meinong an ally not only in the battle against representationalism, as he maintains, but also in that against nominalism.

In an article on the ‘Meinong’ of Gustav Bergmann, Rosaria Egidi expressed a *desideratum* concerning the need for «reconstructing the arguments in Bergmann’s critique [of Meinong] in order to assess their soundness and their peculiarities compared to other interpretative perspectives»¹. Recently, in an article devoted to some aspects of Bergmann’s analysis of Meinongian ontology, Guido Bonino remarked that, apart from a few ex-

* Bergmann’s works are quoted from the *Collected Works* (2003-2004); Meinong’s works, except the first edition of *Über Annahmen* (1902), are quoted from the *Alexius Meinong Gesamtausgabe* (1968-1978). The following abbreviations will be used:

CW = G. Bergmann, *Collected Works*

R = G. Bergmann, *Realism*

GA = *Alexius Meinong Gesamtausgabe*.

Translations are mine, unless indicated otherwise; references to English translations appear in square brackets.

¹ Egidi, 2005, p. 55.

ceptions², «[i]n spite of its being often mentioned in Meinongian bibliographies, it does not seem that Bergmann's painstaking analysis of certain selected themes of Meinong's views produced a great impact on Meinongian studies»³. Here, I will only partially meet the *desideratum* of examining the arguments in Bergmann's critique of Meinong: firstly because, just as Egidi's and Bonino's articles are not exhaustive – the former revolving essentially on the issue of representationalism, the latter on Meinong's reism –, neither will be my contribution, whose aim is simply to add another piece to the puzzle; secondly because, although I will attempt to provide an assessment of Bergmann's reading of Meinong, I will not compare it with standard interpretations of Meinongian philosophy. I will proceed as follows: first (1) I am going to explain how Bergmann reads Meinong; subsequently, (2) I will point out which Meinong Bergmann reads, that is, which writings he refers to and at the same time which of Meinong's theories he criticizes; finally, (3) I will propose a brief assessment, by taking into account Meinong's mature work, which Bergmann completely ignored.

1. *How does Bergmann read Meinong?*

Besides writing about him more generally throughout the whole volume, Bergmann deals specifically with Meinong in the fourth part of *Realism*, where he systematizes his ontological conceptions (some developments and reassessments of which may be found in later essays and in his posthumous *New Foundations of Ontology*)⁴. He gives a strong interpretation of Meinongian ontology – I would almost say a violent one – both as regards its interpretative method and its content.

1.1. *What is Bergmann's interpretative method?*

The method is clearly explained by the author himself under three different headings: the development of Meinong's thought, his style and his terminology⁵. (a) To begin with, Bergmann remarks that Meinong's thought in ontology is not uniform, but scattered with «breaks and new starts»: bet-

² Cf. Barber, 1966; 1970; 1971; Grossmann, 1974.

³ Bonino, 2006, p. 240.

⁴ Cf. Bergmann, 1992; 2003: CW II, pp. 309-369; on which cf. Hochberg, 1994, pp. 9 ff.; 2001.

⁵ Cf. R, pp. 340-343.

ween his first and final ontology there were two intermediate stages, which means that we have four ontologies overall. *Therefore*, Meinong's thought needs to be considered through each step of its development. (b) As for Meinong's style, Bergmann defines it a «diffuse style»: Meinong purportedly could not state «in the right way and in the right context» the distinctions he points out.

He is forever prone to pursue phenomenological butterflies, sometimes under the goad of a central motive that has recently emerged, more often just for the pleasures of the chase. One wishes he had instead taken the time and the trouble to find out whether and how what he says at the moment jibes with what he has said earlier. (R, p. 342)

Moreover, unlike Brentano, Meinong employs ordinary language instead of an ideal one. *Therefore*, on one hand, Bergmann ends up neglecting entire portions of Meinong's work written in such a diffuse style; on the other hand, he lays out everything in an ordered form, imposing «a systematic notation». Finally, (c) according to Bergmann, «Meinong's terminology is obscure and eccentric» (R, p. 342); *therefore*, he adopts his own terminology – which, needless to say, he believes to be neither obscure nor eccentric. For all these reasons, (d) Bergmann feels entitled to express himself rather freely, by saying «some things which he [Meinong] does not say at all and some others, which he does say, very differently» (R, p. 343).

Actually, despite language differences, Bergmann is hardly more accessible reading than Meinong, due partly to the complexity of his way of arguing, filled with lengthy analyses and so focused on details that the wider picture can easily be lost, and partly to the fact that his language often diverges from the standard scholarly terminology⁶. Yet, I think it is important to stress a difference in style between our two authors, which mirrors a difference in their ways of thinking and which we can characterize as an opposition between a systematic approach and an aporetic one. In *Realism*, Bergmann gives an outline of an ontological system, dubbed as *foil*, and he tries to show in which respects it is preferable to alternative ontologies such as the *antifoil*, the *prototype*, and the things-ontologies of Brentano and Meinong. In general, both as he criticizes his opponents and as he advances his theses, Bergmann's statements are sharp and resolute. Meinong's style, on the other hand, is aporetic besides being «diffuse»: he often puts forward tentative theses, which are later to be fully worked out

⁶ Bonino – Torrenzo, 2004, pp. 7-8 and Egidi, 2005, p. 56 see in Bergmann's writing, in his way of arguing and terminology one of the main reasons for the limited diffusion of his thought.

or entirely replaced; he often smoothes out expressions which might look clear-cut and uncompromising with phrases such as ‘so to speak’ (*sozusagen*), ‘if anything’ (*womöglich*), ‘in favourable circumstances’ (*unter Umständen*), ‘at the very best’ (*günstigenfalls*) and the like, or else he says that the present state of research does not allow us to be more precise on a certain subject. Meinong does not work out his ontology into an accomplished system: as Bergmann correctly pointed out, he builds up his ideas through progressive additions, refinements and reworkings. The systematic sketch appearing in the “Selbstdarstellung” (1921) is aimed at giving a general introduction to his philosophy rather than at organizing it as a system. Meinong himself presents his research as a philosophy «from below», proceeding from given facts, and not as a system⁷.

Why did I refer to Bergmann’s interpretation as violent? First of all, because he often alters Meinong’s thought by translating it into his own ontology, the *foil*. The term ‘foil’ refers both to the background – which is part of the language requirements of a comparative ontology – and to the contrast, the yardstick for evaluating an ontology: Meinong’s ontology is precisely examined and judged by the yardstick provided by the foil; Meinong’s language is translated into the language of the foil; the latter, in turn, arises from an ontology which is far from neutral – if any philosophy can be neutral. Secondly, the violence lies also in Bergmann’s selection of Meinongian works. We know that Bergmann intends to consider Meinong’s thought through all the stages of its development. Such an approach is correct, yet, as we will see, Bergmann does it by means of a selection not just *within* each of Meinong’s texts, but equally *among* his texts, whereby he completely ignores those written after the second edition of *Über Annahmen* (1910), corresponding to the mature stage of Meinong’s thought, that is, *Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit* (1915) and *Über emotionale Präsentation* (1917). The former is widely regarded as Meinong’s main work – not just because of its size – whereas the latter was regarded by the author himself as his most important writing⁸. As we said earlier, though, Bergmann’s interpretation is a strong one not just because of the way he reads Meinong, but equally as regards its content. Now, what is the image of Meinong that he presents us?

⁷ Cf. Meinong, 1921: GA VII, p. 42; cf. also p. 4. For a critical analysis of the interpretation that Meinong gives of his own philosophical research see Manotta, 2005.

⁸ Cf. Doris Meinong’s Preface to Meinong, 1923: GA III, p. 473.

1.2. *What image of Meinong does Bergmann present us?*

Meinong's goal was to work out the object theory as an *a priori* science, aimed at accounting for the totality of objects. Object theory is meant to be a science that deals with objects as such and with objects in their totality⁹, a science combining an abstract *a priori* perspective on objects, which is typical of mathematics, and an aspiration to the maximum possible extension and generalization, which has always been peculiar to metaphysics. Conversely, according to Bergmann, there really are no objects in Meinong's ontology – we thus have an object theory without objects, which is why he never uses the term 'Gegenstandstheorie'¹⁰; there are no complexes either, and consequently no facts. All this can seem odd, but it is exactly the conclusion that Bergmann draws after comparing Meinong's ontology with his own foil and translating Meinong's language into the foil language.

The fundamental categories of the foil are things, facts and subsistents. In the foil, all complexes are facts, while all simples are things. Things are divided into particulars and universals. Particulars are *bare* particulars, that is, they are devoid of any nature and differ from each other only numerically. Insofar as they are things, universals are simple, they account for properties and may be possessed by several objects. On the contrary, ordinary things are complexes, and thus they are facts. However, things are not the only constituents of facts, but the latter have at least one other necessary constituent which Bergmann calls "nexus" of exemplification. A fact is made up of things connected by a nexus; the latter belongs to the category of subsistents, and is therefore not homogeneous with the elements it connects, i.e., universals with each other and with particulars. A peculiar character of the nexus is that it requires no further entities in order to be connected with the things it connects; by this claim, Bergmann averts Bradley's infinite regress¹¹.

Bergmann holds as true what he calls the 'principle of exemplification', according to which there is no universal which is not exemplified by a particular, and there is no particular which does not exemplify at least a quality. For Colour as genus to exist, it must be exemplified by a given colour; for this colour to exist, it must be exemplified by a given particular¹².

⁹ Cf. Meinong, 1904: GA II, pp. 485, 486 [1960, pp. 78, 79].

¹⁰ Cf. R, p. 341, fn. 10, p. 344.

¹¹ Cf. R, pp. 4-14.

¹² Cf. R, p. 360. Cf. also R, p. 88: «*A universal need not be separable*. In the foil, the Principle of Exemplification makes particulars and universals equally inseparable from

Hence, «[f]acts are *independent* in a sense in which things are not» (R, p. 43): facts are – in Bergmann's language – independent₂, whereas things (particulars and universals) are dependent₂. Yet, it is not necessary that a given particular exemplify that specific colour; in order to have a fact (e.g., a coloured particular) a nexus is needed. Therefore, things show a certain independence₁, while nexus are dependent₁.

As Bergmann himself states, *Realism* may be portrayed as a passionate battle against three philosophical positions: nominalism, reism and representationalism¹³. Against these views, he supports realism, which he conceives as twofold: realism₁, that is the doctrine that there are universals, is opposed to nominalism and reism; realism₂, which holds that some things are not mental, is opposed to representationalism and idealism¹⁴. It is against the background of this basic framework that Bergmann reads and criticizes Meinong.

According to Bergmann, in Meinong's ontology there is nothing but things, either physical or mental. These are conceived in two ways. On one hand, they are *perfect particulars*, that is, qualified particulars, and not ordinary objects, which are complex. On the other hand, the entities of Meinong's ontology are *collections of particulars*, which Bergmann calls 'cryptoclusters', and which Meinong would mistakenly see as objects¹⁵. This, in Bergmann's opinion, makes him a reist, although not an extreme one such as Brentano. Reism is the conception viewing all beings as things, things as simple and nexus as non-existent. Meinong fell just short of breaking the bonds of reism, and that is, according to Bergmann, one of his glories¹⁶.

Representationalism holds that beings which minds come to know depend on minds themselves, and that there exists a middle term between mental entities and their intentions, that is, extra-mental beings. Thus, the connection between the First (the mental world) and the Second (the physical world) rests on a Third (the world of ideas). Even though representationalism affects the earliest of Meinong's ontologies, Bergmann argues,

each other»; Bergmann, 1960: CW II, p. 69: «None of us is ever presented either with an individual that is not qualified or with a character (quality) that is not exemplified by an individual».

¹³ Cf. R, p. 340.

¹⁴ Cf. R, p. 22. Cf. also Bergmann, 1963: CW II, p. 77: «Idealism holds that all entities are mental; materialism, that they are all nonmental. Only realism₂ sides with common sense, asserts that (1) some entities are mental, some nonmental».

¹⁵ Cf. R, pp. 335-337.

¹⁶ Cf. R, p. 12; cf. also R, pp. 338, 354.

he eventually comes very close «to throwing off the shackles of representationalism»¹⁷. Bergmann can therefore regard Meinong as a valid ally in the battle he has launched against representationalism – which leads to idealism – and for a realistic₂ ontology. Meinong supposedly reaches conclusions that are strictly compatible with a realistic ontology (i.e., with the foil); at the same time, his arguments are not always correct and he eventually fails to construct a true ontological alternative to representationalism. This happens, as Bergmann has it, because Meinong's anti-representationalism is affected by nominalism.

Bergmann considers nominalism as the doctrine claiming that there are no universals, only particulars¹⁸; properties themselves are particular and not universal – more precisely, perfect particulars, mutually connected through a homogeneous nexus. According to Bergmann, Meinong's nominalism is extreme. Despite these shortcomings, he was however able to uphold an ontology that is «genuinely nonrepresentational and realistic₂ in structure», «free from the absurdities of idealism». Herein lies his glory; the way he fought for this cause makes him «the most memorable Don Quixote of a great cause» (R, pp. 339, 340).

I will not discuss representationalism; instead, I will say something on Meinong's "reism" and especially about his "nominalism". Let us now get into the details and attempt to answer the second question we asked in the beginning.

2. Which Meinong does Bergmann read?

Some help towards answering that question may come from Bergmann himself: he devoted the whole of chapter twenty in part four of *Realism* to reconstructing the development of Meinong's ontological thought, where, as previously said, he identifies four different stages. Actually, some claims by Bergmann seem to contradict such a scheme: in part two, he distinguishes only two Meinongian ontologies, «the one with which he started and the one over which he died» – a claim that he repeats later on¹⁹. But in order to understand Meinong's eventual ontology, a refinement is required, which just consists in considering «two intermediate stages, each marked by the emergence of a central motive» (R, p p. 341). By doing so,

¹⁷ R, p. 139; cf. also R, p. 340.

¹⁸ Cf. R, pp. 22, 49, 86, 142. Cf. also Bergmann, 1958: CW I, p. 325.

¹⁹ Cf. R, pp. 139, 340.

Bergmann carries out what he had previously stated about his interpretative method, yet at the same time he does something more: although his alleged purpose is not to write a “factual history”, but a “structural history”, that is, to give a rational reconstruction and not a genetic one, when he reads Meinong he tries to pay attention to the chronological succession of the texts.

2.1. *The first three ontologies*

The first ontology may be found in 1877 and 1882 *Hume-Studien*. At this stage, Meinong's interests are mainly psychological in character, or else, as Bergmann has it, «he was then above all and to the virtual exclusion of everything else concerned with the assay of contents» (R, pp. 399-400), which are all mental. Meinong is still a representationalist. He does not distinguish – as he will later acknowledge himself²⁰ – between content and object, that is, in Bergmann's language, between cores and their intentions. Even though he speaks about representational contents and representational objects, Meinong understands both as mental. Relations – which Bergmann calls ‘connections’²¹ – are likewise all mental. It is true that Meinong sorts them into ‘real’ and ‘ideal’, but these terms have not the same meaning as in his later writings, when they refer to two different kinds of being – Bergmann writes: «levels of existing» (R, p. 403) and this expression implies a precise interpretation. In the first ontology, there is only one kind of being, hence ‘real’ and ‘ideal’ refer to two different modes in which relations arise. Both ideal and real relations are mental, but while ideal relations (of resemblance, identity, compatibility, comparison, cause and effect) subsist among representational contents, and are produced²², real relations are founded on mental states (they subsist between the act of representing and the representational contents, or between the foundations and the relation built on these), and are perceived²³. Connections are the major innovation of the first ontology: according to Bergmann, the early

²⁰ Cf. Meinong, p. 1899: GA II, p. 381 [1978, p. 141].

²¹ Bergmann calls Meinong's *Relation* ‘connection’ and reserves the word ‘relation’ for his own use (cf. R, p. 344). From here on, if there is no risk of confusion, ‘Relation’ is translated by ‘relation’, otherwise the German word is used; the same holds for ‘Komplex’ and ‘complex’; ‘connection’ appears in Bergmann's quotations or arguments.

²² Cf. Meinong, 1882: GA II, pp. 42-43, 128, 142, 155.

²³ Meinong, 1882: GA II, pp. 137-142. Cf. also R, p. 410: «They [*scil.* all connections] are either ideal₁ or real₁, depending on whether or not the mind has produced them out of other contents».

Meinong «does *not dialectically consider physical objects*», but he «admits the proposition that there are physical objects» (R, p. 401); Meinong's connections are internal connections among nonmental particulars, which are imported into the mind and given the ontological status of mental particulars²⁴.

The second ontology wholly emerges in “Über Gegenstände höherer Ordnung und deren Verhältnis zur inneren Wahrnehmung” (1899). The transition has been gradual. Bergmann skips over intermediate steps – his purpose being, as usual, structural rather than merely historical –, but he understands very well the major significance of the theory of relations in the development of Meinongian ontology. This theory, which Meinong had worked on repeatedly over the previous seventeen years, represents the underlying thread of his writings up to 1899. In Bergmann's opinion, the transition to the second ontology is prompted by two innovations. The first one is the distinction between content and object, that is, in his language, between core and intention. According to the new point of view, he says, «[t]he former is mental; the latter, physical»²⁵. Now, the mental character of contents is explicitly stated by Meinong, but the claim that «all intentions exist» does not fully make sense of the development of his thought – unless we interpret ‘exist’ in a way which is not the same as Meinong's. Following Twardowski²⁶, Meinong puts forward two arguments to support the distinction between content and object: the first concerns their existence, that is to say, the content exists even though the object does not – as in the case of an ideal relation, a mathematical object or a fictional object –; the second concerns their nature, as the object of an idea has some properties – Meinong gives the example of something blue, hot or heavy – which can by no means inhere in the content, as this cannot in turn be blue, hot or heavy²⁷. Bergmann only considers the second argument and ignores the first, in the context of which Meinong introduces a classification of non-existing objects. Yet Bergmann regards as the second innovation (giving rise to the second Meinongian ontology) precisely what he seems to be neglecting, i.e., the notion of ideal object (*idealer Gegenstand*), which he calls ‘ideal particular’²⁸, that is, an object of higher order

²⁴ Cf. R, p. 405.

²⁵ R, p. 409; cf. also R, p. 400.

²⁶ Cf. Twardowski, 1894, pp. 30-31 [1977, pp. 27-28].

²⁷ Cf. Meinong, 1899: GA II, pp. 382-84 [1978, pp. 141-142].

²⁸ Cf. R, p. 410. For the reasons why Bergmann translates ‘*Gegenstand*’ with ‘particular’, cf. R, p. 344.

involving the introduction of a second kind of being. According to Meinong, objects of higher order are characterized by an «intrinsic non-independence»²⁹, because they can only be thought of in reference to other objects, on which they are built. Objects of higher order include relations (like the difference between two objects) and complexions (like a melody)³⁰. They can be both ideal, like the relation of similarity between two things, and real, like the combination between a colour and an extension. The notion of ideal is linked to a specific kind of being, ‘subsistence’, which is neither physical nor psychical; while both the physical and the psychical are connected to the kind of being that Meinong calls ‘existence’, that is, to being temporally determined. Therefore, according to the new view, all relations of the first ontology (either ideal or real) are real, since they are all mental. More precisely, what can exist is real, what can subsist is ideal³¹. This means that Meinong identifies neither real objects with existent objects nor ideal objects with subsistent ones. Bergmann ignores the definition of ‘ideal’ and ‘real’ by means of the concept of possibility and writes: «A real particular has *Dasein* (*ist da*). An ideal particular has *Bestand* (*besteht*)» (R, p. 263). Instead, according to Meinong, an object is real if its nature allows it to exist, independently of whether it actually exists or not; in this sense, reality is not limited to actual existence in the present, but it includes also the past and the future³². Moreover, as Meinong explains in a later writing, what subsists is ideal, but not all that is ideal subsists: again, he calls those objects ‘ideal’ which by nature cannot exist but can only subsist; this does not exclude that there are ideal objects which actually do not even subsist³³.

With ideal particulars, Bergmann claims, Meinong preserves both reism – since the new entity is a particular – and the internal character of relations, for an ideal relation obtains necessarily as a result of the nature of its *inferiora*³⁴. Presumably, although he makes no explicit reference to it, Bergmann has in mind a page³⁵ where Meinong proposes the example of a comparison between two colours, *A* and *B*, and writes:

²⁹ Meinong, 1899: GA II, p. 386 [1978, p. 144].

³⁰ For lexical uniformity, I use the term ‘complex’ (*Komplex*) instead of ‘complexion’ (*Komplexion*).

³¹ Cf. Meinong, 1899: GA II, pp. 394, 395 [1978, p. 150].

³² Cf. Meinong, 1899: GA II, p. 457 [1978: 192-193].

³³ Cf. Meinong, 1910: GA IV, pp. 63-64, 74 [1983, pp. 51-52, 58].

³⁴ Cf. R, p. 410.

³⁵ Cf. Meinong, 1899: GA II, p. 398 [1978, p. 152].

The *A*- and the *B*-idea participate at any rate, in the whole process. This can only mean that both ideas enter into a certain real relation with each other. The operation aimed at producing the relation brings about, under sufficiently favourable conditions, a new idea, namely the idea of the difference, naturally not of the difference in general, but of the specific difference between *A* and *B*.

Here, Meinong is speaking of the difference as a particular. It must be remarked, however, that he refers to a real relation between ideas (*Vorstellungen*), and not to the ideal relation of difference subsisting between the objects *A* and *B*. An ideal relation diverges from a real one in one important respect: it follows *necessarily* from a given set of inferiora;

if *A* and *B* are different once then they will always be different, they must be, and we understand “must” in the sense of logical necessity which is established, on the one hand, by the characteristics [nature, *Beschaffenheit*] of *A* and *B* and, on the other hand, by the character [essence, *Wesen*] of difference.

Meinong does not yet differentiate the production of ideas (*Vorstellungsproduktion*) having other ideas as their inferiora from the foundation (*Fundierung*) of ideal relations, understood as the necessary relation between an ideal superior and its inferiora³⁶. It is because of this ambiguity that Bergmann can write:

Structurally, Meinong's connections are internal connections of the Second; imported into the First, where they were given ontological status; then, without losing this status, re-exported into the Second. (R, p. 410)

The third innovation, leading to the third ontology, is the theory of objective (*Objektiv*), which is introduced in the first edition of *Über Annahmen* (1902)³⁷. The theoretical means to conceive the objective are offered by the essay on objects of higher order. Indeed, according to Meinong, an objective is an object of higher order, but it is of a different kind than a relation or a complex. An objective is the object of a judgement or of an assumption, not of an idea; it can be true or false, if it is true it subsists, and if it subsists it is a fact³⁸.

How does Bergmann translate Meinong's theory in his own language? He takes the objective as an object of higher order and defines it as «an ideal particular compounded out of a nature which is a proposition and

³⁶ The distinction is made in *Über Annahmen* (1902, pp. 8-9), where Meinong writes that Rudolf Ameseder called his attention to such «inexactness» (p. 8 and fn. 4). Cf. Ameseder, 1901, pp. 6-9 and Meinong, 1910: GA IV, pp. 16, 251-252 [1983, pp. 18, 182]; on this topic cf. Raspa, 2005, pp. 112-114.

³⁷ Cf. R, pp. 413, 415, 416.

³⁸ Cf. Meinong, 1902, pp. 189; 1910: GA IV, p. 69 [1983, p. 55].

either *ex* or *nonex*»³⁹. Here ‘*ex*’ stands for existence and ‘*nonex*’ for non-being⁴⁰, both «do the jobs of Frege’s True and False» (R, p. 364); indeed «[a] proposition combines with *ex* or *nonex* depending on whether the sentence which stands for it is true or false» (R, p. 357). The objective satisfies the need to represent states of affairs and, by means of *nonex*, it accounts for problems like non-veridical perception or false belief. However, Bergmann thinks that Meinong lacks an adequate notion of fact, because he neither has the notion of nexus nor does he make a clear distinction between things and complexes. Here it should be recalled that, according to Bergmann, things are simple and only facts are complex.

In Bergmann’s opinion, Meinong’s is not a complex ontology (like his own), but a function ontology, which suffers from *two major inaccuracies* and *two fundamental inadequacies*. The first inadequacy is nominalism, the other is «Meinong’s failure to recognize the ontological status of functions»⁴¹. The two inaccuracies are the «nature inaccuracy» and the «function inaccuracy»⁴². The latter and the second inadequacy are strictly connected with Bergmann’s interpretation of Meinong’s *Relationen* and *Objektive*. First I shall deal with them, and then I will discuss nature inaccuracy and nominalism.

Bergmann starts his reasoning⁴³ with an example, which also shows how the ideal language works. Two tones, c_1 and e_1 , are connected into the fact that ‘ c_1 is higher than e_1 ’. This situation can be differently expressed in different ontologies. In Meinong’s ontology – he says – there are the two particulars c_1 and e_1 , a *Relation*, which he writes as $(c_1; e_1)$, and an *Objektiv*, written as $(c_1; (c_1; e_1); e_1)$; the latter respectively take the roles of the connection and of the fact; they are particulars too, which means that they are (i) independent, (ii) simple and, of course, (iii) not universal. Let us examine first Bergmann’s reading of Meinong’s *Relation* or connection (see above fn. 21). (iii) A connection $(c_1; e_1)$ is a particular if, and only if, given another connection $(c_2; e_2)$, whose inferiora c_2 and e_2 are grounding the same pitches as c_1 and e_1 , it is different than the latter. Since this is precisely the case in Meinong’s ontology, then connections are particulars. This result is important for the rest of Bergmann’s argument. (i) As for its

³⁹ R, p. 415; cf. also R, pp. 355-356 and 361: «To be an ideal particular and to be one of *higher order* is one and the same».

⁴⁰ Cf. R, pp. 354, 355.

⁴¹ R, p. 360 and fn. 54; cf. also R, p. 339.

⁴² Cf. R, pp. 336-337, 353, 371-372.

⁴³ Cf. R, pp. 344-348; on which cf. Bonino, 2006, pp. 254 ff.

independence, we know that a connection $(c_1; e_1)$ as an object of higher order is built upon other objects which are its indispensable basis. This means, according to Bergmann's reading, not only that unless the inferiora c_1 and e_1 were there, the superius $(c_1; e_1)$ would not be there (and conversely), but also that unless the inferiora are what they are, the superius would not be what it is (and conversely). It seems then not easy to show the independence of Meinong's *Relationen*, but a help comes from the previous argument: $(c_1; e_1)$ is a particular insofar as it has a nature, which neither nexus nor any other subsistents of the foil have; hence, $(c_1; e_1)$ is neither a nexus nor another subsistent, and it is also not dependent in the sense in which the latter are (i.e., dependent_1). The argument is not yet definitive, it has to be completed with (ii) the simplicity proof of the connection $(c_1; e_1)$. If $(c_1; e_1)$ were a fact, it would be complex, that is, it would consist of c_1 , e_1 and a further entity; but then a connection between the former and this entity is required, and so on in an infinite regress. If $(c_1; e_1)$ is not a nexus, Bradley's regress cannot be averted. Without nexus there is no fact, but at the very best a collection; and if a connection is neither a nexus nor a fact, it can only be a thing, that is a particular, which is as such simple, independent₁ and not universal. The whole argument clearly presupposes the foil's ontology.

With regard to objectives, as these are objects of higher order, Bergmann thinks that what has been previously said about *Relationen* holds for them as well. In fact, he says that an objective is connected with its inferiora as $(c_1; e_1)$ to c_1 and e_1 , and that as this is a particular, so is the objective too. Therefore, the objective $(c_1; (c_1; e_1); e_1)$ is built upon both the members of the *Relation* and the *Relation* that connects them, that is, upon c_1 , e_1 and $(c_1; e_1)$. Also in this case an infinite regress arises: given the objective $(c_1; (c_1; e_1); e_1)$, two other connections $(c_1; (c_1; e_1))$ and $(e_1; (c_1; e_1))$ are also given; but then new objectives would arise like $(c_1; (c_1; (c_1; e_1))); (c_1; e_1))$, and so on.

Now, what is this connection which links the inferiora either with a *Relation* or with an objective as their superius? Bergmann answers: a function, whose arguments are the inferiora and whose value is the superius. Therefore, «Meinong's is a function ontology» (R, p. 349). He argues that Meinong is unaware of this, and hence he does not distinguish between complexes and functions, but mistakes cryptoclusters, which are collections of particulars, for objects⁴⁴. This is the *function inaccuracy*. Related to this, Bergmann mentions the *second inadequacy*, that is, that

⁴⁴ Cf. R, p. 371-372; cf. also R, p. 337.

Meinong does not give an ontological status to functions; in other words, there are no functions in his ontology. But this is not a serious gap in Bergmann's view:

Radical as it is, the inadequacy is yet easily remedied. One merely has to add the required number of functions to the basic ontological inventory. (R, p. 349)

The latter argument is very peculiar: Meinong's is a function ontology, but there are no functions in his ontology, which is in fact «*an implicit function ontology*»; now, it is enough to add functions and all is well. I shall forgo comment on this argument and proceed to recapitulate the result of the whole reasoning. Meinong's *Relation* – the same holds for the objective – is a particular, i.e., a simple thing, which by connecting other things causes an infinite regress; this could be averted only by the notion of nexus, which Meinong does not have. It follows that in his ontology there are no complexes. And if there are no complexes, then there are no facts, since, according to Bergmann, only facts are complex. Therefore, he concludes that Meinong thinks he distinguishes simple things from complexes and these from facts (i.e., objectives), but actually in his ontology there are only things.

What can one say about such a reading? I limit myself to three remarks. The first concerns the reference texts used by Bergmann. He declares that these are the first section of “Über Gegenstände höherer Ordnung” (1899) for connections, and chapter three of the second edition of *Über Annahmen* (1910) for objectives⁴⁵. Now, the latter text is a reworking and profound rewriting of chapter seven of the first edition, in which Meinong exposes for the first time his theory of objectives. Hence, Bergmann pegs the third ontology to the first edition of *Über Annahmen*, but in fact he refers – when he does it – to the second one (the significance of this remark will become clear later). The former text, the first section of the essay on objects of higher order is, as Meinong expressly declares⁴⁶, only a sketch and is not finished; unfortunately, he will never expand it, rather he seems to invite the readers to complete themselves what he did not accomplish. However, in *Über emotionale Präsentation* (1917) Meinong recognizes that the theory was initially formulated in relationship with relations and complexes, and that objectives were at that time unknown⁴⁷. Now, Bergmann interprets both *Relationen* and objectives from the standpoint of the essay on objects of higher order. His approach is partly justified by the fact

⁴⁵ Cf. R, p. 345, fn. 17.

⁴⁶ Cf. Meinong, 1899: GA II, p. 401 [1978, p. 155].

⁴⁷ Cf. Meinong, 1917: GA III, p. 389 [1972, pp. 93-94].

that Meinong refers to this text even when he is speaking about objectives, but at the same time it prevents Bergmann from interpreting them in a more sympathetic light.

As regards the concept of objects of higher order, it seems that Bergmann fails to understand what Meinong's *Komplexe* effectively are. He interprets Meinong's *Komplex* as a mere collection of particulars, that is, as a cryptocluster; then he deduces from a principle of general ontology, according to which «a collection of entities is not itself an entity» (R, p. 16) – a principle which, in Bergmann's view, is accepted by Meinong too⁴⁸ –, that a cryptocluster or *Komplex* is not an entity. On the contrary, Meinong strongly distinguishes between a *Komplex* and a mere collection, for which he uses the term “objective collective” (*objektives Kollektiv*)⁴⁹. Meinong explicitly claims that a *Komplex* is more than an objective collective of component parts, and he states a «principle of partial coincidence» which aims to account for the fact that each *Komplex* needs a *Relation* and hence is not a mere collection: rather, a *Komplex* is a relation together with its members. On the basis of this principle – which is however judged «both specious and opaque» by Bergmann (R, p. 414) –, relations are distinguished from *Komplexe*, since they are parts of the latter, but not conversely. Substantially Bergmann mixes up Meinong's *Komplex* with the objective collective⁵⁰. Thus he comes to the conclusion that in Meinong there are no complexes and, since Meinong's relation is different from the nexus, because it opens the way to Bradley's regress, there is also no adequate notion of facts. Since Bergmann identifies complexes and facts, he questions that subsisting objectives are facts.

Concerning objectives, Bergmann points out a significant question: that of the relationship between an objective and its inferiora, that is, the elements upon which it is built. However, I am doubtful whether it is correct to interpret the objective as something which is connected with three particulars (the members of the relation and the relation itself). In this way the objective is wholly assimilated to the *Komplex*. A careful examination of this issue requires an analysis both of Bradley's regress and of Meinong's and Bergmann's interpretations of the latter. I will not deal with

⁴⁸ Cf. R, p. 337.

⁴⁹ Cf. Meinong, 1899: GA II, pp. 388 ff. [1978, pp. 145 ff.].

⁵⁰ As Tegtmeier, 2000, pp. 97-98 correctly points out; cf. also p. 95: «Meinong's explicit statement that relations are parts of complexes is clearly inconsistent with Bergmann's interpretation».

this topic⁵¹, and will limit myself to remarking that the objective can be understood as playing a new function compared to that of the other objects of higher order, which escape the infinite regress, thus resolving problems which remained open in the previous treatment⁵².

2.2. *The ontological catastrophe (Meinong's final ontology)*

The theory of objects of higher order of 1899 and that of objectives of 1902 are preparatory to object theory, which appears officially in 1904. But Bergmann – as we will see – rejects its programme of a science of objects as such and in their totality.

Between the first and the second edition of [*Über*] *Annahmen* – says Bergmann – their author changed his mind on an issue so fundamental that more or less directly it affects virtually all others. (R, pp. 415-416)

This change is witnessed by several Meinongian texts, which Bergmann refers to: “*Über Gegenstandstheorie*” (1904), *Über die Erfahrungsgrundlagen unseres Wissens* (1906), *Über die Stellung der Gegenstandstheorie im System der Wissenschaften* (1906-1907) and, of course, the second edition of *Über Annahmen* (1910). It is here, particularly in chapter seven, that, according to Bergmann, Meinong displays his final ontology, a true ontological catastrophe. This was already implicit in his third ontology, where «the seed of the nature inaccuracy was sown» (R, p. 416). Now, what is *nature inaccuracy*? It is the failure to confer an ontological status on natures. A nature is not a thing, and therefore it does not exist for a reist. According to Bergmann, Meinong did acknowledge only in the final ontology, «when it was too late», that natures might exist⁵³. Hence the diagnosis Bergmann makes for a patient who is – in his own words⁵⁴ – virtually incurable:

Meinong's reism caused him to commit the most fatal error an ontologist can make. He insisted, without knowing it, on a specialized use of ‘exist’, i.e., on a use narrower than the only one proper and safe in ontology. (R, p. 417)

⁵¹ About which Orilia, 2006, 2007 has written interesting things. Moreover, Bergmann gets a bit mixed up: according to him, Meinong rejects infinite regress as regards relations, while he accepts it when he is examining objectives (cf. R, pp. 347, 348); actually, Meinong does exactly the opposite (cf. Meinong, 1899: GA II, pp. 390-391 [1978, pp. 147-148]; 1902, pp. 122-129, 164; 1910, GA IV, pp. 260-268 [1983, pp. 187-193]).

⁵² As Lenoci, 1997, pp. 262-264, 266, 279 suggests. A critique of Bergmann's interpretation of the objective is offered by Sierszulka, 2005, pp. 86 ff.

⁵³ Cf. R, p. 353.

⁵⁴ Cf. R, pp. 440-441.

Bergmann defines this “proper” use in the first sentence of *Realism*: «To exist, to be an *entity*, to have *ontological status* are the same»⁵⁵. In another passage he explains: «*There are several kinds (categories) of existents, but there is only one kind of existing. [...] ‘Exist’ is univocal*» (R, p. 362). Existence has two modes, actuality and potentiality; the latter has «an ontological status all of its own, which is the lowest of all» (R, p. 10, fn. 1), while actuality «has the ontological status which in a very obvious sense is the highest of all» (R, p. 63). Therefore, Bergmann assumes a single concept of existence, yet he allows *variations in degree*. Even though a fact may be either actual or potential⁵⁶, he believes that this does not undermine in any way the univocality of existing. Potentiality is the mere foundation of the possibility of any complex; in linguistic terms, «it is what makes any sentence, either true or false, well-formed»⁵⁷. As Bergmann sharply declares:

Kinds and degrees of independence (as I use the term) establish status differences among the categories of fact, things, and subsistents. But these differences among existents do not in any way involve different kinds of existing. (R, pp. 362-363)

We have already seen, as we introduced the principle of exemplification, the relation connecting independence and existence.

Meinong’s argument is quite different, since he distinguishes kinds of being (*Seinsarten*), while assuming, according to Bergmann, a single category of existents, the particulars, thus proving his nominalism⁵⁸. Meinong’s ‘*Sein*’ is translated into the language of the foil as ‘existing’, hence he would distinguish kinds of existing, or else – since in Bergmann’s view «‘kind of existing’ is clumsy» – «*levels of existence*» (R, p. 363). Just like Russell in *The Principles of Mathematics*⁵⁹, Meinong does not identify ‘existing’ and ‘being an entity’, as he acknowledges both entities that exist and others that do not exist. This means that what exists in Meinong’s sense does also exist in Bergmann’s sense, but not always conversely. Bergmann correctly points out the theoretical opposition between assuming one or more kinds (or categories) of existents and one or more kinds of existing, or being (in Meinongian terms). Now, he concludes, if «only particulars “exist”, or, synonymously, every “existent (being, *Sein*)” is a

⁵⁵ R, p. 3; cf. also Bergmann, 1963: CW II, p. 76.

⁵⁶ Cf. R, pp. 10, fn. 1, 61, 198, 352, fn. 54, 434.

⁵⁷ R, pp. 362, fn. 60; cf. also R, pp. 214-217.

⁵⁸ Cf. R, p. 15: «Nominalism, as I shall sometimes use the term, very broadly, is the doctrine that there is only one type (subcategory) of things».

⁵⁹ Cf. Russell, 1903, p. 449.

particular», then natures, which exist in his own sense, do not “exist” in Meinong’s sense.

Thus a collision course is set. The result is an absurd ontology, aggravated by a terminology not only clumsy but bizarre. (R, p. 417)

Below we will see how Bergmann rejects Meinong’s concept of *Daseinsfreiheit* and therefore the two fundamental principles of object theory: the principle of independence of so-being from being and the principle of the *Außersein*. Let us follow Bergmann’s argument, which is made up of three steps, each presenting a different stage in the evolution of Meinong’s thought from the third ontology to the final one. The extract deserves to be read carefully⁶⁰.

Meinong – Bergmann says – divides being in three ways. We leave out the first division into *Sein* (being), *Sosein* (so-being) and *Wiessein* (how-being), which is, according to Bergmann, «merely a clumsy tripartition of facts into the presumably existential, the categorical, and the relational». Another division of all being is already familiar to us, i.e., the one into the real and the ideal, which – as we know – Bergmann identifies respectively with existence (*Dasein*) and subsistence (*Bestand*). A third division of being is however more important: this brings out the notion of “pure object” (*reiner Gegenstand*), which stands, according to Meinong, «beyond being and non-being»⁶¹. Bergmann interprets ‘pure object’ as ‘pure particular’, that is as a synonym of ‘nature’. In Meinong’s view, pure objects (or natures) do not exist, yet they are not a mere nothing; besides being and non-being he theorizes *Außersein* (literally translatable as ‘extra-being’), which belongs to all pure objects (or natures). What is the *Außersein*? According to Meinong, it is the sphere of all that is «given», that is, of *all possible combinations among properties and objects*⁶². In this sense, it is the sphere of the pure object, where no assumptions are made concerning its existence or non-existence, and even its possibility or impossibility. Thus understood, the notion of *Außersein*, insofar as this includes all possible combinations of objects and properties, and therefore all possible objectives, shows some similarities with Bergmann’s concept of potentiality or possible₁, which is pure combinatorial possibility. Conversely, the domain of nonsense (or Bergmann’s impossible₁) would coincide, according to a late view of Meinong’s, with the domain of defective objects,

⁶⁰ Cf. R, pp. 417-418.

⁶¹ Meinong, 1904: GA II, p. 494 [1960, p. 86].

⁶² Cf. Meinong, 1904: GA II, pp. 492-493, 500 [1960, pp. 85, 92]; 1910, GA IV, pp. 79-80 [1983, p. 62]; 1915: GA VI, p. 181.

which are devoid even of *Außersein*⁶³. Bergmann is not aware of these similarities, and – following Russell⁶⁴ – interprets the *Außersein* as a third kind of being. Hence the conclusion of the first part of his argument (whose textual reference is the first four sections of “Über Gegenstandstheorie”)⁶⁵:

If they existed, there would thus be three sorts (*Arten*) of being, affirmative (positive) *Sein*, *Nichtsein*, which he [Meinong] holds is in its own way “positive”, and *Aussersein*. Thus the height of the absurd (in things) and the bizarre (in words) would be reached. (R, p. 417)

The second step concerns the principle of independence. Meinong states it in “Über Gegenstandstheorie”, but Bergmann refers to the more articulate second section of *Über die Stellung der Gegenstandstheorie*⁶⁶. Bergmann’s natures are the same as Meinong’s so-being (*Sosein*), in the sense that so-being is the whole nature of a particular. We know from the principle of *Außersein*, that being and non-being are not part of the nature of an object⁶⁷. Now, according to the principle of independence, a pure particular does not need to exist or to subsist in order to have properties. This means that «*Sosein ist daseinsfrei*», so-being is existence-free, and consequently, that we can assert the so-being of an object without assuming that it exists or subsists. Bergmann translates the principle of independence into the foil’s language as follows: simple natures of simple particulars do not have an ontological status. But this is unacceptable from his standpoint, because if something has no ontological status, then it does not exist, i.e., it is not a part of the world, and therefore we may not talk about it at all. In Bergmann’s view, the principle of independence conflicts with the concept of *Außersein*.

Let us now look at the third step. Bergmann grants that Meinong eventually establishes the proposition which had already surfaced in the passage between the first and the second ontology: all intentions exist. According to Meinong, properties can be attributed to an object without assuming it either as existent or as subsistent; nevertheless, asserting that an object does not exist implies that «somehow» it is there; in other terms, it has to be «given beforehand» (*vorgegeben*) in a pure manner, prior to the

⁶³ Cf. Meinong, 1917: GA III, p. 24 [1972, p. 21].

⁶⁴ Cf. Russell, 1905/1973, p. 78.

⁶⁵ Cf. R, p. 418, fn. 40.

⁶⁶ Cf. R, p. 418, fn. 41.

⁶⁷ Cf. Meinong, 1904: GA II, pp. 493-494 [1960, p. 86]; on this topic cf. Lambert, 1983, pp. 19-21.

inquiry over its being or non-being⁶⁸. Now, what is this «givenness» (*Gegebenheit*), which Meinong also defines as «a most general property», i.e., one that can be ascribed to all objects without exception?⁶⁹ Initially, we said that Meinong's philosophy – following a late reading he gave of his own research – is built on the given; yet, between the *Hume-Studien* and his mature works, the notion of «given» has been extended to include not only what is given in immediate experience, but equally what is given in the sense of subsistence and even of mere *Außersein*⁷⁰. Bergmann reads this through his own philosophical categories: all that is given exists, it must exist. Actually, he writes:

What is “given beforehand” exists in its own right. *Aussersein* is recognised as a third “positive” sort of *Sein*.

In his eyes, this conclusion has a twofold meaning, at once positive and negative:

Thus the nature inaccuracy has finally been cleared up. But at the same time the height of the absurd and the bizarre has been reached. (R, p. 418)

Officially Meinong is still a reist, but in fact natures «have become a positive sort of ‘existent’». Supposedly, then, he has laid the foundations of a new beginning, even though he was not fully aware of this. As for himself, Bergmann insists that he does not discriminate between being and existence: to him, talking about kinds of being is sheer nonsense – let alone *Außersein*.

Need I add – he writes – that I have not the slightest notion of what a *Seinsart* could possibly be? The one thing I am sure of is that it is something even more absurd than a level. (R, p. 418)

This conclusion should not astonish: as we have seen, it is implied in the first sentence of *Realism* and it is restated throughout the whole book, as well as in previous writings. Meinong distinguishes between kinds of being, while according to Bergmann existence is univocal, there are no different kinds of existing, but different degrees of independence which establish differences of status among categories of existents (facts, things and subsistents); however, he speaks about modes of existing and a lower existence as regards subsistents. But what exactly does it mean that «‘exist’ is univocal», if there are modes of existing and differences of degree as to the ontological status? What is a lower or a higher ontological status? In

⁶⁸ Cf. Meinong, 1904: GA II, p. 491 [1960, pp. 83-84].

⁶⁹ Meinong, 1904: GA II, p. 500 [1960, p. 92].

⁷⁰ Cf. Meinong, 1921: GA VII, pp. 42-43.

which sense does nexus exist, but its status «is lower than that of a thing»? (R, pp. 363-364). Substantially, Bergmann's degrees of ontological status try to answer the same question as Meinong's kinds of being.

3. *An assessment*

Let us recapitulate the path taken by Bergmann. He starts from the theory of relations exposed in *Hume-Studien II* (first phase), he then examines its new formulation in the first section of "Über Gegenstände höherer Ordnung" (second phase), and uses this to give an explanation of the objective, whose theory has already been exposed in the first edition of *Über Annahmen* (third phase) and subsequently rewritten in the second one (in which Bergmann fixes the emergence of the final ontology). He reads the second edition, not the first, but he considers the theory of objectives exposed there as belonging to the third phase. Of course Bergmann's purpose is structural, but pursuing it he splits a work and puts in the middle of it Meinong's writings between 1904 and 1907! Adopting this very peculiar approach, Bergmann can only appreciate the Meinong that predates the elaboration of object theory. What comes later and culminates in his opinion in the seventh chapter of *Über Annahmen*, especially in § 38 entitled "Zur Selbstkritik. Die Außerseinsansicht", that is, the Meinong of object theory, is simply dismissed.

3.1. *Bergmann and Meinongian studies*

We can now try to explain why Bergmann's analysis of Meinong's ontology did not produce a great impact on Meinongian studies. The question is not insignificant, if we consider that in the 60s of the last century Bergmann played a part in the rediscovery of Meinong's thought together with Roderick M. Chisholm, John N. Findlay and Rudolf Haller. The answer is implicit in what we said before. If my reconstruction of Bergmann's reading of Meinong is correct, through the critique of the principle of independence and of the *Außersein*, Bergmann rejects the main concept of object theory, that is, *Daseinsfreiheit*. Thus it is hardly surprising that his reading of Meinong has remained far from the mainstream which has interested many scholars in recent decades. It is certainly distant from those who are seeking in Meinong the means, or at least the theoretical intuitions, to speak about non-existents or fictions (like Terence Parsons

and Richard Routley), or who lay stress on the principle of independence (Karel Lambert) or on the theory of *Außersein* (Dale Jacquette).

If indeed, as Rosaria Egidi maintains, «by proposing the realistic₂ alternative, Bergmann intends to carry out the Meinongian programme» (Egidi, 2005, p. 65), then this happens through a weakening of object theory. Bergmann's proposal would be a way of rethinking object theory without the different kinds of being, the principle of independence and the *Außersein*. This evidently runs counter to Meinong's intent, which was to give increasing importance to these concepts, so much so that not only did he exercise self-criticism and reformulate whole parts of *Über Annahmen*, but he also reconsidered such concepts in later works which Bergmann completely ignored. In *Über emotionale Präsentation* Meinong speaks of defective objects, to which even *Außersein* does not belong⁷¹.

The Meinong Bergmann is interested in is not the Meinong of object theory. This has some effects on Bergmann's ultimate judgment about Meinong's nominalism – which, supposedly, characterizes his thought from the ontology with which he started till «the one over which he died». But what could Bergmann have said on this subject, if he had ventured into considering Meinong's mature work as well?

3.2. *What could Bergmann have said, if he had examined Meinong's mature work?*

Let us take some statements by Bergmann about nominalists like Brentano and Meinong. He writes:

There are thus no universals in either the First or the Second of their worlds. (R, p. 142)

And again:

[...] there are no *indeterminate* objects. A triangle is either equilateral, or isosceles, or rectangular, and so on. There is none which is not either the one or the other, just as there is no spot which is colored without being (a completely determinate shade of) either red, or blue, or green, and so on. This specious argument for nominalism swayed many, Brentano and Meinong among them. Speaking of abstract objects, they all insist that there are none and that, therefore, nominalism is true. (R, pp. 191-192)

All objects, that is ordinary objects like chairs, trees and rocks, are completely determinate. Hence Bergmann infers:

In asserting their premiss the nominalists are thus right. Of course they are. But they are disastrously wrong in deducing from this truism under the influence of

⁷¹ Cf. Meinong, 1917: GA III, pp. 304 ff. [1972, pp. 18 ff.].

their more or less explicit reism what it does not imply, namely, that there are no derived characters (things), having some ontological status.

Bergmann states instead that «derived characters have ontological status, though of course not that of objects» (R, p. 192).

Derived characters or universals differ from other universals like ‘red’ or ‘square’, because they have a form such as ‘being both green and square’⁷²; a derived universal is the *definiens* of a definition as well, since Bergmann maintains that «[t]he linguistic reflection of derivation is definition» (R, p. 93). While non-derived universals are always exemplified on the basis of the principle of exemplification, derived universals are not always exemplified; therefore, they often exist only potentially. For instance, according to Bergmann, both the dog and the centaur are derived universals: the former is exemplified by the form ‘being both a mammal and a quadruped and with a very sharp sense of smell and so on’, and therefore it is an actual derived universal; the latter is not exemplified by ‘being both a man and a horse’, and therefore it is a potential derived universal⁷³.

Let us now look at what Meinong says about indeterminate objects such as ‘the triangle’. Actually – as we have already seen – Meinong is (or appears to be) a nominalist in the essay on objects of higher order, when he says that relations should be considered in their specificity; or in *Über die Erfahrungsgrundlagen unseres Wissens*, when he says that the green of a leaf is not the green in general, but the specific green of that individual leaf, which has been generated and dies with it⁷⁴. Yet, another view is growing in him, a view concerning incomplete or indeterminate objects. His reflection about such objects begins – if we bear with Bergmann’s periodization – during the second stage of his ontology, in “Abstrahieren und Vergleichen” (1900)⁷⁵, it continues in *Über die Stellung der Gegenstandstheorie*⁷⁶, and reaches an organic arrangement after what Bergmann calls «Meinong’s final ontology», in a book published in 1915, *Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit*⁷⁷. Bergmann does not examine at all

⁷² Cf. R, p. 13.

⁷³ Cf. R, p. 94. Cf. also Angelone – Minocchio – Pagliardi, 2004, pp. 67-71.

⁷⁴ Cf. Meinong, 1906: GA V, p. 394.

⁷⁵ Cf. Meinong, 1900: GA I, pp. 464 ff. [1993, 155 ff.].

⁷⁶ Cf. Meinong, 1906-1907: GA V, pp. 326-329.

⁷⁷ For a genetic reconstruction of this line of thought cf. Modenato, 2006, pp. 115-124.

this book, of which the reader of *Realism* apprehends very little, besides what is already deducible from the title⁷⁸.

Now, the triangle is, according to the mature Meinong, an indeterminate object in precisely the same sense in which Bergmann is speaking of it. The triangle «as such is neither equilateral nor isosceles, neither rectangular nor scalene: it is in this respect and in many others just indeterminate»⁷⁹, or incomplete. Such objects possess a peculiar ontological status, which is different from that of ordinary objects. Let us recall that complete objects, which are determined in all their respects, exist or subsist⁸⁰, and hence exhaust the domain of Meinong's being; conversely, incomplete objects have a being which Meinong calls "implexive being" (*implexives Sein*): this means that they exist or subsist not separately, but insofar as they are "implected" (*implektiert*), that is, involved or embedded in complete objects. Meinong gives the example of the incomplete object 'the ball', and asks in which relationship it stands to the billiard balls of his friend X. Now, the incomplete object does not exist in the individual balls in the same sense as in the relationship of parts to a whole, because all parts of a complete object are complete as well. The incomplete object 'the ball' is implected by an implecting object (*Implektant*), in our example the friend's billiard balls. An incomplete object is implected by all complete objects which can be thought through it; this means that its being is determined through the existence or subsistence of such an implecting object. In this sense we can speak of an implexive existence or subsistence: an incomplete object does not exist separately, but it exists or subsists as implected, if its implecting objects exist or subsist. Such implexive being belongs *by variations in degree* to the incomplete objects. Thus the round square is impossible, since it is never implected, while the rectangular square is possible⁸¹.

Is Meinong here not dealing with the question of universals and their exemplification? Is not the triangle or the ball which he is speaking of a universal as Bergmann understands it? Meinong explicitly speaks of

⁷⁸ In six lines, Bergmann (R, p. 436) appreciates the work but criticizes the notion of *Wahrscheinlichkeitsevidenz*. In the related fn. 29 he adds: «All together, *Ueber Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit* is as dreary as are Brentano's reflections about probability, causality, and induction in *Versuch ueber die Erkenntnis*. But his essay is at least short; Meinong's treatise is very long». And that is all.

⁷⁹ Meinong, 1915: GA VI, p. 178.

⁸⁰ Meinong, 1915: GA VI, pp. 185, 191, 202.

⁸¹ Cf. Meinong, 1915: GA VI, pp. 210-17.

genera and species (like ‘triangles’ and ‘vertebrates’) as universal objects⁸² and states more than once that incomplete objects play the role of universals⁸³. What then did Bergmann find in *Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit*?

From representationalist positions, Meinong eventually came to realistic positions. A fixed point of his philosophy is that there is a world outside us and independent of us, and yet not only real objects, but also ideal and incomplete ones are not subjective; to those who dislike the expression ‘realism’, Meinong suggests replacing it with ‘objectivism’⁸⁴. If Bergmann had ventured into considering the mature Meinong, surely he would have criticized – as is inevitable – single points, but he would have found in him a fellow traveller not only in the battle against representationalism, but also in that against nominalism. The point is not merely that Bergmann does not examine the mature Meinong: he does not examine him because he dismisses object theory, and this is what barred him from discovering in Meinong an ally in the battle against nominalism.

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⁸² Cf. Meinong, 1915: GA VI, p. 208.

⁸³ Cf. Meinong, 1915: GA VI, p. 740; 1921: GA VII, p. 19 [1974: 227]; on this topic cf. Jacqueline, 1995.

⁸⁴ Cf. Meinong, 1921: GA VII, p. 46.

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Metaphysics of space and time

Laird Addis

PARTICULARS AS AREAS AND DURATIONS

Abstract. Gustav Bergmann came to hold in his 1964 paper, “Synthetic *A Priori*”, that basic particulars just are areas and durations, hoping thereby to guarantee that we are acquainted with such particulars. I have come to agree with this view, although I argued in an early paper that we are not acquainted with basic particulars. But there is a problem with Bergmann’s thesis. Following discussion of the connection of particularity with space and time, I raise the question of how duration can individuate, given that there is but one dimension of it. I explore some putative solutions and settle, tentatively, on one that makes a basic particular what, in another tradition, could be called a hylomorph of area or duration and prime matter. Whether or not this solution really allows that we are acquainted with basic particulars remains uncertain.

Whenever it was that Gustav Bergmann introduced the notion of the bare particular – either by the expression itself or otherwise – he had his more or less final say about them in one of his most important papers, “Synthetic *A Priori*,” written for his last book of essays, *Logic and Reality* (Bergmann, 1964). There he settles definitively on the view that bare particulars just are areas and durations. The most important argument of the essay, at least in his mind, is that, even as areas and durations, particulars are not spatial and temporal entities in a way that would compromise their bareness. Whether or not sustaining this claim is really as important as he maintains, it is not my concern in this paper. Instead, I propose to explore the very idea that areas and durations, and especially the latter, are the particulars that many of us agree must be among the constituents of the ontological analysis (or assay, as Bergmann came to prefer) of objects and events.

Forty years ago I published a paper called “Particulars and Acquaintance” (Addis, 1967) in which I argued that, while we are not acquainted with particulars, the arguments in their favor are so compelling that we must nevertheless suppose them to exist. We are acquainted with properties, I agreed, but not with the entities that exemplify those properties. Bergmann did not like my paper. I had done exactly what, according to a very curious passage in “Synthetic *A Priori*”, a philosopher should not do, at least on one interpretation of that paragraph which I now quote:

(Let it be said once and for all that even if the question [of asking to have one's attention directed to a bare particular] were unanswerable, it would not follow that there are no bare particulars. Should they turn out to be dialectically indispensable, an argument could be made for "postulating" their existence. The proper place for such postulation, though, is in science and science only. Thus it is much, much better not to have to make the argument). (Bergmann, 1964, p. 278, parentheses in original)

Of this curious paragraph, I still can do no better than repeat what I said about it in that early paper of mine:

It is not clear, to be sure, what Bergmann means by 'such postulation' – postulation *per se* or postulation of bare particulars specifically. If it is the latter, then there is a confusion involved. It is true that we think of science as "postulating" entities: atoms, electrons, and so on. Yet, "ontologically" speaking, science never does any more than (1) discover or define a "new" *property*, (2) claim that that *property* is in fact exemplified, and (3) claim or show that that *property* is significant, i.e., that it has certain lawful connections with other properties. When the scientist says that there are atoms, he means that something has a property or set of properties of a certain sort. But what it is to have a property is no business of the scientist, but rather of the philosopher. Nor would the scientist ever be interested in categorial "properties" such as "being a property" or "being a particular." The postulation of science is limited to *members* of the category of property; in no case does science postulate categories themselves. Thus any suggestion that science might postulate bare particulars is absurd. But probably Bergmann means that postulation *per se* should be limited to science (although of course the question of postulating bare particulars would never arise). But then the sense of the first sentence above is not clear. (Addis, 1967, p. 254)

But, in a way, this matter is moot, at least between Bergmann and me, in that I have long since come to agree with Bergmann that we are acquainted with particulars, because particulars are areas and durations or, at least, so intimately connected with areas and durations that, given that we are acquainted with areas and durations, we may conclude that we are acquainted with particulars. The reason for my qualification will become clear only near the end of this paper.

(I do wish to observe, somewhat aside, that despite a flurry of discussion in the 1960s of bare particulars by Bergmann students and others as well as substantial discussion in the 1970s and some beyond, there is very little in the literature on the idea of particulars as areas and durations, even though so regarding them was Bergmann's decisive answer to those who claimed that we are not acquainted with anything reasonably called bare particulars. I do not know the reason for this neglect).

The main overarching reason I gave in the 1967 paper for rejecting particulars as areas and durations was that it tied the notion of particulars too

closely to those of space and time. For despite Bergmann's arguments in "Synthetic *A Priori*" that tried to dissociate areas and durations from too intimate a connection with space and time (to speak loosely), it was clear that particulars could exist only in a spatial or a temporal or a spatial-temporal world. But this connection, which I saw then as a weakness or, perhaps I should say, disadvantage of the view, I came later, especially while working on my book on the philosophy of music (Addis, 1999) with its emphasis on the ontology of sounds and of conscious states, and on a lecture I gave on the ontological impossibility of gods (Addis, unpublished), as a strength and an advantage. In the latter piece, especially, I wrestled with the idea that particulars are extensions of space and time (as I took areas and durations to be), and I shall make use of some of that material here.

There is, it seems to me, a curious and perplexing problem with saying without qualification that particulars just are areas and durations. But before I state the problem, I want briefly to rehearse what will be some familiar considerations that many of us learned from Bergmann and also to discuss the general issue of the connection of particularity with space and time.

Among ordinary objects I include not only obviously physical ones such as stars and organisms and red spots but also mental ones (sometimes called states or events) such as perceivings and pains as well as things whose mental or physical status is controversial such as sounds and odors. (Of course, for some philosophers, everything is physical. But for most of them, some of those physical things are also mental. So they can express the same idea but in a slightly different way). Bergmann insisted, and said so many times, that the ontological analysis of ordinary objects must account – to take the simplest case – both for the sameness of properties that some pairs of objects exemplify and for their being numerically distinct. The sameness of properties can be adequately accounted for, Bergmann believed and I agree, only on the supposition that properties are universals, literally the same entity in two or more objects with exactly the same shade of red, for example. On the other hand, if, as we should, we deny the principle of the identity of indiscernibles (or, better said, of the sameness of identicals, given the definition of 'identity' as having all properties in common), then we cannot allow that an ordinary object or event consists only of those universals. The principle of general ontology that no two objects can have all *constituents* (not: properties!) in common thus bids us, given what we have assumed so far, to agree that every

ordinary object contains an entity that is not one of its properties and that no other object has among *its* constituents. You just can't make particular things out of universal things only. Thus we arrive at the notion of the particular, whether bare or not, as a basic ontological category.

This is an almost intolerably concise argument for basic particulars, which, of course can be and has been challenged at every step here stated as well as every substep not here stated. But it is not my present purpose to make the argument further. I find it compelling, when spelled out in detail, and I shall proceed on the assumption of its soundness. Thus, ordinary objects do consist of particulars, as adumbrated, and universals – connected, we might as well add, by the asymmetrical nexus of exemplification.

With this background, I am ready to begin my exploration of the idea of particulars as extensions in space and time. My thesis is that particulars are entities that, at the least, are of ontological necessity connected with space and time, that is, with extensions as areas and durations, one or both of which is (are) given to us in any experience we have of a particular object or event. I shall now attempt some defense of that thesis of a rather un-Bergmannian sort, although my main defense is simply that this view is clearer, more economical, and solves the problem better than any other view while countenancing only entities with which we are acquainted.

One agrees, in a way, with Descartes that the “essence” of physical objects is their extension in space, and of mental objects (at least of conscious states, which were what, apparently, he was talking about) their *thinking*, even though it ignores some ordinary objects altogether, such as sounds perhaps most importantly, which have neither extension in space nor consciousness. But in another sense, it would have been more natural, and certainly more symmetrical, to say that it is extension in time that is the “essence” of conscious states. In any case, while it is impossible for physical objects, at least of the sort that consist of atoms and molecules, to have any of the properties of that kind of object unless it has extension in space, I submit that it is equally impossible for a conscious state to have any of the properties of that kind of object unless it has extension in time, that is, duration. The impossibility in both cases is ontological: the “nature” of the entities involved precludes the corresponding “possibility”. Thus we have a bit of initial support for the hypothesis that for anything to be a particular something or other, it must be in space or in time. Of course, one *might* say, abstractly though falsely, that it is the nature of physical things that they must be, to some extent, in the world of space and time, and that conscious states, while as a matter of fact all confirmed

instances are in time, are, by way of extreme contrast to physical things, such that they need not be, to any extent, in the world of space and/or time. Indeed, for those who believe that there are conscious but bodiless beings “outside” of space and time – gods, angels, and eventually ourselves – it is required that awareness can exist without duration. Yet, to anticipate, the crucial phenomenological fact is that conscious states are not given to us as having spatial location and, consequently and more importantly, that the particularity of a conscious state is secured only by its temporal location. To be sure, every confirmed case of a conscious state has an intimate connection with something that is in space – a brain or at least some part of an organism, and we have every good reason to believe that conscious states can exist only in very intimate association – some would say identity – with highly organized states of matter. But, as I shall argue later, the particularity of a conscious state cannot rest on that fact. And if it did, that would only strengthen the case for saying that nothing can be particular and altogether “outside” the world of space and time.

It is obvious that those objects that are uncontroversially physical must, as Descartes insisted, have extension in space. But must a mind, then, also have duration just in order to be a particular thing? Or, more generally, as just claimed, does any particular thing that is not in space have to be in time in order to be a particular thing? We are not talking here about the possibility of those useful fictions of mathematics and science, that is, extensionless points and durationless instants, for they are in space and time or, rather, would be if they existed. No, we are asking if it is possible for there to be particular objects that are both extensionless and durationless and that are “outside” of space and time as, for the historically most important example, gods are often supposed to be.

It is tempting to say, and I believe it to be true, that to be a particular object or event just is to be the sort of thing that is divisible into some kind of parts. Again, for physical objects of the uncontroversial kind, this has long been a commonplace, even if Leibniz put it to very dubious use in his main argument for monads. Indeed, why should we not say the same, against Leibniz, for mental objects such as a perceiving of a chair? In point of fact, of course, all perceivings do have duration, but my claim is that this fact is one of ontological necessity.

Descartes, among many others, was fearful that if his god had parts, it might break up and cease to exist as a god, and so maintained that his god is an absolutely simple substance. He should have realized, and perhaps did realize, the profound difficulty, not to say impossibility, of such an

entity's having any properties of a sort that could make it a particular being at all. It can have no structure of any kind and therefore, by the way, nothing to ground its dispositions. Be that as it may, and of whatever worry it might be to theists, my claim is that such an absolutely simple substance is, like an extensionless point or a durationless instant, an impossible object to begin with. An object without any parts cannot be a particular thing just because it cannot exemplify any of the properties that would make it a being of a certain sort, such as being a tree or an atom or a human. But to have parts, at least in the relevant sense, is to be either in space or in time or in both. Hence, any entity that is a particular thing – that can have properties but not be the property of anything – is necessarily in space or time or both.

Perhaps by now I have, in what would be Bergmann's opinion, swung too far in the opposite direction, tying particularity too closely to space and time. But again, I am not worried here about the "bareness" issue, whether or not asserting the "intimate association" or identity of (ultimate, ontological) particulars with areas and durations threatens their bareness in a sense that matters. I want instead, in the remainder of this paper, to deal with a problem that arises with respect to durations that does not arise with respect to areas.

One may get the impression in reading Bergmann's detailed treatment in "*Synthetic A Priori*" of bare particulars as areas that he does not mean for us to think of them as literally bits of space. In a footnote, he observes that

Instead of 'area' one could use either '(spatial) extension' or 'piece of space'. From the former we had better stay away until time is brought in. Use of the latter would have strengthened the suspicion of "absolutism". To dispel the suspicion, one merely has to point out that the phrase is metaphorical. There is, as one says, no Space with a capital S. (Bergmann, 1964, p. 291)

The point is, if I understand it, that, in keeping with the Principle of Exemplification, areas cannot exist except as exemplifying properties, that is, except as being ordinary objects. If there were no ordinary objects, there would be no areas and so nothing to stand in spatial relations and so no space at all. Still, an area is a "from here to there," so to speak, and, given the multi-dimensionality of space, guarantees that no two areas will stand in all and only the same spatial relations (at the same time, one may want to add; but if it is a purely spatial world, then that complication won't even arise). So areas nicely solve the problem of individuating identical ordinary objects while also being something with which it seems we are indubitably

acquainted. As Bergmann might say, in effect does say, «How would I know that this area has this shape if I were not acquainted with both the shape and the area?».

But our world is not a merely spatial one. Nor is it the crucial fact that all objects that are in space are also in time. It is instead that some objects are in time only or, at the least, are not given to us as being in space while they are given to us in their particularity. The most important of such objects are states of consciousness such as perceivings, rememberings, feelings (of pain, for example), and in general all those awarenesses that make up the stream of consciousness. And it is not just that these objects (or events or states or whatever you want to call them) are in time and, probably, not in space, but, as has just been briefly argued, that without time, they could not exist. Nor is it only conscious states that require time for their existence: those things that are, as we speak, mental but not, at least on my view, constituents of conscious states, such as emotions, moods, and sensations are one category of such entities. Another, whether mental or not, is that of sounds, odors, and tastes.

It was the investigation of the ontology of sounds, and what I called their “ontological affinity” to conscious states, that also led me, somewhat independently of Bergmann, to the idea, but not yet the conclusion, that some particulars just are durations. For the particularity of a sound, whether or not it is spatially located and even given as such, seems, in some strong sense, to depend on its extension in time and nothing else. About sounds I shall have more to say. It is, therefore, strongly tempting to conclude that the particulars in all such objects – conscious states, emotions, moods, sensations, odors, sounds – are the durations themselves. But by now, it is probably obvious what the difficulty, or apparent difficulty, is in the theory that some particulars are durations. Bergmann himself, near the end of “Synthetic *A Priori*,” states it as follows:

We may have stumbled upon a fundamental difference between space and time. If “two” particulars (areas) coincide in space, as one says, then they are one and not two. If two awarenesses, e.g., one of mine and one of yours, are exactly simultaneous, i.e., as one says, if they coincide in time, they are still two particulars and not one. (Bergmann, 1964, p. 301)

But he just leaves it at that. How can this be? The fundamental motivation for having particulars in one’s ontology is to be able to individuate, and especially, of course, to be able to individuate qualitatively identical objects or events. But it would seem that if you and I are, at the same time, both thinking that $2 + 2 = 4$, and if the particular in each thought just *is*

duration, then our two mental states have exactly the same constituents. The fact that underlies the problem is, equally clearly, that duration is unidimensional; there is, as it were, only one duration. So durations, as bits of duration, so to speak, cannot, it would seem, do the job that particulars are supposed to do. And it would seem proper that, if we were to conclude from this fact that durations are not themselves particulars, we should further conclude that areas are not particulars.

One abstractly possible response to this dialectical impasse, as we might call it, is to deny Bergmann's final claim above: that in such a situation «they are still two particulars and not one». In an even earlier work than my 1967 paper – the published version of my doctoral dissertation (Addis, 1965) – I wondered about the individuation of qualitatively identical and simultaneous mental states and seemed to suggest (if I now read myself correctly) that it was the indubitably distinct brain states of you and me, yours being the cause of your mental state and mine of mine, that also individuate our mental states. This, I suppose, *would* be to say that, in themselves, our mental states are really one! But surely, that is absurd, not because, as some might say, my mental state is given as *mine* and yours as *yours*, which, in an ontological sense isn't even true (there is no property of *being-mine* except in the irrelevant legal sense), but because being given as mine would not exclude that it is also yours. No, it is because my mental state is given to me, when I introspect, as *particular* or, if you like, as *particularized*. Thus, whatever grounds its particularity, it cannot be something wholly and contingently external to it, such as the state of my brain. But is it still, in some sense, possible even so that your mental state and mine are literally the same particular object? I don't know how completely to dispose of the idea; just *possibly* it is an idea worth pursuing further, but I shall assume here, what I very much tend to believe, that it is not an acceptable solution to our problem.

One feature of the kinds of situations that pose our problem that may make that “solution” have any plausibility at all is that, unlike the cases in which areas have all properties in common, we are never *acquainted* with two, simultaneous mental states having all properties in common. The only mental states I am acquainted with are my own (non-ontological sense); and the idea that I might be having two, simultaneous, qualitatively identical mental states is surely, in some sense, absurd. (Or if different, mutually unaware “parts” of my mind can think the same thing at the same time, we are, epistemically speaking, in the same situation as that of two persons having the same thought). So, it might be suggested, there is no problem to

solve: the durations I am acquainted with in my mental states are the particulars in them, and I don't need to distinguish them from other mental states with which I am not acquainted.

My response to this proposal is, as some of you will suspect, that what is wanted is an *ontological*, not an epistemological solution to our problem. The fact that I am not acquainted with others' mental states is irrelevant; what is relevant is that *there are*, or may be, simultaneous, qualitatively identical mental states, no matter who may or may not be acquainted with them.

But there is another problem with this proposed solution. It is agreed that we are not acquainted with simultaneous, qualitatively identical mental states, and the same may plausibly be said of odors and tastes as well as of emotions and some sensations. But what about sounds? Are we not sometimes given qualitatively identical, simultaneous sounds? And if so, and if sounds are dependent on their durations for their particularity, then the presupposition of the proposed solution – that we are never acquainted with two, simultaneous, qualitatively identical objects that depend on duration in the relevant way – is false.

Why are philosophers not more interested in sounds? As I said in the music book, almost the only major philosopher, at least of the analytic tradition, to explore some of the ontology and epistemology of sounds is Peter Strawson, who devotes the second chapter of *Individuals* (Strawson, 1959) to the topic, especially in the context of imagining a world of sounds and minds alone. Sounds are not quite unique in being entities that, while depending on duration for their existence and their particularity, can also have spatial location – some sensations like pains and itches are similar in that respect – but they are, or so I say, the only *mind-independent* entities of that sort. Let us consider the ontology of sounds a little further.

Strawson maintains that our experience of some sounds as having spatial location is not immediately given but learned, as some have said also about pains. I doubt it, in both cases, but learned or not, some sounds like some pains do have spatial location. But whether or not it is true of pains, sounds do not depend for their nature or existence on space. Sounds could exist in a non-spatial world, but, like conscious states themselves, could not exist in a non-temporal world. If particulars are just areas and durations, then a sound is a duration exemplifying volume, timbre, and (usually) pitch. If it also has a spatial location, that is something extra, as it were – something external to its nature as a sound.

But it is this fact of sometimes having spatial location that not only allows for musical performances that specifically call for qualitatively identical sounds from different locations but also, as I suggested above, provides examples of cases in which a person is acquainted with simultaneous, qualitatively identical entities whose particularity depends on their durations. And sounds seem to be the only kind of entities of which this is the case. But because it is the case, our problem remains: how, if some particulars just are durations, to individuate what would then be cases of numerically distinct objects with all constituents in common.

We may make use of this example of simultaneous, qualitatively identical sounds with which a person is acquainted also to reject any proposed solution to our problem that would distinguish “public” from “private” time or duration. For even if, as I would not myself agree, sounds are really “private” to the person who hears them, the problem is there: the two sounds are given to me as two and “within” the same duration, “public” or “private.”

There is an ontological assay of ordinary objects that solves our problem but only at what may seem to be the cost of once again making particulars not themselves literally objects of acquaintance. But let us see if this may not be a case of what, in another tradition, might be called a “higher synthesis”. I am not averse to shopping from time to time in other branches and times of our common Western philosophical tradition, something that usually but not always dismayed Gustav Bergmann who, after all, did a bit of it himself once he got beyond his strict positivist inhibitions. Be that as it may, what I want to remind you of is the medieval and earlier Aristotelian notion of an ordinary object as consisting of a natured substance and its accidents. I have long thought that the best way to think of this assay clearly, even if none of its proponents ever exactly put it this way, is to think of the hylomorph of prime matter and essence as a particular exemplifying a property of a sort that grounds ontologically (what in, my opinion, should not be grounded ontologically) the everyday categories of things into humans, dogs, stones, apples, and so on – that is, into those things for which there happen to be substantives in ordinary language due, also in my opinion, not to anything of ontological significance, but instead to human needs, purposes, and desires. It is this hylomorph in which inhere what that tradition called accidents. Thus the distinction between two kinds of *properties*, essences and accidents, is grounded ontologically in how closely they embrace what makes the object a particular thing, its prime matter. (Michael Loux, 1991, has extended and

helpful discussion of this “double-predication” thesis as it appears in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*).

Of course, this analysis really applies only to physical objects, at least historically speaking, for, despite the worries about how a soul could exist as a particular thing after death, minds, not to mention particular conscious states, are not yet thought of, in the ontological sense, as fully particular things as are physical objects. Even so, I think the basic idea might profitably be applied to our problem as follows.

Instead of the kinds of essences Aristotle and the medievals had, we have duration and area; they are, if we want to speak this way, the “essences” of ordinary objects and events. And just as a traditional essence can of course be shared but is particularized in an ordinary object by its prime matter, so, in our ordinary objects, duration and/or area is particularized by well, if you like, bare particulars. And it is, indeed, these momentary, particularized areas and durations that exemplify the properties of sense experience that have traditionally been those exemplified by bare particulars. How this three-level analysis of ordinary objects might be reflected in an ideal language I shall not attempt to say, although I did have a run at a somewhat similar idea in a paper I wrote in the ’70s for a collection of studies of Bergmann’s philosophy (Addis, 1974).

But am I now really back to where I was in the 1967 paper: that there are bare particulars but we are not acquainted with them? Perhaps so. But I cannot help but think, for what it is worth, that something like this must be the solution to the problem, and that, in some reasonable sense, we can say that on this view we *are* acquainted with the particulars in ordinary objects and events. Perhaps somewhat curiously, the medievals had no trouble with this idea, maintaining that universals are given to, or even “in”, the intellect, while the particulars are given to the senses. I cannot, of course, agree with that way of putting it, but I like the idea that the hylomorph, as such, is an object of acquaintance.

This is not an entirely satisfactory solution. Or at least the formulation and defense of it here are not wholly adequate. So I close with a challenge for the reader either to find better arguments for the solution or to find a better solution.

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IS THERE A DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE SPACE?*

Abstract. One issue that Bergmann discusses in his article “Synthetic *A Priori*” is the ontology of space. He presents his answer to the question: “What kinds of spatial entities are there?” by distinguishing three answers to the question that could plausibly be called “absolutist”, and argues that his view is nonabsolute (or relative) with respect to each. For Bergmann there is a close connection between the ontology of space and the phenomenology of space. What we know to be true about space, what needs an ontological ground is based on how space is presented to us. Conversely, according to the Principle of Acquaintance, the simple entities of one’s ontology must be objects of acquaintance that are presented to us. For that reason, Bergmann worries about the questioner and critic who asks him to direct his attention to the entity “in” a spot which is the bare particular. To answer that supposedly “unanswerable” question in a way that allows Bergmann to preserve his relativism is one task he sets himself in “Synthetic *A Priori*”. I shall argue, however, that Bergmann is not successful in accomplishing that task since his phenomenology of particulars renders his ontology of space “absolute” in at least one sense of that ambiguous term.

One issue that Bergmann discusses in his article “Synthetic *A Priori*”¹ is the ontology of space. He presents his answer to the question: “What kinds of spatial entities are there?” by distinguishing three answers to the question that could plausibly be called “absolutist”, and argues that his view is nonabsolute (or relative) with respect to each. For Bergmann there is a close connection between the ontology of space and the phenomenology of space. What we know to be true about space, what needs an ontological ground is based on how space is presented to us. Conversely, according to the Principle of Acquaintance, the simple entities of one’s ontology must be objects of acquaintance that are presented to us. For that reason, Bergmann worries about the questioner and critic who asks him to direct his attention to the entity “in” say, a red, round spot, which is the bare par-

* I have benefited greatly by discussions with Panayot Butchvarov and Erwin Tegtmeier regarding the content of this paper.

¹ In Gustav Bergmann *Logic and Reality*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison 1964, pp. 272-301. Unless otherwise noted, all page references in the text will be to this paper.

ticular. To answer that supposedly “unanswerable” question in a way that allows Bergmann to preserve his relativism is one task he sets for himself in “Synthetic *A Priori*”. I shall argue, however, that Bergmann is not successful in accomplishing that task since his phenomenology of particulars renders his ontology of space “absolute” in at least one sense of that ambiguous term². To see why I shall begin by considering Bergmann’s three views of absolute and relative space.

The first view of absolute space that Bergmann discusses is the so-called container view. He characterizes it as follows:

If all “things” now ceased to exist, would space be left? The view of those who answer negatively is relative₁. Those answering affirmatively hold the absolute₁, or, as it is also called, the container view [...]. The absolutist is committed to holding that at least some spatial entities are neither things “in” the spots nor relations among such things. (Bergmann, 1964, p. 285)

The absolutist₁ holds that regions of space, what Bergmann calls “space-things”, and others call “places”, the spatial relations between them and the shapes they exemplify are spatial entities. The cornerstone of this view, as Bergmann characterizes it, is that at least one kind of spatial entity is not a constituent “in” the spots, or a relation among such things. Thus, one would be an absolutist₁ if one held that places directly stand in spatial relations and that spots only indirectly stand in spatial relations in virtue of *occupying* a place. On Bergmann’s view the only spatial things are relations and properties. The relata of spatial relations are bare particulars and they are non-spatial. Since relations obtain directly among things and the various spatial properties are “in” the spots (that is, are constituents of them), Bergmann’s view is relativistic₁.

Although Bergmann «dismiss[es] all kinds of absolutism₁ out of hand» (Bergmann, 1964, p. 286), he does, in fact, have various reasons for doing so. For one, we are not acquainted with space-things or places. For another, they are dialectically dispensable since the problem of individuation can be solved without them (with bare particulars). Furthermore, they are ontologically lavish, violating Occam’s razor by unnecessarily positing a rela-

² It is a platitude to claim that Bergmann’s views have steadily and in some ways radically changed over the years but so far as I can tell, his views on space and time have remained basically unchanged throughout. In *New Foundations of Ontology* (1992), Bergmann mentions that his current views on time can be found in Appendix C, but since it is not there, I assume he never wrote it, and my point holds. See Bergmann, 1992, pp. 209 and 221. And since he says nothing new about space in *New Foundations* we can assume that his views there remain the same as those expressed in earlier works.

tion of occupancy as the ontological ground of a spot's being at a place. For Bergmann, the spatial relations between the particular "in" the spot and other particulars are sufficient to ground a spot being at a place. For these reasons, he dismisses absolutism₁ and the alternatives to which he turns are all relativistic₁.

Since the second version of the absolute/relative space distinction is the main focus of this paper, let me briefly state the third version before I turn to a detailed discussion of the second. According to the third version of absolute space places, construed as individuals existing "in" or "outside" of each spot, are abandoned and in their place peculiar spatial properties which Bergmann calls "coordinate qualities", *hereness*, *thereness*, and so on are introduced. If you maintain that there are such properties then you are an absolutist₃, if you deny their existence then you are a relativist₃. Bergmann is a relativist₃ since he says: «There are no coordinate qualities. We are neither presented with them nor dialectically forced to 'postulate' them» (Bergmann, 1964, p. 287). In a Scotist world all simple things are characters, including non-relational spatial and temporal characters, or coordinate qualities, that are introduced to individuate two spots with the same ordinary non-relational properties. Bergmann's rejection of Scotism (that is, a gamma ontology) in favor of an ontology that recognizes a categorical difference between universals and particulars is part and parcel of his rejection of coordinate qualities.

Bergmann characterizes the second view of absolute space as follows:

In a nonscotist world there is an individual "in" each spot. Is this individual a spatial thing? Depending on whether your answer is affirmative or negative, you are an absolutist₂ or a relativist₂. [...] Relativism₂ is the view that all simple spatial things are either properties or relations. (Bergmann, 1964, pp. 286, 287)

Bergmann says that he is a relativist₂. That can only mean that the individual in each spot, i.e., the bare particular, is a non-spatial thing. But what feature or features do spatial individuals (hereafter called "places") possess that particulars lack? That places have some feature or features that set them apart from particulars is obvious, for otherwise we could not make sense out of the distinction between absolute₂ and relative₂ space. But *does* the distinction make sense, and is the debate between absolute₂ and relative₂ space really that important?

One might argue that the absolute₂/relative₂ controversy is spurious because particulars and places are *both* spatial things. After all, particulars and places both are *in space*, since they both exemplify spatial relations, such as being at a certain distance from other particulars or places, and

they both have spatial characters such as having a certain shape. However, that would be a *bad* argument for rejecting the distinction. The issue separating absolutism₂ and relativism₂ concerns not what properties and relations the individual “in” a spot has, but concerns what the individual is in itself. To answer the ontological question: What is space? is to give an inventory of all spatial entities, or rather, of all *kinds* of such entities there are. Thus, the issue separating absolutism₂ and relativism₂ concerns whether or not there is a *kind* of individual that is spatial, which is not the question of whether the individual “in” the spot is also in space, since it is, or whether individuals exemplify spatial properties, since they do, but whether or not individuals or particulars are *intrinsically* spatial, or *by their very nature* spatial. Presumably, then, Bergmann is a relativist₂ because in his ontology, the individuals “in” spots are *bare*; they have no nature and *a fortiori* are not *intrinsically* spatial.

The controversy between absolute₂ and relative₂ space is very important since one’s views on the ontology of space have implications for the ontological status of relations (are they internal or external?), fundamental ties or nexus (are they homogenous or inhomogeneous?) and the choice between substance and fact, and gamma and epsilon ontologies. If the individuals “in” the spots are spatial things, then they are natured (perfect) particulars (in contemporary parlance “tropes”) or substances of classic ontologies and that would be a disaster, undermining Bergmann’s ontological system completely. Furthermore, if the individual “in” the spot is intrinsically spatial then it can *only* exemplify non-mental properties and therefore, Bergmann’s view that particulars, being bare, can exemplify *either* non-mental properties such as *being round* and *being red* or mental properties such as the species characters *being a remembering* and *being a perceiving*, and propositional characters such as ‘that the cat is on the mat’ cannot be sustained. Thus, upholding the distinction between absolutism₂ and relativism₂ and the justifying claim that his view is relative₂ (because bare particulars are nonspatial) is, for Bergmann’s ontology, very important indeed.

If, however, we are not presented with bare particulars then his relativistic₂ ontology of space does not have a phenomenological ground. Since an adequate ontology must have a phenomenological ground, the critic’s requirement to “show me the particular” is one that Bergmann takes seriously. He makes clear the connection between the ontology of space and the phenomenology of particulars when he says:

In my world there are neither space-things nor coordinate qualities. That makes my view relative₁ as well as relative₃. Whether or not I am also a relativist₂ depends on whether or not the individuals which exemplify shapes are themselves spatial. That takes us back to the bare particular and the question which supposedly is unanswerable. (Bergmann, 1964, p. 288)

Bergmann formulates the supposedly unanswerable question in the following passage that I will quote at length:

Suppose someone asks me what *c* is? I strike the right key, strike some others, strike the first again, tell him that *c* is what has been presented to him on the first and last occasion but on none of the others. [...] In my ontology, what is presented on each of these two occasions is a fact, namely, a particular exemplifying a pitch, loudness, and so on. The pitch is one; the particulars are two. Suppose now that the questioner asks me to direct his attention to the particular in the way I just directed it to a pitch. Particulars, or, at least, this sort of particular being momentary, they cannot be presented twice. The questioner appreciates the point but insists that what he was in fact presented with on each of the two occasions is a pitch, a loudness, perhaps some other qualities, and nothing else. (That shows the appeal of Scotism!) Thus he keeps asking me what a bare particular is, demanding that his attention be directed to one. This is the question the critics of D₂ [the doctrine that all relations are external] hold to be unanswerable. So far the defenders have not known how to answer it. Eventually I shall propose an answer. (Bergmann, 1964, p. 278)

If Bergmann cannot answer the critic's demand to direct his attention to the bare particular "in" the spot, then either there is no individual "in" the spot or, assuming a nonscotist world, the individual in the spot would be spatial and space would be absolute₂ with either alternative having disastrous ontological consequences. On the other hand, if we are acquainted with bare particulars, then the "unanswerable" question can be answered, the individual in the spot is non-spatial, and his relativism₂ is secured. What, then, is Bergmann's response to the unanswerable question and is it phenomenologically adequate to satisfy the critic and ontologically adequate to insure his relativism₂?

Bergmann answers the allegedly unanswerable question by saying:

Remember the questioner who, when presented with middle *c*, insisted that all the entities presented to him were properties. Suppose he gives me another chance, asks me to direct his attention to the bare particular "in" the spot. I first acquaint him with my use of 'shape', then tell him that *the bare particular is the spot's area*. (Bergmann, 1964, p. 288; emphasis added)

Although we are acquainted with the area of the spot, the critic could reply that being a certain area is a character "in" the spot, and for that reason the entity to which Bergmann directed our attention is this character, and not a

bare particular. If this is true, as phenomenologically it may appear to be, then either there is no bare particular “in” the spot – the spot is simply a collection of characters – or there is a bare particular “in” the spot, but it is not presented to us, only its properties are.

Bergmann is sensitive to this objection and has the following reply:

Assume that you are presented with two spots. If they agree in all non-relational characters, including shape, they will also agree in the character you claim the entity is. How then would you *know* that they are two and not one? The questioner has no answer. (Bergmann, 1964, p. 289; my emphasis)

Bergmann’s point is that the area a thing has, or its being spatially extended, is not a character of it, since if it were then we could not know upon being presented with two spots that they were two and not one. However, this appeal to epistemological considerations (for example, how would you *know* there are two spots and not one) is surprising. For, the issue is not how we know they are two (since the perceived distance between the two spots is sufficient for that), but rather how would the critic provide an *ontological ground* for their being two (since they have all their non-relational characters in common)? Bergmann’s answer is that to individuate the two spots *the area must be a particular* – a mere individuator – and not a character. And he clearly does identify the particular with its area when he says, perhaps infelicitously, that «The spot’s area is not only round, it also is red. *I take it, then, that the bare particular “in” the spot is its area*» (Bergmann, 1964, p. 290; emphasis added). By treating the bare particular as being identical with the area of the spot Bergmann can claim that when he sees the two spots he is directly acquainted with different bare particulars when he is acquainted with different areas, but with that response he goes, I submit, from an unanswerable question to an unacceptable answer.

For Bergmann is now faced with the following dilemma. If the individual in the spot is (identical to) an area or as he says later in the article, its (spatial) extension, then the bare particular can be presented to us, but it is no longer a mere ‘this’, a mere individuator since there is something about it, some feature in itself, in virtue of which it is identifiable or recognizable. It is, in other words a natured particular; not a bare this, but a “this particular area” or “this particular (spatial) extension”. In that case, however, there is no basis for distinguishing the particular in the spot from an absolute₂ place. Since an area or a spatial extension seems to be a simple spatial thing, if it is identical with the “bare” particular in the spot, then the resulting particular is also *a spatial thing. It has (or is) a nature*,

identifiable and recognizable as different from all other entities of the same ontological kind. On the other hand, if Bergmann maintains that the area or spatial extension of a particular is a character external to it, and so is not grounded in the particular itself (since only then is the particular truly bare), then the critic's question is indeed unanswerable. For, if being presented with the spot's area or spatial extension does not acquaint us with the particular itself, or the *thing* that *has* an area or *is* (spatially) extended, then bare particulars lack a phenomenological ground. Thus, if a bare particular is an area or spatial extension, then his ontology of space is absolute₂, and if the bare particular is not identical with its area but exemplifies it, then his phenomenology of particulars is inadequate.

The dilemma Bergmann is facing arises again when he tries to refute a reason why particulars may *seem* to be spatial things. He says:

Call a word a space word if and only if, when used phenomenologically, it represents a simple spatial thing. [...] 'Area' obviously is a predicate. Hence, if it were a space word, area would be a character. [...] If one holds that it is [a character] of the first type then I turn the tables on him, ask him to direct my attention to the individual that exemplifies the spot's area. This question is unanswerable. Your only way out is to become a Scotist. Then you will need coordinate qualities. (Bergmann, 1964, pp. 290-91)

I do not see how this argument supports Bergmann's case, since it begs the question of whether or not we are acquainted with particulars, and thus whether or not space is relative₂. The question at issue is this: How can we be aware of the individual that exemplifies the spot's area, if the spot's area is included among its characters, and so we are only aware of characters? This is precisely the question that Bergmann needs to answer? To answer it by saying that "this question is unanswerable" is unavailing. Moreover, Bergmann seems to be arguing that the word 'area' does not represent a simple spatial character of the first type because if it did we would not be acquainted with the individual that exemplifies it, that is, the bare particular. But we are aware of the bare particular (since a Scotist ontology is false), and therefore 'area' is not a space word. Unfortunately, I doubt that response will impress the critic of bare particulars, for a dialectical or phenomenological argument against Scotism – a gamma ontology – is not tantamount to a phenomenological argument for particulars.

In any case, Bergmann must still face the problem I raised a moment ago. If the words 'area' and 'spatial extension' do not name a character, what they do name is a simple individual thing "in" the spot, but then I can see no basis for distinguishing it from a simple *spatial* thing, and thus the

individual “in” the spot it is not a *bare* (non-natured) particular, but an absolute₂ place.

A similar problem arises with regard to acquaintance with awarenesses, or bare particulars that exemplify species and propositional characters. To have a shape is to be a (spatial) extension. To have duration is to be a (temporal) extension. Thus, in directing one’s attention to the bare particular in a mental act, our attention is directed to its (temporal) extension. But again, the particular extendedness “in” an act of awareness – its being temporally extended – is a character exemplified by the particular “in” the act or it is not. If it is a character exemplified by a particular, then being presented with it does not answer the question: “Where is the particular?”. It does not provide a phenomenological ground for the bare particular which is “in” a mental act. On the other hand, if the temporal extendedness of a particular is grounded in what the particular is in itself; if the particular *is identical to its being temporally extended* or its temporal extension, then the particular would appear to be a simple *temporal* thing or a moment of absolute₂ time, which, of course, is anathema to Bergmann.

What, then, is to be done? Bergmann does give himself a way out, although in “Synthetic *A Priori*” he didn’t realize he would need to use it. Immediately after raising the critic’s allegedly unanswerable question he says parenthetically:

(Let it be said once and for all that even if the question were unanswerable, it would not follow that there are no bare particulars. Should they turn out to be dialectically indispensable, an argument could be made for “postulating” their existence. The proper place for such postulation, though, is in science and in science only. Thus it is *much, much better not to have to make that argument*). (Bergmann, 1964, p. 278; emphasis added)

Thus, the way out of the dilemma I have posed is to abandon the principle of acquaintance and his preferred phenomenology of bare particulars, and simply “postulate” their existence.

It would appear, therefore, that Bergmann’s phenomenology of particulars and ontology of space are an unhappy fit. On the one hand, to preserve relativism₂ he must deny that bare particulars have or require a phenomenological ground. On the other hand, to require a phenomenological ground for bare particulars he must accept absolutism₂. Thus, in response to the question of this paper, “Is there a difference between absolute and relative space?”, I would say that given Bergmann’s phenomenology of particulars and his ontology of space in the second sense of the absolute/relative space controversy, the answer is “no”.

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Giuliano Torrenzo

TENSELESS TIME VS. TENSED TRUTHMAKERS

Abstract. In a recent article in *Dialectica*, Dean Zimmerman has argued that the eternalist A-theorist (a.k.a. “moving spotlight” theorist) can distinguish her position from that of the B-theorist serious tensor, only by appealing to a «non-relativized kind of truth that applies to propositions that are only temporarily true» (Zimmerman, 2005, p. 453), namely a notion of truth simpliciter as applied to tensed propositions. In what follows I will argue that this notion is spurious, and cannot do the job. My critique’s outline will remind Bergmann’s critiques against “monsters”, namely notions which, appearances notwithstanding, are irremediably blurred. The difference between the B-theorist serious tensor, and the eternalist A-theorist has rather to be drawn as a difference on whether tensed sentences require tensed truth-makers or not. My starting point will be a short *détour* through the debate over temporary intrinsics and presentism.

I. As Kelly Haslanger has recently noticed, presentists and four-dimensionalists are partly allied in their charge against the non-presentist three-dimensionalists in the debate over temporary intrinsics³. They agree on two tenets, concerning ordinary properties and tensed predication respectively:

(OP) Temporary intrinsic properties (such as being bent or being straight) are neither properties indexed to times, nor relations to times;

³ Very roughly, I will distinguish a *metaphysical*, an *ontological* and a *semantic* aspect in the philosophy of time, which are related to the problem of temporary intrinsics (the *locus classicus* of the problem is Lewis, 1986, pp. 202-205). The distinction between A-theory and B-theory is metaphysical. According to the A-theory, the passage of time is real, and, thus, tense determinations (such as being *present*, *past*, and *future*) are genuine features of reality. According to the B-theory tense determinations are reducible to relations between a perceiver and a position in time. The distinction between the presentist and the eternalist is ontological. According to the presentist, in our most unrestricted domain of quantification we find only presently existing entities, whereas according to the eternalist also past and future entities exist. The distinction between the serious tensor and the de-tensor is semantic. According to the *serious tensor* tensed sentences express tensed propositions, namely propositions that are temporally *undetermined* (their truth-value being possibly variable through time), whereas according to the *de-tensor* tensed sentences express tenseless propositions, namely propositions that are temporally determined (bearing a determined truth-value regardless of time).

(TP) Tensed predication is neither a form of adverbial modification nor of copula modification.

The two positions part company soon, though. Firstly, although they both agree that intrinsic properties are not just superficially monadic and non-relational, they disagree on the proper subject of instantiation of intrinsic properties. According to the four-dimensionalist, temporal parts of objects instantiate temporary intrinsic properties, while according to the three-dimensionalist presentist, objects themselves instantiate intrinsic properties. Secondly, they disagree on the consequences of (TP). While the four-dimensionalist reduces tensed predication, contextually, in terms of a-temporal predication, by endorsing

(TC) ‘*x* is a *P*’ uttered at *t*, is true iff *x*-at-*t* is *P* a-temporally⁴,

the presentist takes tensed predication as a primitive and irreducible form of temporal predication. Her position, thus, may be summed up in the formula “ordinary objects (and not their temporal parts) just have intrinsic properties”⁵. To illustrate the idea, consider a sentence such as (1):

(1) Federico is sleepy

When (1) is true (at *t*, in the morning, say), Federico just has the property of being sleepy. He does not have it by having a time-indexed property, or by bearing a certain relation to a time. And he is not sleepy “morning-ly” or by bearing a temporally modified non-relational link to the property of being sleepy either. Federico just has the property of being sleepy. At a later time (at *t*’, in the evening, say), Federico may lack the property of being sleepy, he will – for instance – have the property of being fully awake. According to the presentist, at *t* and *t*’ respectively, Federico (the “whole” Federico and not one of his temporal parts) just has different, incompatible properties.

II. Now, how can the presentist avoid the contradiction of attributing incompatible properties to the same entity, given that, in her account of persistence, the very same entity just has different, incompatible properties? Notice that the problem does not concern what the presentist says, but rather how she describes reality to be. To put it in Kit Fine’s terms: if both the tensed fact that Federico is sleepy, and the tensed fact that Federico is fully awake compose reality, then it seems like reality may encompass contradictory facts. By taking tenses as primitive the presentist will never ex-

⁴ *x*-at-*t* is the temporal part of *x* existing at *t*.

⁵ Cf. Hinchliff, 1996; Haslanger, 2003.

plicitly state a contradiction, but she will nevertheless describe a contradictory reality – one encompassing incompatible facts. Of course, those facts have different “temporal positions”, and according to the presentist not all temporal positions have the same ontological status. This is exactly how the presentist avoids the contradiction: she claims that there is only one existing temporal position, viz. the present time, and reality is composed only of facts obtaining at the present time. Therefore, when the fact that Federico is sleepy is present, it belongs to reality, and when the fact that Federico is fully awake is present, it belongs to reality, but they are never both present, and thus they never belong both to reality.

Notice that the presentist here is exploiting the metaphysical view of the A-theory of time to solve the contradiction, rather than her ontology restricted to presently existing entities. As also Haslanger has noticed, the eternalist A-theorist may endorse a similar solution to the problem of temporary intrinsics. What it takes for an A-theorist to claim that ordinary objects just have temporary intrinsic properties, without falling into a contradiction, is endorsing the view that the present time is metaphysically privileged over the past and the future, namely to endorse (F):

(F) Tensed facts that obtain at the present time are the only metaphysically privileged facts that compose reality⁶.

The presentist will construe such privilege as existence: reality is composed only of tensed facts that obtain at present. But the A-theory of time is compatible also with an eternalist ontology (namely a domain encompassing also past and future entities), and thus with the claim that the privilege of the present perspective on reality is not existence, but some primitive “spotlight” on reality. The eternalist B-theorist shares the same ontology, but maintains that reality is composed of tenseless facts, and thus there is no metaphysical privilege of the present time. Nevertheless, the B-theorist may endorse the semantic thesis according to which tensed sentences express tensed proposition – i.e., taking tense seriously. As Dean Zimmerman has lately stressed, the distinction between a serious tensor B-theorist and an eternalist A-theorist is difficult to pin down. According to Zimmerman, the two theorists disagree on the following tenet:

(TH) There are tensed propositions that are true (false) simpliciter.

⁶ This is the thesis Kit Fine calls *factive* presentism, which is compatible with *ontological* eternalism, namely the view that past and future objects have the same ontological status than present ones (Fine, 2006).

If he is right, then the A-theorist needs not to insist on (F) to make sense of her solution to the problem of temporary intrinsics. The A-theorist (whether presentist or not) can define ‘just having’ along those lines:

(JH) A (three-dimensional) object x just has the property being- P if and only if the tensed proposition expressed by an utterance of ‘ x is P ’ is true simpliciter⁷.

By adopting this definition the A-theorist will both have the means to solve the problem of temporary intrinsics, and distinguish her position from that of the B-theorist serious tensor. Two birds with a stone!

However, in order for (JH) to do both jobs, we need to secure a grasp of the notion of truth simpliciter as applied to tensed propositions that is independent from our grasp of (F). Claiming the contrary would have us caught in an impasse. On the one hand, it would be circular to draw the distinction between the serious tensor and the A-theorist as a disagreement on (TH), and then understand truth simpliciter as applied to tensed proposition in terms of (F), which is the thesis we are individuating the A-theory with. On the other hand, we have good reasons to think that the core notion involved in the A-theory of time, the idea that the passage of time is real, does not imply (F). Fine’s fragmentalist version of tense realism, for instance, is meant to be a non-standard form of A-theory, which explicitly rejects (F). According to the fragmentalist, reality is not a single coherent collection of tensed facts. There are different collections of tensed facts, namely different fragments of reality (for instance, each perspective from a particular time is such a fragment), but no collection of fragments, in turn, compose reality. If also this position qualifies as a form of A-theory, then grasping truth simpliciter as applied to tensed proposition in terms of (P) would not allow us to characterize what all forms of A-theory share. In the rest of the paper I will show that this independent grasp is an illusion. It might seem that we grasp this notion only if we blur certain distinctions concerning propositional evaluation and truth.

III. I start with noticing that if the disagreement between the B-theorist serious tensor and the A-theorist is a disagreement on (TH), then defining true simpliciter as true at the present time will not do the job. The only reason a philosopher has not to take reference to the present time as an arbitrary choice of what counts as true *simpliciter* is that she believes (F) to

⁷ Where the predicate ‘ P ’ express the property of *being- P* , ‘ x ’ refers to x , and the ‘is’ is that of *tensed* predication.

be true – or something in the ballpark. A better try is to insist on the evaluation of tensed propositions. What distinguishes the A-theorist from the merely serious tensor is that, according to the former but not the latter, tensed propositions are evaluated simpliciter, viz. without any reference – neither in tensed, nor in tenseless terms – to a time or a temporal location. This seems to be what Zimmerman has in mind when he claims that:

What is being ruled out [by the A-theorist, as opposed to the B-theorist serious tensor] is the need for further ‘completion’ of properties like loudness or bentness in order for a thing to exemplify the property; in particular, nothing like a time needs be ‘added’ to the property and the thing in order to make the proposition that the thing has the property ‘complete’. But what is this notion of ‘completion’ if it is not simply: ‘complete enough to be true in a non-relative fashion’? (Zimmerman, 2005, p. 447)

The expression ‘complete enough to be true in a non-relative fashion’ seems to imply that the complete proposition in question is evaluated simpliciter, and not with respect to a temporal parameter. Now, it seems to me that the idea that it is possible to evaluate a tensed proposition without reference to a temporal location is based on a confusion. To be sure, according to the standard A-theorist, there is only one privileged time of evaluation. But it does not follow from this that evaluation of tensed propositions is carried out without reference to any time whatsoever. It is still relative to the only privileged time (i.e., the present time) that tensed propositions are true or false. The only cases in which it makes sense – *prima facie* at least – to evaluate a tensed proposition without reference to a certain time are non-temporary (and thus degenerative) cases: for instance if a sortal property is involved (e.g., if the tensed proposition expressed by an utterance of ‘This is a banana’ is true with respect to a time t , it is true with respect to any time, and thus it is true simpliciter), or an eternal object is involved (e.g., ‘Number two is even’). But tensed propositions concerning contingent objects and temporary properties cannot be evaluated without reference to a time, and thus cannot be true or false simpliciter. Unless by this we mean simply that they are true with respect to the present time, and the present time is the only metaphysically privileged time. But by so doing we will not secure to truth simpliciter as applied to tensed propositions an independent grasp, and we would anyway let non-standard forms of A-theory out of the picture.

I know that the A-theorist – the standard A-theorist at least – will resist such line of thought and claim that I am misconstruing her position. In her picture, whether the ascription of the tensed property being presently sleepy to a persistent object such as Federico, i.e., the tensed proposition

that Federico is presently sleepy, is true or not, it is a matter of how reality is, full stop, and not a matter of how reality is relative to a certain parameter, namely a temporal location. Still, the tense realist's reality – at least the non-presentist tense realist's reality – does not contain only present facts, but also past and future facts. Here we have to be careful, since the expression 'present fact' is ambiguous: it may mean present tensed facts (such as the fact that Federico is fully awake, as opposed to the fact that Federico was sleepy), or it may mean tensed facts obtaining at present (such as the fact that Federico is fully awake, and the fact that Federico was sleepy, which obtain at present, as opposed to the fact that Federico is sleepy and the fact that Federico will be fully awake, which obtained this morning). The eternalist A-theorist puts a privilege of some sort over present facts in this second sense, and not only on facts that are present in both senses. Reality, for the eternalist A-theorist encompasses the whole plethora of tensed facts composing the perspective from the present time, no matter where in time they are located.

Some presentists are willing to say that even when we talk about the past and the future we are actually talking about present properties of the world⁸. But this position has its costs⁹, and those costs are usually among the main reasons that push an A-theorist towards eternalism and away from presentism¹⁰. Roughly, the A-theorist endorses eternalism in order to have all the tensed truth makers it takes to ground not only present tensed truths, but also past and future tensed truths. The eternalist A-theorist is not compelled to avoid any reference to the past and the future in construing the past and future tensed facts that ground past and future truths. In her picture, the past tensed fact that Federico was sleepy obtains at present if and only if the present tensed fact that Federico is sleepy obtained in the past. And it is the latter present tensed fact, which obtained in the past, what makes true now that Federico was sleepy. If she could not refer to a past time to localize in the past the truth-maker of a past tensed truth, then the eternalist A-theorist would not be better off than the presentist in her account of truth. Thus, the truth makers for past and future tensed sentences have different temporal location within the perspective from the present, and the A-theorist needs to "target" those different positions in order to evaluate the tensed proposition expressed by tensed sentences.

⁸ E.g., Bigelow, 1996.

⁹ For criticisms cf. Sider, 2001, and Keller, 2004.

¹⁰ Or to endorse an Ersatz version of presentism (Crisp, 2007; Bourne, 2006) for which what I say in the next paragraphs may be applied, *mutatis mutandis*.

More precisely, the A-theorist evaluates with respect to the present time a past tensed proposition [Pp] (to be read: it was the case that p) by evaluating with respect to past times the present tense “kernel” [p] of the proposition. Thus, maybe, in a trivial sense, present tensed sentences are evaluated simpliciter, because they do not need further reference to a position in time within the present perspective, but past and future tensed sentences need always reference to past and future time within the perspective of the present time in order to be evaluated.

IV. The conclusion is that if the A-theorist wants to resort to all the truth makers that an eternalist ontology allows her to have, she cannot make sense of a notion of evaluation simpliciter of tensed propositions, and thus, she cannot make sense of a notion of truth simpliciter, as applied to tensed propositions. Again, if with ‘truth simpliciter’ here she means nothing over and above that reality is composed only by the facts that obtain at the present time (or at any rate that those are the only metaphysically privileged facts of reality), and thus being presently true is being true simpliciter, then her position is intelligible. But, then, there is no independent grasp of the notion of truth simpliciter as applied to tensed proposition. This seems right, also in light of non-standard forms of A-theory: by rejecting the privilege of the present, the non-standard A-theorist reject the idea that tensed propositions may be true simpliciter, but this does not seem to amount to a rejection of her metaphysical view of time. What distinguishes the eternalist A-theorist position from that of the serious tensor B-theorist is, rather, the nature of the truth makers involved in the interpretation and evaluation of tensed sentences. The A-theorist will have tensed proposition made true by tensed facts. The tensed proposition expressed by ‘Federico is sleepy’ uttered at t , the present time, is true if and only if the fact that Federico is (presently) sleepy presently obtains. The serious tensor B-theorist will have tensed propositions made true by tenseless facts. The tensed proposition expressed by ‘Federico is sleepy’ uttered at t , is true if and only if the fact that Federico is sleepy at t obtains simpliciter. The idea of a tensed proposition true simpliciter, when disjoined from the idea of some sort of privilege over the present time is but a monster that no serious ontology should flirt with.

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SOME TROUBLES WITH THE SPECIOUS PRESENT IN BERGMANN'S IDEAL LANGUAGE

Abstract. How can an ideal language such as Bergmann's account for our (inner) perception of time and change? More specifically, since the main axiom of Bergmann's philosophy of time is that *every moment is a specious present*, how can an Ideal Language capture a phenomenally vanishing experience such as the real cognized present? In "Duration and the Specious Present" (1960) Bergmann deals with this problem. We argue that the problem, though Bergmann considers it "specific and minute", is at the core of his philosophy of time and that Bergmann's solution is unsatisfactory because in that article the very notion of *specious present* is misunderstood. In order to try answering to the above-mentioned questions we need, firstly, to map Bergmann's time conception within his philosophical system until the early 1960s and, secondly, to sketch a short theoretic scheme of Bergmann's ideal language (L) to show why L fails to give an account of the *specious present's* experience. Our goal will be to trace the reason of this technical problem back to its real roots, which are essentially philosophical rather than merely logical.

1. *Bergmann's philosophy of time*

In "Some Reflections on Time" (Bergmann, 1959) Bergmann presents his philosophy of time introducing the contrast between two radically distinct positions: the relativist and the absolutist. According to the absolutist, time exists independently of the world's objects and events. In general, absolute theories describe time – and space – as a sort of container for events. To say it metaphorically, the world is in time, or, differently, time is one of the formal features of the world. In relativists' theories however – Bergmann's perspective belongs to this group – time is in the world: which means that time is not a formal aspect of our world (like nexus, for example) but it is a constituent, a part of the world's content. In fact, for Bergmann, time is always a relation between two entities, even when one of them is not expressed in ordinary language, and every relation is a worldly "thing", in Bergmann's own words. This is, at first glance, the macroscopic difference between the absolutist's and the relativist's positions. For example, for an

* Andrea Pagliardi wrote sections 1 and 3, while sections 2 and 4 were written by Fabio Minocchio.

absolutist ‘now’ refers to a moment, and moments are individuals, whereas, for a relativist, ‘now’ refers to a temporal relation; in other words we would not really know what ‘now’ means if we could not analyze it in terms of relations like *being simultaneous with something* or *being earlier than*. It is important to remember that only particulars can stand in temporal relations to each other, while the characters and, with them, temporal relations themselves, are timeless. To say it in Bergmann’s words «individuals are in time, characters are timeles»¹¹.

Bergmann’s relativistic time model has two important consequences: that adimensional, durationless instants do not exist, and that there are no entities which have an intrinsic duration.

In regards to durationless instants we just need to say that in Bergmann’s world there is no room for them, since for a relativist there are no temporal individuals at all: they simply do not exist because we are not acquainted with them. They are fictions or, at best, abstractions like geometrical points.

With respect of continuants, Bergmann holds that, to admit them, entails a substantialistic view: continuants are substances, even in their weaker form which does not include ontological independence (e.g., independence from exemplification), nor the inner qualified nature of things. However, substantialism could be congruent with the absolutist’s perspective, while clearly incompatible with any relativist’s view. Let us see why. Continuants, unlike Bergmann’s momentary individuals, can exemplify different properties in different moments. The absolutist has no problems in formalizing this feature of the substances in an artificial language (if he has any) because the space-time grid identifies every exemplification in a unique way: what is true at instant t_1 (for example that a substance is predicated of a certain property) could be false at instant t_2 without there being a contradiction. But if you adopt a relativistic view of time, like Bergman’s one, since time emerges from an ordering-relational property, there always must be two concrete individuals exemplifying different characters. If there are not, you will obtain a contradiction in the artificial

¹¹ Bergmann, 1959, p. 232. Particulars and time relational properties are both simple “things” in Bergmannian sense, so, with respect to the ontological ground, they exist in the same way. However the difference between them at the level of the Ideal Language’s syntax is crucial. Consider the following sentence: ‘The Green is simultaneous with the Red’. It is an ill-formed statement for Bergmann, a syntactical nonsense. On the contrary, the sentence ‘The Green is a color’ is well-formed since it states that a second type character is exemplified by one of the first type.

language: an individual cannot exemplify and not exemplify the same character at the same moment.

If Bergmann's individuals cannot be instantaneous, nor continuant, they have to be momentary occurrents, that is, every span of time has a duration. More technically, each individual is «attached to one and only segment (of time)» (Bergmann, 1959, p. 233). Here we are at one crucial turn of the screw. If we understand what it signifies that a moment is a duration, then we can once and for all grasp how deep the difference is among the absolutist's and the relativist's views.

This idea is captured by what we may call The General Axiom of Bergmann's philosophy of time: *every moment is a specious present*. The words 'moment' and 'specious present' are used here commonsensically and not philosophically: Bergmann does not discuss the conception of the specious present, and accepts quite uncritically an undefined notion which stems from psychology. The specious present, as Bergmann speaks of it, seems to be nothing more than the temporal span of a man's attention. Hence, before focusing on the contradiction of the notion of specious present and analyzing it in its technical aspects, we need to go deeper into Bergmann's method, in order to exactly understand, firstly, why the contradiction arises in Bergmann's ideal language and, secondly, if Bergmann's strategy succeeds in avoiding it.

2. *The ideal language method*

According to Bergmann, the starting point of each philosophical system should be a meta-philosophical step: the development of a powerful method for inquiries. Bergmann's method is the so called "ideal language method" (ILM). As Bergmann often points out, we may use a linguistic expression either commonsensically or philosophically. For example, if someone says that bodies do not exist or that the world is the totality of facts or that there aren't any instants, then, obviously, he employs the words 'body', 'fact' and 'instant' not according to ordinary language, and we have to look for them in some philosophical dictionary or treatise. Why? Because all philosophical uses require their own explanation. In order to explain these idiosyncratic uses of words and to extract the philosophical theories zipped in them, the practitioner of the method must try to talk commonsensically and in a natural language about the structure and the interpretation of an artificial language in which, in principle, it must be

possible to reconstruct every philosophically oriented sentence, eradicating from it every philosophical commitment. Hence, the task of a practitioner of the method will be to find a scheme, called the ideal language (which from now on we will call L, Bergmann's ideal language), through which all philosophical uses can be explained, or what amounts to the same, all philosophical problems can be solved. In other words, the reconstruction of each philosophically oriented sentence would coincide with one and only one translation in L, in which all the philosophical complex and defined terms will be substituted by primitive descriptive terms of L¹². Unfortunately, this condition cannot always be satisfied: as we will see later, this is perhaps the major obstacle to the resolution of the *specious present's* contradiction.

There is even another general key point about ILM that we think it is useful for our purposes to spell out. Bergmann suggests constantly in his work that his ideal language, since it isn't a natural language, is a language spoken by no one. What the "practitioners" of the method rather can do is only to talk *about* the ideal language *in a natural language*, emended of philosophical terms, where the latter, that is the metalanguage, and the former, that is the object-language, are considered as belonging to different categories. Therefore, for Bergmann, the ideal language is such that we can only write it down for rational reconstructions of philosophical theories. So, to sum up and conclude, since, at least in principle, the written statements of L could be understood by every "practitioner" of the method, the ideal language is not a language of inner monologue or a private language; on the contrary, L offers us the possibility to render public some phenomenological and introspective facets of our immediate experience of the world in which time plays a fundamental role.

¹² Bergmann very often underlines that his very idea of an ideal language as the proper method for a philosophical investigation is grounded on the theoretic approach to solve philosophical puzzles supported by those philosophers that he calls "classical analysts". Among them for sure there is Russell who has strongly influenced Bergmann's ILM. From a broad point of view there is, first, a very close analogy between the main task of Russell's method of logical reductive analysis, the search for "logical atoms", and Bergmann's ILM, that is the search for "ontological simples"; second, the idea that the study of the language's semantic features must be epistemologically and ontologically oriented, is no doubt an important legacy of Russell's. From a narrow point of view, Bergmann's theoretical and logical background is essentially derived from some Russellian theories – like those of types (without ramification) and descriptions – and naïve set theory's classical axioms, e.g., that of extensionality.

Finally, from a technical point of view, L is an extension of the improved language of the *Principia Mathematica*. We may think of L as a powerful, complete (ideal) language, for it is possible to transcribe in it not only singular (declarative) and general (quantified) statements but also those of propositional attitudes (it has to be noticed that, according to Bergmann, since these classes of sentences fall into the category of descriptive sentences, then all sentences “refer to” facts). In other words (closer to Bergmann jargon) there is a proper part of L that is able to describe the minds (or rather the mental acts of awareness which minds are reduced to) and also able to capture the notion of intentionality (via “logical” or “formal” apparatus). If you like slogans, the world that L is called to describe is not a truncated world.

Now we are ready for a short critical presentation of some specific technical aspects of the ILM, aspects which are useful for grasping Bergmann’s troubles with the formalization of our experience of time.

L is a subject-predicate scheme: hence undefined descriptive terms of L are only either individual or predicative constants. Both stand for (or refer to) existent simple things from Bergmann’s world: the former refer to concrete individuals, whereas the latter refer to characters. The syntax of L is, for Bergmann, merely a matter of the geometrical design of its written signs. In other words, L is a language in which the grammatical correctness depends only on the geometrical shapes of terms and their arrangements. For example if ‘*a*’ (lower case type) and ‘*F*’ (upper case type) are well-formed signs, the former standing for an individual and the latter for a character, then ‘*a* is an *F*’ (and also ‘There is at least an *x* such that *x* is an *F*’) is a well-formed formula of L. The fact that in our example ‘*a* is an *F*’ is a well-formed formula is, of course, a straightforward consequence of Bergmann’s celebrated ontological principle: each individual must exemplify at least one character and, conversely, every simple character must be exemplified at least by one individual¹³. Our interest, here, is to focus on the following question: how can we know that an undefined descriptive term is a well-formed sign? The standard answer should be, of course, by its formation rules only, but for Bergmann, the answer is, perhaps unsurprisingly, also by means of the interpretation rules of L. The basic rule to which Bergmann appeals is what he calls The Principle of

¹³ In Bergmann’s world, every exemplification is a fact or a complex. Exemplification, like other subsistents in Bergmann’s ideal language ante *Realism*, can also be shown by means of the geometrical properties of terms (juxtaposition, parentheses, shapes and so on), whereas the existents (simple and complex) can only be named.

Acquaintance: *an undefined descriptive term must not occur in the ideal language unless it names a thing with which we are directly acquainted with*¹⁴. This rule guides all the interpretations of the primitive descriptive terms of the ideal language. Individual and predicative constants are both “mere labels” of the *things* – i.e., refer to them in the same manner in which the so called Russellian “logically proper names” do. Hence they are *directly* referential terms. According to Russell, a name is a logically proper name only if what it refers to is a thing which we are acquainted with. To be acquainted with something means to have immediate experience or knowledge of something, that is a type of knowledge which is not, to use an outdated term, “discursive”¹⁵. Knowledge by acquaintance does not entail complex inferential processes which, by contrast, are at the core of knowledge by description.

If I hear a thunder, for example, I know that – *via* scientific laws or inductive inference – there has been a lightning before, even though I was not directly acquainted with it. To sum up, the only things we can be directly acquainted with (in a technical but non philosophical use of the expression) are the phenomenal objects (individuals and characters) and these are momentary entities *par excellence*¹⁶: these are the momentary entities *par excellence*. So all the primitive descriptive terms of Bergmann’s ideal language refer to phenomenal things which we are directly acquainted with. In other words, what an undefined descriptive term of his ideal language refers to has to be *wholly presented to the subject of acquaintance*. But for the subject of acquaintance, that a thing is “wholly presented” to him signifies that this thing is “wholly contained” in an act of awareness or, in other words, that the thing is “wholly contained” in a specious present.

The topic of the acquaintance leads to the problem of our apprehension of past experiences: are we directly acquainted with the past? For Bergmann the answer to this problem is firmly negative: we are not directly acquainted with the past. What is the nature of our knowledge about the past in Bergmann’s world? How can a statement about the past be translated into Bergmann’s ideal language? As we have seen, direct acquaint-

¹⁴ Cf. Bergmann, 1959, p. 237.

¹⁵ Cf. Russell, 1903, § 56.

¹⁶ Cf. Bergmann, 1960, p. 39. According to Bergmann, 1947, phenomenal objects are the simple things of which the complex entities, like sense-data, are made of. Later, Bergmann seems to have changed his mind about phenomenalism, following the new ideas about the distinction realism/idealism (cf. Bergmann, 1964).

ance is limited to the content of the actual specious present. So, statements about the past seem to be verified only indirectly: they involve more complex acts of awareness that require an existential clause for what we are not – or no longer – acquainted with. For example, when I say ‘I remember that there was something green and square’, the sentence introduced by the that-clause is a proposition which is the content of my memory act¹⁷. The specious present of the utterance of the actual text is the *specious present* in which the act is wholly contained. The translation of ‘I remember that there was something green and square’ is the following: “‘There is an x such that x is earlier than n and x is green and square’ is exemplified by an act and this act is of remembering”¹⁸. In formulas:

$$‘p_1’(a) \cdot mem(a)$$

where ‘ p_1 ’ stands for:

$$(\exists x) [pr(x, n) \cdot grsq(x)]$$

A thing like ‘ p_1 ’ is a propositional first type monadic predicate: i.e., a predicate that we obtain *via* the application of the quoting operator (one of the undefined logical signs of L) to the ideal texts of awareness.

From an ontological point of view the acts of awareness are (mental) individuals that exemplify both propositional first type monadic characters and the characters of the awareness’ modes. Furthermore, being individuals, acts of awareness are “in” time in the relational sense we saw before: they have a duration. So, more generally, acts of awareness are intentional acts like perceiving, remembering, knowing; their contents, for Bergmann, are always propositional (in a very idiosyncratic sense, as we have seen).

Bergmann must introduce the apparatus of acts because otherwise he could not have a criterion to determine whether ‘There is an x such that x is earlier than n and x is green and square’ is a sentence about the past or not, since for him the existential quantifier is tenseless and therefore the two individuals could be in the same specious present. But it seems that once we are at the level of intentionality the problem is only shifted because

¹⁷ A sentence of propositional attitude like ‘I remember that there was something green and square’, that is a sentence of spoken English, is what Bergmann calls *the actual text of an awareness*, whereas its transcription in the ideal language is *the ideal text of an awareness*.

¹⁸ According to Bergmann here ‘ n ’ is a variable term that stands for an entity of which one must be acquainted with at the time of the judgment’s formulation. This time, i.e., the “now”, is a sort of transcendental condition for formulating temporal judgments.

without introducing the modes of awareness, we would once again not have a temporal criterion.

3. *Changes in the specious present*

Now, we have all the theoretical instruments to examine the problem of change in the specious present. As we saw, on the one hand for a subject of acquaintance the fact that something is “wholly presented” to him means that the thing is “wholly contained” in a specious present, or in other words, that it is “wholly contained” in an act of awareness. It means that whatever the ideal text of an act of awareness asserts may be asserted (truly or falsely) all through the specious present¹⁹. On the other hand, in a world without absolute time, neither continuants nor change in an ontological sense exist. *But there are changes in the world and we are directly acquainted with them.* This is an evidence that Bergmann cannot and does not want to deny: we are not directly acquainted with absolute time and, similarly, we are directly acquainted with changes in the world. There are no doubts about this: accepting that we are acquainted with changes, is the same as saying that change has to be wholly presented in awareness. Allowing the possibility of change within a specious present seems to be the only way we could be directly acquainted with a change at all.

So, in our opinion, the possibility of reconstructing changes in L, far from being a «specific, even minute» problem, as Bergmann considers it (Bergmann, 1959, p. 239), is at the core of epistemological foundation of his ideal language and is a crucial question both to Bergmann’s method and to his ontology.

Let us examine briefly Bergmann’s reconstruction of the problem as he presents it in “Duration and the Specious Present”. Take the case of two spots (*a*, *b*) one to the left of the other. The first spot stands still, while the second one moves quickly to his right, and all that occurs within the same specious present. In L the initial situation could be transcribed as:

$lf(b, a),$

while the final setting will be:

$\sim lf(b, a)^{20}$

¹⁹ Cf. Bergmann 1959, p. 239.

²⁰ ‘ $\sim lf(b, a)$ ’ is well formed for Bergmann since his ILM accepts the Principle of Negative Predication (PNP), according to which «we need not and do not hesitate to

As every statement has to be asserted through the specious present and since the specious present has to be considered a unity because of its duration, we are forced to consider both sentences to be simultaneously true, which is a logical contradiction – «a logical catastrophe» as Bergmann himself calls it.

Now let us show Bergmann's solution. If the specious present is a duration you cannot detach parts of time from it, but with the aid of mathematical instruments you can construct a continuum of instants out of the two relations of precedence and simultaneity between the beginning and the end of the specious present. Bergmann does not dwell on the point, stressing that it is a task for a mathematician: for him having the theoretical possibility to do the gambit is enough. He points out that introducing a continuum of instants in a specious present in such a way is not different from introducing real numbers between a natural number and its successor. On this basis, Bergmann can now define an arithmetic functor of the first type, which he calls 'duration' (*du*), and apply it to the two spots, which allows him to form two additional sentences D_1 and D_2 . The former states that the first instants of the two durations coincide, while the latter says that the last instant of the one precedes that of the other. At last, Bergmann can transcribe the statement as follows:

$$lf(b,a) \cdot D_1 \cdot D_2$$

' $D_1 \cdot D_2$ ' allows to interpret '*lf*' properly, specifying the validity field of *lf* without introducing two primitive notions of *leftness*. Moreover ' $D_1 \cdot D_2$ ' is a well-formed formula and is not a contradiction.

At a first glance, the way Bergmann solves the puzzle avoiding inconsistency in L appears to be quite plausible, but as Ronald Hoy noticed²¹ it seems that the source of the problem has been ignored.

We have two objections to Bergmann's solution. The first is internal to Bergmann's ontology and his ILM. The second is more philosophical and concerns the very concept of the specious present.

First objection. Commonsensically certainty is a quality of an act, but there is a philosophical use of "certain" that is relevant to Bergmann's ILM: a statement of L is certain if and only if it is atomic, molecular or

predicate, negatively, of an individual a character which it does not exemplify and which may not be exemplified at all in individual's segment [of time]» (Bergmann, 1959, p. 233). For a discussion in depth of Bergman's PNP see Rosenberg, 1968, pp. 286-287.

²¹ Cfr. Hoy, 1976.

analytic²². According to Bergmann, a statement of L that describes a specious present's experience (or, if you prefer, an act of awareness the duration of which coincides with that of the specious present) must be certain, since we are directly acquainted with it. Then, it must be not only a mere well-formed formula of L, but also has to be molecular, atomic or analytic. However a sentence of L in which a logical operator occurs (and a functor like *du* is a logical operator by assumption) cannot be neither analytic nor atomic or molecular, so it is not a "certain" statement, with the consequence that the fact it would mirror seems to belong to the same type of facts transcribed by existentially quantified sentences. In those cases, as we saw, a mere "external" reading of the sentence does not allow us to know whether the individuals that exemplify any temporal relation are wholly contained in the same specious present or not. *Ergo*, the contradiction is not solved at all, but merely hidden under a logical expedient applied to a (onto)logical problem.

Second objection. It is proper of the inner specious present's nature, the speciousness of the experienced present, to say that $lf(b,a)$ was true but is not true now, so that also $\sim lf(b,a)$ must be recognized as true. In a specious present, the contemporary presence of a statement and its negation is not a contradiction, because of the particular nature of this experience which has a duration while it continues to be present.

It is exactly this feature of the ordinary conception of specious present that makes the present "specious". The introduction of the functor *du*, by which Bergmann can split the present experience in earlier and later parts without abandoning a view of it as a whole, does violence to the very essence of the specious present.

Indeed, the notion of specious present is fraught with difficulties and Bergmann himself, at the end of "Some Reflections on Time", is forced to admit that the blur that surrounds the problem of change within the present is due to the difficulty in matching phenomenological description with psychological and philosophical analysis in the *specious present*²³. C.D. Broad, who is the author of one of the clearest expositions of the notion of specious present, argued that the definition of the specious present is based on two fundamental assumptions. First, the notion of a momentary act of awareness, according to which we can be aware only of events that last for a certain span of time. Second, that a later act of awareness would be aware

²² Cfr. Bergmann, 1959, p. 247.

²³ Cfr. Bergmann, 1959, pp. 263-264.

also of a part of the content of the former²⁴. Bergmann's conception of the specious present accepts quite literally the first aspect, but seems to refuse the second: every act of awareness has to be wholly contained in the actual specious present. That is, in our opinion, the very root of his problems.

4. *A possible way out*

A possible way out could be to hold that we are not directly acquainted with changes, assuming that a specious present lasts until the particulars in it do not change their properties. In other words a change always entails two or more specious presents. To say it differently, being aware of a change is always to be aware of temporal relations among two or more specious presents. This move implies that every statement about changes in properties is a statement about the past, even if the thing or the event in the past has just passed. Since Bergmann's ideal language method can successfully transcribe statements about the past, by means of the ideal text of an awareness in existentially quantified sentences, we would have no problems in relating different individuals belonging to different specious presents.

Put this way, the situation in Bergmann's example – the two spots one of which moves to the right of the other – could be described by two non contradictory statements representing two distinct states of affairs, the first about the past, though a very recent one ('The spot *b* was to the left of the spot *a*'), and the second about the present ('(Now) the spot *b* is not to the left of the spot *a*'). Thus, according to Bergmann's ILM, the former can be transcribed by a statement like:

$$\exists x [pr(x, n) \cdot lf(b, a)(x)]$$

while the latter will be:

$$\sim lf(b, a)$$

We have described two distinct situations. But what about the change? We suggest that it could be explained at the level of awareness. In this view, an experience of change is nothing more than an act of awareness whose text says that there are two different situations and that there is an

²⁴ Cfr. Broad, 1923, pp. 348 ff. For an overview on the historical discussion about the nature and the phenomenology of the specious present see Mabbott, 1951, Mundle, 1954, and Plumber, 1985; for a contemporary resumption of this topic see Gallagher, 1998, Dainton, 2000, and Kelly, 2005.

order between them, namely one precedes the other. The first individual act exemplifying the relation of “being earlier than”, belongs to a passed specious present, while the second is contained in the actual specious present.

One may object that the specious present involves a notion of memory distinct from the normal way we deal with the past: call it *just passed memory*, a sort of short-term memory or a faculty of retention. In our opinion this is the very key of the problem. We think that the question regards the modes in which the text of an act is presented to our awareness, like remembering, knowing, doubting and so on. As Bergmann introduces specific characters to distinguish them, we can find no reason for not introducing one more universal to name the remembering as just passed, *jpmem*, thus distinguishing it from the remembering as past, *mem*.

The translation should be something like:

$$[\exists x (pr(x, n) \cdot lf(b, a)(x))' (a) \cdot jpmem(a)] \& [\exists x (pr(x, n) \cdot \sim lf(b, a)(n))' (b) \cdot acq(b)]$$

It is important to notice that there is no contradiction in such a statement: since $\sim lf(b, a)$ and $lf(b, a)$ are part of a quoted expression, they have the properties of an undefined descriptive sign. So we have two different individuals exemplifying two opposite texts, which is not a contradiction.

However, for Bergmann the price to pay for such a gambit would be too high: he would have to give up the assumption that we are directly acquainted with the change. Or, rather, he would have to forsake the idea that an ideal language could mirror every kind of phenomenal experience. The epistemological question at this point is: should we downsize our reliance on the explicative power of Bergmann’s ILM? As we have seen, the very connection between philosophical analysis and phenomenological description lies in the formation and interpretation rules of Bergmann’s ideal language, and this, for example, allows us to be directly acquainted with what is named by an undefined descriptive sign. Anyway, we find no reason to conclude that all introspective immediate evidences have to be captured by Bergmann’s ideal language or, more precisely, have to be named by an undefined descriptive sign.

As Bergmann confesses at the end of both “Some Reflections on Time” and “Duration and the Specious Present”, with respect to the experience of the specious present, we are at the natural boundaries of the analytical enterprise. We think that the tension between the direct acquaintance with changes within a single specious present and the difficulty to transcribe

every experience in ILM give us a taste of the limits of Bergmann's ontology.

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