THE ONTOLOGICAL TURN: STUDIES IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF GUSTAV BERGMANN, edited by M.S. Gram and E.D. Klemke. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1974, 314 pp.

This collection of twelve essays is an excellent book on Gustav Bergmann's philosophy. With the exception of W. Sellars' "Seeing, Seeming, and Sensing," K. Lehrer's "Belief and Error," and E. Steinus' "The Problem of Color Incompatibility," all of the essays are about central themes in Bergmann's philosophy. What adds to the high quality of the book is that it contains serious criticisms of Bergmann as well as alternative answers to the problems posed by him. The book contains much original philosophy and metaphilosophy, but rather than attempt to review all of the essays in it, I will concentrate on a few of the fundamental issues that are raised in some of them.

The first essay by P. Butchvarov concerns nothing less than the nature and "The Limits of Ontological Analysis." According to Butchvarov, *ontological analysis* is "any philosophical [as opposed to linguistic, psychological or scientific] inquiry into the nature and existence of entities or states of affairs,... that attempts to answer philosophical questions of the form 'What is x?' by specifying what such an entity consists of, what its constituents or elements are..." (p. 5). He argues that ontological analysis reaches its limit in its attempt to solve the problem of the *unity* of complex entities and

the problem of *ultimate sorts*. The problem of the unity of a complex arises when we attempt to give an ontological account of what an ordinary thing is, and the problem of ultimate sorts arises when we attempt to give an account of what a particular or a property is. The first problem arises because on Bergmann's view ordinary individual things are facts, and facts are complex, i.e., they have constituents. In other words, on Bergmann's assay, a red round spot would not be a simple *thing,* but a complex *fact* whose constituents or elements are a bare particular, exemplification, and the properties red and round.[1] Since, however, there could be the collection of constituents even if the fact did not exist, the fact must be something more than its constituents, but what more? Surely, any attempt to add constituents to the complex will not provide an answer to what constitutes its unity. Thus, Butchvarov concludes, "we seem to reach the conclusion that analysis of a complex entity x into constituent entities cannot provide us with a complete answer to the question, 'What is x?'" (p. 9)

In "Intentions, Facts, and Propositions," Hochberg attempts to avoid Butchvarov's conclusion. He says that "To hold that there are facts is to construe such entities in terms of constituents *structured* in a certain way and hence not reducible to such constituents...' (p. 182). "Facts must be recognized as existents in addition to constituents of facts,... as basic, though complex entities" (p. 178–79). Hochbert does not find anything paradoxical in the existence of a basic (unanalyzable) though complex entity, but it seems that it really is paradoxical. For what is the "structure" that Hochberg speaks of? Is it simple or is it complex? He says that "the structure of the sentence *represents* the structure of the fact..." (p. 182), and that suggests that the structure is simple. For it is plausible to construe the structure of a sentence like "Ra" as the spatial relation between "R" and "a" and spatial relations are simple. Thus, if the structure of the sentence represents the structure of the fact, then the structure of a fact should be simple too. But if the structure of a fact is simple, how can the fact itself be complex? On the other hand, if the structure is a complex of its terms in relation, then the unity or simplicity of the fact is lost. Butchvarov sums up his criticism nicely in the following passage: "Such a person [e.g., Hochberg] would quite understandably protest that the fact is certainly not just its constituents, but rather the constituents *plus* the *structure* by which they are embedded. But we have already included the structure by including the relation (and even the tie)! On the other hand, if these are not the structure, then the structure is simply the fact itself, and we

would not have even begun our analysis" (p. 9). Thus, it appears that ontological analysis reaches its limits when attempting to understand the unity of a complex.

Butchvarov does not conclude that ontology is impossible or that analysis is the wrong method of ontological inquiry. Rather, he attempts to explain *why* ontological analysis reaches its limits. Butchvarov maintains that the goal of philosophy is to *understand* the most general features of the world, and that we achieve that goal when we discover what those general features are most *like*. In other words, for Butchvarov, understanding is accomplished by the method of analogy: "We understand the world primarily by grasping the net of intersecting and overlapping similarities and differences" (p. 25). Bergmann's philosophy is an attempt at *analytical* understanding. It attempts to understand an object in terms of its similarity to a whole consisting of parts. The part-whole analogy is itself illuminating because it is analogous to an arbitrary collection of entities, i.e., "something whose nature is completely transparent to us, of which we can have total and unqualified understanding" (p. 27). However, the part-whole analogy cannot help us in "our attempt to understand precisely the difference between a complex object and an arbitrary collection (p. 28). Butchvarov does not conclude that we must reject analytical understanding altogether, but rather that "we must employ analogies other than that with wholes and parts if we are to elucidate the two topics at which ontological analysis reaches its limits" (p. 33).

E.B. Allaire's essay, 'Bergmann's Ontologies," is much more critical of analytical understanding. Indeed, in the final section of his essay he rejects it completely. However, the major portion of his essay is devoted to tracing the development of Bergmann from what he calls a "frugal" ontologist to a "lavish" ontologist. The lavish ontologist maintains that there is a truth-making (correspondence, aboutness, or intentionality) relation between problematic statements such as 'This is not red," "Two plus two is equal to four," and "All humans are mortal," and external correlates. These external correlates or facts are not reducible to facts that the correlated to unproblematic atomic statements such as "this is red." On the other hand, the frugal ontologist attempts to reduce or render all problematic statements as complexes of unproblematic ones (reductionism), or as about forms of thought, mental concepts, language, and so on (relocationism). Although they differ, both kinds of ontologists agree that there exists a special connection or relation between linguistic items (or thoughts) and non-linguistic items (or intentions).

According to Allaire, the early Bergmann is frugal because he is

more concerned with logical than ontological issues. More specifically, the early Bergmann is primarily concerned with the problem of necessity and claimed that the ideal language method could solve it. According to that method, all necessarily true statements can be transcribed into analytic sentences, and all contingently true statements can be transcribed into synthetic sentences. In one sense, Bergmann's solution is non-ontological because he maintains that necessary truths are not about the world, i.e., they do not have external correlates. However, "the ontological implications of the solution emerge only when... the philosopher explains how L* [the ideal language (IL)] is related to 'the world'" (p. 52). Concerning general statements, the early Bergmann maintained that the word 'all" could be transcribed by "(x)" but he avoided facing the ontological issue of what "(x)" refers to. When he did come to face the ontological issue, he maintained that "(x)" refers to an entity, namely, generality. Consequently, Bergmann's later ontology contains general facts. Thus, one may ask, "Why did Bergmann move from a frugal to a lavish ontology?"

According to Allaire, the movement is the inevitable consequence of the ideal language method. He says "Bergmann starts from a position, a program really, that is like the early Wittgenstein's and ends with a position that is like Frege's. He gets there primarily because he conceives of the ideal language as a device, on the one hand, for *saying* with logical perspicuity all that gets said commonsensically in a natural language and, on the other for representing what *exists*. The former makes reductionism unattainable, the latter assures lavishness" (p. 60). Bergmann must conceive the IL as containing transcriptions of *all* English sentences in order to give a logical solution to the problem of necessity. However, if one must *say* (transcribe) in the IL negations, conjunctions, disjunctions, possibilities, etc., and if the IL uses sentences (transcriptions) to stand for, represent or go proxy for non-linguistic items, then negative, conjunctive, disjunctive, and possible facts must exist. Allaire concludes that "the ideal language method *dictates* a lavish ontology" (p. 30).

Allaire's exposition of Bergmann's move from a frugal to a lavish ontology and his critique of the ideal language method are important but they do not entail the conclusion that "there is no aboutness or intentionality or 'truth-making' relation" (p. 64) between language (or thought) and the world. Although the ideal language method presupposes the existence of some special relation between language and the world, the converse does not hold. Why couldn't a philosopher who engages in ontological analysis reject the formalist theory

of necessary truth and consequently, the ultimate reason for an IL, and still believe in intentionality? Furthermore, even if we grant that ultimately it is a belief in intentionality that dictates a lavish ontology, it does not follow that there is no intentionality. What Allaire must show is that there is reason to reject lavishness and that he does not do.

In "Bergmann's Ontology and the Principle of Acquaintance," R. Grossmann neither doubts that there is an intentional relation nor questions Bergmann's lavish ontology. Rather he attempts to show that an ontology that contains individuals, properties, relations, negation, connectives, and quantifiers (including numbers) can be reconciled with the 'realistic version" of the principle of acquaintance according to which the only entities we can know exist are those we are "acquainted with through mental acts of perception" (p. 90). In what follows, I shall explain why Grossmann does not reconcile a defensible principle of acquaintance (PA) with an ontology of both individuals and properties.

According to Grossmann, Bergmann maintains (and Grossmann agrees) that "we must count as perceivable all the constituents of states of affairs which can be intentions of mental acts of perception" (p. 109). For example, Grossmann says that, "It may be readily granted,... that we perceive such atomic states of affairs' as that *this is green* and that A *is to the left of* B. If so, then it follows upon our criterion that not only inidividuals, but also properties and relations are perceivable" (p. 109). One question that immediately arises is what do Bergmann and Grossman mean by "individual." For Bergmann the only individuals that exist are bare particulars, i.e., individuators that are *constituents* of ordinary things. For Grossmann, however, bare particulars are not constituents of ordinary things, but are themselves identical with ordinary things. Grossmann's motive for the identification of bare particulars with ordinary individual things is that it enables him to apply (PA) to bare particulars. When we perceive two blue squares, everyone agrees that we see two individual things. "But we do not see, in addition, the bare particulars *a* and *b* 'in' the two individual things A and B" (p. 98). Grossmann's way out is to take the ordinary individual things that we see to be bare particulars. According to him, Bergmann's mistake is that "instead of identifying bare particulars with ordinary individual things, he identifies them with constituents of such individuals, instead of identifying states of affairs with 'ordinary' facts and circumstances, he identifies them with individual things. There is therefore, no real conflict between the principle of acquaintance and an on-

tology of particulars" (p. 101). However, if the individual in an "ordinary" atomic fact is a bare particular *qua* ordinary thing, then we cannot perceive properties and consequently, we cannot perceive the atomic fact that *this is green.* To see why this is so we must turn to Grossmann's views on time and change.

Grossmann maintains, contrary to Bergmann, that a world with changing continuants need not be committed to absolute time. His idea is that just as we can conceive of a single spatial object as having spatial parts, we can conceive a single temporal object as having temporal parts. Then, if we consider an individual A that changes from F (red) to G (green), it follows according to Grossmann, that "there is a description of the changing continuant A which is neither contradictory nor (wholly) in terms of momentary individuals" (p. 93). The description is as follows: *"A is neither F, nor is it G,* where G is the property that supplants F at a later time. However, *a temporal part of A is F, another temporal part is G,* and the former exists before the latter" (p. 93, emphasis added). One crucial question here is whether or not the "individual" or "bare particular" in an atomic fact is a continuant. Individuals are continuants since Grossmann identifies individuals with ordinary things and ordinary things are continuants. But then, we do not perceive properties such as red and green, because according to Grossmann's view of change, *continuants do not exemplify changing properties, only their temporal parts do.* Hence, we cannot perceive the fact that *this is green* where "this" refers to an individual *qua* ordinary thing (continuant) and "green" refers to a property that the individual exemplifies. On the other hand, if the individual or bare particular in an atomic fact is not a continuant, but a temporal part of one, then ordinary things are complex since they "contain" as constituents temporal parts that exemplify properties. Since, on Grossmann's own terms, we do not see any constituents of individual things, it follows that we do not see the temporal part (bare particular) "in" individual things. Consequently, given Grossmann's account of time and change, he cannot reconcile the realistic version of (PA) that he and Bergmann both subscribe to, with the existence of both individuals and properties.

Leaving the issue of acquaintance aside, we can see that Grossmann's account of time and change is inadequate. Grossmann is attempting to refute Bergmann's claim that since a continuant is an individual thing that at one time has a certain property and at another time does not have that property, there can be continuants without a contradiction only if we acknowledge the existence of absolute time. Grossmann maintains that Bergmann's reasoning is

invalid since a changing continuant can be described in terms of a succession of its temporal parts that collectively exemplify different properties at different times. However, Grossmann's analysis does not yield a single individual that changes, i.e., has a property and loses it. For, neither the 'continuant" nor its temporal parts change. Grossmann's analysis does avoid commitment to absolute time, but it does not, in the ontological sense, contain continuants. Therefore, Grossmann has not refuted Bergmann's claim that we can reject absolute time only if we also reject continuants.

Bergmann's argument that claims to show that there cannot be continuants unless there is also absolute time is also critically discussed in "Time, Substance, and Analysis," by L. Addis. According to Bergmann, the representation of a changing continuant without absolute time would be as follows: rd(a) · ~ rd(a). Addis argues that the best reading of "rd(a)" is:

> (B) that the state of affairs *a*'s being red occurred at some time or other (past, present, or future) (p. 154).

Then, he says that "~ rd(a)" could mean either

> (E) that at some time (past, present, or future) *a*, though it existed at that time, was not red; or
> (F) that *a* though it existed (past, present, or future), was never red (p. 155).

Addis correctly notes that while (F) is the contradictory of "rd(a)" read as (B), (E) is not. Thus, the contradiction arises only if (E) and (F) are equivalent. Addis then says that "this means that *a* must be the sort of individual that cannot change its properties" (p. 155) and concludes that Bergmann's argument amounts to a *petitio principii.*

It seems to me, however, that it is Addis and not Bergmann that is guilty of a *petitio principii.* First, Bergmann would not agree to reading "rd(a)" as (B) nor "~ rd(a)" as either (E) or (F). Rather, he would read "rd(a)" as "*a* is (tenselessly) red" and " ~rd(a)" as "*a* is (tenselessly) not red." Since those two sentences are contradictories, Addis' reading of "rd(a)" begs the question of whether or not one can *consistently* believe in continuants without introducing absolute time.

There is a second way in which Addis begs the question against Bergmann s thesis about continuants and time. According to Bergmann, the relativist maintains that there are no non-relational temporal things, i.e., the relativist rejects temporal *individuals* (moments) *and* he rejects non-relational temporal *properties*. Thus, to maintain

that events or states of affairs come into existence by acquiring the property of "presentness" is a version of absolute time.[2] For the relativist, the only temporal things that exist are relations. Addis attempts to show that one can develop a formal notation that represents an individual changing and still be a relativist with respect to time. The notation is as follows:

(1) sc[ye(a), rd(a)]   Some occurrence of a's being red˙ was (is, will be) succeeded by an occurrence of a's being yellow.

(2) ~(sc[ye(a), rd(a)])   Some occurrence of a's being red was not (is not, will not be) succeeded by an occurrence of a's being yellow. (p. 159)

On this representation of an ontology of enduring individuals, "temporal relations are relations between facts or states of affairs rather than between individuals" (p. 163), and if this is true then Addis' argument is in trouble. For according to Addis it is not the fact of a's being red that is succeeded by the fact of a's being yellow, but rather it is some *occurrence* of a's being red that is succeeded by some *occurrence* of a's being yellow. Thus, to avoid the absurdity that facts both do and do not stand in temporal relations Addis must identify the occurrences of states of affairs with the states of affairs themselves. What then are occurrences? The only two plausible interpretations are that occurrences are states of affairs that (i) "become *present*," (acquire the property of "presentness," or "come into existence"), or (ii) occupy a certain *moment*. On either interpretation, Addis' representation of continuants and *occurrences* does not avoid absolute time. Of course if one denies that occurrences exist, then one may retain Addis' notation and avoid both absolute time and contradiction. However, if occurrences do not exist, then (1) sc[ye(a), rd(a)] and (2) ~(sc[ye(a), rd(a)]) are no longer ontological representations of the world. Consequently, the notation does not establish that there are continuants in any ontologically relevant sense. Therefore, Addis has not refuted Bergmann's claim that an ontology of continuants cannot be consistently relativist with respect to time.

There are several other essays in this fine volume that are worthy of careful consideration. They are: H.B. Veatch: "Gustav Bergmann: A Humble Petition and Advice;" T.M. Sprigge: "Consciousness;" A. Hausman: "Bergmann on the Analytic-Synthetic Distinction;" R. Ackermann: "Perspicuous Languages;" and F. Wilson: "Why I am

Not Aware of Your Pain." The most personally revealing article is by Sprigge. He tells us of his early years as a graduate student when reading Bergmann's first book gave him the "courage to think for myself" even though the pursuit of ontological investigations is "the kiss of death to one in academic philosophy in England" (p. 115). The irony is that if "academic philosophy" is conceived to be identical with a study of the traditional philosophical problems, then to study Bergmann is to study academic philosophy *par excellence*.

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NOTES

[1]   That the situation also contains the entities universality and particularity is what gives rise to the problem of ultimate sorts about which I will have nothing more to say in this review.

[2]   Cf. G. Bergmann, "Some Reflections on Time," reprinted in Bergmann's *Meaning and Existence*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), pp. 225–263, and especially pp. 237–38.