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Selected bibliography on Panayot Butchvarov

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The Ontological Realism of Panayot Butchvarov (under construction)

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Books

1. Butchvarov, Panayot. 1966. *Resemblance and Identity. An Examination of the Problem of Universals*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

   Contents: Preface IX-XIV; Introduction 3; 1. The nominalist theory 16, 2. The identity and the resemblance theories 56; 3. The relation of resemblance 101; 4. Generic identity 135; Conclusion 173; Bibliography 199; Index 205.
   "The first task of this essay, therefore, is the development of a distinctive and philosophically useful notion of universal, and of a corresponding statement of the problem of universals as a separate philosophical issue. Its second task is the solution of the so-stated problem of universals. Roughly, I shall identify the notion of universal with that of universal quality, in a very wide sense of the word "quality" to be explained in section 1. And I shall offer an explanation of the notion of universal quality that does not depend on the employment of the technical philosophical terms "universal," "particular," or "abstract." I shall identify the problem of universals with the question whether there are universal qualities, i.e., whether the qualities of individual things are universal or particular, or, as I shall actually state it without the use of the terms "universal" and "particular," whether certain qualities of individual things should be described as being one and the same quality or distinct qualities related by a relation of resemblance. Other questions concerning universals, I believe, are either consequences or under modifications of this primary problem, or else independent philosophical issues having no special relation to the puzzles concerning universals. That this is so will become evident, I hope, in the course of our inquiry, especially in sections 1, 2, 5, 13, 17, and 18. But I shall not engage in the historical and exegetic investigations necessary for an actual proof of this claim. My statement of the problem of universals, in particular the identification of the notion of universal with that of universal quality, accords well with important traditional conceptions, such as "the universal is common, since that is called universal which is such as to belong to more than one thing" (Aristotle), and "the universal is that which is in many and of many" (Albert the

Great). But does it not fail to take account of the second part of the equally important traditional question "whether genera and species really exist or are bare notions only; and if they exist whether they are corporeal things, or incorporeal and rather separated, or whether they exist in things perceived by the senses and in relation to them," (Porphyry)? For it seems to exclude from consideration one of the major theories of universals: that "genera and species exist not in sensibles but in separation from sensibles," and that universals may exist even if they have no instances. Now if this theory amounts to the claim that qualities, whether particular or universal, need not be qualities of individual things, that the notions of genus and species can be explained independently of those of instantiation or participation, then indeed we need not consider it, since, in virtue of the very notions of quality, genus, and species, it is obviously false. But the theory need not be interpreted so crudely as to become obviously false. It can be interpreted as claiming that there is an enormous, categorial difference between individual things and universal qualities and that because of this difference the senses in which universal qualities can be said to exist and to be in space and time, and the senses in which individual things can be said to exist and to be in space and time are so different that one can assert the existence of a quality on the ground that it can have instances, even if in fact it has not. I shall consider this claim at the end of the book. But the logically prior questions are, "What is a universal quality?" and "Are there universal qualities?" It is mainly to these questions that I shall address myself in this essay. In many ways the problem of universals is the paradigm of a philosophical problem. It bears virtually no resemblance to any issue of experimental science. It is supremely general, in the sense that it concerns a certain fact about all qualities, in any actual or possible world, in complete abstraction from circumstances and contexts. And it is neither overtly nor disguisedly a problem about philosophy, one which is of interest to philosophers only because of their self-consciousness about the status and possibility of their discipline. Perhaps this is why writers on the problem of universals are especially tempted to connect their inquiries with considerations about philosophical method. I have succumbed to this temptation, mainly in Chapter Three. In content, if not in style, this essay is intended to be metaphysical. Part of its purpose is to demonstrate, in the context of a specific philosophical topic, that at least one branch of philosophy is a legitimate cognitive discipline that has as its subject matter, not certain features of language or of mathematics, but the essential and most general characteristics of the world."

2. ———. 1970. *The Concept of Knowledge*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Contents: Part One: Primary knowledge 3; Part Two: The objects of a priori knowledge 99; Part Three: Primary Perceptual knowledge 185; Part Four: Derivative knowledge 267; Index 321-325.

"Part One of this book attempts an account of the general concept of knowledge, especially as it is employed in what I shall call primary epistemic judgments, that is, judgments of the form "A knows that p" which would not typically be in need of justification by appeal to other epistemic judgments. (Epistemic judgments that are in need of such justification I shall call derivative, and I shall make a corresponding distinction between primary and derivative knowledge.) We shall find that this account leads to, indeed demands and at the same time illuminates, the division of all knowledge into a priori and a posteriori. But unless then a detailed elucidation of this division is provided, the general account of the concept of knowledge would remain skeletal. There are two questions in particular that such an elucidation must answer. First, what are the objects of a priori knowledge? Second, what is the nature of primary a posteriori knowledge? Our account of the concept of knowledge, like most such accounts, requires that the object of knowledge be a certain truth or fact. But what, if anything, could be an a priori (or necessary) truth or fact? Our account, again in common with most, requires the distinction between primary and

derivative knowledge. But can this distinction be made good with respect to our sense-perceptual knowledge of the "external" world of bodies, which is the paradigm and most extensive segment of a posteriori knowledge? That the answers to these questions are not at all settled should be obvious. Yet, unless it includes such answers, an account of the general concept of knowledge cannot be accepted as satisfactory. Part Two of this book will attempt to provide an answer to the first question, and Part Three an answer to the second.

The consideration of a posteriori knowledge in Part Three raises with particular urgency the question of the possibility and nature of derivative knowledge. This is not surprising. That question concerns chiefly derivative a posteriori knowledge, the nature of derivative a priori knowledge being largely the concern of formal logic and its possibility generally unquestioned. The crucial issue regarding derivative a posteriori knowledge is the legitimacy of nondemonstrative inference. In Part Four we return to our inquiry into the general concept of knowledge, but this time with special attention to the issue of nondemonstrative inference and to the nature of derivative knowledge in general, and provide further reasons in support of the chief thesis of Part One.

I shall not, however, discuss the usual philosophical problems about the validity of certain particular kinds of derivative knowledge (e.g., of the future, of bodies, of other minds). Each of these requires careful, detailed treatment in its own right; nothing is gained by sweeping proclamations or refutations of skepticism. And since these problems constitute the familiar subject matter of the theory of knowledge, I offer here only an introduction to that branch of philosophy and not a theory of knowledge as such. Indeed, as is well known, the sort of theory of knowledge one proposes, and most of its tenets, are largely determined by the account one offers of the fundamental epistemic concepts. It is important, however, that such an account be given first and that it be uninfluenced by one's epistemological convictions. For, true or false, these convictions have philosophical value only insofar as they are justified, and their justification cannot be attempted without an account of the key concepts involved. Thus the reader may come to think that our inquiry leads to skepticism. In this, as I shall explain, he would be mistaken. But even if he were not, I would regard such a consequence as acceptable, as long as the rejection of skepticism is not itself grounded in investigations such as ours. Our respect for common sense must not be confused with the possession of a philosophical answer to skepticism. In philosophy, as in any other purely theoretical discipline, it is better to be wrong as the result of inquiry and argument than to be right as the result of mere conviction. The layman who takes the existence of an external world for granted may be right, and the philosophical skeptic whose inquiries lead him to deny the existence of an external world may be wrong. But the skeptic is the philosopher, and the layman is not." pp. 4-5

3. ———. 1979. *Being Qua Being. A Theory of Identity, Existence, and Predication*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Contents: Acknowledgments IX; Introduction 1; 1. The apparent distinctness of Identicals 9; 2. Objects and entities 39; 3. Indiscernibility 64; 4. Existence 82; 5. essence 122; 6. Substances 154; 7. qualities 184; 8. Accidental connections 212; Appendix A. Relations 239; Appendix B. Idealism 248; Notes 256; Index 267.

"The inquiry into being qua being has been identified with metaphysics. But it would be better to use the term "metaphysics" more broadly, namely, for the branch of philosophy that has as its subject matter the nature of the world, or of reality, rather than the nature of our knowledge, or of our language, or of our sciences about the world. We may then distinguish several levels of metaphysical inquiry. On the least fundamental level metaphysics is concerned with the most general description of the actual world, with the most general kinds of things there are and with the way they fit together. It asks such questions as whether God exists, whether there are

both minds and bodies or only minds or only bodies, and if there are both minds and bodies, how they are related. On this level it is closely connected with epistemology, since the main philosophical difficulties such questions pose for us are epistemological in character.

On a more fundamental level, presupposed by the first, metaphysics inquires into the nature of all possible, or at least all conceivable, comprehensible worlds, and thus only indirectly into the nature of the actual world. Can there be a world that consists only of individuals and not also of properties and relations? Or a world that consists only of properties and relations? Can there be nonidentical but indiscernible things? Questions related to those on the previous level can now be asked in complete independence from the usual epistemological considerations. Can there be a world unless there is God? Can there be a world without bodies? Without minds? On this level metaphysics is closely connected with logic. (Immediately following his introduction of the notion of a science of being qua being Aristotle offers a defense of the laws of non-contradiction and excluded middle.) But this connection is no more limited to formal logic than the notion of necessary truth is limited to the truths of forma logic. The criterion of possibility on which it would rely can hardly be mere forma consistency; it must be conceivability or comprehensibility (not of propositions, but of what propositions purport to describe), for, whether we like it or not, we have no other general and ultimate criterion of possibility.

This is why, on this level, metaphysics is also connected with phenomenology, i.e., with the philosophical description of the most genera character of the objects of consciousness qua objects of consciousness.

On the third and most fundamental level metaphysics is concerned with the concepts and principles on the basis of which the questions belonging to the other two levels, i.e., the questions about what things there are or at least there can be, must be answered. Instead of there questions, it asks, what is it for something to be in a world, or for something to be a world? It is on this level, I suggest, that metaphysics is best described as the inquiry into being qua being, or, we might also say, as protometaphysics. Any conception of a world presupposes the conception of what it is for something to exist in that world. Any conception of a thing presupposes the conception of what it is for it to be the subject of predication, both accidental and essential. Any conception of a thing presupposes the conception of what it is for it to be identifiable, not in the sense of being merely singled out but also in the sense of being singled out again or in a different way, of being recognized, of being the subject of a true informative identity judgment.

It follows that the concepts of existence, identity, essential predication, and accidental predication cannot be understood as standing for constituents of the world, presumably for certain properties or relations. They are the concepts in terms of which we must understand what it is for something to be in the world, what it is for something to have a property or be related to another thing, and what it is for something to be a property or a relation. Yet they apply to any possible world; indeed nothing would be a world were it not for their applicability to it. We may call such concepts, which apply without standing for anything, transcendental. The inquiry into being qua being, or protometaphysics, may then be called a transcendental inquiry.

Now the central thesis of this book is that the concepts of existence, identity, accidental predication, and essential predication are intimately related, and moreover that the concept of identity is basic and the other three are to be understood in terms of it. I shall argue that the four puzzles with which we began admit of a common solution, the key to which is to be found in a careful study of the second puzzle, that regarding identity. It is a solution based on a distinction between what I shall call objects and entities. A similar, but not the same, distinction has often been made, most notably by Meinong but also by recent possible-worlds semanticists, in treatments of the first puzzle, that regarding existence. But there it rests on the proposition that there are things of which it is true that there are no such things, a proposition that, I suggest, cannot be made

coherent, let alone plausible, except on the basis of considerations external to the topic of existence. A similar, but again not the same, distinction has also been made, e.g., by Carnap and Sellars, in treatments of an aspect of the second puzzle, namely, the seeming failure of the principle of the Indiscernibility of identicals in intentional and modal contexts; I have in mind the distinction between individuals and individual concepts. But if an individual concept is indeed a concept, or at all like a concept, then it is not the object of the propositional attitude, or the subject of the modal property, with respect to which the principle seems to fail, and therefore its relevance is obscure. If it is not really a concept, then how does it differ from the individual with which it is associated? Again, I believe that these questions can be answered only on the basis of considerations both far more general and much deeper than the seeming discernibility of identicals in intentional and modal contexts." pp. 3-5 (notes omitted).

4. ———. 1998. *Skepticism About the External World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Contents: Introduction 3; 1. Direct realism 12; 2. The Adverbial theory 35; 3. The skeptic's argument 56; 4. A first answer to the skeptic 89; 5. Our concept of reality 111; 6. The untruth and the truth of skepticism 133; Notes 159; Index 179.

"We are now ready to attempt another answer to the skeptic, one based on the preceding considerations regarding the concept of reality. Can what I have called the particular (nonmodal epistemic) question, namely, Do we know or at least have evidence, in some particular perceptual situation, that what we perceive is a real material object? be given a nonskeptical answer, just as in chapter 4 I gave a non skeptical answer to the general (non-modal epistemic) question, namely, Do we know or at least have evidence that material objects exist? If it can, then we would also have a second nonskeptical answer to the general question, since a nonskeptical answer to the particular question entails a nonskeptical answer to the general question, though not vice versa. Thus my argument in chapter 4 in favor of the latter would receive welcome supplementation. But, as we shall see, we would still need that argument at a crucial point in our search in this chapter for a complete nonskeptical answer to the particular question. The fact is that both answers are needed. There is no circularity here, since the argument in chapter 4 is independent of the argument to be offered in this chapter, It's just that the converse is not quite the case.

Clearly. the question whether a certain perceptual object exists, is real, cannot be answered unless an account of the concept of existence, reality, is offered, even though this fact has been generally ignored by recent Anglo-American philosophers of perception (in striking contrast with continental philosophers). I have already said why Russell's account in terms of the satisfaction of a propositional function is unacceptable; it presupposes a more fundamental concept of existence, which would allow us to decide what to count as admissible arguments of the function and what not to so count. And the familiar proposal that the reality of an object consists in its fitting in the spatiotemporal causal system of the world is conceptually circular; it presupposes the concept of reality, for of course the system in question must be a system of real objects, and the causal relations in it must also be real, rather than imaginary, if the "fitting in" is to be even relevant. For similar reasons. also conceptually circular is the Kantian-phenomenalist account, as I argued in chapter 5.

The failures of those accounts should not be surprising if the existence, the reality, of an object cannot be thought of as one of its properties, relational or nonrelational. It certainly is not observable, and we would he indulging in mere fantasy if we suppose that it is somehow hidden in or behind the object that exists. I have argued that we should think of existence as the indefinite identifiability of the object to which it is attributed, in the sense that there is an indefinite number of objects with each of which it is identical. But their identity is not something in reality. Rather it

is imposed on them by our decisions to apply the concept of identity, The same can be said about the concept of existence, reality, since it is to be understood in terms of the concept of identity. Both are transcendental concepts." pp. 133-134

Essays

1. ———. 1974. "The Limits of Ontological Analysis." In *The Ontological Turn. Studies in the Philosophy of Gustav Bergmann*, edited by Gram, Moltke and Klemke, Elmer, 3-37. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.

2. ———. 1977. "Identity." *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* no. 2:70-89.

"A novel account is offered of the nature of informative identity statements. Special attention is accorded to the intimate connection between the concept of identity and the concept of existence, and to their fundamental role in any intelligible conceptual framework."
Reprinted in: Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling, Jr., Howard K. Wettstein (eds.) - *Contemporary perspectives in the philosophy of language* - Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1979

3. ———. 1981. "The Ontology of Philosophical Analysis." *Noûs* no. 15:3-14.

"The most striking fact about recent analytic philosophy has been its return to metaphysics. But it is characteristic of most recent analytic ontologies that they do not face the ontological issues directly, but rather consist in the search for definitions that would capture ordinary usage or in paraphrasing ordinary statements supposed to be ontologically problematic. Gustav Bergmann, whose recent work is reviewed here, is an exception. His recent ontology constitutes a genuine and unabashed turn to the things themselves. However, it involves excesses which seem due to insufficient attention to the peculiarities of the ontologically crucial concept of identity."

4. ———. 1986. "Our Robust Sense of Reality." *Grazer Philosophische Studien* no. 25/26:403-421.

"Anti-Meinongian philosophers, such as Russell, do not explain what they mean by existence when they deny that there are nonexistent objects - they just sense robustly. I argue that any plausible explanation of what they mean tends to undermine their view and to support the Meinongian view. But why are they so strongly convinced that they are right? I argue that the reason is to be found in the special character of the concept of existence, which has been insufficiently examined by anti-Meinongian as well as by Meinongian philosophers."

5. ———. 1988. "Russell's Views on Reality." *Grazer Philosophische Studien* no. 32:165-167.

"Russell's account of existence as satisfaction of a propositional function presupposes a more fundamental notion of existence, which we would employ in deciding what to allow as arguments satisfying a function, a notion he never elucidates. Jan Dejnožka has distinguished three ways Russell used the term "exists," one being the phenomenalist's, in which it refers to correlations of sense-data. I argue that this phenomenalist notion cannot be the one Russell needs, since

he explicitly held that existence be understood broadly, so that, e.g., the nonexistence of God would not follow by definition."