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III. BERGMANN ON PERCEIVING, SENSING, AND APPEARING

DAN CRAWFORD

IN this study I am going to present and discuss some of the central themes of Gustav Bergmann's theory of perception. I shall be concerned, however, only with "later Bergmann," that is, with the perceptual theory worked out in a series of essays in which Bergmann shifts from phenomenism to a form of *intentional realism*. This label ("intentional realism") indicates the two dominant themes in Bergmann's later thought about perception: perceivings are analyzed as mental acts (thoughts) which are intentionally related to real and mind-independent objects and states of affairs.

In a timely essay, "Intentionality" (1955),¹ Bergmann presented an impressive defense of mental acts, and although the framework of that essay was still phenomenistic, the structural analysis of mental acts and their intentionality presented there has not been significantly altered by Bergmann in later writings. In two subsequent essays, "Acts" (1960) and "Realistic Postscript" (1963) his realistic turn was worked out in detail in the context of giving a satisfactory account of ordinary perceptual experience. These three essays will comprise the core texts of the study that follows.²

Bergmann's perceptual theory has not received its fair share of attention from the majority of contemporary analytic philosophers of perception. I can think of two reasons why this is so. First, there is the problem of the *approachability* of Bergmann's theory. His two most important essays on perception, "Acts" and "Realistic Postscript," are rather obscurely situated in a collection of essays which contains a formidable line-up of ontological and historical topics. And once the perceptual theory has been *located* within the texts, there is then the more difficult problem of isolating it from the ontological system in which it is firmly embedded. An added handicap is that in doing this one must

cut through a great deal of terminology and coarse style to behold the theory in its essentials.

A second reason for the lack of widespread discussion of Bergmann's thought is that Bergmann himself has tended to be out of sympathy with the prevailing methods and problem-areas of recent discussion in the philosophy of mind. One of my goals is to show that Bergmann is not as far removed from the main currents of recent discussion as one might think. Through patient exposition and careful criticism, I shall try to show where there is common ground between Bergmann and other strands in the philosophy of perception, and also where I believe Bergmann has made valuable contributions to the current debate.

I shall begin with a sketch of Bergmann's concept of *veridical perception*. This first section will be largely expository and foundational, setting the stage for later discussion. Its initial aim is to acquaint the reader with "the act" and its mental properties, but it also includes a short discussion of Bergmann's conception of the *objects* of perceptual acts. In the following sections, I shall present Bergmann's views on *perceptual error* and *appearing*, and on *sensations*, and work from them toward what I believe to be a more adequate understanding of these concepts.

VERIDICAL PERCEPTION: (1) THE MENTAL ACT

The fundamental idea underlying Bergmann's account of veridical perceptions is that they should be viewed as a species of mental act (thought) intending nonmental and actual states of affairs, also called "facts." Thoughts, i.e., individual thinkings, are construed as (bare) particulars exemplifying two "simple" mental properties: a propositional attitude (Int, 7, 28; Acts, 36)³ and

¹ Gustav Bergmann, "Intentionality" in *Meaning and Existence* (Madison, 1960), pp. 3-38; "Acts" and "Realistic Postscript" occur in *Logic and Reality* (Madison, 1964), pp. 3-44 and 302-340 respectively. Hereafter, references to these three essays will be included in the body of the text in the following abbreviated fashion: (Int, 3), (Acts, 4), (RP, 302).

² The general theory of acts, couched in a frame of intentional realism, worked out in these essays, is also maintained in Bergmann's more recent book, *Realism* (Madison, 1967).

³ Bergmann refers to the "species" of an act, or to its "mode of awareness," rather than its "propositional attitude."

what Bergmann refers to as a "propositional character" (Int, 28). In holding that mental acts exhibit these two nonrelational properties, Bergmann is rejecting G. E. Moore's claim that mental acts are diaphanous.

When Bergmann says that mental acts have propositional characters, he is committing himself to the idea that propositions or judgments enter into perceptions. He refers to these unique propositional properties of acts by means of a quoting device which forms new predicates out of sentences: thus he would speak of a "this-is-green" mental act.⁴ Since the intentionality of thoughts is *not* one of the topics of this essay, I shall have very little to say about these unique intentional properties. I shall simply assume that individual thought-episodes do have a propositional property, and I shall refer to this property by means of Bergmann's special predicates (e.g., "this-is-green").

Now let us turn to the other simple property of acts, the propositional attitude. Bergmann holds that a thought always has the property of being, e.g., a perceiving, a believing, a thinking of, a doubting whether, a sensing, etc.⁵ It should be noted that in the case of perceiving, Bergmann allows that the mental property in question may be the specific types of perceiving: visual, tactile, etc. (Acts, 36). He thinks it is necessary to introduce these mental properties to account for certain introspectible differences among mental acts which have the same propositional character. Now I do believe that Bergmann is on good ground in making such a claim, at least in regard to perception. For I do not see how it can be denied that there are noticeable differences, which anyone can detect and report about, between the mental experiences as experiences of *perceiving* that something is green and merely *thinking* that it is green. I shall take it that Bergmann's mental property, *being a perceiving*, refers to this introspectible *perceptual character* of the former kind of experience. However, I shall later call into question the idea that this perceptual character of some mental states is "simple," if this means that it cannot be defined in terms of other mental concepts.

Now if, as Bergmann says, *being a perceiving* describes a nonrelational property of a mental act,

then it dawns immediately that his conception of perceiving (and hence of seeing) differs radically from that of most contemporary philosophers. For it is generally accepted that the ordinary concept of seeing is one which describes a *knowledge*-relation between an observer and an actual object: seeing-that is taken to be a specific kind of knowing-that. Bergmann, however, uses "see" in such a way that

1. *S* sees that this is green

does not imply that this is green. The concept of seeing pertains solely to a mental act, and does not carry any implication about the truth of the proposition involved in that act, nor about the grounds or justification for accepting that proposition.

Now Bergmann might argue, in defense of this usage, that there is some basis in common speech for construing the notion of seeing in the way that he does, and not as a type of knowing. It is natural for someone to say, for example, that he had *seen* a ghost, or an unidentified flying object, even when he has good grounds for believing, or even knows, that what was seen in these cases did not exist.

However, granting that these are correct uses of "see," it is still questionable whether the perceptual verb in these contexts is being used to describe a property of a mental state as Bergmann suggests. For it should be noted that in the above contexts, it would be equally appropriate for the subject to report what he *seemed* to see, or what *appeared* to him ("There appeared to be a ghost there"). But I shall later interpret Bergmann as saying that these seems-statements and appears-statements do not function solely to describe a mental property of a mental state, but *also* to call into question the truth or falsity of that mental state. Consequently, it seems that Bergmann's use of "see" and "perceive" to refer to an introspectible feature of a mental state is a technical use of these expressions without any clear basis in common speech. Of course there is nothing wrong with using ordinary terms in special ways, as long as, when one is done, things hang together in the way they are supposed to.

One interesting consequence of Bergmann's use of "see" is that it becomes correct to say that cases of both veridical and nonveridical perception are

⁴ I have added hyphens to Bergmann's single quotes to make these unique predicates more conspicuous to the reader. These predicates may be viewed as technical expressions whose ordinary language equivalents are the that-clauses which occur in such ordinary contexts as: "George's thinking that this is green occurred at *t*."

⁵ I take it that the same mental act may instantiate *more than one* attitude, although Bergmann does not, to my knowledge, deal with this question. It seems we must allow that the very same act which is a perceiving that this is a chair may also be a believing that this is a chair, which for Bergmann is a distinct kind of act.

cases of *seeing*. For since the mental states, considered as mental states, that occur in *veridical* perception could well be identical in kind with those that occur in *nonveridical* perception (if the subject is deceived), then both would exhibit the property of being a seeing in Bergmann's sense. Now I pointed out above that I believe it is necessary to speak of some mental acts as having a *perceptual character* in order to distinguish them from other nonperceptual acts. And certainly the acts involved in appearances exhibit this same perceptual quality. However, I shall argue that there is a profounder reason for grouping appearances and veridical seeings under the common head of perceivings as Bergmann does. In doing so, I shall defend the view, which differs from Bergmann's, that the concept of a *perceiving as a knowing* is the basic concept in our ordinary beliefs about perception, and that the concept of an appearing presupposes it.

VERIDICAL PERCEPTION:

(2) THE PERCEPTUAL OBJECT

Bergmann's account of the objects of ordinary perceptions turns on a key distinction between two types of perceiving (1 and 2) that differ in respect of their intentional objects. The intended objects of perceivings₂, Bergmann says, are such "ordinary things" as chairs and tables. Hence the propositional characters of these perceptual acts are about ordinary things, e.g., "this-is-a-table." A perceiving₁, on the other hand, intends (in the case of vision) an area-particular (RP, 319) rather than a whole object. Bergmann introduces the notion of a perceiving₁ and its object by making a phenomenological point about perceivings₂:

When I perceive₂ the table, my "attention does not center" on any of the particulars "in" it that may or may not on this occasion be presented to me.

He continues:

But we all are, when perceiving₂, capable of shifting to another act whose intention is the fact of some particular (or particulars) exemplifying some properties (and relations). These particulars are all "in" the table; . . . The species of [this act] is again perceiving. . . . Yet [its intention] is characteristically "narrower" than that of the preceding perceiving₂. An act with such an intention I call a perceiving₁. (RP, 314.)

Here I take Bergmann to be saying, correctly, that while observing a table, we are capable of shifting to another perceptual act in which what is

seen is a fact about some area-particular. One might achieve this state by focusing more narrowly on the facing surface of the table. The propositional character of such an induced minimal perceiving would be expressed by a sentence of the form

This area-particular has such-and-such properties.

However, it should be apparent that Bergmann in the above passage is making a much stronger claim than this phenomenological one. He is in fact maintaining that the intentional objects of perceivings₂ can be *analyzed* in terms of a set of particulars having observable properties. He goes on to say that what has been said about perceivings₁ "provides a cue for assaying the intentions of perceivings₂," and then proceeds to analyze ordinary objects (or rather facts pertaining to them) as follows. (Here I must include a rather lengthy and tortured passage, as it introduces terminology without which the reader will be lost in later discussion.)

Let '*Mp*' be the sentence representing the fact that would have been presented to me if the act had been a perceiving₁ instead of a perceiving₂. Let '*a*₁, . . . , *a*_n' stand for the particulars "in" it and, whenever it helps, write '*Mp*(*a*₁, . . . , *a*_n)' instead of '*Mp*'. The letter '*M*' in '*Mp*' is to remind us that the fact is molecular. The letter '*p*' is to recall 'part'. For I assay *P* (This is a table), which is the intention of the perceiving₂ with which we are concerned, as a conjunction of two (part) facts. One is *Mp*; the other I call *Op*. That makes '*P*' an abbreviation for '*Mp*·*Op*'. The letter '*O*' is to remind us that '*Op*' contains operators. *Op*, the *operator part* of *P*, is very complex indeed. Fortunately we need no details. The idea is easily grasped. '*Op*' schematically states that there are all the particulars which must be there, that these particulars have all the properties they must have, and that they stand in all the relations in which they must stand, among themselves and to the particulars in the *molecular part*, if the latter is to be "in" a table. (RP, 314-315.)

In this passage, Bergmann is putting forward the improbable idea that the area-particular(s) which I *would* perceive, *if* I were perceiving₁ (*Mp*), is the core ingredient of what I *do* perceive when I perceive₂ the whole table. This claim carries with it the idea that the only particulars which are "present" to me when I perceive a table are those which constitute its facing surface.

Now I believe that Bergmann gets on the wrong track in attempting to analyze the ordinary objects of perceivings₂ in terms of the objects of the

corresponding perceivings₁. For it seems to me a mistake (although I shall not try to prove that it is) to think that the area-particulars seen in perceivings₁ are in any sense *parts* or *constituents* of ordinary objects. The area-particulars which Bergmann thinks are seen in normal perceptions are actually very special objects seen in very special circumstances (usually experimental situations). Hence Bergmann's error does not lie in thinking that area-particulars can be perceptual objects, but in taking them as the "cue" to the perception of ordinary objects.

In the remainder of this essay, I shall be concerned primarily with instances of perceiving₂, where the intentional objects are ordinary things. I shall argue that the notion of a perceiving₁ is a useful one only because of the role it plays in helping us to understand the concept of a sensation.

PERCEPTUAL ERROR

For Bergmann, there are two kinds of perceptual error: *qualitative* and *existential*. In the former, some actual thing appears to be other than it is, whereas in the latter, there appears to be something which does not actually exist, as in hallucinations. I shall limit my discussion to Bergmann's concept of qualitative appearing.

We have seen that cases of perceptual error are to be construed as *perceivings* in Bergmann's sense, and that they could involve the same propositions as veridical perceivings. The difference between veridical and nonveridical mental acts is that the proposition involved in the former is true, and in the latter false.

Bergmann's main concern is with the ontological implications of this epistemic difference. He claims that in cases of error where we are not related to an actual state of affairs, we are nevertheless still related to something, namely a *non-actual* state of affairs, or as he puts it, somewhat paradoxically, a "possible fact." The essential point is put this way: "In assaying [qualitative

error] there is only one hurdle to overcome. One must recognize that possibilities exist" (RP, 321).

Let us look at how Bergmann explains this point about qualitative appearing in a particular case. We should note that his entire discussion of error turns on the preceding analysis of perceivings₂. The example given is the following:

I perceive₂ an oval coin. Surprised that there should be such a thing, I reach for it, examine it, perceive₃⁶ it to be round. The '*Op*' of the original perceiving₂ is false. How about its '*Mp*'? Let *a* be the particular (area) "in" it that was presented to me. '*a* is round', I have now reason to believe, is true; '*a* is oval', false. The latter is a conjunction term of '*Mp*'. That makes *Mp*, too, a mere possibility. But *the external particular in Mp is real*. (RP, 319.)

Though we have already been introduced to the terminology in this passage, it is nevertheless so compressed that a commentary is necessary. I offer the following construction of what is being said.

In this example, the perceptual judgment involved in the original perceiving₂ is expressed by the false sentence "this is an oval coin." In making this judgment, the perceiver is intending something about all the particulars in the coin, including of course the area-particular in the facing surface. Now in the above passage, Bergmann suggests that the perceiver, when judging₂ that this is an oval coin, is at the same time making a *second* judgment, which corresponds to *Mp* in the object, namely the judgment that *a* is oval. Hence he seems to be assuming, tacitly, that when one judges that something is an oval coin, he is committed to the further judgment that the particular in the facing surface of the coin is oval.⁷

On this interpretation, Bergmann's point comes to this: since both of the judgments involved in this perceptual experience are false, then their intentional objects are merely possible states of affairs. However, the individual thing which these possible states of affairs concern is actual. The coin is real!⁸

Clearly the crux of Bergmann's analysis of perceptual error lies in his ontological claim about

⁶ This is not a typographical error. A perceiving₃ for Bergmann is the final perception₂ in a series of perceivings₂ aimed at checking the truth of the first perceiving₂ in that series. The judgment involved in a perceiving₃ is therefore a justified one. (RP, 316.)

⁷ The situation is really more complicated than Bergmann admits. I am speaking as if *Mp* is how I visually *take* the facing side of an object to *be* when I see (or seem to see) that object. But this is not necessarily how I think the facing side of the object *appears*. And consequently, neither is it how the area-particular which I would perceive₁ if I abstracted the facing surface from the object would appear. It is really all three of these things that Bergmann is calling *Mp*.

⁸ The account Bergmann gives of existential appearances (RP, 320-321) leads to a similar conclusion, with the important difference that the individuals which the intended possible states of affairs concern are *not* real. If I perceive a ghost, the nonactual ghostly fact which is the intentional object of this perception concerns a nonactual individual ghost. If we accept the idea of nonactual facts, then I see no reason to balk at nonactual individuals.

possible states of affairs. Although it is not my purpose in this essay to determine the ultimate status of these intentional objects, I shall conclude this section by gathering together the most important claims Bergmann makes about them, and commenting briefly on each.

(1) Possible states of affairs have ontological status, though they are not actual. (2) They are what mental acts are related to in nonveridical perception. (3) In perceptual cases, they are rich, sensuous states of affairs, which may be indistinguishable from the perceptible facts constituting ordinary objects.

Bergmann is on firm ground, I believe, in making each of these claims. I am in agreement with (1) and (2) because it seems that if one accepts the idea that mental acts have a propositional or judgmental character, as I do, then one is automatically committed to the intentional objects which those judgments are about, and to which one must make some sort of existential reference. Bergmann reminds us that we must distinguish the act and its object, the *perceiving* and the *perceived*. If I seem to see a ghost at my window, that which I seem to see, this ghost, is certainly distinct from the act or perceptual experience which intends that object and through which I see it. Moreover, concerning (3), the claim that the intentional objects of perceiving have a "sensuous" character, it is difficult to deny that the states of affairs intended by perceptual acts, veridical and nonveridical, are qualitatively different from those intended by non-perceptual acts such as mere thinkings.

It seems that we must accept, provisionally at least, the conclusion that the intentional facts of which Bergmann speaks exist in some sense, though they are not actual.

APPEARING

Bergmann's primary concern, in his discussion of perceptual error, was to arrive at an adequate *ontology* of appearing. The burden of his analysis of cases of nonveridical perception was to show that in these cases the existence of nonactual states of affairs must be admitted. In this section, I shall move beyond Bergmann's rather circumscribed ontological concerns and ask whether or not some general theory or definition of the *meaning* of *appears-statements* can be elicited from Bergmann's account.

One serious limitation of that account is that it is restricted to cases of perceptual *error*, where there

appears to be something which does not actually exist. Although I shall initially work within this framework of *mere appearances*, my long-range goal is to construct, if possible, a more general theory of appearing which will have application also to cases in which what appears to be the case *is* the case.

Before beginning this project, it will be helpful to review in a general way what Bergmann has said about appearing. An important feature of his account is that he has tended to assimilate appearances and their objects to veridical perceiving and their objects. He has done this by emphasizing that the mental states, or more exactly acts, involved in these two kinds of experiences could be identical, that is, they could exhibit the same propositional and perceptual character. In addition, he has said that the objects of these two experiences, viz., states of affairs, might be the *same* states of affairs in that they might be perceptually indistinguishable, and expressed by the same statement, although they differ in respect of their "mode" of existence. In the remainder of this section I shall explore this assimilation of nonveridical to veridical perceiving and also argue that it must be strengthened in a way that Bergmann himself would not allow.

The following general picture of the meaning of appears-statements seems to emerge from Bergmann's discussion. If we say of George:

2. There (merely) appears to George to be an oval coin before him,

then we are asserting two things: (a) we are describing George's occurrent visual experience as being a perceiving that there is an oval coin before him (where "perceiving" in this context has Bergmann's technical, nonepistemic sense in which it describes a mental property). More exactly, we are characterizing George's experience as being a perceptual one, and as having a certain specific propositional character ("this-is-an-oval-coin"). In addition, (b) we are making an epistemic judgment that the proposition involved in this experience is false and hence that George (his act) is not related to an actual state of affairs.

And if George were to make a corresponding report about his own experience:

3. There (merely) appears to me to be an oval coin over there,

he too would be describing the kind of experience he was having, as well as asserting its falsity.

On this showing, then, statements about mere

appearings have both a *descriptive* and an *epistemic* function: they describe the subject's occurrent experience, and also deny the truth of the propositional content of that experience.

It may help to clarify this interpretation of Bergmann if we express it in terms of the ontological framework of mental acts. When George reports, as in (3), that there merely appears to be an oval coin before him, Bergmann seems to be saying that his mental state includes two distinct acts. There is, first, George's *perceiving* (in Bergmann's sense) that the coin is oval, and secondly, his *judging* about this perceiving that it is false, i.e., that its object is a possible fact.

Now I believe that this account of mere appearings, which I am attributing to Bergmann as being very much in the spirit of his remarks, does provide us with all but one of the essential insights needed to construct an adequate and general theory of appearing. First of all, Bergmann is surely right in holding that appears-statements have the descriptive role he gives them. When someone reports in a perceptual situation that something *x* appears to have some property *f*, then whatever else he might be saying, he is at least reporting his occurrent experience. Moreover, it is correct to say that the proposition that he ascribes to his experience has the form "*x is f*" (rather than "*x appears f*"). And finally, I think Bergmann is right in linking the concept of *appearing* with the concepts of *truth* and *falsity*, though as we shall see, this connection is somewhat more complicated than Bergmann recognizes. However, the fundamental mistake of this account, as I shall argue in a moment, is that it fails to recognize a more intimate connection that exists between *appearing*, in general, and *veridical seeing*.

At this point in the discussion, if we are to achieve our goal of finding a general theory of appearing, we must find some way of dealing with the fact that not all appearings are *mere* appearings, and not all appears-statements imply that their constituent propositions are false. Thus someone might say, while looking at a green wall in normal conditions:

4. This wall appears green to me, and of course it is green.

In this case, the proposition that the wall is green is *true*.

Moreover, as this example shows, we cannot say that it is at least always part of the meaning of appears-statements that they *call into question* the

truth of their constituent propositions; for although appears-statements are often *used* to express doubt about what appears, this cannot be what these statements *mean*, since they can be correctly used even when the speaker has no doubt whatsoever about the truth of their propositions. The general point seems to be that if one asserts that *x appears f*, he does not thereby commit himself to either the truth or the falsity of the proposition that *x is f*.

We may now ask: is it possible to give an account of appearing which is consistent with this point, but at the same time retains Bergmann's insight that the concept of appearing is an epistemic one involving in some way the notion of truth? The alternative would seem to be to abandon the link between *appearing* and *truth*, and hold that there is at least one important sense of "appears" in which it has a purely descriptive role, i.e., simply describes the subject's occurrent experience.

Now I do not see that we are driven to this alternative, for I hold that we can, and should, explicate the concept of appearing as an epistemic one, by means of the concept of *veridically perceiving*. The basic idea of the view I wish to defend is that when someone judges how something appears he is assimilating the perceptual state he is in to a corresponding state of actually perceiving. However, it is crucial to realize that the concept of perceiving which I am employing is not Bergmann's concept of perceiving (i.e., it does not name a simple mental property), nor is it even what Bergmann would refer to as veridical seeing (i.e., it does not simply describe a relation between a mental act and an *actual* object). Rather *perceiving*, on my account, has the sense of *knowing*, and carries with it the implication that the proposition involved in the perceiving is not only true, but justifiably accepted. In attempting to understand appearings in terms of the notion of *perceiving as knowing*, I am departing fundamentally from Bergmann's view.

I stated in the last paragraph that when someone makes an appears-judgment he assimilates his experience to that of actually perceiving. The judgment involves, as it did for Bergmann, both a descriptive and an epistemic claim: (a) the subject is *comparing* his experience, as an experience, in both its propositional and perceptual character, with the experience of actually perceiving the thing in question. At the same time, (b) he is *checking* or *canceling* the normal truth-implication of that perceiving.

To apply this claim to our notorious case of the

oval coin: when someone reports that a coin appears oval to him, he says, in effect,

this experience of mine, as an experience, is the same as (or closely resembles) the experience involved in actually seeing an oval coin, though I do not (for whatever reasons) commit myself to the idea that the proposition involved in that experience is true (as I would if I were actually seeing an oval coin).⁹

Now with regard to the epistemic part of the meaning of appears-statements, (b) above, it should be realized that the *checking* of the truth-implication of one's perceptual state does not imply that the subject believes or even suspects that his perception is or may be false. It is indeed true that very often when someone says how something appears it is because he has become aware of some unfavorable evidence which casts doubt on his perception. However, we have seen that it cannot be part of the meaning of appears-statements to call into question in this way the truth of a perception. All that can be said, and all that needs to be said, is that in judging how something appears, one does not by that judgment commit himself to either the truth or the falsity of his perception. And this is perfectly consistent with his making another overriding judgment in that situation that the propositional content of his experience is indeed true, or indeed false. What is important is that the appears-judgment cancels the truth of the perception, which automatically marks it as an essentially epistemic judgment.¹⁰

As to the descriptive part of the meaning of appears-statements, (a) above, it can be seen that I agree with Bergmann that in making these statements one is ascribing a certain propositional character and a perceptual character to his experience. However, I have argued that one does not do this, as it were, directly, but indirectly by applying to his experience the concept of a corresponding seeing which has the characteristics in question. I would also agree with Bergmann that appearings involve two acts rather than one inasmuch as an appearing includes a reference to a corresponding perceiving which is, so to speak, the

core act of the appearing, and which is qualified in the complex way described above.

A final observation. The idea that appearings should be analyzed in terms of veridical perceivings finds support in the fact of ordinary usage that sentences of the form "*x looks f* (to me now)" are usually synonymous with "it is as though I were seeing *x to be f*." The account of appearing I have given secures the conceptual dependence suggested by this usage.

What is most important is to retain the idea that the concepts of appearing and perceiving are essentially bound up with those of knowledge, truth, and evidence. Bergmann is in danger of losing sight of this fact in failing to recognize the conceptual connections that I have stressed.

SENSATIONS: BERGMANN'S THEORY

In this section I shall explore Bergmann's concept of sensations and try to determine grounds for deciding whether or not this concept is an acceptable one. The broad questions I shall put to Bergmann are three: (1) what grounds are there for thinking that sensations exist? (2) how do we go about characterizing sensations? and (3) what role do sensations play in perception? But before we attempt to decipher Bergmann's claims about sensations, it will be helpful to reflect for a moment on the general framework into which sensations must fit, and specifically, to ask whether the analyses we have given of *perceiving* and *appearing* place limitations on the possible meanings that can be given to the concept of sensations.

In the first place, the *realistic* assumption of our analysis of perceiving, which rests on a fundamental dichotomy between the subject's act and its actual physical object, places definite restrictions on what we can say about sensations. Specifically, within this realist framework, we can assume that sensations, or sense objects,¹¹ are not identical with, or constituents of, the ordinary objects of perceptual acts, such as tables and trees. If sense objects do play a role in veridical perception, then it is clear that they must be "located" in the subject's mental

⁹ The account of appearing that I have developed is based on the account given by Wilfrid Sellars in "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" in *Science, Perception and Reality* (New York, 1963), sec. III, pp. 140-149, and differs only in minor respects from it.

¹⁰ Sentences such as (4) above, "This wall appears green to me, and of course it is green," sound odd because one who uses the sentence is granting in the second clause what the first clause suggests he refuses to grant. Cf. "Mary will probably arrive tonight, and in fact Mary will arrive tonight."

¹¹ I am here anticipating Bergmann in speaking of sense objects (Bergmann uses the term "sense data"). For the moment, we may think of them as the entities that are sensed in a sensation.

experience as an experience. And to be sure, Bergmann holds that sense objects are *mental* entities in the sense that they are mind-dependent (exist only so long as the subject is having them) and *private* (can only be directly known by the subject who has them).

Moreover, when we consider how sensations might figure in *nonveridical* perception, we arrive at parallel conclusions. For we interpreted mere appearances as mental acts intending perceptual states of affairs: when there appears to be a green spot before me, then my (false) perceptual judgment ("this is a green spot") is intentionally related to a nonactual state of affairs (this being a green spot). And there does not seem to be any justification for identifying the perceptual fact of something's being a green spot with an object of sensation. At least Bergmann does not make any such identification.

How exactly do sensations function in the perceptual experience? This is a question on which our analyses of appearing and perceiving have so far shed very little light. We saw that appears-statements do describe one's experience, but only indirectly, by assimilating it to the experience involved in a corresponding perceiving. And although we did distinguish the propositional and nonpropositional components of the perceptual experience, we have not yet found any way of directly characterizing the nonpropositional component except to say, with Bergmann, that perceptual acts exhibit the property *being a perceiving*. But while saying this does mark the difference between perceptual and nonperceptual acts such as thinking and believing, it does not show us any way of characterizing the *specific features* of the nonpropositional component of perceptual experience. I shall argue below that we can describe these specific features by coming to a proper understanding of sensations and their properties.

We turn now to Bergmann's account of sensations as he presents it in the two essays, "Acts" and "Realistic Postscript." Bergmann bases his argument for sensations on certain facts of introspection; he holds that sensations can be discovered in one's mental state (or as he says, "conscious state") by performing a mental shift. What one notices while in this special mental set are certain colorful entities or "sense data" existing momentarily in one's conscious state. However, the role that these sense data play in perception is obscure in Bergmann's theory. The crucial claim is that sense data do not figure in the analysis of perceivings: perceivings can be fully explicated in terms of mental

acts and their intentional objects. Because of this, Bergmann concludes that "dialectically it makes no difference whatsoever whether or not there are sense data" (RP, 325, italics omitted).

In presenting his idea of sense data, Bergmann uses his earlier distinction between perceiving₁ and 2. To refresh the reader's memory, we said that a perceiving₂ intends a whole physical object while a perceiving₁ intends only the constituent particulars which can be more narrowly focused on—in the case of vision, the area-particulars "in" the facing surface. In addition, Bergmann makes a key use of the notion of *externality*, which he takes to be a characteristic of all perceived₂ and perceived₁ objects, but not of sensed objects. Here are the relevant passages:

Everyone can make the shift from perceiving₂ to perceiving₁. . . . The molecular fact intended by a perceiving₁ (of mine) still presents the "idea of external existence." . . . Whatever else may or may not be "in" [my conscious state], the molecular fact, its intention [*Mp*], certainly is not. (RP, 325.)

He continues:

To claim that there are sense data is to claim that, just as we can shift from perceiving₂ to perceiving₁, we can make a second shift, in the same direction, as it were, from perceiving₁. . . . If the intention from which you shifted is *Mp*, call this conscious state \overline{Mp} . \overline{Mp} is exactly like *Mp*. Only the [externality] has disappeared! This conscious state \overline{Mp} is a sense datum. (RP, 325.)

The most plausible interpretation of the second shift Bergmann describes, from perceiving₁ to sensing, is that it is a shift from seeing something which is *not* in one's conscious state to seeing (or sensing) something which *is* in one's conscious state. This is why Bergmann stresses the fact that the object of the perceiving₁ is not in one's conscious state. Further, even though the objects of the perceiving₁ and the sensing are "exactly like" one another, Bergmann distinguishes them on the grounds that the perceived object, but not the sensed object, "presents the idea of external existence." How does this notion of the presence or absence of externality shed light on sensations?

While Bergmann takes the "idea of external existence" as presented by an object to be a simple datum of consciousness (RP, 311) it is natural to interpret this notion in terms of the idea that the object that one sees (or seems to see) is *in physical space*. If this is correct, then in claiming that the objects of sensation do not present the idea of

externality, Bergmann would be saying, plausibly, that when one shifts from a perceiving to a sensing the sensed object is no longer spatially separated from the subject in the way that the perceived object was: the sensed object is not (or does not appear to be) in physical space.

Now it is difficult to deny the introspective facts to which Bergmann is calling attention, namely that we can come to notice the visual objects he describes by changing our mental set. Moreover, it seems correct to say that these objects are not seen as being in physical space, viz., they are not in the vicinity of or near the surface of the objects we were looking at before shifting into our phenomenological frame of mind. Hence I conclude that Bergmann has given us some reason for thinking that sense data exist. Furthermore, it would seem to be a justifiable inference that sense data are present in *all* perceptions, since whenever we are perceiving we are capable of noticing them by shifting into the proper mental set.¹² But still, it is not at all clear what *role*, if any, sense data play in perception, and how they are connected with perceptual acts. Specifically, we may wonder whether it is any longer necessary to say that perceptual acts have the simple property *perceiving*, once it is recognized that sense data always accompany these acts in one's conscious state.

SENSATIONS AS COMPONENTS OF THE ACT

My objections to Bergmann's conception of sense data are two. First, it obscures the role of sensations in perception and ultimately leads to the idea that they are irrelevant to a philosophical understanding of ordinary perceiving, as happens with Bergmann. Secondly, it loses sight of an essential feature of the perceptual experience as an experience, namely that it has the same kind of sensory properties that Bergmann ascribes to sense data. What I am suggesting is that it is the perceptual experience as a whole which may be said to have sensory properties (as well as a propositional character).

However, this claim must be qualified in an

important respect. We must take into account something which Bergmann overlooks, namely that mental entities, of whatever sort, are *not* things that can have sensory properties. A sense datum, for example, cannot be literally green and triangular since these properties pertain primarily to physical objects in space. Hence what must be said about inner experiences is that they have properties (let us call them *phenomenal* properties) which are different from, but *analogous* to, physical sensory properties such as color and shape.¹³ It is these phenomenal properties which, I am arguing, may be ascribed to the perceptual experience. If I am right about this, then a correct description of the experience that occurs in the perception of a green triangle is that it has, first, the propositional character "this-is-a-green-triangle" (cum attitude), and second, unique sensory properties analogous to greenness and triangularity.

But there is no reason why we should not refer to the sensory or nonpropositional component of the perceptual experience as the subject's *sensation*. That is, we seem to have found a useful and commonsensical concept of a sensation as a component part of the perceptual experience. Indeed, once this suggestion is taken seriously, then it dawns on us that the introspective evidence pertaining to sense data that Bergmann brings forth does not justify his inference that sense data and perceptual act are *distinct entities*. For all Bergmann has shown, it is quite possible that when one makes the shift from a perceiving to a sensing, he is coming to notice properties of his perceptual *act*.

I shall try to defend my nonBergmannian concept of a sensation, and specifically the idea that it has the phenomenal features I described, by drawing on one of our conclusions about appearances. I argued earlier that in making appears-reports, one is comparing his experience with that of a corresponding seeing. Moreover, I suggested that the subject is able to recognize the *respects* in which his experience resembles and differs from that related experience. If this was correct, then the report that there appears to be a green triangular object over there involves the claim that

¹² What should be said about Bergmann's perceiving? Has he succeeded in describing an intermediate stage between perceiving whole objects (or rather the facing surfaces of whole objects) and coming to sense sense data—a stage in which one sees an expanse or area as being in external physical space? Perhaps it is necessary to pass through such a stage in coming to notice our inner experiences; but I would argue that whether it is is a phenomenological question which, to use a Bergmannian turn of phrase, is dialectically irrelevant to the question of sense data and their characteristics.

¹³ Wilfrid Sellars describes the analogy between physical and phenomenal color and shape in terms of common logical and structural features in "The Structure of Knowledge: (1) Perception" (unpublished), p. 20. I would add that these physical and phenomenal properties are *disanalogous* as regards their causal features.

this perceptual experience (of mine) as an experience resembles the experience involved in actually seeing a green triangular object over there *in respect of its greenness and triangularity*.

Now in reporting comparatively about the greenness and triangularity of one's experience, I think it is clear that one is not simply referring to the propositional element of the two experiences (which does include the concepts *green* and *triangular*). One is also characterizing one's experience in its *nonpropositional* aspect by means of the predicates "green" and "triangular." In this way, I believe, our analysis of appearances lends support to our concept of sensations as that part of the perceptual experience having properties which are counterparts of the perceptible properties of their intended objects.¹⁴

Once we have put this concept of sensations to use in understanding perceivings, then there is no longer any motivation for saying, with Bergmann, that the perceptual character of perceivings is a simple mental property, for we have succeeded in giving a more determinate description of this property in terms of sensations. Moreover, if as I have claimed, sensations are component parts of perceivings, then they are as dialectically relevant in giving an analysis of perceiving as is the act itself.

Finally, it is important to realize that my defense of sensations has not rested on the claim that they are ever observed, i.e., that they are ever perceptual objects. All I have said is that one can recognize certain things about his mental experience, which is simply to say that one can give noninferential reports about his experience. And while I certainly do not deny the relevance of the introspective facts that Bergmann calls attention to, I believe I have shown that Bergmann is wrong in claiming that these facts are the *sole* grounds for introducing sensations, for I have found other common sense considerations which lead to this idea.

SUMMARY

To conclude this discussion, I shall review briefly some of the more important elements of Bergmann's perceptual theory, as well as where I have found them to be in need of revision. (1) On the important matter of *nonveridical perception*, Bergmann has made a strong case for saying that the intentional objects involved in these perceptions exist in some sense, though they are not actual. These nonactual states of affairs, he pointed out, may be perceptually indistinguishable from actual states of affairs. Although Bergmann's concept of these nonactual states of affairs is not a wholly satisfactory one, he has at least shown us the place they occupy in perception, and hence the road that any rival theory must travel.

(2) Bergmann rightly drew attention to the *perceptual character* of perceptual acts, which distinguishes them from such nonperceptions as merely thinking or believing. However, we found that it was not necessary to stop with the idea that *being a perceiving* is a simple mental property of acts, but that it could be further explicated in terms of a concept of sensations.

(3) In regard to *appearing*, although Bergmann correctly assimilated the concept of appearing to that of veridical perceiving, we found it necessary to strengthen this assimilation in such a way that appearances must be *analyzed* in terms of veridical perceivings (in the sense of knowings).

(4) Concerning *sensations*, Bergmann has stressed the introspective grounds which justify, in part, philosophical claims about sensations, thus helping to secure their place in the philosophy of mind. We supplemented his thesis by constructing a different, but commonsensical, notion of sensations which did not rely on introspective evidence, and which made sensations an integral part of the perceptual process.

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¹⁴ I should make it clear that I am *not* claiming that the concept of sensations that I have given is the only acceptable one, philosophically speaking, nor that it is the most penetrating one. Specifically, I do not wish to deny that there are good grounds for speaking of sensations as entities (or states) separate from the perceptual experience. In fact, I believe that there are convincing reasons for inferring the existence of antecedent sensory states which mediate between the purely physical state and the "full-blown" perceptual experience. (See Wilfrid Sellars, *Science and Metaphysics* [New York, 1968], ch. 1, for a valuable discussion of what Sellars calls the "sense impression inference.") One such reason is to give an adequate explanation of the sensory component of perception that I have described. But the fact that such theoretical advances are necessary should not blind us to the more rudimentary understanding of sensations as the nonpropositional component of perceivings.