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*TYPES: ESSAYS IN METAPHYSICS*

by Eddy M. Zemach.

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Collections of an author's previously published articles can provide a definite contribution to philosophy. The best collections bring together pieces published at various places and times on what appear to be diverse, singular, and often highly specialized, even esoteric, topics in such a way as to display the author's breadth and unity of philosophical vision. One thinks in this regard of the collections of the papers of Davidson, who has not set down his ideas systematically in a book. Collections are often better than such books; they collect details often missing in books, and one sees the historical development of the ideas right before one's eyes. This collection of 21 previously published essays of Eddy Zemach is such a contribution: these essays, which cover a wide range of difficult topics, together represent an impressive elaboration of a systematic philosophy. Moreover, the book is written in a clear style that makes it a pleasure to read, a virtue of philosophical writing not to be lightly regarded. Zemach states his views straightforwardly, even boldly. The details of Zemach's arguments deserve serious reflection, but here I will only elucidate general themes and raise a few basic questions.

These essays are arranged in five parts: "Metaphysics," "Ontology," "Aesthetics," "The Mind," and "Mind and Language." "Metaphysics" comprises four essays articulating and defending nominalism. "A Plea for a New Nominalism" begins, "I believe that the world is a totality of things; there are no properties, or relations, or sets, or states of affairs, or facts, or events; there are only particular things" (p. 25). A particular thing is "what can be identified and reidentified" (pp. 1-2). Socrates is a particular thing. Socrates can be identified and reidentified at various spatiotemporal indices. Yet no one is tempted to consider Socrates a universal. All of Socrates is present at different spatiotemporal locations; e.g., "he is in the market place on Sunday and he is in prison on Monday" (p. 26). Zemach's new nominalism

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suggests treating general terms such as "water" as names for particular things in the very same manner as "Socrates." "Water, like Socrates, is wholly present in many spatiotemporal locations. Your swimming pool has water in it, and yet I find the same thing, i.e., water in my tub. Water is then in both locations..." (p. 26). Types are particular physical things: "...Woman, Water, Dog, Square, White, Mary, etc. are all material things recurring, at various spatiotemporal locations" (p. 36). But Zemach's is not a theory of scattered objects; Water is not the mereological sum of all individual instances of water. Wherever water is present there too is Water.

This nominalism leads naturally to a logic in which there are "names of things and logical terms only" (p. 25), where "is" is always understood as identity. To say "Socrates is a man" is to say wherever Socrates is present, Man is present; at some locations Socrates and Man are identical. This is not to say that wherever Man is present so is Socrates. Man is also present wherever Plato is—Man recurs at various spatial locations—though Socrates is never identical to Plato: "Identity at *different* locations is non-transitive" (p. 10). This "Aristotelian" logic is neatly formalized in "Substance Logic" (written with Eric Walther). Of this logic, Zemach says, "When Peter Geach says that 'Aristotle's going over to the two-term theory was a disaster, comparable only to the Fall of Adam' he expresses the credo of all Fregean logic, that two-term logic cannot work... Yet if I am not mistaken this is precisely what we have here in this paper ['A Plea...']: a working, adequate two-term logic" (p. 33). This logic can also represent *individuals, events, and relations* in terms of types. An *event*, "(...not the events usually talked about in philosophy; e.g. Queen Ann's Death. *These* events, I think, do not exist)" (p. 29), is a type at a particular index. Events do not recur. *Individuals* are events of the same type which share a certain spatiotemporal continuity. *Relations* are complex types and thus physical objects. "If John loves Mary, one points at *John and Mary*, and says: 'This is a love.' On our view, that is literally true" (p. 19). Here one's intuitions might rebel. If John loves Mary, but at the present they are having a horrible fight, then at John and Mary, Love is then identical to Fighting. But should Love ever be equated with Fighting? If relations are material objects, one's intuitions should conform.

These essays may articulate a consistent version of nominalism, but one may wonder why the bother. What motivates any nominalist is the problem of universals: what does it mean for an object to

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exemplify a universal? Zemach thinks the problem arises for any language with predicates: "For what is a predicate? Some say that predicates are names for universals which individual things exemplify, or names of sets of which individual things are members... Others say that predicates name nothing, but are satisfied by particular things. What, however, is satisfaction, and how is it different from naming?" (p. 25). (Is reference better understood than satisfaction?) Zemach's nominalism does away with predicates and with them the ontological explanation of what makes predicates true of objects. But it does so at a cost: this nominalism runs afoul of numbers. In "Numbers," Zemach construes numbers as material objects, as types: "Just as this cat is a material thing even though at different times it has a different molecular constitution and shape, so is 2 a material thing even though at one complex substance,  $C_1$ , it is apple meat, and at another,  $C_2$ , it is wood. 2 is the type, The Twosome..." (p. 39). Numbers then, it seems, may be scattered objects. 2 exists wherever there is a twosome. But then Quine's example of one square composed of four adjacent triangles,  $\square$ , is telling. At this object, Four is present as well as One, so at this object  $4=1$ ! Zemach admits, "Since numbers are actual objects in the physical world, very large numbers cannot exist, because there are not enough things to go around for them" (p. 39). To avoid disparaging mathematicians' talk of "very large numbers" Zemach's semantics must include possible as well as actual objects: "Statements about non-existing numbers are true then in the same way that statements about fictional characters are true. To say Lear had three daughters is to speak about non-existing entities" (p. 45). However, the appeal to non-existing objects reveals the cost of this nominalism. This nominalism rejects universals and predicates because of the mysteries of exemplification and satisfaction but embraces the mysteries of possibilia. One set of mysteries is let out the window only to let in another. Zemach tries to deflate his use of possibility: "The concept of a possible world is a natural extension of the concept of logical consistency, and, as such, it is entirely innocuous" (p. 46). What natural extension? Didn't Gödel show that logical consistency alone is not strong enough to restrict which possibilities are the numbers? One could treat possible worlds in terms of sets, but this nominalism abhors sets. Without sets, it seems, one must adopt a modal realism on a par with David Lewis'. But then one should wonder whether the epistemological and ontological perplexities of modal realism are not more frightening than concerns over satisfaction. One

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might admit satisfaction as at least as well understood as reference, yet still shudder at possible worlds. A nominalist motivated by a taste for desert landscapes will not find non-existing deserts so palatable. This is a new nominalism indeed!

Part Two, "Ontology," comprises essays defending relative identity and vague objects. These essays are the strongest in the book. Anyone interested in these issues should read these essays. Relative identity is defended against charges of incoherence by appeal to Substance Logic and its theorem that identity is non-transitive at different locations. That "... we non-omniscient beings can know only vague objects" (p. 89) follows from relative identity and the vagueness of sortal terms: "...no sortal term of ours is so detailed that it predetermines, for every possible item, whether it falls under that sortal or not. Our sortals are vague, so the objects they pick out, identified as instances of those vague sortals, must be vague, too" (p. 93). He later adds, "Sortal terms are determined by our interests" (p. 115), so which objects we know "... is, of necessity, sortal dependent and *value laden*" (p. 116). This may sound like the fast track to metaphysical relativism, but not so: "Some Metaphysical Realists hold that objects are chunks of the world that have the features they have regardless of how we conceive them. I, too, am a metaphysical realist, and believe that reality in itself is theory-independent; but I do not think that the objects we discuss, whether in daily life or in science, are just such chunks of the world" (p. 145). Are these *real* objects not articles of faith reminiscent of Kant's unknown object = X, which if not incoherent are at least utterly mysterious?

Part Three, "Aesthetics," extends these ideas to aesthetic objects and interpretation. The identity of a particular work of art, like the identity of anything, is relative to a sortal, and how this sortal is determined is dependent on our interests and values. So, the specification of a particular artwork involves normative judgments. These considerations show that Goodman is too quick to identify a painting with a particular canvas. We value a particular painting because of "... our aesthetic appreciation of a certain arrangement of color expanses; thus that arrangement *defines* a certain *thing*, i.e., *The Night Watch*. That thing may coincide (for a while) with a certain canvas, but there is absolutely no reason why *it*, *The Night Watch*, cannot also coincide with other canvases at the same time, or at different times: reproductions (on other canvases) *are* the same painting" (pp. 119-120). This line is interesting, but it all turns on Zemach's understanding of the function of art objects: to be "contemplated for their beauty" (p. 119). Whether

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this is *the* function of art objects should be considered. If it is not, then identity conditions for aesthetic objects may differ from those Zemach champions.

The essays of Parts Four and Five extend these ideas to the sortal "person" and explore the consequences of doing so for theories of the unconscious, the soul, memory, indexicals, and psychological egoism. The gist is "...that since the boundaries of persons can be drawn in various distinct ways, there is a multitude of person-concepts, and thus there is no fact of the matter as to which events stand in the I-relation to each other [are stages of the same person]. A society chooses one of those ways of delimiting persons..." (p. 221). This indicates the causal, "empiricistic conception of memory is fundamentally misguided" (*Ibid.*). The question is not empirical but conventional. (Do "empirical" and "conventional" mark a clear distinction?) This consequence is also the downfall of egoism. Should I do *x* or not? "The egoist principle has an answer: do *x* iff it is advantageous to *me*. Yet if this answer is to be nonarbitrary the identity between the performer of *x* and the one who benefits from *x* must not be conventional only" (p. 244). Just when all this conventionalism appears disastrous, objective values enter. "The value of a situation ... is an objective property of that situation; it is determined and verified by empirical observation" (p. 273). Value-based ethics must replace personalistic ethics.

Besides being clear Zemach's writing displays throughout a passionate conviction that these issues are important. These challenging essays are scattered over diverse locations; they are identical to *Types* only where they are collected together. Philosophers can be grateful *Types* exists.

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