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Rational and Social Agency: The Philosophy of Michael Bratman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 368 pp. ISBN 9780199794515. Hardback: \$90.00.

I have it on good authority that publishers hate Festschriften. The reason for their aversion is not difficult to imagine: the typical Festschrift is seen as lacking in novel ideas and arguments, and filled with flattering displays of praise and an absence of critical depth. When viewed in another light, though, the Festschrift presents a unique opportunity to reflect on the work of an eminent scholar, and to raise questions about where a particular field of scholarship has been and is going. The present Festschrift honouring the work of Michael Bratman is nearly perfect in this regard. Without flattery or superficiality, this impressive collection of essays both broadens and refines the extraordinary work that has been devoted to attaining a critical understanding of Bratman's corpus. The collection contains ten essays bookended by a useful introduction by the editors and incisive replies by Bratman. The first four essays, by Richard Holton, Al Mele, Kieran Setiya, and David Velleman, discuss Bratman's planning theory of intention. The next four, by Jay Wallace, Geoffrey Sayre-McCord and Michael Smith, Elijah Millgram, and Christine Korsgaard, examine Bratman's accounts of rational self-governance, autonomy, and identification. The final two, by Margaret Gilbert and Scott Shapiro, focus on Bratman's account of shared agency. In my opinion, none of the essays directly challenges the foundational assumptions that provide the reductive framework within which Bratman operates, but one essay in particular, by Elijah Millgram, comes very close. Hence, in what follows, I begin by sketching two important presuppositions of Bratman's work and then I discuss Millgram's essay and Bratman's response, which struck me as among the most fruitful combination of the bunch.

Like many Anglophone philosophers of action working over the past four decades or so, Bratman is interested in differentiating between those attitudes and actions with which you *identify* as agent and those that you legitimately *disown*. For Bratman, intentions play a central role in discriminating between the two. On his influential model, intentions are *sui generis* mental states that function as persisting and stable plans whose normative content specifies which other attitudes you should treat as reasons when deliberating about what to do. Crucially, for Bratman, when you act on the basis of deliberation guided by the relevant intentions, and when the structure of the relevant intentions is consistent and coherent, the intentions are rationally self-governing. That is, your rational self-governance consists in the proper functioning of this system of mental states: when this system causes your behaviour in the appropriate manner, *you* can be said to govern what is taking place.

Equally as important, Bratman's account of rational self-governance rejects homuncular models of the agent. Typical homuncular models assume that as a conscious agent you exist in a manner that differs from your system of mental states, stepping back from and reflecting upon that system much like the notorious Cartesian spectre existing as a thinking substance in addition to the parts of which that system is composed. In rejecting homuncular models of the agent, Bratman makes a controversial metaphysical assumption of his own. He assumes that you are *identical with* a system of mental states unified across time by relations of psychological continuity, which he describes in terms of a broadly Lockean approach to personal identity. That is, you are not a persisting physical object of any kind, e.g., a particular living animal, but a temporally fragmented collection of mental states stitched together by psychologically continuous relations. Together, these assumptions form the core of Bratman's reductive model of rational self-governed action. On the one hand, Bratman assumes that when your action is appropriately caused by the correctly structured intentions, this system of mental states governs what is taking place. On the other hand, Bratman rejects homuncular models of the agent and assumes that you are identical with the relevant system of mental states standing in relations of psychological continuity. Together, these assumptions depict you not as a physical object of any kind, but as a collection of mental states held together by relations of psychological continuity.

In one of the most challenging essays of the collection, Elijah Millgram's "Segmented Agency" (pp. 152–89) targets the reductive model of rational self-governed agency endorsed by Bratman. Using an evocative example of a Jewish academic living in Germany during the 1930s, Millgram argues that there are times in your life when you experience genuinely unanticipated circumstances that require immediate action, where you must abandon your environment and act in novel ways that cannot be guided by the kinds of persisting and stable intentions that are of interest to Bratman. According to Millgram, intentions make sense only for agents who reside in static environments that are largely predictable, but you are not such an agent. Rather, because you inhabit and experience a world that is deeply surprising, there are many circumstances in which you must move on, exiting one niche while searching for another. In this way, you are a *segmented* agent whose life is normally divided into parts and who often moves from place to place.

If Millgram is correct and we are segmented agents, an important question arises. When you exit one niche and move to another, can this be a rational self-governed action? According to the model defended by Bratman, when you act on the basis of deliberation guided by the relevant intentions, and when the structure of the intentions is consistent and coherent, your intentions

rationally guide you and you thereby govern what is taking place. However, according to Millgram, your stable and persisting intentions are niche-specific, so they cannot rationally guide you when leaving a known environment and transitioning to unknown circumstances. But, if that is so, then leaving your niche and heading into the unfamiliar cannot be a rational self-governed action, at least not according to the model defended by Bratman. This, says Millgram, is a problem, for in such cases praiseworthy forms of rational self-governed action occur, where you rely on forms of rationality that are appropriate to segmented agents, such as feelings of boredom or frustration that prompt you to move to a new niche. Thus, for Millgram, the model of rational self-governed agency that Bratman endorses is incomplete, and as a segmented agent you are not identical with a collection of mental states fused together across time by psychologically continuous relations. Rather, you are not a single agent at all, but “the substrate of a series of them” (p. 175), i.e., the substance underlying a series of distinct agents that “you conjure up to meet the needs of the moment” (*ibid.*), so the broadly Lockean approach to personal identity endorsed by Bratman does not apply.

In his response to Millgram, Bratman insists that for a radical shift to be a rationally self-governed action there would have to be *some* stable, plan-like intention operative on your part, or else when faced with such a fundamental change in the world you would move from niche to niche on the basis of good luck, rather than as a rational self-governed action. Granted, Millgram does not (here) specify how to identify those movements between niches that are the result of good luck and those that are rationally self-governed actions, but Bratman’s response does not address the deeper challenge raised by examples of segmented agency. Although Millgram does not quite frame it this way, his example targets the reductive ambition inherent within Bratman’s model of rational self-governance. Examples of segmented agency challenge the reductive claim that you are identical with a collection of mental states, by suggesting that there is a real distinction between you and those mental states. Crucially, acknowledging the existence of this distinction does not require that we follow Bratman and assume that we must choose between homuncular and reductive models of the agent. Plausibly, we can recognize this distinction by claiming that, e.g., you are a particular physical object that has conscious mental states, is subject to the occurrence of conscious mental events, stands in relations to other physical objects, undergoes change without annihilation, persists through time while occupying space, and has the ability to perform various intentional actions. If such an alternative is plausible, then, contrary to what Bratman has long assumed to be the case, avoiding the sort of homuncular model of the agent that would make Descartes proud does not require the

reductive assumption that you are identical with a psychologically continuous collection of mental states.

Of course, exploring the plausibility of such alternatives is work for future scholars who need not share the controversial, reductive assumptions upon which Bratman has built his model of rational self-governed agency. Perhaps had this Festschrift included additional work that directly challenges such assumptions, the collection would have achieved perfection. This, however, is but a minor concern. The editors are to be commended for assembling an outstanding collection of essays, which, like Bratman's own corpus, are essential reading for anyone working in Anglophone philosophy of action.

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