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On the Plurality of Existences

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Abstract

Many philosophers aim to develop a theory of reality—to answer the question, what does reality consist in? Roughly, this is the challenge of ontology. For the last half-century, perhaps most philosophers in the analytic tradition have approached this so-called ontological question arguing that it should be understood as a question about *what there is*. Call this the Neo-Quinean approach. In recent years, however, serious competitors to this approach have emerged. Neo-Aristotelians, for example, take the ontological question to be best understood as a question about *what is fundamental*. The Neo-Sellarsians take it to be about the relations between what they call the manifest and scientific images. And the Neo-Carnapian approach is aimed at showing the triviality or meaninglessness of ontology. Since the disagreement at hand is about how we ought to understand the very challenge of ontology, the debate is, as it were, a "meta-ontological" one. In this project, I defend the claim that Neo-Meinongianism deserves a seat at the table. To this end, I take up two general tasks. First, I motivate the kind of Neo-Meinongianism I am interested in (§1). Second, I further demonstrate its utility by exploring its connection to truth (§2), mereology (§3), and time (§4).

In §1, I consider the merits of jointly endorsing *Meinongianism* and *Ontological Pluralism*. With the aim of showing that the two views complement one another, I

argue that such a meta-ontology can have tremendous utility, since it inherits the resources of both its constituent meta-ontologies, but avoids some objections that plague each constituent meta-ontology held independently.

In §2, I explore the connection between a sort of Meinongianism and Truth. Some find it deeply intuitive that a true proposition is true in virtue of some relation that obtains between the proposition and reality. Some find it deeply intuitive that there are straightforwardly true propositions about nonexistent entities. A puzzle therein arises for those who have both intuitions. In this chapter, I develop this puzzle and explore the prospects of responding to it by appeal to the seemingly unprincipled response that some truths depend on being, and others do not. Ultimately, I argue that Meinongians have the machinery to offer a satisfying solution to the puzzle by way of a specific version of alethic pluralism. I conclude by preemptively responding to a number of objections.

In §3, I explore the connection between ontological pluralism and mereological pluralism. I argue that ontological pluralism is well-positioned to motivate mereological pluralism and that mereological pluralism carries tremendous theoretical utility. The two views therein make an attractive package. Insofar as the ontological pluralist decides to embrace mereological pluralism, she will inherit the resources to resolve some perennial metaphysical puzzles. I conclude, among other things, that the ontological pluralist has strong reason to be a mereological pluralist, and that everyone has strong reason to take ontological pluralism even more seriously.

In §4, I develop and defend a theory of time I call Meinongian Growing Block

Theory, which deploys the metaontological resources of both Meinongianism and Ontological Pluralism. Initially, I articulate the view by juxtaposing it against two neighboring views, Meinongian Presentism and Presentist Existential Pluralism. I argue that Meinongian Growing Block Theory is preferable to these views and suggest reasons for thinking it will also fair well against new competitors from the Moving Spotlight and Fragmentalism camps as well.

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Contents

Preface

Before moving forward, I should be explicit about some of my methodological convictions. I do not plan to say more in defense of these convictions beyond the little I am about to say; some of these are more controversial than others. First, I take myself to be engaged in the programme of revisionary metaphysics. Contra-Strawson, I do not think metaphysics is merely descriptive; rather, it will often recommend revisions to how we think. I submit reality has scheme-independent joints, and metaphysicians are to aim at capturing them.

Second, I am something of a phenomenal conservative. Thus, while I endorse a kind of revisionary approach to metaphysics, the more a theory violates our intuitions the more it is rendered implausible, all else being equal. Of course, if some deeply counter-intuitive theory has far more utility than its competitors, the cost may yet be worth paying, at least provisionally. Intuitions help establish our default position.

Third, and relatedly, I think similarly of the role of language in metaphysics—that we should be semantically conservative. I take language to be representational, such that illuminating its structure can give us insight into the structure of reality; doing semantics is metaphysically illuminating. As an example, I think language gives us

good reason to have as our default view that there are individuals and properties, and that there is a categorical difference between them. Of course, just because conservatism recommends this as the default view does not mean we will never endorse revisionary views; the price just has to be right. I suspect in many cases it will be.

Fourth, I do not have much faith in ontological simplicity. By this I mean that I cannot see any good reason why one should arrive at the ontological enterprise expecting to find that reality should be simple—that there should be few joints. Perhaps such an expectation is supposed to be motivated by a prior commitment to metaphysical naturalism. I don't much like naturalism either. To be clear, I do not take this to bear on the theoretical virtue of simplicity. Indeed, should two theories be equal with respect to their utility, we ought to prefer the simpler one. But, importantly, unless there is a tie in theoretical utility, I say there is no "razor" to be had.

Part I

A Meta-Ontology

1 Meinongian Ontological Pluralism

Few philosophers defend Meinongianism, the view that there are things that do not exist. Even fewer argue for Ontological Pluralism, the view that there are different ways to exist. In this paper, I argue that the two aforementioned views complement one another. Call the combination of the two views, *Meinongian Ontological Pluralism*, or MOP. My project here is twofold: first, to show that MOP inherits the resources of both its constituent meta-ontologies, and second, to show that endorsing both *Meinongianism* and *Ontological Pluralism* together affords one with the resources to resolve objections that plague each view held independently.

In the first part of the paper, I gesture at some of the work Meinongians and Ontological Pluralists have claimed their respective meta-ontologies will do for them and note that the two views are compatible such that the combined view inherits the resources of the two theories.

As a preface, Meinongians reject the Quinean link between the existence and quantification, since *ex hypothesi* there are many entities in the domain of quantification that do not exist (e.g. fictional entities). For the Meinongian, the truth of sentences of the following form are commonplace: There is some x such that x does

not exist. Importantly, the view straightforwardly allows one to make truthful predications of nonexistent entities. Apart from Meinongianism, we might be puzzled about how to account for putative truths such as 'Pegasus can fly', especially in light of Pegasus's failure to exist.

Ontological Pluralism also offers tremendous utility. The pluralist denies that existence is univocal.[1] The theory is often said to capture the intuitive view that what we mean when we say that tables exist is something other than what we mean when we say numbers exist. Indeed, *ex hypothesi*, there is more than one way to exist. The appeal to ways of being allows one to resolve various metaphysical puzzles; where the pluralist might otherwise be forced to admit the non-existence of some entity (e.g. past objects), she can claim that the entity rather exists in a different way.

One worry, however, is that in addition to inheriting the resources of Meinongianism and Ontological Pluralism, it also inherits the objections that plague either view. On this front, I address the Counting Argument against Ontological Pluralism (§1.2), the problem of mixed ontological status for Ontological Pluralism (§1.3), and the characterization problem for Meinongianism (§1.4).

1.1 The View

Here, I formulate what I call Meinongian Ontological Pluralism. We can start with a slogan version of the view: *there are entities that do not exist; of the entities that exist,*

[1] There are formulations of ontological pluralism that emphasize the metaphysical rather than the linguistic (e.g. McDaniel (2017)), but in this chapter I focus on versions that either have linguistic components, or partly rely on linguistic motivations.

not all exist in the same way.[2] In the introduction, I hastily called the view that there are things that do not exist, Meinongianism. But Meinongianism, the sort I endorse here, has another important component; it takes existence to be a property—a first-order one. Importantly, Meinongians reject the idea that existence should be understood as a property of properties, or that it can be adequately accounted for with the quantifier of first-order logic. The view, then, can be characterized as follows:[3]

(1) Existence is a first-order property.

(2) There are entities that lack this property.

What follows by the lights of the Meinongian is that we cannot infer from the claim that because some x does not exist, that there is no such x; nor can we deduce from the claim that because there is some x, that some x exists. Alas, the Meinongian quantifier ranges over more than all the existents.

Here's a natural worry. It may appear as though the MOPist cannot commit to (1) and (2) as they are since she endorses Ontological Pluralism, the view that there are different ways to exist. This natural worry arises because recent proponents of Ontological Pluralism have formulated the doctrine by invoking a plurality of semantically primitive, restricted quantifiers.[4] This way of understanding the doctrine,

[2]Given this characterization, Meinong's own view might be said to qualify as a kind of MOP, at least if we understand his notion of being to be tantamount to my notion of existence. However, as will become clear, I make no distinction between existence and being; Meinongian subsistence will therein fail to fit into the MOPist framework.

[3]Plausibly, there are more precise ways to formulate the view, such as in Sainsbury (2010), which distinguishes between the view's ontological, linguistic, and formal commitments. I take it nothing substantive is lost here by giving this simple, albeit coarse characterization.

[4]See McDaniel (2009, 2010, 2017) and Turner (2010). I go on to sometimes refer to this way of formulating Pluralism as the "traditional" way. This formulation of pluralism is what Simmons (2020) refers to as *Quantificational Pluralism*.

however, does not fit well with the aforementioned characterization of Meinongianism for a few reasons. First, one reason to prefer the primitive quantifier formulation of Pluralism is that it can be exposited from within a Quinean framework with relatively few revisions, which does strong work in blunting objections from those who would charge incoherence against the Pluralist; but this motivation is not shared by the MOPist, since she intends to endorse a Meinongian framework instead. Second, and perhaps more critically, unlike the standard Pluralist's claim about the English 'there are', the Meinongian interpretation of the quantifier at work in (2) is taken to be univocal, and not more perspicuously expressed by using a disjunction of more natural, primitive quantifiers.

Fortunately, there are ways to formulate Ontological Pluralism without the use of multiple primitive quantifiers. Instead, one can formulate it at the level of individuals by appeal to multiple, first-order, existence properties. There are a number of ways this might be further specified. For example, just as one might think *having mass* is a determinable property with corresponding determinate properties such as *being 3 grams* and *being 5 grams*, the pluralist can claim that *existence* is a determinable property with determinate properties such as *being concrete* and *being abstract*. Another option is to treat existence as a disjunctive property, such that to exist is to either be concrete, or abstract, or actual, etc. So long as there are multiple, existence properties at least as fundamental as generic existence, the view is a pluralist one.[5]

[5]Here, I have no intention of arguing for a specific set of determinate existence properties, but I submit the MOPist should take a cue from other proponents of Pluralism who intend to utilize the view to capture the deepest joints in the world.

Since Ontological Pluralism can be formulated this way, there is no obvious, internal tension within MOP. This should come as little surprise given Meinong's own view. In any case, our initial characterization of Meinongianism then needs only the following adjustments:

(1*) There are multiple, first-order, existence properties.

(2*) There are entities that lack all existence properties.

(1*) therein suffices for MOP's status as a version of Pluralism and (2*) suffices for its status as a version of Meinongianism.[6] It is also evident that, so characterized, MOP will be able to inherit the putative virtues of both Meinongianism and Ontological Pluralism. Recall some of the theoretical utility of Meinongianism. First, because of the scope of the Meinongian quantifier, there are no obvious problems accounting for truths about non-existent entities, such as Pegasus. Second, no special pleading is required for an analysis of the predicate 'exists'. MOP straightforwardly inherits the first since it just employs the Meinongian quantifier, and it inherits the second since, according to MOP, all existence properties are ordinary first-order properties.

Recall also some of the theoretical utility of Ontological Pluralism. In addressing metaphysical puzzles, the Pluralist can claim an entity exists in different ways, where she might otherwise be forced to admit the entity exists (or not). Given the difficult metaphysical challenge of what to make of holes, Kris McDaniel puts this virtue of Pluralism as follows:[7]

[6]This is provided that the quantifier in (2*) is taken to be a Meinongian quantifier, such as Priest's '$\mathfrak{S}$', which ranges over non-existents.

[7]As McDaniel acknowledges, this difficult challenge regarding almost nothings is captured well by

> The ontological pluralist can happily say that there are holes and then diligently pursue the question of in what way there are holes. By contrast, according to the ontological monist, either something is or it isn't, and that's all there is say about a thing's existential status. This puts the ontological monist in an uncomfortable position. According to her, everything that there is enjoys *the same kind of reality*, which is the kind of reality enjoyed by full-fledged concrete entities such as ourselves. She is committed to the unpleasant claim that *holes are just as real as concretia*, a claim that is apt to be met with incredulous stares by those not acquainted with contemporary metaphysics.[8]

Without specifying exactly what existences there are, we can still take on the informative task of showing that MOP can express the same ways of being with first-order properties as with the primitive quantifiers posited by the more familiar, quantificational version of Ontological Pluralism. Hopefully one can preemptively see how this might go, but let's make it explicit the sake of clarity.

Suppose there are two kinds of existences that an entity might enjoy, abstract-existence and concrete-existence. We could formulate that by claiming that the '$\exists$' is more perspicuously expressed by a disjunction of the more natural quantifiers '$\exists_a$' and '$\exists_c$', representing abstract and concrete existence, respectively.[9] The domains of our Pluralist quantifiers *might* then look something like this:

$\exists_c$: {cars, tables, horses,...}

Sorensen (2008) who writes, "it feels paradoxical to say that absences exist—but no better to say that absences do not exist" and "...holes do not sit any more comfortably on the side of being than of nonbeing."

[8] See McDaniel (2017, §5.1).

[9] In §1.3, I more thoroughly exposit the nuances of these quantifiers. They are meant to be taken as both *semantically primitive* and *restricted*.

$\exists_a$: {the number 7, Sherlock Holmes, $\emptyset$,...}

On this supposition, the propositions that *horses exist* and *the number 7 exists* can be expressed as: $\exists_c$x(Hx) and $\exists_a$x(x=7). Of course, the MOPist rejects this Quinean formulation of the propositions and will deploy something like the Meinongian quantifier, $\mathfrak{S}$ (translated as 'for some' rather than 'there exists'), along with the appropriate existence predicate. The MOPist can express these same propositions; rather than $\exists_c$x(Hx), she will have $\mathfrak{S}$x(Hx & E!$_c$x); and rather than $\exists_a$x(x=7), she will have $\mathfrak{S}$x(x=7 & E!$_a$x), where E!$_c$ and E!$_a$ are the MOPist predicates that express the first-order properties of concrete-existence and abstract-existence, each respectively.[10] Indeed, for any primitive existential quantifier the Ontological Pluralist chooses to posit, be they aimed at carving *abstracta* from *concreta* or not, the MOPist can appeal to fundamental existential properties to express the same proposition.[11] If this is right, then MOP will inherit the aforementioned utility of Pluralism; that is, the MOPist is in just as good of a position as the Pluralist in dealing with almost nothings—neither need admit that if holes exist, they exist just the same as you and me.[12]

So far, the MOPist appears to have quite an appealing meta-ontology. Insofar as Meinongianism and Ontological Pluralism both independently have tremendous theoretical utility, MOP may have the sum of this utility. And no doubt when evaluating various philosophical theories, an important consideration is how much theoretical work the view can do—what puzzles it can solve and so on. Thus, to the extent that its

[10]Following the standard, Meinongian convention, the '!' signifies that the predicate denotes existence.
[11]It may be more accurate to say these are equivalent propositions rather than the very same.
[12]Of course, this is true not only of holes, but of any other thing the Pluralist may wish to claim exists in a way distinct from the way you and I exist.

constituent meta-ontologies are on the table, as it were, so too MOP should be.

Perhaps that's too quick. One might think it does not necessarily follow simply from the fact that because MOP inherits the utility from its constituent views that MOP is therein preferable to its constituent meta-ontologies. After all, plausibly, if MOP is to inherit the resources Meinongianism and Ontological Pluralism, it will also inherit the problems. That is, whatever objections there are that plague either Meinongianism or Pluralism, it seems they will also plague MOP. And if that's right, then perhaps the benefits of the inherited utility fail to offset the costs of the inherited objections, possibly leaving MOP less desirable a meta-ontology than its constituent views taken independently. In the end, I don't think this will be the case, because the objections we might think a meta-ontology inherits by virtue of being both a Meinongian and a Pluralist view ultimately fail to persist against MOP. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to addressing a some of these objections.

1.2 The Counting Argument

One putative problem for Ontological Pluralism is called the Counting Argument. Peter van Inwagen articulates the objection as follows:

> No one would be inclined to suppose that number words like 'six' or 'forty-three' mean different things when they are used to count different sorts of objects. The very essence of the applicability of arithmetic is that numbers may count anything: if you have written thirteen epics and I own thirteen cats, then the number of your epics is the number of my cats. But [being] is closely tied to number. To say that

> [there are no unicorns] is to say something very much like saying that the number of unicorns is 0; to say that [there are horses] is to say that the number of horses is 1 or more. The univocacy of number and the intimate connection between number and [being] should convince us that there is at least very good reason to think that [being] is univocal.[13]

Two main claims are being made in the above excerpt. First, number words and terms do not shift meanings when they are used to count different things; number terms are univocal. Second, there is an intimate relationship between quantification and counting; namely, there is an equivalence between sentences of the form 'there are no Fs' and sentences of the form 'the number of Fs is zero.'[14] Given these two claims, it seems we should infer that quantifiers are similarly univocal, so the argument goes. We can formulate the argument, CA, as follows:

(3) 'There are no unicorns' is true *iff* 'the number of unicorns is zero' is true.

(4) Number terms like 'zero' are univocal.

(5) Therefore, quantifiers like 'there are' are univocal.

(6) Therefore, Ontological Pluralism is false.

On the face of it, both premises in the argument have a strong *prima facie* plausibility. Van Inwagen supports (4) by running various semantic tests for ambiguity. "If I say that four is the number of the Stuart kings of England, the canonical Gospels, and the

[13] See van Inwagen (1998, p. 236).

[14] There are reasons to think that there is merely an equivalence (rather than an identity); for van Inwagen, this distinction appears critical for making sense of the inside of the ontology room versus the outside.

cardinal points of the compass, that's not a syllepsis like 'Aunt Maude went home in a short while, a flood of tears, and a Buick'."[15] That is, the failure to detect zeugma in a sentence where a single number term is used to count things in different categories is evidence that number terms are not equivocal.

If (3) and (4) are true, I grant that (5) follows. If 'there are' were equivocal—if (5) were false—and we were to accept (4) because of the ambiguity tests, then we would expect (3) to be false, since the biconditional would not hold *unequivocally*. Its truth would depend on which quantifier were at play. Finally, (6) simply falls out of (5) since equivocal quantifiers are constitutive of the familiar way of formalizing Ontological Pluralism.[16]

Another way to frame the Counting Argument is as a dilemma for the Pluralist, where the first horn is giving up (3) and the second horn is giving up (4).[17] Given the intuitive plausibility of both premises, biting the bullet on either of the horns is undesirable.[18]

Interestingly, the MOPist is uniquely situated to reject the move to (6), for she can respond as follows: "(6) does not follow for those who endorse pluralism as I do; there are a plurality of existence properties, not a plurality of quantifiers. Indeed, natural language may independently give us reason to think there is a privileged, univocal quantifier—I concede this! But I needn't abandon pluralism in accepting a univocal

[15] See van Inwagen (2009b, p. 53).

[16] Again, for the time being, I am bracketing version of pluralism that neither have linguistic baggage nor rely on intuitions about ordinary language for motivation.

[17] See Turner (2010, pp. 24-25).

[18] As Turner puts it, "Neither option is completely unpalatable, although it is hard to savor the taste of either."

quantifier." As we have already seen, the MOPist deploys only one primitive quantifier, $\mathfrak{S}$, and yet this clearly does not rule out her endorsing Pluralism, as she deploys multiple, primitive, existence properties. The point here is that a Pluralist needn't abandon her view in light of the Counting Argument provided she endorses Meinongianism, since Meinongians deny that quantificational phrases bear the requisite relationship to existence predicates. The severing of this relationship affords the MOPist with the resources to endorse a plurality of existences whilst preserving the link between quantification and number. In short, the Counting Argument above puts no pressure on the MOPist to abandon Pluralism as she formulates it.

Of course, there is a nearby analogous counting argument, CA*, one might try to raise against the MOPist, one which van Inwagen would undoubtedly also endorse:

(3*) 'Unicorns do not exist' is true *iff* 'the number of unicorns is zero' is true.

(4*) Number terms like 'zero' are univocal.

(5*) Therefore, 'exists' is univocal.

(6*) Therefore, MOP is false.

Given his endorsement of the Quinean meta-ontology, this response should be wholly unsurprising. Elsewhere, van Inwagen says, "When I say that affirmation of existence is denial of the number zero, I mean only that to say that Fs exist is to say that the number of Fs is not zero. For example, in my view, 'Horses exist' is equivalent to 'The number of horses is not zero'."[19] Of course, if an ontological monist thinks that to be is

[19]See van Inwagen (2009a, p. 483).

to be the value of a bound variable, then (3*) is entailed by (3). And (4*) is just (4). So it may be natural to think that to the extent the Counting Argument is a compelling objection against Ontological Pluralism, we should think that this new version is a compelling objection against MOP. I submit this is not the case.

Recall, the MOPist finds CA to be compelling because, by her lights, there are independent reasons from natural language for thinking that 'there are' is univocal; this underlies her endorsement of C1. Being a pluralist, however, she takes seriously the claim of the lay who are found saying that what it means to say tables exist is something different than what it means to they say numbers exist; these claims are evidence that the use facts of the predicate 'exists' likely does not pick out a single fundamental property. So by the MOPist's lights, there are independently motivated reasons for denying (5*), that is, good reason for thinking 'exists' is equivocal. The stronger these reasons, the more she will be willing to run the argument backwards and reject (3*).

If lay testimony is taken to be insufficient, the MOPist may look to semantic tests for ambiguity in order to proffer additional evidence against (5*). Just as the Counting Argument was partly justified by running ambiguity tests on 'there are' to demonstrate the lack of zeugma, the MOPist may attempt to run the same tests on the predicate 'exists' to show there *is* zeugma. If this can be done, then the defense of MOP against the revised Counting Argument begins to look very strong.[20] Consider the following sentences:

[20]If this cannot be done, the MOPist may still appeal to the work such a meta-ontology can do in order to motivate her Pluralism apart from equivocation in natural language.

(7) Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars exist.

(8) Numbers exist.

(9) Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, and numbers exist.

First, reflect on what ordinary competent English speakers mean by (7).[21] Then do the same with (8). Now consider (9). In (9), I myself find some of the strangeness constitutive of zeugma. Though far less pronounced then that found in 'Aunt Maude went home in a Buick and a flood of tears,' it is nevertheless present. This suggests that 'exists' is indeed equivocal, as it seems to operate with different meanings on different parts of the sentence. If this is right, then the MOPist is well-positioned to reject (5*).

Importantly, the MOPist would therein also be well-positioned to accept the intimate link between quantification and number, but deny the link between existence and number.[22] Thus, provided that the Counting Argument is a problem for Ontological Pluralists of the traditional sort, MOP appears to inherit no such objection.

1.3 The Problem of Mixed Ontological Status

Recently, Akiko Frischhut and Alexander Skiles have argued that PAPE-ism, an Ontological Pluralist theory about the metaphysics of time and modality, though appealing, succumbs to what they call "the problem of mixed ontological status".[23] In

[21] It is difficult, but necessary, to set aside one's theoretical commitments in order to properly execute the test; the goal is to isolate features of English predicates—most certainly not predicates of Ontologese.

[22] We should also note that though the success of such an ambiguity test would strengthen the case for MOP, the view needn't rest on such a test. After all, the metaphysician may think that natural language has a rather restricted role when writing the book of the world. She may simply theorize that Ex is a less natural property than $E_a x$ and $E_c x$; as it turns out, doing so generates a powerful theory.

[23] See Frischhut and Skiles (2013).

light of this problem, they conclude that proponents of PAPE-ism must abandon their view, or develop it in a different way.[24] I take myself to be undertaking the latter option. Before showing how the MOPist can respond, we should be clear on PAPE-ism and the putative problem.

PAPE-ism was initially conceived as a response to the putative inconsistency between the three following commonsensical claims: First, the non-present and the non-actual are less real than the present and the actual. Second, all truths (including those about the non-present and non-actual) must be made true by something real. And third, the present, actual things are not able to ground all the truths; commonsense has it that Plato is long gone and therein unable to make facts about what he could or couldn't have been true. Eternalists and possibilists, of course, will reject the first claim.[25] Others reject the second claim, arguing either that not all truthmakers need to be real, or that not all truths need truthmakers.[26] Still others reject the third claim, insisting that all truths have present, actual truthmakers.[27]

The Ontological Pluralist appears to correctly identify that the above trilemma arises only against the ontological monist, for if there are ways of existing such that some ways are more real than others, then she has available the option of claiming that non-present and non-actual entities are real—less real than the present and actual, but real enough to ground the relevant truths. So by the Pluralist's lights, there

[24]This problem, as Frischhut and Skiles note, is targeted only at Pluralists who would simultaneously apply their quantifiers to handle the non-present *and* the non-actual.
[25]See Sider (2001) and Lewis (1986).
[26]See Gallois (2004) and Merricks (2007).
[27]See Caplan and Sanford (2011).

is no trilemma to be had, and therefore no reason to hastily reject one of the commonsense claims; so much the worse for the monist. PAPE-ism is an attempt to precisely work out a Pluralist view so as to genuinely diffuse the trilemma.

In order to explicate the view, the Pluralist will help herself to two concepts.[28] The first is that of a *semantically primitive, restricted quantifier*. Consider the familiar quantifier, $\exists$, which ranges over *everything* there is. Call a restricted quantifier one which ranges over a proper subset of the entities in the domain of $\exists$. Call such a restricted quantifier a *semantically primitive* one if it is not defined (even partly) in terms of $\exists$. The second concept is that of *comparative naturalness*, which can apply to expressions in any grammatical category.[29] Now the PAPE-ist can make sense of the following five semantically primitive restricted quantifiers. Say that $\exists^{was}$ ranges over what is past, $\exists^{now}$ over what is present, $\exists^{will}$ over what is future, $\exists^{\Diamond}$ over what is merely possible, and $\exists^{@}$ over what is actual. PAPE-ism can then be characterized as follows:[30]

> PAPE (1): $\exists^{was}$, $\exists^{will}$, and $\exists^{\Diamond}$ are semantically primitive restricted quantifier expressions that are at least as natural as $\exists$.
>
> PAPE (2): $\exists^{now}$ is a semantically primitive restricted quantifier expression that is more natural than $\exists^{was}$ and $\exists^{will}$, and $\exists^{@}$ is a semantically primitive restricted quantifier expression that is more natural than $\exists^{\Diamond}$.

And finally, in order to do the intended work, the PAPE-ist is committed to a connection

[28] See Frischhut and Skiles (2013) for a more thorough setup of the view. This originates in McDaniel (2009).

[29] See Lewis (1983) and Sider (2013).

[30] See Frischuut and Skiles (2013, pp. 266-267).

between the truths expressed using her primitive quantifiers and temporal/modal truths expressed without her quantifiers. Specifically, she is committed to the fact that if there *was* a dinosaur (one not included in $\exists^{now}$ or $\exists^{will}$), then $\exists^{was}$ ranges over a dinosaur. Additionally, she is committed to the fact that if $\exists^{was}$ ranges over a dinosaur, then there *was* a dinosaur. The former commitment can be expressed with the following principle (followed by the same principle governing possible truths):[31]

σ^{was}: $\Box((was(\exists x)(\Phi x) \wedge \neg(\exists^{now} y)(\exists^{will} z)(\Phi y \vee \Phi z)) \supset (\exists x)(\Phi x \wedge (\exists^{was} y)(x = y)))$

Necessarily (and always), if there was some x (where x is in the domain of neither the present nor future quantifiers), then x is in the domain of the past quantifier.

$\sigma^{\Diamond}$: $\Box((\Diamond(\exists x)(\Phi x) \wedge \neg(\exists^{@} y)(\Phi y)) \supset (\exists x)(\Phi x \wedge (\exists^{\Diamond} y)(x = y)))$

Necessarily (and always), if it is possible that there is some x (where x is not in the domain of the actual quantifier), then x is in the domain of the possible quantifier.

The latter commitment can be expressed:

τ^{was}: $\Box((\exists^{was} x)(\Phi x) \supset was(\exists x)(\Phi x))$

Necessarily (and always), if some x is in the domain of the past quantifier, then there was the x.

Given the characterization of PAPE-ism we have now, alongside its proponent's further commitments, we can see how the ontology might dissolve the putative inconsistency

[31] There are of course the same principles regarding the other PAPE-ist quantifiers as well, but we only need these two in order to set up the problem.

between our three commonsense claims. The PAPE-ist can endorse the first claim, that non-present and the non-actual things are less real than the present and actual things; Plato enjoys past-existence which is less real than present-existence (PAPE 2). She can endorse the second claim, that all truths are made true by something real; for her, there are more things than simply the present, actual ones.[32] Finally, she can endorse the third claim, conceding that the resources of only the present and actual things are insufficient to ground all the truths there are. An attractive solution, so it seems.

As it has been formulated, PAPE-ism faces what Frischhut and Skiles call the *problem of mixed ontological status*, which we can reconstruct as a *reductio*:

(10) It is possible that there was a talking donkey (included in neither $\exists^{now}$ nor $\exists^{will}$).

(11) So, it is possible that there is a talking donkey included in $\exists^{was}$. (1, σ^{was})

(12) So, included in $\exists^{\Diamond}$, there is a talking donkey also included in $\exists^{was}$. (2, $\sigma^{\Diamond}$)

(13) So, there is a talking donkey included in $\exists^{was}$. (3)

(14) So, there was a talking donkey. (4, τ^{was})

Of course, there were never any talking donkeys. Thus, given we accept (10), PAPE-ism has led us astray. Jason Turner has responded on behalf of the Pluralist by arguing that should we concede the Frischhut and Skiles's argument is valid, we needn't think the conclusion is particularly undesirable.[33] As a Pluralist, the PAPE-ist

[32] As it turns out, the PAPE-ist agrees in general with the Eternalist about all the things that exist. Indeed, she concedes that Plato exists, just in a non-present way; nevertheless, we have no reason to deny Plato the power to truth-make, as it were.

[33] See Turner (2013).

might be a modal realist, who can make clear sense of how there are indeed talking donkeys located earlier than the moving spotlights in their respective worlds—that truly there were talking donkeys. This seems quite right.

Another of Turner's insights is that it appears the *mixing* of ontological statuses is rather orthogonal to the lurking concern, since the problem arises even in the temporal case alone.[34] Given the PAPE-ist affirms the reality of past, present, and future existents, but gives a special status to the present, the view is something of a spotlight theory; the glow of the spotlight is a way of being and although the light once shone upon dinosaurs, it now no longer does. The PAPE-ist understands this as: it *is not* the case, though it *was* the case, that dinosaurs were included in $\exists^{now}$. So, $\exists^{now}$ is *shifty*; and if there is a concern here, it is this rather than the mixing of modal and temporal ways of being. "Claims about the spotlight's motion are recalcitrant to grounding."[35]

There are further moves for the PAPE-ist to make, but here I hope to draw attention to an important way in which the MOPist has a distinct advantage as a result of her Meinongian resources. First, because the MOPist does not make appeal to a plurality of quantifiers, she is not stuck with a shifty $\exists^{now}$. Alas, there is only one quantifier in her book of the world, $\mathfrak{S}$. This does not put her in a better position than the PAPE-ist with respect to the bruteness of certain facts about the spotlight's movement, but plausibly, she *is* in a position to offer a more perspicuous metaphysical account.

Some of the initial fear regarding a shifty domain for a natural quantifier might be the lack of metaphysical precedence. Perhaps we might have been on board with an

[34] See Turner (2013, pp. 278-279).
[35] See Turner (2013, p. 279). See also Cameron (2015).

abstract way of being and a concrete way of being, but *abstracta* do not become *concreta*, or the other way around. If all a Quinean needs to do to understand the pluralist ontology is to take all the things that fall under the domain of her '$\exists$' and draw a line down the middle to demarcate *abstract* from *concreta*, it's quite easy for her to go along for the expositional ride. But if the domains are instead past, present, and future, and entities shift from being in the domain of $\exists^{will}$ into the domain of $\exists^{now}$ and then into the domain of $\exists^{was}$, an incredulous stare will likely be in the wake.

In contrast, MOP is not as scandalous. Ways of being are understood as familiar first-order properties of things; and intuition does not clash with the notion that entities can come to gain and lose properties. Consequently, the MOPist needn't say that there is shiftiness in what there is, only in what things are like, which is plausibly a more natural expression of the intuitions behind the moving spotlight theory to begin with.

The MOPist is therein at an advantage over the mere ontological pluralist on account of a more compelling response to the problem of mixed ontological status. In giving the metaphysical story with respect to the temporal *shiftiness* concern, she needs only to appeal to a commonplace kind of event, whereas the PAPE-ist must also motivate an understanding of a *shifty*, primitive quantifier. Further, though this latter project seems feasible, it may run contrary to the intuitions of many who are attracted to the moving spotlight view.

1.4 The Characterization Problem

Meinongians think there are non-existent entities, and therein owe a principle that explains what entities there are, and what kinds of properties they can have. Call this a *comprehension* or *characterization principle*. In its most naive form, the principle says that for any condition *Ax* with free variable *x*, there is an object that satisfies *Ax*.[36] This gets the Meinongian all of the entities she wants, but the principle as stated seems unacceptable. Graham Priest presents the problem as follows:

> The CP [(Characterization Principle)] cannot be accepted in this form, for it entails the existence of something satisfying any condition. Let A(x) be any property. Let B be A(x) $\wedge$ Ex. Applying the CP to B we get an object c_B such that A(c_B) $\wedge$ Ec_B. So $\mathfrak{S}$x(A(x) $\wedge$ Ex). Worse, let A be any sentence one likes, and let B be x = x $\wedge$ A. Apply the CP to B, and we get an object, c_B, such that $c_B = c_B \wedge$ A, from which A follows. So we have proved an arbitrary A. For this reason, no noneist has even accepted the CP in its pristine form. The standard response, from Meinong onwards, has been to accept it only if the properties deployed in the CP are of a certain kind: assumptible, characterizing, nuclear, the names vary. And existence (among others) is not such a predicate. The problem for this line is to give a principled characterization of what constitutes a characterizing predicate and why. No one, as far as I am aware, has been able to do this. Certain classes of predicates can be circumscribed and deemed safe. But without an appropriate rationale, it is difficult to avoid the feeling that the class has been gerrymandered simply to avoid

[36] Terence Parsons (1980) calls this the Unrestricted Comprehension Principle.

problems.[37]

The problem here is (at least) tripartite. First, it appears the characterization principle can be used to prove the existence of anything. Second, and even worse, it appears the principle can be used to prove any arbitrary claim. And third, attempts to hedge the principle appear inappropriately *ad hoc*.

Let's start with the first problem. No doubt the force of the worry comes from the fear of a *reductio*. Perhaps the thought is something like this: If the CP can be used to prove the existence of unicorns, something has surely gone awry, since unicorns do not exist. And it is easy to see why this would be problematic, if we take ontological monism for granted. But the MOPist is an ontological pluralist, and as we have previously noted, she might well endorse modal realism and claim that there are genuine possible worlds which have possible-existence. If she does so, then the *reductio* will fail, since the MOPist happily accepts the existence of possible beings such as unicorns—they just don't exist in the actual world.

What about the second, stronger problem? From the CP it not only follows that Sherlock Holmes exists but also that the sky is green. Again, given the resources of modal realism (motivated by Pluralism), the MOPist will be happy to relegate the truth of any way a world could be to some existing state of affairs in some possible world. Indeed, there is a world where Holmes exists and the sky is green, so it seems the CP does not generate unwanted truths for the MOPist.

This is surely too quick a response to the Characterization Problem. Consider

[37] See Priest (2005, p. 83).

impossible entities. There are no possible round squares, but round squares can nevertheless be characterized; they are round, after all. But if round squares can be characterized as having roundness, then they can be characterized as having, say, actual-existence. So the deep problem is extant.

By borrowing Priest's strategy on behalf of the MOPist, we have blunted some of the force of the first and second problems by committing to the existence of *possibilia*, but still it seems the MOPist cannot endorse the CP in full generality. If she were to do so, she would betray her commitment to the claim that there are things that lack all existence properties, since everything would exist in some way or another. Thus, as other Meinongians have attempted, the MOPist must hedge the CP. A notoriously daunting challenge. "The standard response, from Meinong onwards, has been to accept it only if the properties deployed in the CP are of a certain kind: *assumptible*, *characterizing*, *nuclear*, the names vary. And existence (among others) is not such a predicate."[38]

In undertaking this project, some Meinongians have naturally engaged a two-fold challenge. The first fold is to circumscribe the safe (i.e. non-existence-entailing) properties, and the second is to offer an explanation for why the safe ones are safe.[39] However, this is not the only way for the Meinongian to go. Here, I submit the MOPist will reject this challenge. There is no need to delineate between safe and unsafe properties. If we already think there are ways of being, then there is nothing additionally odd about thinking there are ways to have properties—that there are

[38] See Priest (2005, p. 83).

[39] See Parsons (1980). This sort of strategy is one suggested by Ernst Mally (1912).

different candidate relations that obtain between an object and its properties. Call the ways of predication internal and external,[40] or implicit and explicit,[41] or encoding and exemplifying,[42] if you wish. Regardless of the locutions we choose here, we note that it is the *way* of having the property, e.g. *via* exemplification, that existence of some sort is entailed. The MOPist then has no worry about *which properties* are or are not existence-entailing, and therein needn't attempt the precarious task of sorting properties into safe and unsafe. Which kinds of properties are available for the CP to use is wide open. The MOPist will therein happily admit that round squares have roundness *and* existence, so long as the having amounts to something like encoding.

Let's be clear about the MOPist response. The CP appears to generate the existence of anything and everything, and worse, prove any arbitrary claim. One common solution in light of this problem is to limit which properties can be fed to the CP. But attempts to demarcate these properties seem arbitrary and therein *ad hoc*. The MOPist notes that her Pluralism presents a motivated response: that the *having* of properties also comes in ways.[43] And if that's right, then she needn't demarcate the safe from unsafe. Rather, she needs only to claim that one way of having a property is existence-entailing and another is not. There are, of course, other routes to motivate different ways of instantiating properties—dual copula views and so forth—but insofar as the Meinongian takes up the challenge of picking out safe properties (e.g. the

[40] See Castañeda (1974).
[41] See Fine (1982).
[42] See Zalta (1983, 1988).
[43] See Turner (2010) for a similar claim about the resources of Pluralism with respect to a plurality of numbering relations.

assumptible, the *nuclear*, etc.), the pluralist resources of MOP generates a more attractive solution to the Characterization Problem; and even with respect to those other ways of motivating distinct "having" relations, one might still find the MOPist solution preferable on the grounds that it can be more semantically "conservative."[44]

1.5 The Upshot

Undoubtedly there is much more to say here. There are likely other objections lurking nearby. But the objective here has not been so ambitious as to argue for the truth, or even the probable truth, of MOP. Rather, I have only sought to argue that Meinongianism and Ontological Pluralism complement one another. MOP inherits much of the utility of Meinongianism (e.g. fittingness with natural language, a more systematic analysis of predicates, etc.) and also Ontological Pluralism (e.g. fittingness with our intuitions about different ways to exist, accounting for almost nothings, etc.). Further, jointly endorsing Meinongianism and Ontological Pluralism affords one with the resources to respond to putatively extant problems for the views held independently. Minimally, I hope to have shown that the MOPist's responses to such objections are better than the ones offered in defense of the views held alone. So to the Meinongians I say, be Pluralists. And to the Pluralists I say, be Meinongians. Most everyone else should find MOP more attractive than Meinongianism and Pluralism taken separately.

[44] Semanticists are often reluctant to say any word is ambiguous, so if ontological pluralism can motivate a plurality of "having" relations without appeal to an ambiguous copula, then plausibly the MOPist needn't take on any semantic theses we might independently be averse to. The same is not true for views such as Zalta's. See Partee (1986, 1987) for a well known defense of the unambiguous copula.

Part II

Some Applications

2 Meinongian Alethic Pluralism

2.1 Introduction

Recent metaontological debates over ontology itself have brought to light how theories of existence might bear on other metaphysical issues. Here, I am focused on the connection between these metaontologies and truth. More specifically, I am interested in determining which metaontological approaches are most consonant with our intuitions about truth. Insofar as one theory is the best at vindicating these intuitions, we have reason to endorse that theory.

One trouble is, as I will point out, that two of our intuitions about truth seem to be at odds with one another. This has resulted in philosophers vindicating one intuition at the cost of betraying the other. In this paper, I argue that there is a metaontological view, a Meinongian one, that is well-situated to vindicate both intuitions. In short, this is because the Meinongian distinction between exemplification and encoding/characterization motivates a weak form of alethic pluralism that can diffuse the apparent tension. This gives us some reason to prefer Meinongianism over its rivals.

My plan is as follows. In §2, I briefly articulate the metaontological players and motivate the puzzle that arises from our intuitions about truth. In §3, I show how Meinongianism can motivate just the right kind of alethic pluralism that can be used to solve the puzzle. In §4, I respond to a number of likely objections. Among these objections are that the appeal to alethic pluralism is too radical a solution for the severity of the problem and that rival pluralist views about truth can solve the puzzle without appeal to the Meinongian machinery.

2.2 Motivating the Puzzle

Quineans take the key ontological question to be, *what is there?*[1] Fundamentalists take the key question to instead be, *what is fundamental?*[2] Quineans and Fundamentalists seem to represent a large majority of contemporary metaphysicians. While they have substantive metaontological disagreements, there is a noteworthy point of agreement. Both appear to agree with the following. If one's ontology doesn't include some things, then the truths about those things need to be explained in terms of other things that *are* included.[3] Of course, the strategies here will differ; the Quinean will offer a paraphrase[4] and the Fundamentalist will tell a grounding story.[5] Critically, both agree there is a robust sense in which truth depends on the realm of being. Call this point of

[1] See Quine (1948).

[2] See Fine (2001, 2005, 2009). Roughly, the key is the distinction between what there *really* is and what there is *derivatively*.

[3] This insight comes from Von Solodkoff and Woodward (2013).

[4] See Quine (1960, 1981) and van Inwagen (1998).

[5] For examples of different types of Fundamentalism, see Schaffer (2009), Sider (2009), and Cameron (2010).

agreement, DEPENDENCE. DEPENDENCE is deeply intuitive and seems to underly correspondence theories in general.

Noneism is the view that there are things that do not exist.[6] Noneists are often further characterized by two more commitments, *Neutral Quantification* and the *Principle of Independence*. According to the former, there is a pair of quantifiers, general and particular, which range over both existent and non-existent entities. Loaded quantification is defined up with an existence predicate, 'E!'.[7] According to the latter, the *sosein* of an object (i.e. its properties) is independent of its *sein* (i.e. its being).[8] On this view, then, objects can have properties, yet fail to have being. And if this is possible, it can be true that Sherlock Holmes is a detective—straightforwardly—yet also be nonexistent.[9] So, Noneists think the realm of non-being plays a role in determining truth, and therein reject DEPENDENCE.

Among what the Noneist gets in return are the resources to easily account for commonsense truths about nonexistents, such as, Pegasus can fly, or round squares are round—truths that otherwise demand more philosophical theorizing. 'Sherlock Holmes is a detective' is true because the thing denoted by 'Sherlock Holmes' has the property denoted by the predicate 'is a detective'. There is no novel semantic account being offered here, even though the subject denotes a nonexistent thing; truths about nonexistents are true in the same way as truths about existents. In this way, Noneists

[6] See Routley (1980, 1982) and Priest (2005).

[7] See Priest (2008) for a brief history on particular quantification and its existential baggage.

[8] This is typically not taken in full generality.

[9] By 'straightforwardly', I mean to say the semantic structure of the sentence is just as we would expect, given its surface. The name successfully refers, and the proposition is true because the referent has the property denoted by the predicate. No surprising paraphrase or truth-maker story, no hidden fictionalist operator, etc.

preserve a kind of unity in their semantics that they would otherwise have to betray. This is ultimately made possible because Noneism divorces quantification from existence, making reference to nonexistents coherent.

What we find, then, is that while the Noneist must give up DEPENDENCE, they vindicate the deep intuition that we can assert straightforward truths about—and quantify over, refer to, think about, etc.—nonexistent entities. Call this intuition, REFERENCE.

Philosophers steeped in theory may be tempted to resist the claim that REFERENCE is intuitive. Quineans, for example, might appeal to the putative link between quantifier phrases such as 'there are' and the predicate 'exists'. They are likely to insist that propositions of the form 'there are Fs' are equivalent to propositions of the form 'Fs exist'. If there is a deep connection here in the way the Quineans claim, then it could never be true that there are non-existent entities.[10]

The point is not that REFERENCE is true, but that it is intuitive. It may very well be that after we begin theorizing we find that REFERENCE is not worth endorsing. This, though, is to be settled dialectically downstream.[11] For evidence that REFERENCE is intuitive, one need only look to ordinary discourse where quantification over (and reference to) nonexistents is commonplace.

So a challenge emerges for those who find both DEPENDENCE and REFERENCE intuitive. From this vantage point, Quineans and Fundamentalists vindicate the former

[10]By 'Quinean', I mean to denote the view according to which there is a single, fundamental sense of 'exists' and it is to be captured with the existential quantifier. See van Inwagen (1998).

[11]On my view, this is to be settled by cost-benefit analysis a la David Lewis (1986).

and betray the latter while the Noneists vindicate the latter and betray the former. This is unfortunate. If there is a metaontological approach that is amenable to both intuitions, we have good reason to endorse that approach, all things being equal. In what follows, I argue there is such a view.

2.3 Meinongian Alethic Pluralism

2.3.1 Meinongianism and the Dual Copula Strategy

The approach I aim to defend here might be thought to be a version of Noneism with some additions. However, to avoid terminological confusion, I will characterize the approach I defend as a version of Meinongianism.[12]

For simplicity, here I take Meinongianism to be any metaontological view on which existence is a first-order property that some entities lack.[13] Sometimes, Meinongians deploy the Dual Copula Strategy (DCS) according to which the copula 'is' is ambiguous.[14] Proponents of DCS have argued there are two distinct relations that can obtain between individuals and properties—*exemplification* and *encoding*.[15] Following the logical convention, 'Fa' means *a exemplifies F*, while 'aF' means *a encodes F*.

To illustrate the difference between the two distinct kinds of predication, consider

[12]In the debate over nonexistents, 'Noneism' is often understood as the view Graham Priest (2005) defends, which Berto (2008) calls Modal Meinongianism. Noneists of this sort deploy an "other worlds" strategy according to which reference to nonexistent objects is reference to non-actual objects; these might be entities in merely possible or impossible worlds.

[13]This is not an attempt to characterize Meinong's own view, but rather contemporary metaontological views which are relevantly similar.

[14]See Zalta (1983). See Bueno and Zalta (2017) for the contrast between Zalta's Object Theory and Priest's Modal Meinongianism.

[15]These relations are sometimes given different names; here I follow Zalta (1983, 1988).

Sherlock Holmes. This likely involves the properties of wearing a deerstalker hat and smoking a pipe, but Sherlock does not really exemplify these properties. He is, of course, not a hat-wearing, pipe-smoking individual like you or I might be. This is because if you—a concrete thing—were to have the property of wearing a hat, you would *exemplify* it. Sherlock, being a merely, intentional entity, *encodes* his properties. In both cases, the properties are the same, but the way in which they are *had* differs. Importantly, proponents of DCS typically think the various relations that obtain between individuals and properties track ontological kinds.[16] This should be unsurprising given the kinds of intuitive cases which motivate the distinction.

2.3.2 From DCS to Alethic Pluralism

Roughly, alethic pluralism is the view that there is more than one kind of truth. The alethic pluralist theories on offer vary quite greatly in a number of ways, but all of them generally claim that different domains of discourse are associated with distinct truth properties.[17] What makes propositions true in scientific discourse, for example, might differ from what makes propositions true in, say, moral discourse.

DCS and alethic pluralism bear a natural fit to one another. On DCS, objects of different kinds have properties in different ways. Suppose Tarski's T-schema which states: 'a is F' is true *iff* a is F.[18] By the lights of the DCS theorist, the schema is more

[16] On Mally's (1912) view, for example, it is *abstracta* and *concreta* that have their properties in different ways.

[17] For examples, see Wright (1992, 2003), Lynch (2000, 2009), Sher (2004), Pederson (2010), and Edwards (2011, 2018). On some of the weaker forms of alethic pluralism—Sher (2004), for example—all truth is truth by correspondence, but the "form" of correspondence varies across domains.

[18] See Tarski (1933, 1952). For a recent, systematic treatment of Tarski's views on truth, see Ray (2018).

perspicuously expressed, 'a is F' is true *iff* Fa or aF. If truth is a property of propositions, but there are two fundamentally distinct ways of building up these propositions, one might be skeptical that the DCS theorist has not already betrayed alethic monism.

Put another way, suppose, following Tarski, that truth is satisfaction. An atomic sentence 'a is F' is true when the object referred to by 'a' *satisfies* the predicate 'is F'. Here, the DCS theorist may insist that exemplification and encoding are two distinct ways to satisfy a predicate. If truth is satisfaction, and there are multiple ways to satisfy, then minimally, there is a deep joint that carves apart truths of one kind from truths of the other. This doesn't necessarily commit the DCS theorist to alethic pluralism, but the fit is undeniable, and should the friend of DCS endorse alethic pluralism, the move would be well-motivated. Natural joints of this sort are precisely the sorts of cases pluralists of different sorts use to motivate their theories.[19] So there is a bridge from the Meinongian metaontological approach to alethic pluralism in the sense that those who endorse the former are well-positioned to endorse the latter.

2.3.3 Alethic Pluralism at Work

Not all forms of alethic pluralism are helpful for resolving our original puzzle. To illustrate, consider Douglas Edwards' recent defense.[20] There are the domains of discourse, each of which is connected to a truth property. The truths of some domains,

[19]It is widely accepted that there is natural joint between the abstract and the concrete. Accepting this does not commit one to ontological pluralism, but it is precisely the kind of case that might motivate ontological pluralism. The domains of objects seem so fundamentally different that one grows skeptical that they enjoy the same sort of being. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that while both exist, they do not exist in the same way. See the introductory chapter of McDaniel (2017).

[20]See Edwards (2018).

such as the physical and chemical, are true by correspondence, while the truths of other domains, such as the moral and aesthetic, are true by superassertability. What determines which truth properties are assigned to which domains? In short, domains are comprised of predicates that either track sparse properties or abundant ones. Domains that track the former are connected with correspondence, while domains that track the latter are connected with superasserability. The predicates in physics, for example, are "responsive" to objective similarities and differences in reality, and so pick out sparse properties; so, the truths of the physical domain are true by correspondence.

The original puzzle arises because of the difficulty of simultaneously endorsing both DEPENDENCE and REFERENCE. Alethic pluralism can aid in resolving the tension if it turns out that the cases which give rise to those intuitions turn out to track two distinct kinds of truth that we have been unintentionally conflating. That is, if the cases which generate DEPENDENCE are all truths of one kind, and the cases which generate REFERENCE are of another, then we can undermine the tension by claiming that there is an important sense in which the two intuitions are not at odds with one another. For example, there is no tension between DEPENDENCE and REFERENCE if 'truth' means truth_1 in the former and truth_2 in the latter.

This won't work with Edwards' account, because the cases that give rise to the puzzle don't neatly track the sparse-abundant distinction. What we need is for there to be one kind of truth for truths about reality and another for truths about unreality. The sparse-abundant distinction won't work here because both real and unreal things can have both sparse and abundant properties.

My proposal is simple. Distinguish real discourse from unreal discourse. This neatly divides the intuitive cases which give rise to DEPENDENCE and REFERENCE from the beginning.[21] As we have already seen, the Meinongian has a motivated and principled way to demarcate the two by appeal to DCS. The truth property connected to real discourse can be stipulated to be such that truth depends on being, thereby vindicating DEPENDENCE. We can further stipulate that the truths of both the real and unreal discourses are truth by correspondence so as to preserve the semantic unity underwriting REFERENCE.[22] Call this view, Meinongian Alethic Pluralism (MAP).

Let's take stock. We began by noting that some popular metaontological views naturally end up betraying at least one of two deep intuitions about truth because the two intuitions appear to be in tension. Meinongianism, as I have characterized it, needn't betray either. This is because Meinongians have independent reasons for deploying DCS, which, as it turns out, can motivate precisely the right kind of alethic pluralism to explain away the putative tension. This constitutes reason to prefer Meinongianism—MAP in particular—over its rivals.

2.4 OBJECTIONS

The argument I just offered is quite ambitious insofar as it engages with and aims to connect multiple, relatively insular literatures. Naturally, then, there will be many objections. Here, I offer some preemptive rejoinders.

[21] The cases which give rise to DEPENDENCE are familiar—'snow is white' is true *because* snow is white, or 'I am sitting' is true *because* I am sitting. The cases which give rise to REFERENCE are truths about nonexistents (e.g. Sherlock Holmes lives at 221B Baker Street, or round squares are round).

[22] This view is akin to Sher's (2004) moderate alethic pluralism on which truth is both one and many.

Objection 1: Appealing to alethic pluralism is ad hoc. The rough thought here is that this sort of appeal is always available, so it looks infelicitous. Whenever one encounters a puzzle or paradox wherein two claims are discovered to be incompatible, we can make the puzzle vanish by stipulating that there is actually no incompatibility because the claims are true in different ways. So, alethic pluralism looks to be more of a cheat than a genuine solution.

I acknowledge that this might be the natural, first impression, but it is ultimately misguided. Whether or not a philosophical move is ad hoc depends on whether it has any other motivation other than merely to make the relevant problem go away. As I have argued, the Meinongian has principled, and independently motivated reasons for endorsing both DCS and MAP.

Objection 2: MAP does not really vindicate both intuitions. According to MAP, all truths are true by correspondence, but only the truth associated with the real discourse is such that truth depends on being. DEPENDENCE, though, was supposed to be about truth in general, not just some of the truths. So it looks like MAP fails to truly vindicate DEPENDENCE. If so, it fails as a solution to the puzzle.

It is true that, according to MAP, some truths—the ones pertaining to the unreal—do not depend on being. But this is not a serious betrayal of DEPENDENCE. First, by the lights of the view, it is apt to say that truth depends on being. Indeed in the real discourse, all truths do depend on being. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the kinds of cases which generate DEPENDENCE to begin with all find themselves in the real discourse. Because MAP successfully captures the the cases

which generate DEPENDENCE, I submit DEPENDENCE is vindicated.

Objection 3: Adopting alethic pluralism is too radical a solution. Some might find themselves recognizing that it would be preferable to find a metaontology on which they needn't give up either DEPENDENCE or REFERENCE, but think that the severity of this problem does not license a solution as extreme as alethic pluralism.

I am sympathetic to the notion that the benefit of adopting a solution might be worth less than its cost. This is not the case here. In order to properly deploy this cost-benefit analysis, we need to be clear about a few things. First, the alethic pluralism of MAP is not particularly radical. Unlike for many other versions of alethic pluralism, truth is still unified in an important way, since all truth is truth by correspondence. Second, depending on how valuable one takes the benefit of vindicating both DEPENDENCE and REFERENCE, it might not matter if MAP does turn out to be radical. If someone recognizes both of these points, yet still insists that alethic pluralism is too extreme or costly a proposal, we likely disagree about the value and/or role of intuition in our theorizing more generally.[23]

Objection 4: DCS, not Meinongianism, is what solves the puzzle. DCS is the key to motivating alethic pluralism of the sort MAP is. This is because the exemplification-encoding distinction does the work of demarcating the real and unreal discourses. If this is right, then one might think a non-Meinongian could deploy DCS to the same effect as MAP.

First, recall that the aim here is in part to explore the connections between

[23]Those who think, for example, that intuitions count for very little, or nothing at all, will likely be disposed to Objection 3. This topic is unfortunately too large to adequately address here.

metaontological views and truth. DCS is not itself a metaontology and so the fact that DCS does the heavy lifting is tangential to the question of which metaontologies fair best with respect to our intuitions about truth. Second, it's not at all obvious that DCS can be plucked from the Meinongian framework and deployed elsewhere. Recall that DCS is itself motivated only if we take the problem of nonexistents seriously. So we should expect that DCS has metaontological implications. A contemporary Quinean view on which talk of nonexistents is metaphysical nonsense, for example, will be at odds with DCS.

To sum up, there is a route from Meinongianism to alethic pluralism by way of DCS. The package of views I proposed, MAP, nicely resolves the putative tension between DEPENDENCE and REFERENCE. Insofar as this is right, we've discovered that the Meinongian metaontology has more utility than we previously thought, which gives us more reason to accept it.

3 From MOP to Mereological Pluralism

3.1 Introduction

Contemporary defenders of ontological pluralism often point to the resources their respective theories have to either resolve extant philosophical puzzles or provide novel insight into otherwise opaque philosophical doctrines.[1] I aim to further this by exploring how pluralism of the ontological sort might connect with pluralism of the mereological sort. I argue that while the varieties of pluralism do not entail one another, there is a fittingness between the two—one such that, as will become clear, they make for an attractive package.

The structure of this paper is as follows. In §2, I introduce both ontological and mereological pluralism. In §3, I argue that ontological pluralism is uniquely situated to motivate mereological pluralism. In §4, I explore some implications for the extensionality of proper parthood given mereological pluralism. In §5, I use the implications to gesture at solutions to familiar metaphysical puzzles, such as the problem of material constitution.

[1] See McDaniel (2017).

I conclude with a few lessons, but I focus on one. Ontological pluralists have a clear route to solutions for some familiar mereological puzzles. Thus, the impressive catalog of things ontological pluralism can do for us grows ever longer.

3.2 The Setup

3.2.1 Ontological Pluralism

Ontological pluralism is the view that there are ways of being—or that there are different ways to exist. The theory is often said to capture the intuitive view that what we mean when we say that tables exist is something other than what we mean when we say numbers exist.[2] Recent proponents of ontological pluralism have formulated the doctrine by invoking a plurality of semantically primitive, restricted quantifiers.[3] There are other ways of formulating pluralism, but given the popularity of the neo-Quinean metaontology, it is plausibly the most tractable way.[4]

To familiarize ourselves with the view, suppose there are two ways of being—being-abstract and being-concrete. The pluralist can articulate this view by claiming that the unrestricted quantifier we are all familiar with, $\exists$, which ranges over both *abstracta* and *concreta*, is more naturally expressed as a disjunction of two primitive quantifiers, $\exists_a$, which only ranges over the *abstracta*, and $\exists_c$, which only

[2] See Turner (2010).

[3] See McDaniel (2009, 2010, 2017) and Turner (2010).

[4] My own preference is to work out ontological pluralism at the level of first-order properties, rather than at the level of the quantifier. For the sake of the argument I aim to make here, nothing hangs on one formulation over the other.

ranges over the *concreta*.[5] Given that we ought to prefer more natural expressions to less natural expressions in our theorizing, the pluralist will therein deploy these restricted quantifiers in her book of the world, and the supposedly less natural $\exists$ will not figure. If in fact there is a way of being that *all* entities enjoy, that way is to be defined up from the fundamental ways of being.

Once the ontological pluralist has the theoretical resources to distinguish between modes of being, utility abounds. Given the difficult metaphysical challenge of what to make of holes, Kris McDaniel puts this virtue of ontological pluralism as follows:[6]

> The ontological pluralist can happily say that there are holes and then diligently pursue the question of in what way there are holes. By contrast, according to the ontological monist, either something is or it isn't, and that's all there is say about a thing's existential status. This puts the ontological monist in an uncomfortable position. According to her, everything that there is enjoys *the same kind of reality*, which is the kind of reality enjoyed by full-fledged concrete entities such as ourselves. She is committed to the unpleasant claim that *holes are just as real as concretia*, a claim that is apt to be met with incredulous stares by those not acquainted with contemporary metaphysics.[7]

Once we have the resources to distinguish between kinds of reality, we can violate fewer intuitions in our theorizing. Further, we can begin to see that worries about

[5]The notion of naturalness at play here is from Sider (2013) where he notes that naturalness phenomena applies to grammatical categories beyond predicates. Further, the pluralist's quantifiers, $\exists_a$ and $\exists_c$, are primitive in the sense that they will not be further defined in terms of a more basic way of being.

[6]As McDaniel acknowledges, this difficult challenge regarding almost nothings is captured well by Sorensen (2008) who writes, "it feels paradoxical to say that absences exist—but no better to say that absences do not exist" and "...holes do not sit any more comfortably on the side of being than of nonbeing."

[7]See McDaniel (2017, §5.1).

ontology bloating lose some bite when there are ways to bestow reality onto an entity without being pressured to say those things are as real as you or me. More on this latter point in §3.

3.2.2 Mereological Pluralism

Ontological pluralism aims to vindicate pretheoretic intuitions about the ontological differences between, for example, the kind of reality that tables enjoy and the kind of reality that numbers enjoy. Similarly, mereological pluralism aims to vindicate the pretheoretic intuition that the sense in which a cat's tail is a part of that cat is different from the sense in which the letter 'b' is a part of the English alphabet, and also different from the sense in which Socrates is a part of his singleton, {Socrates}.

Before articulating mereological pluralism more precisely, it's important to flag a methodological assumption here. One can of course stipulate outright that the proper target of mereology is the sense of 'part' that corresponds with classical mereology—and begin their theorizing from there. This is precarious. While it might be fine for some purposes, if we hope to draw metaphysical conclusions from our findings, mereology best track the intuitive notion of part, not some stipulated notion; this is the intuitive notion according to which some things "make up" another. And with respect to this intuitive notion, while it "may be subject to further clarification, there remains a genuine question as to whether any reasonable clarification of it will admit of different ways for one object to be a part of another."[8]

[8]See Fine (2010, p. 561.)

Just as ontological pluralism can be characterized as the view that there are fundamentally distinct existences, mereological pluralism is the view that there are fundamentally distinct parthood relations. Critically, one is not a mereological pluralist simply by endorsing the claim that there are spatial parts, functional parts, immediate proper parts, etc., since these parthood relations might be analyzed in terms of a more basic notion of part. Rather, one is a pluralist by endorsing the claim that there is a plurality of *fundamental*, or *basic* parthood relations.

To familiarize ourselves with an example of this view, recall D. M. Armstrong's mereology according to which there are two ways to make wholes from parts—the way in which a chair is made up of its seat (along with other things), and the way in which *states of affairs* are made up of their *constituents*.[9] On this view, while the seat is a part of the chair, and Kris is a part of the state of affairs of *Kris's being hungry*, the seat and Kris are not parts in the same way.[10] How are these relations differentiated? Parthood in the former case obeys an unrestricted composition axiom according to which for any *xs*, the *xs* compose some *y*; the latter parthood relation does not.[11]

While there are no doubt ways to endorse pluralism of both the ontological and mereological varieties other than the two examples articulated above, for our purposes here, this should suffice as an introduction to the views.[12]

[9] See Armstrong (1986 and 1997).

[10] See McDaniel (2009b) on the intelligibility of Armstrong's "compositional pluralism".

[11] As pointed out in McDaniel (2009, p. 257), if this latter sort of parthood obeyed unrestricted composition then Armstrong's states of affairs would fail to perform the task of distinguishing between worlds in which the same entities exist (e.g. Kris and hunger) but some fact (e.g. *Kris is hungry*) obtains in one world but not the other.

[12] See Caplan (2011) for more on the differing ways one can be an ontological pluralist. For more on mereological pluralism, see McDaniel (2009), Fine (1994, 1999), Grossman (1973), and Simons (1987).

3.3 FITTINGNESS

Why think that ontological and mereological pluralism make a good package? Here are three reasons. First, proponents of the views share a methodological strategy regarding intuitions in our theorizing. Second, the ontological pluralist's metaontological programme does not undermine the intuitive cases which motivate mereological pluralism. Third, some of the putatively undesirable consequences of mereological pluralism will be untroubling for the ontological pluralist.

3.3.1 Methodological Kin

In the articulation of both examples of ontological and mereological pluralism above, I briefly addressed a background motivation for the views—to vindicate pretheoretic intuitions. Intuitively, the sense in which I exist differs from the sense in which numbers exist. This is captured by the pluralist's view that there are distinct modes of existence. Intuitively, the sense in which my seat's cushion is a part of my seat differs from the sense in which the letter 'b' is a part of the English alphabet. This is captured by the pluralist's view that there are distinct parthoods. Both pluralists share a clear methodological strategy. This methodological kinship centers on intuitions in our metaphysical theorizing.

Clearly specifying where the above agreement lies is tricky. One likely aspect of the agreement is as follows. Both pluralists agree that intuitions are the philosophers' data. Violating intuitions will no doubt happen since we often have conflicting intuitions,

but it is costly and should be avoided when possible. Further, when we intuit polysemy, going pluralist in the metaphysics is a more perspicuous way to vindicate those intuitions, all things being equal. Thus, insofar as one finds 'exists' and 'part' to be intuitively polysemous, the rationale which leads her to ontological pluralism should also lead her to mereological pluralism (and *vice versa*).

If that's right, then we can more explicitly state at least some of the background agreement as follows. First, theories can differ in their choiceworthiness because of the expressions they deploy—the more natural the expressions, the better. Second, intuitively polysemous expressions which denote properties are *prima facie* most perspicuously captured by endorsing pluralism regarding those properties.

Discovering that both the ontological and mereological pluralist endorse these claims is important. Given how controversial these claims are in metaphysics more generally, it shows that the kinship between the two views is surprisingly deep. After all, both claims are controversial enough to rule out some popular views. For example, the first point will likely be opposed by neo-Carnapians who reject the notion of naturalness (insofar as it is meant to be a joint-carving notion).[13] And the second point will at least be at odds with those who think that even if intuitions offer some theoretical guidance, this guidance is easily overridden by other considerations, such as parsimony.[14]

[13]Hirsch's quantifier variance (2011) and Thomasson's easy ontology (2007, 2014), for example, are very different, but nevertheless in many important cases, they both exemplify the broadly Carnapian view that many familiar metaphysical worries are ultimately grounded in linguistic confusion. The supposed tension between metaphysical views according to which there are tables and those according to which there are only simples arranged tablewise, for example, is to be deflated in one way or another. In these cases, the world "has no preference" regarding which expressions we ought to use to write our theory.

[14]Neo-Quineans who prefer the desert landscape, for example, will almost certainly have a stronger

3.3.2 Metaontological Amenability

Second, ontological pluralism and mereological pluralism make a good pair because the former provides a metaphysical backdrop that is amenable to the intuitive cases which motivate the latter. To see this, it is helpful to begin with the different ways in which the mereological pluralist might individuate her parthood relations.

In the brief introduction to mereological pluralism in §2.2, we saw that one way to distinguish between parthood relations is by noting differences in the axioms which govern those relations; Armstrong has one parthood relation which obeys an unrestricted composition axiom, and one parthood relation which does not. Analogously, if we intuit that tables and sets have 'parts' in different senses, then the pluralist may want to claim these senses track fundamentally distinct parthood relations by appeal to the distinct laws that govern the parthood of tables in contrast with the parthood of sets. Unlike classical parthood, set membership is intransitive.[15]

Another way to distinguish between the pluralist's parthood relations is to assert that the relations apply to different categories.[16] Intuitively, the sense in which my chair has its seat as a part is distinct from the sense in which the English alphabet has the letter (type) 'b' as a part. The difference we intuit here seems intimately bound up with the fact that tables and letter types are entities of very different kinds. More

conviction to avoid positing a plurality of primitive notions in order to vindicate some intuition, particularly if they can make true all the "right claims." Insofar as they recognize that pluralism might do a better job than monism in handling some intuitive phenomena, they might still say, so much the worse for those intuitions.

[15] Shieva is a member of her singleton, {Shieva}, which is a member of its singleton, {{Shieva}}, but Shieva is not a member of {{Shieva}}, since {{Shieva}} has only one member, {Shieva}, which is not identical to Shieva.

[16] See McDaniel (2004, 2009b).

generally, the larger the ontological chasm between the kinds, the smaller the surprise if objects in those categories participate in fundamentally different kinds of relations. Once we get on board with the spirit of the pluralist approach, it's difficult to see why we should suppose that the way in which *concreta* make things up is identical to the way in which *abstracta* make things up in the first place.

Yet another way to distinguish relations is by logical form. According to McDaniel (2004), the fundamental parthood relation material objects stand in is 3-placed, while the fundamental parthood relation that spacetime regions stand in is 2-placed.[17] The logical form of the former is, *x is a part of y at region R*, while the form of the latter is *x is a part of y*.

So there are a host of ways for the mereological pluralist to individuate her relations. And many of the cases that illustrate these ways have intuitive pull in favor of mereological pluralism. These cases, however, make use of many different kinds of entities. The axiomatic-difference case appeals to sets. The category-difference case appeals to letters, and logical-difference case appeals to spacetime regions. Importantly, the existence of these entities is not without controversy. Consider the popular neo-Quinean metaontological programme. Essential to a version of it is the penchant for desert landscapes. For the metaphysician who is committed to this sort of ontological simplicity, it would be unsurprising if her book of the world ultimately included only, say, properties and spacetime.[18] And if one rejects the existence of such entities altogether, there are no motivating cases for mereological pluralism to be

[17] See McDaniel (2004).

[18] For examples of ontological simplicity in action, see Lewis (1986) and Ted Sider (2013).

had.[19]

On the other hand, consider the ontological pluralist's ontology. It is likely to be brimming with all sorts of entities. She might think there are past objects, future objects, fictional objects, merely possible objects, and perhaps even impossible objects. By her lights, not all of these things exist in the same way; and some perhaps don't exist in any way (which is the case on some Meinongian versions of ontological pluralism). Importantly, there *are* such things. Thus, there is no such tension between the pluralist's metaontology and the cases which motivate mereological pluralism.

3.3.3 Potential Costs

Third, endorsing both versions of pluralism allows one to sidestep some putative problems for mereological pluralism held independently. Mereological pluralism appears to have a number of controversial implications. With the right background commitments, some of these implications will be found unwelcome, and therein generate an independent case for denying mereological pluralism. Here are two such examples.

First, mereological pluralism seems to lead to ontology bloating. Suppose there are exactly two basic parthood relations that both obey unrestricted composition, but are differentiated by, say, logical form. Then, whenever some things compose at all, we end up with two wholes—one for each parthood relation. Indeed, the more ways of

[19]It doesn't follow from this that the neo-Quinean of this sort cannot endorse mereological pluralism; it only follows that they do not have the option of appealing to these cases to get the view off the ground. Perhaps they might claim that the theoretical utility is independently sufficient for endorsing the view.

building wholes we endorse, the more we proliferate kinds of wholes. In this way, we end up with far more things in our ontology than we might have hoped for. This is an unparsimonious consequence, and so we ought to reject mereological pluralism, or so the thought goes.

As we have already seen, however, the ontological pluralist is not so worried about ontology bloating. She has ways of bestowing reality onto objects with minimal ontological cost (e.g. by granting them diminished existence or, following the Meinongian, no existence). Thus, what might be an unwelcome cost for mereological pluralism turns out to be untroubling for the ontological pluralist.

Second, mereological pluralism also seems to naturally lead to the possibility of colocation for material objects. If there are different ways in which some material *xx* might compose, then it might happen that the *xx* compose some y in one way and some z in another way, where $y \neq z$. Now, given the deeply intuitive claim that wholes are located just where their parts are located, it follows that y and z will be colocated.[20] And if wholes are guaranteed to be material if all of their parts are material, then such cases will be cases of material colocation. Alas, if the colocation of material objects is impossible, then so much the worse for mereological pluralism.

Again, the ontological pluralist will be unworried. She is amenable to entities such as shadows and absences. By the lights of the ontological pluralist, these

[20]This principle is sometimes called "mereological harmony," following Schaffer (2009) and Uzquiano (2011). For more on harmony, see Leonard (2016). Also note that any mereological pluralist who rejects harmony will be unmoved by this objection; this is the case for McDaniel (2009b) who argues that harmony fails at least for the parthood relation enjoyed by structured universals. Importantly, however, there are many "harmonious" versions of mereological pluralism to be entertained—and proponents of these versions will have to contend with the objection.

almost-nothings are real. Not only can these entities be counted, but it is deeply intuitive that they are spatiotemporally located and even enter into causal relations.[21] Further, their locations can no doubt overlap with the locations of other material objects. For example, plausibly, the absence of water in my glass might be exactly co-located with the coffee in my glass; and my shadow might be exactly co-located with some arrangement of simples on the pavement. Thus, material colocation is not worrisome for the ontological pluralist, and will therein be found impotent as a case against those who endorse both ontological and mereological pluralism (in contrast to mereological pluralism alone).

Ultimately, I take it these three reasons tell in favor of a deep fit between ontological and mereological pluralism. No doubt some other metaontological programmes might fit with mereological pluralism along some dimensions, but it is doubtful they will fit as neatly as ontological pluralism.

3.4 Extensionality

Strictly speaking, the case for fittingness above gives more reason for the mereological pluralist to be an ontological pluralist than the other way around. To further explore what can be said in the latter direction, we ought first consider how mereological pluralism bears on extensional mereology. Finally, we will derive some mereological principles at the pluralist's disposal.

Orthodoxy suggests that if some x and some y share exactly the same parts, then x

[21] For more on absences, see Sartorio (2016), Bernstein (2015), and Schaffer (2000, 2004).

and *y* are identical. This rests on the very strong intuition that can be sloganized as follows: *no difference without a difference maker*. Call this intuition, *No Difference*. But on the considered view, since there are different ways to mereologically make a whole, it is possible for one plurality to make two (or more) things. Does mereological pluralism therein entail a violation of the strong intuition? It's not so clear. Consider the following principle:

EXTENSIONALITY If *x* and *y* are composite objects with the same parts, then $x = y$.

When the mereological pluralist sees 'parts' in the aforementioned principle, she will note the ambiguity. On one reading, it uses 'parts' to denote some generic, non-fundamental kind of parthood. This is quite a natural reading as it seems to track the intuitive sense of 'part' in which some things make up another. Read this way, it is incompatible with mereological pluralism—*ex hypothesi*, there are multiple ways to make wholes from the very same parts. This may seem like a costly, counterintuitive result.

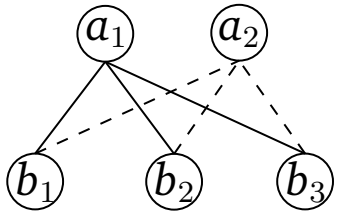
In response, the pluralist will note that she sees the following alternative readings, where 'parts$_n$' is to be read as a placeholder for any particular, basic, parthood relation.

EXTENSIONALITY* If *x* and *y* are composite objects with the same parts$_n$, then $x = y$.

The point here is that while the mereological pluralist is committed to rejecting some notion of extensionality, she needn't reject extensionality for any of her basic parthood relations. Given that all of the pluralist's fundamental parthood relations can

themselves be extensional, she can reasonably insist that there is no serious violation of *No Difference*.[22]

Noting that *Extensionality* and *Extensionality** come apart in this way is instructive. What it shows is that the mereological pluralist can capture the strong *No Difference* intuition while still making logical space for possibilities such as the following:



The above model, *M*, represents cases where two distinct entities, a_1 and a_2, share exactly the same parts, b_1, b_2, and b_3. While a_1 and a_2 are wholes in different ways, they are both mereological wholes nonetheless. As such, extensional mereologists must insist that *M* represents an impossibility. In contrast, the mereological pluralist rejects *Extensionality*; *Extensionality** does just fine in respecting *No Difference* and generates no pressure to reject *M*-cases. The mereological pluralist therein takes no issue with the possibility of two distinct entities sharing exactly the same parts (so long as the wholes stand in distinct composition relations to their parts). As we will see, the ability to distinguish between entities which share exactly the same parts is tremendously serviceable.

[22]No doubt the mereological pluralist might ultimately want to give up even Extensionality*. My primary contention here is that a serious violation of *No Difference* is not a feature of mereological pluralism as such.

3.5 Pluralism at Work

While the implications of mereological pluralism are far reaching, here I aim only to point out two puzzles mereological pluralism has the resources to resolve. Insofar as mereological pluralism generates interesting solutions to extant philosophical puzzles, so much the better for the package of ontological and mereological pluralism.

The first puzzle has to do with propositions. Propositions are strange. We might have strong views about their role in our theorizing, but determining what they are like has proved quite challenging. Matti Eklund discusses the problem of the unity of the proposition, which he takes to be best understood as a handful of related problems which sometimes fall under the classification of *Bradley's regress*.[23] One of these difficult challenges is to distinguish propositions from facts.

Difference Why isn't the proposition that P identical to the fact that P?

Given a view on which propositions are made up of worldly constituents, just like facts, then the proposition that P and the fact that P will have exactly the same parts. So there is pressure to identify the two. But this cannot be, since the existence of the proposition that P does not guarantee the truth of P, while the existence of the fact that P does. Notice, though, that the force of the challenge comes from a background endorsement of *Extensionality*. If we, like the mereological pluralist, allow for *M*-cases, then Difference is impotent. This is because we can suppose that propositions are just like facts in that they are mereologically complex entities, made from the same parts,

[23] See Eklund (2016).

but nevertheless distinct, as propositions are composed in one way, and facts in another.

Similarly, the mereological pluralist will have a solution to the problem of material constitution. To briefly rehearse one iteration of the puzzle, following Gibbard (1975), suppose that a sculptor intends to make a clay statue of Goliath. He does so by sculpting the top half out of some clay, and then the bottom half out of some more clay. Finally, he combines the two halves, thereby creating a new lump of clay *and* a new statue. What are we to say about the relationship between the resulting lump and statue? While Gibbard's original argument aims to establish contingent identities, the story nicely motivates the more general puzzle.

This more general puzzle appears to arise whenever two conditions are met: (i) there is reason to think that some x and some y are identical; (ii) there is reason to think the x and y are distinct. Condition (ii) is typically satisfied through the story by appeal to differing persistence conditions. In the case at hand, only Lumpl can survive being smashed. Critically, (i) is typically satisfied through the story by appeal to sameness of parts. In this case, we are meant to think that Lumpl and Goliath are identical because they are both made up of the same things. Again, since sameness of parts does not guarantee sameness of wholes for the mereological pluralist, she will find condition (i) unsatisfied and therein the general problem of material constitution will not plague her.[24]

[24]At least, if there is yet an extant problem of material constitution, the cases must be radically different so as to not appeal to sameness of parts to meet condition (i). There are, of course, related puzzles such as the Grounding Problem, which I have set aside here because extensionality failure alone will not be enough to block the puzzles from arising.

There is more to explore here, but we have done enough to learn some important lessons. There is a deep fittingness between ontological pluralism and mereological pluralism such that proponents of the latter have strong reason to endorse the former. Further, mereological pluralists can reject extensional mereology without violating the intuition which motivates it. From this we learned that mereological pluralism has the resources to resolve some perennial metaphysical problems; insofar as the ontological pluralist endorses mereological pluralism, she will inherit this utility. Thus, the impressive catalog of things ontological pluralism can do for us grows ever longer.

4 MOP and the Growing Block

4.1 Introduction

Given the recent interest in non-Quinean metaontologies, it is unsurprising that many philosophers are exploring the utility of these heterodox views by revisiting familiar metaphysical debates. In this paper, I aim to join in this project by considering what more can be said about time from a Meinongian perspective. The simplest way to articulate the view I have in mind is by contrast with a similar rival.

Kris McDaniel has recently developed a view of time he calls, Presentist Existential Pluralism (PEP), which makes use of the resources of ontological pluralism.[1] McDaniel contends that PEP is intuitive, theoretically useful, and doesn't suffer from serious troubles of its own; insofar as it is better at satisfying this criteria than alternative views, PEP is worthy of belief.[2] Along the way, McDaniel argues that PEP is preferable to a nearby rival, Meinongian Presentism (MP).

My aim here is not to make trouble for McDaniel's argument for PEP over MP.

[1] McDaniel (2017, §3).

[2] Plausibly, consonance with the empirical sciences is critically important. Following McDaniel, I am bracketing this criterion. Whether or not views according to which the present is metaphysically privileged is consonant with our best physical theories is too large a question to address here.

Rather, I argue that there is a better, third option, one which makes use of both Meinongian and ontological pluralist resources. I call this view the Meinongian Growing Block Theory and contend that it overtakes PEP as the best contender. My plan for this is as follows: In §2, I present PEP and rehearse McDaniel's reasons for its superiority over MP. In §3, I articulate my view and argue that it is superior to PEP.[3] In §4, I consider how the view fairs against Ross Cameron's new Moving Spotlight Theory and Brad Skow's Quasi-Fragmentalism.

4.2 Pluralist Presentism vs. Meinongian Presentism

One way to ensure the substance of the debate between the orthodox views of time is to suppose that there is one metaphysically fundamental meaning for the quantifier, '$\exists$', that the presentist, eternalist, and growing block theorist all deploy. We can then define the competing views as follows.

> Presentism: the view that $\neg\exists$x(x is a past or future object) is true.
>
> Eternalism: the view that each of the following is true: $\exists$x(x is a past object), $\exists$x(x is a present object), and $\exists$x(x is a future object).
>
> Growing Block Theory: the view that each of the following is true: $\exists$x(x is a past object), $\exists$x(x is a present object), and $\neg\exists$x(x is a future object).

This way of framing the debate typically presupposes ontological monism, the view

[3] It should be made explicit that McDaniel's ultimate goal with PEP is to demonstrate the philosophical fruit of ontological pluralism more generally. Because the view I defend here is a pluralist one, if anything, my arguments here only add more fruit to the ontological pluralist tree.

that there is only one way of being, which is represented by the quantifier, '$\exists$'. This presupposition leads us to think that the above three views are the only legitimately viable options.[4]

In opposition, Kris McDaniel endorses ontological pluralism, the view that there are ways or modes of being. The theory is often said to capture the intuitive view that what we mean when we say that tables exist is something other than what we mean when we say numbers exist.[5] Recent proponents of ontological pluralism have formulated the doctrine by invoking a plurality of semantically primitive, restricted quantifiers;[6] or by invoking a plurality of metaphysically fundamental meanings available for the unrestricted '$\exists$'.

PEP: There are two metaphysically fundamental (possible) meanings for the unrestricted quantifier, '$\exists$'; '$\exists_p$x', which ranges over all and only past objects, and '$\exists_c$x', which ranges over all and only present objects; there is no fundamental quantifier that ranges over objects in both domains.

On PEP, there are two fundamentally distinct kinds of existence: present-existence and past-existence.[7] Pluralism allows us to take seriously the notion that the past is real, but not as real as the present. The resulting view is striking. Like Presentism, PEP vindicates the intuition that the present is metaphysically privileged. And yet, like

[4]Of course, there is logical space for other views, but few take those options seriously.
[5]Turner (2010).
[6]McDaniel (2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2017) and Turner (2010). There are other ways of formulating pluralism, but given the popularity of the neo-Quinean metaontology, it is plausibly the most tractable way.
[7]For the time being, we will bracket talk of the future.

Eternalism, PEP avoids the well known truth-maker objection to Presentism.[8] PEP therein has the best of both worlds.

A similar view, Meinongian Presentism (MP), appears to accomplish just as much. Because Meinongians sever the connection between existence and quantification, they have the resources to articulate the following view. Only present things exist; and, while past things do not exist, *there are* past things.[9] This view seems to have similar virtues as PEP. There are both past and present objects, but the present is still metaphysically privileged, as past objects do not exist. Further, since there are past objects, there is no serious trouble with truth-maker objections.

Still, McDaniel claims PEP is preferable to MP. The first reason for this is that PEP needn't deal with non-existents. According to McDaniel's ontological pluralism, everything there is exists in some way or other. Insofar as nonexistent entities are independently implausible, so much the worse for Meinongianism. The second reason is that MP appears to ontologically group past entities like dinosaurs with mythical entities like elves; both kinds of entities are simply nonexistents. Lumping dinosaurs and elves together in this way fails to respect the ontological facts. Fair enough.

In the following section, I present another Meinongian theory of time and show that it can do what PEP can do (and more) while at the same time avoiding the aforementioned criticism of MP.

[8] See Sider (2001), Armstrong (2004), Keller (2004), Crisp (2007).
[9] Gallois (2004), Hinchliff (1988), and Yourgrau (1993).

4.3 Meinongian Growing Block Theory

4.3.1 A Meta-Ontology

McDaniel has pit Meinongianism and ontological pluralism against one another. But it's important to note that these metaontologies are compatible.[10] You might, for instance, endorse the following characteristic theses of Meinongianism:

1. Existence is a first-order property.
2. There are entities that lack existence.
3. There are two different ways for objects to have properties.

The first thesis says that existence is a property of individuals. Something has existence in the same way that it might have roundness—by exemplification. We are not to understand existence as a second-order property, represented with a quantifier. The second thesis is a statement of Noneism, which says that there are nonexistent objects. Some entities fail to exemplify existence. The sense in which *there are* such things must be understood by appeal to Neutral Quantification.[11] The third thesis says that in addition to *exemplification*, objects can *encode* properties. Unlike exemplification, encoding is not existence-entailing.[12]

[10]This should be somewhat unsurprising, since Meinong himself endorsed a sort of ontological pluralism in distinguishing between existence and subsistence.

[11]On Neutral Quantification, there is a pair of quantifiers, general and particular, which range over both existent and non-existent entities. Loaded quantification is defined up with an existence predicate, E!.

[12]From the fact that I exemplify the property of being seated, it follows that I exist; from the fact that Sherlock Holmes encodes the property of being a detective, it does not follow that he exists.

There is no inconsistency in further endorsing ontological pluralism. To do this, we can specify that existence is best thought of as a plurality of fundamental existence properties rather than a single one. On this view, existence can be thought of as a family of fundamental, analogous properties.[13] For an object to exist in a generic sense, then, is for it to have at least one fundamental existence property. For our purposes here, simple changes to (1) and (2) will suffice for characterizing Meinongian Ontological Pluralism (MOP):

4. Existence is a plurality of first-order properties.
5. There are entities that lack all existence properties.
6. There are two different ways for objects to have properties.

4.3.2 An Analogy Between Modality and Time

What might a proponent of MOP say about time? The view I have in mind can be understood as the temporal analog of the following modal metaphysic. Take Lewis's modal realism, but reject actuality as indexical; instead, take actuality and mere possibility as ways of being.[14] There is the actual world, which enjoys actual-existence; the merely possible worlds, which enjoy possible-existence; and the impossible worlds, which don't exist at all. Both actual and merely possible entities exist in some way or other and therein exemplify the properties they have. Impossible entities are unreal, and therein are said to encode the properties they have. This latter, distinctively

[13] In order to qualify as a genuine pluralist view, the various existence properties must be basic—they must not be further analyzed in terms of a more basic notion of existence.

[14] See Bricker (2006).

Meinongian move, helps to ground truths about impossible things, while preserving the intuition that impossible things do not exist in any way.[15]

The analogy to time is straightforward. There are the present entities, which enjoy present-existence; the past entities, which enjoy past-existence; and future entities, which dont exist at all. Both present and past entities exist in some way or other, and therein exemplify the properties they have. Future entities are unreal, and therein encode the properties they have. This latter move helps ground truths about the future without jeopardizing the intuition that the future is entirely nonexistent. On this view, the future is unreal, while the past and the present make up a four-dimensional manifold of concrete existents. Further, this manifold grows as time passes—hence, Meinongian Growing Block Theory, or MGB.[16]

The above analogy suggests a deep metaphysical connection between the future and the impossible—one that some might find surprising. I think this upshot is actually a welcome one. Not only do we have strong intuitions about the unreality of both the future and the impossible, but there are also more substantive reasons for admitting the analogy. Paradigmatic impossible objects are inconsistent ones—objects that have some property, F, and some property, G, where F and G are incompatible (e.g. roundness and squareness). In a way, these impossible objects have *too many* properties to be real. Additionally, our intuitions about the unreality of the future

[15]This appeal to *impossibilia* is not unmotivated. There are well known reasons for thinking that our metaphysics would be better off countenancing impossible worlds. We may need them to model intentional states (Jago 2009, 2014), or explain the putative truths of inconsistent fictions (Priest 1997; Berto 2012), or analyze counterpossible reasoning (Nolan 1997), etc.

[16]For more classical formulations of the growing block view, see Broad (1923) and Tooley (1997).

appear to be linked to our intuition that the future is *open*—that facts about the future have yet to be settled. One way of making sense of an open future is to suggest that there is some kind of indeterminacy regarding future property instantiations. That is, the future is partly constituted by incomplete objects, where for some property, F, the future object in question has neither F nor not-F. On such a view, these future objects have *too few* properties to be real. Thus, there is good reason for thinking that there is an intimate, metaphysical link between the future and the impossible because, plausibly, both sorts of entities deviate from the level of determinacy required for reality.[17]

4.3.3 A-Theoretic Commitments

Unsurprisingly, MGB has a-theoretic commitments. After all, the inception of the project was partly guided by the desire to vindicate the intuition that the present is metaphysically special. That said, there are different ways to characterize what makes for an a-theory as opposed to a b-theory, none of which are entirely uncontroversial. I will not settle on a particular way of framing that debate here, but it is nevertheless informative to note what MGB may or may not be committed to. Here, I will consider four theses often associated with the a-theory, take two of them on board, and hope to remain neutral about the other two.

> PRIVILEGED PRESENT: There is a unique objectively privileged present: the time which is present. No description of reality can be correct without specifying

[17] Something in the neighborhood seems implied but not explicitly stated in McDaniel (2010a, p. 709) regarding *mere intentionalia* (i.e. objects of possible thought).

which time is present.[18]

TEMPORARY PRESENTNESS: What time is objectively privileged changes: the time that is objectively present either was or will not be present (or both), and some time that is not objectively present either was or will be (or both).[19]

I take MGB to be committed to PRIVILEGED PRESENT. It is constitutive of MGB that the present is privileged, since the view essentially claims that *being present* is a fundamental existence property. Further, a book of the world that fails to say what exists (and in what ways) surely fails to offer a complete description of reality. I also take it to be committed to TEMPORARY PRESENTNESS. Without the stipulation that the time that is present changes, we run the risk of ultimately not having a *growing* block at all. If all we are left with in the end is a static, four-dimensional, concrete manifold, then even if one subregion of it has a special ontological status, we could hardly claim to have vindicated the intuitions which motivate Presentism to begin with.

Of course, it is controversial to characterize the a-theory with PRIVILEGED PRESENT and TEMPORARY PRESENTNESS. This is due in large part to the fact that, as stated, they quantify over times.[20] Those who are averse to this might instead prefer to characterize the a-theory as a view about the fundamentality (or primitivity) and indispensability of tense operators:

FUNDAMENTAL TENSE: There is a fundamental distinction between the present

[18] See Cameron (2015, p. 2).
[19] See Cameron (2015, p. 2).
[20] I myself don't find this particularly worrisome. Because there is a four-dimensional spacetime on MGB, quantifying over times is not troublesome in the way that it might be for a Presentist.

and other times, and expressing this distinction requires primitive tense operators.[21]

Still others might think it is best to focus on the nature of change:

> A-PROPERTY CHANGE: Objects do not require temporal parts or time-relational properties to undergo change. Some objects have temporary non-relational properties and endure through change.[22]

Ultimately, I think that these latter principles are preferable to the former two in demarcating the boundaries of the a-theory. This is because they are more metaphysically perspicuous. Still, to the extent that it is possible, I would like to stay neutral about them. There are two reasons for this.

First, along with the perspicuousness, the principles also come with more theoretical baggage. PRIVILEGED PRESENT and TEMPORARY PRESENTNESS are simply precise statements of deep intuitions about the nature of the present. It would take little work to get a layman to nod along with these principles. On the other hand, FUNDAMENTAL TENSE and A-PROPERTY CHANGE make reference to more technical notions—tense operators, temporal parts, time-relational properties, endurance, etc. The layman will likely have much weaker convictions about these latter principles, assuming they have any at all. Before nodding along with FUNDAMENTAL TENSE and A-PROPERTY CHANGE, they would require, among other things, an understanding of

[21]This formulation of the principle is from Sullivan (2012). See Zimmerman (1998) for clarity about what it means to take tense seriously in this way.

[22]See Sullivan (2012).

some formal language and its relationship to the programme of ontology. The more theory-laden these principles become, the more we run the risk of deviating from our original, target phenomena.

Second, apart from incurring the risk of missing the target phenomena, my aim in this project is to develop and defend a Meinongian theory of time that is worth our philosophical attention. In arguing for MGB, doing with fewer contentious commitments means the view will have wider appeal. I might ultimately think that proponents of MGB should endorse FUNDAMENTAL TENSE or A-PROPERTY CHANGE, but that is to be settled dialectically downstream. The arguments I present here in favor of MGB over its competitors will not presume a prior commitment to (or rejection of) these latter, a-theoretic principles.[23]

4.3.4 The Scoreboard at Half-Time

By my count, MGB is doing quite well. Just like PEP and MP, it captures a privileged present and sidesteps the truth-maker objection to Presentism. So MGB also looks to be the best of both worlds. It is unsurprising that MGB also satisfies this desideratum since, just like PEP, it uses ontological pluralism to distinguish between present and past. Importantly, because MGB distinguishes between present-existence and past-existence, in contrast to MP, the view does not mistakenly categorize dinosaurs with elves. So, McDaniel's first complaint for MP will not apply to MGB.

[23] As I have already stated, I don't take myself to be giving substantive reasons for preferring one way of demarcating a-theory from b-theory. Rather, I take myself to have given reasons for only committing to some a-theoretic principles for the sake of formulating a generic version of MGB and arguing for its relative merits.

What should we say about the second complaint? MGB *does* trade in non-existent entities. Presumably this is a cost for MGB—a reason to prefer PEP. This is too quick. There is a lot to say in response depending case by case on the rationale one gives for their aversion towards non-existents. Here I'll briefly address three likely rationales.

Rationale 1: Non-existents are pretheoretically spooky, and so intuitively objectionable. That is, entertaining the concept of a non-existent might make us feel the same way as when we entertain, for example, bare particulars, or divine simplicity, or genuine absence causation, or some other concept that one might find initially opaque. If so, we have *prima facie* reason to do without non-existents; better to stick to deploying well-understood concepts. Perhaps one can make non-existence tractable by doing some philosophy, just as some have made bare particulars and divine simplicity tractable, but success here does not mitigate the fact that these concepts are *initially* opaque. The thought here is that this is enough to justify a defeasible prejudice against non-existents.

I do not grant that non-existent entities are intuitively objectionable, or that there is anything pre-theoretically odd about non-existents.[24] Whether or not we accept them into our metaphysical theories is a separate issue, and it is to be settled later on with a theoretical cost-benefit analysis.[25] In ordinary language, quantification over non-existents is commonplace and straightforward. This is entirely dissimilar to a constituent ontologist's theory of individuation or the mereological structure of God on

[24]That is, I cannot find any oddness that would justify even a *prima facie* prejudice against non-existents.

[25]Before we settle on whether to accept or reject non-existents, we must first explore what they might be able to do for us. See Lewis (1986) on the serviceability of genuine modal realism.

classical theism, neither of which are parts of ordinary discourse at all. I don't think that ordinary language has an authoritative role in our ontological theorizing, but it certainly plays *some* role. Insofar as we hope to identify *pre-theoretic* intuitions for and against non-existents, ordinary language will be tremendously informative.[26]

Rationale 2: Talk of non-existents is metaphysical nonsense. Here one might appeal to the putative link between quantifier phrases such as 'there are' and existence predicates, insisting that to say 'there are Fs' is just to say 'Fs exist'. If there is a deep connection here in the way the neo-Quineans claim, then it could never be true that there are non-existent entities.[27]

This gets the cart before the horse. Those who insist that non-existent entities are a nonstarter come to the table with background meta-ontological commitments. It is question-begging to object to a Meinongian theory of time by presupposing neo-Quineanism; the proponent of MGB antecedently rejects neo-Quineanism. Further, the meta-ontological views we ultimately endorse partly depend on just how serviceable those views ultimately are, and the utility of Meinongianism is precisely what we are exploring here. Thus, to rule Meinongianism out from the start is methodologically mistaken.

Rationale 3: Considerations of parsimony count against non-existents. McDaniel is not a neo-Quinean, nor would he likely think non-existents are particularly odd given

[26]Additionally, even if I were to grant the spookiness charge, I take the theoretical utility of non-existents to be well worth the cost. I soon present this utility in addressing the third rationale against non-existents.

[27]By 'neo-Quinean', I mean to denote the view according to which there is a single, fundamental sense of 'exists' and it is to be captured with the existential quantifier. See van Inwagen (1998).

his exploration of so-called "almost nothings."[28] He might nevertheless reject non-existents on the grounds that they are unnecessary. If we can accomplish all the work with just ontological pluralism, introducing Meinongian machinery is all cost, no benefit. That much seems right.

I say the juice is worth the squeeze. In formulating MGB, I glossed over the idea that it is amenable to our intuitions about the future—namely that the future is unreal, and there are at least some truths about it. I noted that Meinongianism allows us to quantify over future non-existents and to attribute properties to those entities by extending what Meinongians have said about the modal onto the temporal. This allows us to make sense of future truth without jeopardizing the unreality of the future. PEP is unable to accomplish this—and as a matter of principle, no less. On PEP, everything there is exists in some way or other. It can no doubt be extended to capture future truths by introducing future-existence in addition to past- and present-existence, but doing so would inevitably and problematically reify the future. Without the resources of Meinongianism, we are compelled to betray at least one deep intuition about the future.

By my lights, this makes MGB the tentative front-runner given the rubric we began with. MGB is more intuitive than PEP when we consider all of our intuitions about time, and it has more theoretical utility since it has Meinongian resources in addition to the resources of ontological pluralism.[29]

[28] See McDaniel (2010b). At least not odd in the pretheoretically opaque way characterized by *Rationale 1*.

[29] I say 'tentative' because here I have not explicitly taken on the project of showing that Meinongian Ontological Pluralism does not have serious troubles of its own.

4.4 Moving Spotlight Theory and Fragmentalism

In this section, I briefly explore how MGB stacks up against some more distant competitors.[30] A critique of all of MGB's competitors is no doubt untenable here; even a thorough critique of just a few competitors would make this project too unwieldy. My aim here is simply to gesture at how I think some of this will go. To this end, I highlight two recently developed theories of time—Ross Cameron's Moving Spotlight Theory (CST) and Bradford Skow's Quasi-Fragmentalism (QF)—and offer some cursory answers to a few important questions.[31] Do the virtues of MGB illuminated in §2 and §3 still count in favor of the view when contrasted with more distant theories of time? Are those views serviceable in ways that MGB is not? If so, can they be serviceable without suffering problems of their own?

Let's dispense with the first question quickly by noting that, as will become clear, CST and QF fail to respect our intuitions about the unreal future, much like PEP. Insofar as these views endorse future entities without having a mechanism for countenancing genuine non-existents, they reify the future and therein betray our intuitions. I count this a serious cost. We cannot cherrypick which intuitions about time we take to offer guidance and which to ignore. Taking intuitions seriously does

[30] In the previous section, I argued that the Meinongian Growing Block Theory is preferable to its *nearby* rivals, PEP and MP. I take the nearby views just to be the ones that are in some sense built from a rejection of neo-Quinean orthodoxy; the distant ones are the non-nearby ones.

[31] A quick word about the naming convention here. The term 'Quasi-Fragmentalism' is not meant to sound pejorative. Skow's (2015) use of Minkowski geometry to capture what he calls the Passage Intuition makes the resulting view bear a deep resemblance to the Fragmentalism of Fine (2005). 'Quasi' seems apt insofar as Fragmentalism is essentially characterized as explicitly deploying sentential operators to capture a fundamental distinction between *what is the case* and *what is the case in reality*. The view is not one Skow himself endorses, but one he develops on behalf of his competitors.

not mean we ought never give them up, but it does mean that doing so is costly.

4.4.1 Cameron's Moving Spotlight Theory

Here's a sketch of CST. According to standard spotlight theory, everything exists eternally in the regions of a four-dimensional, spacetime manifold. Objects perdure, and (only) *presentness* a-theoretically "moves across" the manifold. Cameron agrees with the first claim—that past, present, and future things exist and have four-dimensional locations—but disagrees with the rest.[32] Objects endure, and rather than introducing a metaphorical, moving spotlight to explain the passage of time, the world itself *ages* intrinsically. Here, objects are said to age without any changes in concreteness, spatiotemporal location, distributional properties, and essential properties. Further, objects have *temporal distributional properties*, intrinsic properties that describe every way the object was, is, or will be at every given age. For example, I have the distributional property of *being, at age n, such that I was standing, am now seated, and will be eating soon, etc...* My entire history is packed into these properties. These temporal distributional properties, together with the intrinsic age properties, serve as the truth-makers for all of the temporal facts.

Why endorse CST? Beyond the fact that it accounts for the privileged present without inviting the truth-maker objection—no small feat—here are two reasons. The first is that it offers a nice escape route from McTaggart's Paradox.[33] This paradox rears its head for any theory according to which time passes. We can reconstruct the

[32] See Cameron (2015).
[33] See McTaggart (1908).

argument as follows:

7. Time passes. (Supposition)
8. So, some event, E, is past. (7)
9. So, E was present. (8)
10. For all Fs, if something was F, then it is F in the past.
11. So, E is present in the past. (9, 10)
12. So, E is both past and present. (8, 11)
13. Nothing can be both past and present.
14. Therefore, it is not the case that time passes. (12, 13)

Recall, on CST, the fact that I was eating at 6pm yesterday is made true not by how past me *is*, but rather it is made true now, by my intrinsic age property, *n*, along with my temporal distributional property of *being, at age n, such that I was eating at 6pm yesterday...* Put simply, Cameron's account of tensed facts (and their truth-makers) creates the space to escape.

This is a nice solution to the paradox. Importantly, however, it does not constitute reason in favor of CST over MGB. Earlier I explicitly characterized MGB without any commitments to theses about tense. So a parasite strategy is available. Should they want to, proponents of MGB could adopt Cameron's solution—that is, deny that if something was F, then it is F in the past—and thereby acquire a solution to the paradox.[34]

[34]This is not to say that this addition to MGB would be welcomed with open arms. In fact, I am

A second reason Cameron offers is that CST is better suited to capture our intuition that the future is open than the growing block view. Here's his argument.[35] There are two ways to account for future openness:

> INDETERMINISM: Some future contingent propositions have indeterminate truth-values.
>
> UNDERDETERMINISM: There is no fact of the matter regarding the truth-value of some future contingent propositions.

CST fits naturally with INDETERMINISM while growing block views fit naturally with UNDERDETERMINISM. INDETERMINISM does better justice to our openness intuitions than UNDERDETERMINISM. So much the worse for growing block views.

Cameron offers three good reasons for the superiority of INDETERMINISM.[36] First, UNDERDETERMINISM (in tandem with the growing block view) is too limited in what it can allow to be open and fixed. There is "no room for the growing blocker to to say that *some* future contingents are fixed." After all, if there is no future ontology, nothing speaks to the truths of these future contingents. Second, INDETERMINISM satisfies intuitions about retrospective assessement. Past predictions about the present seem capable of being true. This is difficult to explain on UNDERDETERMINISM, since it seems the past prediction must be neither true nor false at the time of prediction. Not so for INDETERMINISM. Third, INDETERMINISM coheres better with our attitudes towards

disposed to avoiding this claim, if possible. Regardless of what I endorse later on, the point stands; Cameron's solution to McTaggart's Paradox is compatible with MGB, and so does not constitute a reason to prefer CST.

[35] See Cameron (2015, §5.4-§5.5)

[36] See Cameron (2015, pp.197-201).

future contingents. If we are confident that the future is open, and that this means there are no facts of the matter regarding future contingents, then we are confident that 'it will rain tomorrow' is neither true nor false. But this means we ought to reject that claim and its negation. This is a bad result. Openness intuitions do not prescribe the rejections of some options, but rather that some options *not* be rejected.

Suppose we concede this. What follows? I say not much, so far as MGB is concerned. Insofar as this argument is sound, it targets only the standard version of the growing block view—one that does not deploy Meinongian resources to characterize the future. This is because standard growing blockers are naturally disposed to endorsing UNDERDETERMINISM; because given their ontology, it looks as if there is nothing that speaks to the truth of future contingents. MGB, on the other hand, has a lot to say about future things; there are indeed entities—non-existent ones—that speak to the truth of future contingents. For the reasons Cameron suggests, then, MGB fits more naturally with INDETERMINISM than UNDERDETERMINISM. So there are compelling points in favor of CST, but they are not points that MGB cannot also earn.

4.4.2 Skow's Quasi-Fragmentalism

Brad Skow is partial towards what he calls the anemic view of time's passage, according to which temporal passage is akin to spatial variation. Yet, he goes to great lengths to defend the moving spotlight theory from a number of objections, offering guidance on what one ought to say if they want a more robust account of passage than

he does.[37] In doing so, a view that looks like Fragmentalism emerges. Fragmentalism is the view that reality is not a metaphysically unified place; it is made up of *fragments*—maximal coherent collections of facts.[38] Fine's version sees reality as a series of tensed fragments that do not cohere with one another; the world is contradictory in the sense that, in reality, there are facts with incompatible content. So reality disagrees about what is absolutely present; presentness is relative to something. Though the views look quite different at first, they both land on this principle, hence 'Quasi-Fragmentalism'. On QF, reality is composed of spacetime points with a structure described using Minkowski geometry. Ultimately, what this does is relativize tensed facts to spacetime points.

Why go this way? For one, it captures a robust sort of passage while comporting nicely with special relativity. I have already bracketed the question of whether MGB (or any other view) is compatible with the findings of the empirical sciences. For now, I am happy to grant this as a point in favor of QF. But this point does not go unanswered. There is a heavy price to pay for "going fragmentalist." Our intuition that the present is privileged is more precisely an intuition that the present is *absolutely* privileged. A view on which *no* parts of spacetime are *absolutely present*, and *every* part of spacetime is *relatively present*, can hardly be said to capture the intuitive sense in which the present is metaphysically privileged. Insofar as QF is meant to be attractive to a-theorizers, this is nearly a nonstarter; it is a clear violation of PRIVILEGED PRESENT, which specifies that there is only one objectively privileged present. Maybe this heavy price is worth

[37] See Skow (2015, §6-§9).
[38] See Fine (2005).

paying, but the payoff better be proportionally massive. I am skeptical it will suffice.

For two, QF offers a more robust account of time's passage than the anemic view. Time passes because, for any given point, there are past points and future points relative to it. This is a nice feature but only for the empirical reason we have already mentioned. The trouble here is simple. This sort of passage QF offers is off-target; while it is a genuine sort of passage, it is not adequately connected to the intuitive sort of passage we are aiming to vindicate. Meghan Sullivan puts this point nicely:

> If defenders of the Passage Intuition want to save the appearance that *the* present is an instant that you, the reader, occupy, MST-Spacetime is no help. The intuitions about passage we want to recover are not intuitions about points of space-time, they are intuitions about the macrophysical world.[39]

To be fair, there is more utility in both CST and QF beyond what I have pointed out here, and just how compelling the rejoinders I offer on behalf of MGB is open for debate. We've only just started. Although the final score has yet to be determined, I think it is fair to say that MGB deserves a seat at the table—which is in some cases the best we can hope for as we continue to develop increasingly serviceable theories. Minimally, MGB's prospects call out for further philosophical attention.

[39] See Sullivan (2018).

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EDUCATION

Syracuse University (Syracuse, NY)
- Ph.D. in Philosophy, 2020
- C.U.T. (Certificate in University Teaching), 2018

Biola University (La Mirada, CA)
- M.A. in Philosophy, *high honors*, 2014

University of California, Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara, CA)
- B.A. in Philosophy, *Ethics and Public Policy* concentration, 2011

AREA OF SPECIALIZATION

Metaphysics

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Ethics, Free Will, Philosophy of Religion

PRESENTATIONS (*invited)

February 2020: "The Measure of Freedom" w/ Anthony Nguyen and Shohei Takasaki
8^{th} *Free Will, Moral Responsibility, and Agency* Conference, FSU

November 2019: "Might Truth Only Sometimes Depend on Being?"*
TPS Colloquium, Biola University

February 2019: "Meinongianism, Ontological Pluralism, and Theories of Time"*
TPS Colloquium, Biola University

October 2018: "From Ontological Pluralism to Mereological Pluralism"*
SPEC Society, USC

October 2018: "From Ontological Pluralism to Mereological Pluralism"*
TPS Colloquium, Biola University

April 2018: "Meinongian Ontological Pluralism"*
TPS Colloquium, Biola University

February 2018: "Meinongian Ontological Pluralism"
The Question of Ontology (*delayed; presented 2/20/18*), Complutense University of Madrid

November 2017: "Meinongian Ontological Pluralism"*
2017 ABD Workshop, Syracuse University

November 2017: Comments on Arturo Javier's "Belief in Ordinary Objects: Vindication Without Apprehension?"*
2017 ABD Workshop, Syracuse University

October 2017: "Absence Causation and *Supervenience*"
6^{th} *Free Will, Moral Responsibility, and Agency* Conference, FSU

October 2017: "From Meinongian Ontological Pluralism to Mereological Pluralism"*
2017 Working Papers Series, Syracuse University

April 2017: "Absence Causation and *Supervenience*"
2017 APA Pacific Division Meeting (Seattle, WA)

March 2017: "Absence Causation and *Supervenience*"
2017 USC/UCLA Graduate Conference, UCLA

September 2016: Comments on Viorica Martinez's "The Principle of Sufficient Reason and Non-Existence"*
9^{th} Annual American Association for Mexican Philosophers Conference, Syracuse University

September 2016: "Meinongianism and Ontological Pluralism"
5^{th} Vienna Forum for Analytic Philosophy Graduate Conference, University of Vienna

June 2016: "Counting Against Ontological Pluralism"
5^{th} Italian Conference in Analytic Ontology and Metaphysics, University of Padua

March 2016: "The Model Minority Stereotype"*
Minorities and Philosophy, Syracuse University

December 2015: "Counting Against Ontological Pluralism"
Open Minds XI, University of Manchester

October 2015: Comments on James Lee's "Metaphysical Beliefs and Persisting Disagreement"*
2015 ABD Workshop, Syracuse University

May 2015: "Counting Against Ontological Pluralism"
2015 Talbot Philosophical Society Graduate Conference, Biola University

March 2015: "Number Terms and Existence Phrases"*
2015 Working Papers Series, Syracuse University

March 2014: Comments on Adam Omelianchuk's "Why Can't Substances Be Parts of Other Substances?"*
2014 Talbot Philosophical Society Graduate Conference, Biola University

October 2013:"Epistemicism, Vague Names, and Ontological Commitments"*
TPS Colloquium, Biola University

May 2013: "Persons and the Metaphysics of Resurrection: A Rejoinder to Baker"
Personhood, Place, and Possession Graduate Conference, UC Santa Barbara

March 2013: "Paradise on the Cheap"*
TPS Colloquium, Biola University

November 2011: Comments on Zach Comer's "The Fine-Tuning Argument and the Understated Evidence Objection"*
2011 Biola Student Conference, Biola University

Works in Progress

"Counting Against Ontological Pluralism"
"Absence Causation and Actual Sequence Views"
"Meinongian Ontological Pluralism"
"Bridging Ontological Pluralism and Mereological Pluralism"
"Meinongianism, Ontological Pluralism, and the Growing Block"
"A Dilemma for Classical Bundle Theory"
"The Measure of Freedom" w/ Anthony Nguyen and Shohei Takasaki

Awards and Grants

Travel Grant (x9), Department of Philosophy, Syracuse University, 2015-2020

Graduate Student Travel Stipend, American Philosophical Association, 2017
Travel Grant, The Analysis Trust *via* the University of Manchester, 2015
Summer Research Fellowship, College of Arts and Sciences, Syracuse University, 2015
Elected into Kappa Tau Epsilon, Talbot Scholastic Honor Society, Biola Unversity, 2014
Fieldstead M.A. Philosophy Grant, Biola University, 2013
Biola M.A. Philosophy & Ethics Scholarship, Biola University, 2013

Teaching Experience

Instructor of Record

Free Will	Summer 2018, Summer 2019, Summer 2020
Modern and Post-Modern Philosophy	Spring 2020
Classical and Medieval Philosophy	Fall 2019
Introduction to Moral Theory	Fall 2017, Spring 2020
Ethics and Contemporary Issues	Fall 2019
Critical Thinking	Fall 2018, Fall 2019
Theories of Knowledge and Reality	Summer 2016, Summer 2017
Philosophy of Religion	Summer 2015

Teaching Assistant

Introduction to Logic (M. Rieppel)	Fall 2016
Human Nature (A. Gallois)	Spring 2016
Introduction to Logic (M. Rieppel)	Fall 2015
Theories of Knowledge and Reality (M. Heller)	Spring 2015
Theories of Knowledge and Reality (R. Van Gulick)	Fall 2014
Metaphysics & Epistemology (T. Pickavance)	Spring 2014
Symbolic Logic (T. Pickavance)	Spring 2014
Epistemology II: Religious Pluralism (T. Pickavance)	Fall 2013
Philosophy of Religion (T. Pickavance)	Fall 2013

Professional & Departmental Service

Service Positions

Capstone Thesis Advisor, Providence Christian College	2020–2021
Graduate TA Mentor, Philosophy Department, Syracuse University	2016–2018
Founder/Organizer, Minorities and Philosophy: *Syracuse University Chapter*	2015–2018
Volunteer Philosophy Instructor, Southside Academy Charter School	2015–2016
President, Talbot Philosophical Society, Biola University	2013–2014
Vice-President, Talbot Philosophical Society, Biola University	2012–2013
Communications Chair, Talbot Philosophical Society, Biola University	2012

Conferences/Other Events

Referee, 2020 SU Graduate Conference (Sara Bernstein, Michael Rieppel)	postponed
Referee, 2019 SU Graduate Conference (Jennifer Whiting, Luvell Anderson)	April 2019
Referee, 2018 SU Graduate Conference (Trenton Merricks, Kara Richardson)	April 2018
Chair, *The Question of Ontology* Conference (Schaffer, Cumpa, Yablo)	February 2018
Chair, SPAWN 2017, 'The Collective Grounds of Relations' (Raul Saucedo)	June 2017
Referee, 2017 SU Graduate Conference (Agustín Rayo, Fred Beiser)	April 2017
Assistant Organizer/Chair, 2017 California Metaphysics Conference (USC)	January 2017
Chair, 2nd IAPDD, 'What Does it Mean to Kill Someone?' (A. Omelianchuk)	May 2016
Referee, 2016 SU Graduate Conference (Daniel Korman, David Sobel)	April 2016
Co-Organizer, 'Minorities in the Media', MAP: Syracuse University	March 2016
Chair, 2015 APA Pacific Division Meeting, 'Measure is Puzzling' (A. Segal)	April 2015
Referee, 2015 SU Graduate Conference (Douglas Portmore, Kim Frost)	March 2015
Co-Organizer/Referee, 2014 TPS Spring Conference (Edward Feser)	March 2014
Co-Organizer/Referee, 2013 TPS Fall Conference (David Hershenov)	November 2013
Co-Organizer, 2013 New Graduate Student Orientation	August 2013

Co-Organizer/Referee, 2013 TPS Spring Conference (Keith DeRose)	March 2013
Co-Organizer/Referee, 2012 TPS Fall Conference (Stephen T. Davis)	November 2012
Co-Organizer, 2012 New Graduate Student Orientation	August 2012

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