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Extended Modal Realism — A New Solution to Problems Related to Non-existence

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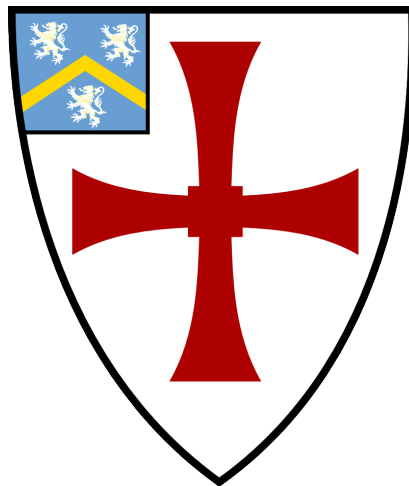
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Abstract

This thesis argues that we should consider extended modal realism as a new player in the debate about non-existence. The primary aim is to show that extended modal realism is a viable theory when it comes to solving problems of non-existence. At times I will argue that extended modal realism has advantages over Lewisian modal realism when it comes to examining the problems of non-existence, not only in the case of problems relating to thought but also problems concerning truth as well. However, I do not intend for the proposed advantages of extended modal realism to be presented as knockdown arguments against other strategies.

Not only do I argue that extended modal realism is viable when it comes to solving these problems, but I also make adjustments and additions to the theory that supports the conclusion of this thesis, and I argue that these are improvements to the modal realist theory. I include arguments for a new theory of existence that removes the need for the extended modal realist to rely on set-theoretic notations to understand existence, which I consider problematic. I argue for the revival of the Lewis-Rosen proposal for truth-making and a semantic instrumentalist theory of thought, both of which naturally

accompany extended modal realism. Throughout this thesis, I will comment on the proposals and strategies of other authors, and some of these comments will be critical. At this very early stage, I want to clarify that this thesis's success does not rest on showing that all other competitor theories fail. I only include critical comments to situate extended modal realism within the landscape of viable positions that are available for one to occupy.

Supervisors: Sara Uckelman and Stephen Mumford

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Throughout the highs and lows along the journey of research and deep thought, I finally wish to thank my parents and close friends who have been encouraging and supportive every step of the way.

Declaration

The work in this thesis is based on research carried out at the Durham University, Department of Philosophy, University of Durham, England. No part of this thesis has been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification, and it is the sole work of the author unless referenced to the contrary in the text.

Some of the work presented in this thesis has been published in journals and conference proceedings - the relevant publications are listed below.

Publications

Thomas, A. (2019). Extended modal realism - a new solution to the problem of intentional inexistence.Philosophia 48, 1197–1208

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Introduction

Before I begin this thesis it would be helpful to have some background information. Problems concerning non-existence have been present in philosophical discussion for a great many years. It was Parmenides who stated "Thou canst not know what is not—that is impossible—nor utter it; for it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be...The thing that can be thought and that for the sake of which the thought exists is the same thing; for you cannot find thought without something that is, as which it is uttered"(Russell, 2013, 49). Russell clarifies this comment from Parmenides, stating "The essence of this argument is: When you think, you think *of* something; when you use a name, it must be the name of something. Therefore both thought and language require objects outside themselves" (Russell, 2013, 49). But what happens when the objects of language or of thought are standardly thought to be non-existent objects. The question of how we think and talk about things which do not exist has become known as the problem of non-existence. When it comes to non-existent objects, the

standard view in mainstream, (Anglo-American) philosophy is that no such objects exist (Parsons, 1981, 1). We might put this view in positive terms: "everything that there is exists". This, combined with an attachment to quantification as a tool to range over what there is, causes problems. For it seems that there is then a class of objects which do not exist and are not captured by the standard use of quantification; therefore, the problem arises about how we can say true things about these kinds of objects. Parsons (1981, 1), expressing a similar concern, calls this dilemma the "Russellian Rut" on the grounds that he thinks it stems from Russell.[1] It is a view that we are entrenched in, which is pervasive and dominant; however, we must admit that recently there have been developments away from this style of thinking, principally with Crane (2013) who has been referred to as a "weak Meinongian" by Casati and Fujikawa (2016). In conversation, Crane has clarified his position: to be a quasi or weak Meinongian is to accept that there are things that do not exist without accepting the characterisation postulate. Crane in our exchange admits that maybe we should not call this Meinongian unless all we mean by Meinongian is that there are things which do not exist. There is also the point that the force of Crane's solution comes with the non-relational understanding of intentionality rather than any kind of vast metaphysical moves. Therefore, we may doubt how far Crane's development actually gets us out of the rut, and perhaps we might understand Crane as offering a more sensible and less dogmatic way to operate within the rut. No matter how we understand Crane, there have been

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[1]Although in Chapter 7 I will ultimately claim it is Quine's doctrines that have been most problematic.

significant shifts in the metaphysics of non-existence with the work of Routley (1980); Parsons (1981); Zalta (1988); Priest (2016); Berto (2017, 2018). There has been a renewed attention on questions about non-existence and I think in no small part due to the new interest in impossible worlds, mainly due to the work of Priest, Berto and Jago. Priest in particular takes his view as one which pushes back against an orthodoxy that takes the view that the particular quantifier is "existentially loaded", and is so ingrained in modern philosophical logic that to reject this association is enough to receive an incredulous stare. Priest (2016, 323) cites the following passage from Lycan (1979, 290, italics original) in support of his assessment:

> I have to take my place amongst those who find *relentlessly* (i.e., *genuinely or primitively*) Meinongian quantification simply unintelligible. However, in saying this, I am not using the term "unintelligible" in its sneering post-Wittgensteinian sense. So far as I am able to introspect, I am not expressing any tendentious philosophical qualm. (For this reason, my use of the term may be irrevocably misleading.) I mean that I really cannot understand relentlessly Meinongian quantification at all; to me it is *literally* gibberish or mere noise.

I will say more about the notion of existence and its relation to the existential quantifier in Chapter 7. For now I wish to point out that the picture has been set up as one between those who have an orthodoxy theory of existence and those who do not. However, there is another option which

is little explored, often mentioned in the literature, and features heavily in the references and bibliographies of works concerning non-existence. That is to go the way of the modal realist (Lewis, 1986). *On The Plurality of Worlds* and many of Lewis's other works are often seen in the references of material about non-existence, but a modal realist solution to the problems of non-existence is rarely considered in full seriousness. Part of this is because Lewisian modal realism, which is the most well-known variety of modal realism does not seem that well equipped to deal with problems of non-existence. Even though an ontology that admits possibilia might at first seem appealing, the fact that Lewisian worlds are completely isolated creates problems down the line. Because Lewis's worlds are completely isolated from any other worlds, any theory of thought which involves causal relations rules out modal realism. What is more, Lewisian modal realism completely rejects impossibilia and thus many typical non-existent objects we might want to explain with Lewisian modal realism we cannot in the seemingly alluring straightforward way.

There are also some potential meta-reasons as to why modal realism does not seem to fit neatly into the picture as I have presented it above. It is broadly in the Russell/Quine tradition and thus does not make the move of Priest by noting an alternative reading for "∃", but Lewisian modal realism does seem to allow for a greater domain of existent objects than many philosophers would be happy with and thus is awkwardly positioned in the non-existence literature. This puts people in an uncomfortable position where the theory of quantification remains traditional but the metaphysical

commitments are just ones that people are unhappy with; even Priest (2016, 14) says, "by being a modal realist, and so taking every object to exist. But this gives us an extremely bloated ontology." In this thesis, I offer a new application for a relatively new variety of modal realism, extended modal realism (Yagisawa, 2010).

In this thesis, I argue that extended modal realism is a viable solution to problems of non-existence and in some places succeeds in places where Lewisian modal realism is limited. First, extended modal realism is able to make sense of the noneist's valuable comments about existential quantification, but it does not need to completely revoke the traditional position. What is more, extended modal realism is also able to accommodate theories of thought which involve causal relations better than Lewisian modal realism can. However, merely because extended modal realism is successful in some areas where Lewisian modal realism is limited this is not intended to be presented as knockdown objections to Lewisian modal realism. These critical comments are merely intended to show that in certain circumstances extended modal realism could be advantageous to a Lewisian system.

The structure of this thesis is as follows. In Chapter 2 I detail what extended modal realism is. In Chapter 3 I introduce the general issues created by non-existent objects and the particular problems I will be focusing on in this thesis. In Chapter 4 I respond to claims made by Crane (2012), for it seems that there are significant issues in how Crane sets up the problem. In Chapter 5 I detail and introduce the concept of intentionality and its related concepts. I highlight some issues that come with how to under-

stand these concepts. Then in Chapter 6 I introduce some of the other ways that the problem of non-existence has been approached in some of the most recent and relevant literature. In Chapter 7 I survey some of the positions on how philosophers understand existence, then in 8 I provide my theory of existence and how it develops the relational existence of Yagisawa. Chapter 9 provides a solution to the problem about true negative existential statements, in this chapter I also show how extended modal realism can develop the Lewis–Rosen proposal. Chapter 10 contains replies to potential objections. Chapter 11 provides the details of how extended modal realism is a viable solution to the problem of non-existence and avoids the objections raised by Kriegel (2007); this chapter has been published in Thomas (2019). Chapter 12 contains replies to some objections concerning modal realism and singular thought showing that it is not only a metaphysics that is important when it comes to problems of non-existence, but also a complementary theory of thought needs to be involved as well, which I provide in this chapter. This thesis is broadly divided into four parts. The first part, up to and including Chapter 7, details much of the work that has gone on before and situates this thesis within the literature. The latter parts (starting from Chapter 8 onwards) are comprised of a series of related standalone papers. Finally, in Chapter 13 I summarise what has been achieved in this thesis and I identify some scope for further work and developments.

1.1 Methodology

Before I start the main part of the thesis, I will say a bit about the methodology for this project. This thesis aims to establish extended modal realism as a viable player in debates about non-existence. This thesis will highlight some of the advantages and solutions that extended modal realism brings to the table. However, when reading this thesis, one should not consider extended modal realism to be a panacea. Extended modal realism has its own commitments and draws backs. That said, I will be focusing on pointing out the benefits it can bring. In true Lewisian fashion, the aim is to establish extended modal realism as a "serviceable" theory in relation to questions of non-existence. For this thesis to be successful, I need not show that other relevant theories are false.

Another methodological point is that throughout this thesis, I refer to and comment on other viable and well-known philosophical views in the area of non-existence. Critical comments about these views are not intended to be knock-down objections, and I take it that there are many viable options to answer questions about non-existence. These critical comments are merely included to show that there are areas where extended modal realism might offer an advantage compared to existing theories.

Part I

Extended Modal Realism and the Problem of Non-existence and Intentionality

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Modal Realism Extended and Otherwise

1

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I outline the details of the position known as extended modal realism. Extended modal realism is a development on the Lewisian modal realist project. In this thesis, I argue that extended modal realism has a place to be treated as a solution to the problem of non-existence. In this chapter, I detail extended modal realism and explain what I take possible and impossible worlds to be. I also highlight some reasons as to why we

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[1]This title was selected in respect to Yagisawa's book *Worlds and Individuals, Possible and Otherwise*, which had a significant impact on my philosophical thoughts in general and on this thesis in particular.

might want to extend the Lewisian project to also include impossible worlds as well as possible worlds.

Extended modal realism is a variety of modal realism which claims that there are possible worlds and impossible worlds. In 1986 Lewis provided us with the metaphysical framework for a philosophers' paradise. However, his vision of paradise was not as expansive as it could have been. The paradise Lewis offered us neglected to include impossible worlds. In the discussion that follows, I present a modal realist metaphysics which includes both possible and impossible worlds; this is *truly* a philosophers' paradise. Taking my cue from Lewis's methodology, I do not set out with the aim to establish extended modal realism as a theory superior to all rivalling theories. What I can offer is a theory with a great deal of explanatory power that is "serviceable". The extended modal realism, as presented here, is generally that as presented to us by Yagisawa (2010). However, there is an important difference between Yagisawa and myself. The main difference is that we disagree about what it takes to exist, which leads to a distinctive division between our theories. I explain this difference in Chapter 8. I argue that my theory of existence is not only an improvement on Yagisawa's theory but also has advantages for discussion concerning non-existence.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. In §2.2 I introduce what modal realism is as articulated by David Lewis, since some readers might be unfamiliar with Lewis's theory. In §2.3 I signal some reasons as to why we might want to expand on the Lewisian framework as articulated by Kiourti (2019). Finally, I will detail extended modal realism (Yagisawa, 1988, 2010).

2.2   Lewis's Modal Realism

Lewis's modal realism is the view that there are other worlds just as real as ours. He refers to these other worlds as "possible worlds". They are spatiotemporally isolated wholes. Nolan (2015, 54) says that "Every possible description of a world matches up to a real, concrete universe out there."

Lewis (1986, 2) states that there are worlds which are other ways. This is the thesis he refers to as modal realism. For Lewis, our world is just one among many. The worlds he speaks of are varied. There are enough worlds that absolutely *every way* that a world could possibly be is a way that some world *is*. Lewis's worlds are comprised of possibilia (possible parts). Just as there is variance among worlds, there is variance among these parts of the worlds. Lewis (1986, 2) says, "There are ever so many ways that a part of a world could be: and so many and so varied are the other worlds that absolutely every way that a part of a world could possibly be is a way that some part of some world is." For Lewis, his possible worlds are all of one kind. There is a difference in kind between the things that are parts of worlds, but this difference is no more different than the difference in kind that occurs between things that occupy the same world, for example the difference between chairs and cats.

When it comes to creation, Lewis is clear that his worlds are not created, though he does allow that "It may happen that one part of a world makes other parts, as we do; and as other-worldly gods and demiurges do on a grander scale"(Lewis, 1986, 3). For Lewis, the plenitude of worlds are

causally isolated.

> nothing outside a world ever makes a world; and nothing inside
> makes the whole of a world, for that would be an impossible
> kind of self causation. We make languages and concepts and
> descriptions and imaginary representations that apply to worlds.
> We make stipulations that select some worlds rather than others
> for our attention. Some of us even make assertions to the effect
> that other worlds exist. But none of these things we make are
> worlds themselves.

(Lewis, 1986, 3)

This is the sketch of modal realism, but why might a philosopher be attracted to this system? Lewis (1986, 3) provides some reasons, although his reasons are minimal and nuanced. Chiefly he says we ought to believe in a plurality of worlds because the hypothesis is "serviceable". Lewis also cites the impressive record that possible worlds and possibilia have had on influencing our analysis of necessity as truth at all possible worlds (Lewis, 1973). But really the choice to go for modal realism comes down to a trade-off, and for some maybe, the price to pay for modal realism is too high. Lewis states:

> If we want the theoretical benefits that talk of *possibilia* brings,
> the most straightforward way to gain one's title to them is to
> accept such talk as the literal truth. It is my view that the

price is right, is less spectacularly so than in the mathematical parallel. The benefits are worth their ontological cost. Modal realism is fruitful; that gives us good reason to believe it is true. (Lewis, 1986, 4)

2.3 Extending the Lewisian Project

Since Lewisian modal realism, there have been various uses and developments of the possible worlds framework to include impossible worlds even though Lewis himself disapproves of such entities.

As far as I can tell, it was Naylor (1986) who originally suggested the extension of modal realism to include impossible worlds. Naylor's argument functions by highlighting that if we accept Lewis's argument for possible worlds, then we also ought to accept impossible worlds via the same argument.

Lewis writes:

I believe that there are possible worlds other than the one we happen to inhabit. If an argument is wanted, it is this. It is uncontroversially true that things might have been otherwise than they are. I believe, and so do you, that things could have been different in countless ways. But what does this mean? Ordinary language permits the paraphrase: there are many ways things could have been beside the way that they actually are.

On the face of it, this sentence is an existential quantification. It says that there exist many entities of a certain description to wit, 'ways things could have been'. I believe that things could have been different in countless ways; I believe permissible paraphrase of what I believe; taking the paraphrase of its face value, I therefore believe in the existence of entities which might be called "ways things could have been". I prefer to call them possible worlds. (Lewis, 1973, [84)

Naylor argues that if we are happy to accept Lewis's short argument for possible worlds, then we should accept the same argument for *impossible* worlds.

Naylor writes:

It is also uncontroversially true that some things might not have been otherwise than they are. The chair that is in fact blue could not have been both blue and red in the same respect and at the same time. I believe, and so do you, that things could *not* have been different in countless ways. But ordinary language permits the paraphrase: there are many ways things could *not* have been besides the way that they actually are. On the face of it, this sentence is also an existential quantification. It says that there exist many entities of a certain description, viz., "ways things could *not* have been." I believe permissible paraphrases of what I believe. Taking the paraphrase at face value, I therefore believe

in the existence of entities which might be called "ways things could not have been". I call them *impossible worlds.* (Naylor, 1986, 28–29)

Whether or not Naylor is endorsing modal realism or the introduction of impossible worlds is beside the point. There are philosophers, like me, who take Lewis's original argument for possible worlds seriously and are happy to follow the Naylor's argument for the extension of Lewis's paradise to include impossible worlds.

Before I detail the specifics of extended modal realism, I will say a little bit about what exactly impossible worlds are and why we might decide to include possible worlds in our ontology.

2.4 Impossible Worlds

2.4.1 Why Impossible Worlds?

I cannot employ them merely to solve the problem of non-existence so we an need independent reasons for their introduction. Kiourti (2019) highlights the motivations for impossible worlds. The first reason for the introduction of impossible worlds that Kiourti highlights is the "granularity problem". Possible worlds are useful when it comes to individuating distinct propositions via distinct sets of possible worlds. However, the analysis is too coarse-grained. Kiourti highlights that an account needs to be more

fine-grained to distinguish all intuitively distinct thought content. Kiourti
provides the following example:

> Mathematicians have tried to square the circle for centuries be-
> fore it was proven impossible. In doing so they entertained an
> impossible proposition, which, in turn, is identified with the null
> set of worlds (for it is true at no possible world). But then, to
> entertain the idea of squaring the circle is to entertain each and
> every impossible proposition—"1+1=3", "red is green", "the
> law of excluded middle is false", "Tim (the time traveller) is
> dead and not dead" and so on, also identified with the null set.
> But, surely these are distinct thoughts for one can entertain, be-
> lieve or desire one without thereby also entertaining, believing
> or desiring every other. The situation is similar when it comes
> to necessary propositions, usually identified with the set of all
> worlds. One can presumably know that one plus one equals two
> but not thereby know that Hesperus is Phosphorus or that if all
> men are mortal and Socrates is a man, then Socrates is mortal.
> Lo and behold, venturing into impossible worlds (a.k.a. worlds
> that verify some impossibilities and falsify some necessities) al-
> lows us to differentiate intuitively distinct propositions across
> the board.(Kiourti, 2019, 2)

The next motivation that Kiourti highlights is that they allow for us to
build a semantics for counter-possible conditions, one which does not leave

them all vacuously true. According to Lewis–Stalnaker semantics for counterfactual states, a counterfactual is true just when all worlds closest to our world satisfy the antecedent also satisfies the consequent. Kiourti says:

> without impossible worlds, the same treatment does not extend
> to counterpossibles, since antecedents of such conditionals are
> false at all worlds, hence satisfy these truth conditions trivially.
> Now, if my table suddenly sprouted wings and flew away I would
> (presumably) sit up and take notice. Ditto if my table suddenly
> turned into a square circle. By the same token, it's false that
> if my table suddenly sprouted wings I wouldn't bat an eyelid;
> and false that if my table suddenly turned into a square circle
> I wouldn't be surprised. But the latter proposition, no matter
> how exotic, comes out true on the standard account. (Kiourti,
> 2019, 2)

The final way in which Kiourti motivates impossible worlds is by highlighting that "impossible propositions and counterpossible reasoning strikes deeply at philosophical theorising" (Kiourti, 2019, 2). Kiourti goes on to say:

> Philosophers (and mathematicians) seem to entertain impossibilities rather often, as Daniel Nolan (1997: 544–546) points out,
> and frequently reason from such hypotheses in logic and metaphysics. We regularly evaluate mutually exclusive metaphysical

theories or logical systems, for instance, to assess their consequences. But whilst these are epistemically possible, if one such theory is true, then presumably, it is neccessarily true and hence its rivals necessarily false, i.e. impossible. Still, the content of these theories is not trivial. Nor is any odd thing true under such hypotheses. It seems unlikely that two philosophers may strongly disagree about, say, the behaviour of negation or about the nature of properties, yet that everything at least one of them says is trivially true. A more reasonable interpretation would be to say that philosophers, mathematicians, logicians and the like are capable of having meaningful arguments about such matters, and making sometimes true and sometimes false statements. As Berit Brogaard and Joe Salerno put it: "[p]erhaps much of philosophy is vacuous, uninformative and fallacious. But if it is, it is not for systematic misuse of the counterfactual"(Brogaard and Salerno 2013: 664). By contrast, impossible worlds allow for contentful philosophical discussions, and elegantly extend the standard treatment of counterfactuals to cover subjunctives of all kinds.(Kiourti, 2019, 2–3)

2.4.2 What Are Impossible Worlds?

Those who endorse impossible worlds tend to think that whatever their metaphysics for possible worlds is shared by impossible worlds. Priest expresses this sentiment in the following way.

> As far as I can see, any of the main theories concerning the
> nature of possible worlds can be applied equally to impossible
> worlds: they are existent nonactual entities; they are nonexist-
> ent objects; they are constructions out of properties and other
> universals; they are just certain sets of sentences... There is, as
> far as I can see no cogent (in particular, non-question-begging)
> reason to suppose there is an *ontological* difference between
> merely possible and impossible worlds. (Priest, 1997, 580–581)

There are a number of ways of understanding possible worlds which Berto
and Jago (2019, 31–32) catalogue informatively.

IMPOSSIBLE WAYS: One way to understand impossible worlds is as im-
possible ways. Berto and Jago (2019, 31) say we might understand im-
possible worlds as similar to possible worlds. Along the lines of "If possible
worlds are ways things could be, then non-normal or impossible worlds are
ways things could *not* be." The thought behind this conception of impossible
worlds is that everything is possible. However, there are some things which
cannot happen. The ways the world couldn't be are impossible worlds.
Yagisawa (1988) thinks of impossible worlds like this.

LOGIC VIOLATORS: We might also understand impossible worlds as
worlds where the laws of logic fail. Of course, this conception depends
on what we take the laws of logic to be. Berto and Jago (2019, 31), re-
ferring to Priest (2008) characterise this view in the following way: "Given

some logic *L*, an impossible world with respect to the *L*-laws is one in which some of those laws fail to hold." Priest (2008, 172) himself says, "After all we seem to envisage just such worlds when we evaluate conditionals such as 'if intuitionist logic were correct, the law of identity would fail'(false). Even if one is a modal realist, why should there not be such worlds?"

CLASSICAL LOGIC VIOLATORS: A third way of understanding impossible worlds is to think of them as a classical logic violator. If we think that the laws of logic are the classical ones, then this gives the same result as the previous definition. However, if we think otherwise A world complying with intuitionistic logic, but where instances of Excluded Middle fail, will be impossible in this third sense (Berto and Jago, 2019, 32).

CONTRADICTION-REALISERS: The final way to understand impossible worlds is one where contradictions hold, that is to say worlds at which sentences that take the form A and ¬A hold, violating the law of non-contradiction.

The kind of worlds I am interested in are those articulated by Yagisawa, first in Yagisawa (1988) and then developed at length in Yagisawa (2010). In the 1988 paper, Yagisawa puts forward a development of the Lewisian project with an argument in very much the same vein as Naylor: if we accept Lewis's argument for possible worlds, we ought also to do the same for impossible worlds. In this 1988 paper, Yagisawa comments very little about the metaphysics of impossible worlds. Rather, Yagisawa takes it that

his scope in this paper is to endorse the conditional thesis:

> If modal realism is to be accepted at all, we should not stop with
> the Lewisian modal realism, but go all the way and accept the
> extended modal realism. I shall leave it to the readers to decide
> whether this condition should be used as the first premise of the
> *modus ponens* or the first premises of the *modus tollens.*
>
> (Yagisawa, 1988, 203).

In Yagisawa's 2010 he departs slightly from the Lewisian project.[1]

Yagisawa (2010, 176) characterises impossible worlds in the following way:

> Worlds are metaphysical indices of the modal kind. All possible
> are worlds but not all worlds are possible worlds. Some worlds
> are not possible worlds, that is, they are impossible worlds. An
> impossible world is a world at which an impossibility obtains.

For Yagisawa, impossible worlds are as simple as that. Like Priest re-
commends, extended modalists straightforwardly apply the metaphysics of
possible worlds to impossible worlds; they are of the same kind but differ
in their qualities. To make the position that I will later rely on more clear,
I will detail what possible worlds are for the extended modal realist in the
next section.

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[1]Depending on who you ask, the departure is more or less great. For instance, Nolan
(2015, 53) suggests that Lewis maintains the analogy between worlds and times and thus
might consider Yagisawa's move very much in line with the Lewisian variety of modal
realism. However, Yagisawa himself points out that Lewis denies the analogy between
times and worlds so might consider his extension of modal realism at a greater distance
(Yagisawa, 1988, 45).

2.5   Possible Worlds and Extended Modal Realism

The extended modal realist theory is realist in the sense that it is realist about possible worlds and about *mere possibilia*. What is more, the extended modal realist is realist in an important sense. They provide a non-representational treatment of modality *de re* (Yagisawa, 2010, 19).

For the extended modal realist, "possible worlds" are metaphysical indices on a par with temporal and spatial indices. They are "modal indices." The best way to get a handle on possible worlds in extended modal realism is to compare them to worlds according to Lewis's modal realism.

Lewis says:

> The world we live in is a very inclusive thing. Every stick and every stone you have ever seen is part of it. And so are you and I. And so are the planet Earth, the solar system, the entire Milky Way, the remote galaxies we see through telescopes, and (if there are such things) all the bits of empty space between the stars and galaxies. There is nothing so far away from us as not to be part of our world. Anything at any distance at all is to be included. Likewise the world is inclusive in time. No long-gone ancient Romans, no long-gone pterodactyls, no long-gone primordial clouds of plasma are too far in the past, nor are the dead dark stars too far in the future, to be part of this same

world. Maybe, as I myself think, the world is a big physical
object; or maybe some parts of it are entechies or spirits or aura
or deities or other things unknown to physics. But nothing is so
alien kind as not to be part of our world, provided only that it
does exist at some distance and direction from here, or at some
time before or after or simultaneous with now. (Lewis, 1986, 1)

For Lewis, a possible world is the mereological sum of all that is spatiotemporally related. Lewis emphasises that his worlds are like spatial locations stating: "The worlds are something like remote planets; except that most of them are much bigger than mere planets, and they are not remote" (Lewis, 1986, 1).

By contrast, Yagisawa (2010, 44) thinks of possible worlds as things more "akin to that of a spatial point (or extended region at best), not something that occupies it. What Lewis describes in the first quotation above I call *the universe*, or more accurately the actual world-stage of the universe"'. The universe is a vast object which extends at least spatially, temporally, and—according to extended modal realism—modally. You and I are part of it, and so are the remote galaxies and the ancient Romans. But the universe is not a possible world. It is instead the comprehensive subject of possibility and necessity.

On this conception of possible worlds, possibility and necessity are cashed out in the following way. When we assert that something p is possible (or necessary), we are saying that the universe is possibly (or necessarily) P. The universe is one way at one possible world. For Yagisawa (2010, 44), the

universe extends in modal dimensions, as well as in spatial and temporal dimensions.

Yagisawa (2010, 44) says:

> What Lewis calls "our world" is the universe as it actually is, i.e. the universe as it is at the actual world. In Lewis's system there are many objects like what he calls "our world", and he calls them "possible worlds". In my system there are many objects like the universe at the actual world, and they are the same universe at various possible worlds. That is, there are many objects like the actual-world-stage of the universe, and they are different world-stages of the same universe. Possible worlds themselves are not objects like the universe of the inhabitants of the universe. They are just such that the universe is a certain way at, or with respect to, them.

Yagisawa continues:

> I regard what Lewis calls "possible worlds" as modal parts of one and the same universe.[1] The universe's modal parts are not possible worlds, but the universe itself as it is at possible worlds, its world-stages. The universe's spatial or temporal parts are not spatial regions or temporal regions, but the universe itself as it is at such regions. *Lewis's modal space* (what he calls "logical

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[1]This is something I emphasise in my understanding of extended modal realist commitments as seen in Chapter 8.

space", the collection of all Lewsisian possible worlds and all possible objects existing at them) contains many concrete objects each of which is unified by spatiotemporal (or some other more general natural) relatedness and which do not together form a single possible object. *My modal space* (collection of all possible worlds I embrace and all objects existing at them) contains many concrete objects all of which are modal parts of one and the same universe. Some of them may be unified by spatiotemporal relatedness, some may be unified by some other relation, and some other may not be unified by any relation other than being part of the universe whatever that requires. Yagisawa (2010, 44)

Yagisawa wishes to remind us that Lewis's conception of a possible world is akin to how the actualist conceptualises them in an important way.

Lewis analyses "x is F at w" in terms of x's counterpart at w; x is F if and only if x's counterpart at w is F (expect when "F" is a special predicate like 'existent'). The counterpart of x at w represents x at w, and this makes representation play a crucial role in the truth condition for modalities *de re*. (Yagisawa, 2010, 47)

Yagisawa points out that actualists have to account for "x is F at w" in a similar way.

> According to the linguistic version of actualism, x is F at w and
> only if the sentence "*a* is F" is true at w, where "*a*" refers to
> x. The term "*a*" represents x at w, which makes representation
> crucial in this theory. The version of modal realism I [Yagisawa]
> defend differs from both Lewis's theory and actualism in this
> regard. (Yagisawa, 2010, 47)

Yagisawa (2014, 47) puts it that "The version of modal realism I favour ana-
lyses 'x is F at w' in terms of x itself, but this does not mean that notion
of representation has no place at all in this analysis". For Yagisawa, repres-
entation is *narrowly Lagadonian* just if the representative is identical to the
represented. Lewis calls this simply "Lagadonian". Narrowly Lagadonian
representation is self-representation. Representation is *broadly Lagaondian*
just if the representative is identical to a part of the represented, i.e. the
representative is identical to either the represented or a proper part of
the represented. Broadly Lagadonian representation, is representation of a
whole by a part. On my version of modal realism, x is F at w if and only
if x's world-stage at w is F. A modally extended individual is represented
at w by its world-stage at w. A world-stage of x at w is a modal part of x.
So, the version of modal realism I favour analyses modality *de re* in terms
of broadly Lagadonian representation (Yagisawa, 2014, 47).

The upshot of this is as Yagisawa describes it is:

> Start with a particular individual, say you, as you actually are.
> The broadly Lagadonian representational analysis of modality

de re applies to modalities concerning you. The same applies to modalities concerning a larger plurality of individuals, say, all that are near the surface of Earth. This will continue to hold as we move up in spatial size, to the contents of the solar system, the Milky Way, the Virgo Supercluster, and so on. Increasing the span on temporal period will not change the applicability of the broadly Lagadonian representational analysis of modality *de re.* The contents of the twenty first century, the Holocene, the Cenozoic Era, the Phanerzoic Eon, and so on. Eventually we reach the entire universe as it actually is, what Lewis calls "the actual world". But this object (or this plurality of objects as considered together are) only a proper part of a much larger whole extending through modal space, just as your actual-world-stage is only a proper part of a much larger whole that is you extending through many possible worlds. This object has different properties at different modal indices, just as you do. The modal indices are worlds. This object, the modally extended universe, is distinct from any world, just as you, a modally extended individual are distinct from any world. (Yagisawa, 2010, 47–48)

2.6 Modal Realism not Meinongianism

Some might suggest that extended modal realism is closer to a Meinongian ontology like that of Priest (2016) than to the modal realism of Lewis. However, from the inception of his theory, Yagisawa provides comments to ward off this objection. He says:

> Alexius von Meinong's ontology notoriously includes impossible things such as a square circle. I agree with Meinong's basic ontological insight that impossibility is not a good reason for exclusion from ontology. But I do not concur with his distinction between Sein and Assersein. I have no analogous distinction. Following Lewis, I say that there is only one ontological mode: existence. We use the existential quantifier to express it. The existential quantifier virtually always has a restricted universe of discourse, there is a broader universe of discourse for the variable to range over. Here I differ from Lewis. If the existential quantifier is used with absolutely no restriction, it will mean according to Lewis, "There exists an x in some world in our logical space." But according to me it will mean "There exists an x in some world in some logical space in some super logical space in some super super logical space...in some $(\text{super})^n$ logical space..." (Yagisawa, 1988, 202)

Yagisawa is sensitive to the closeness of his theory to Meinongian-style

theories from the very outset. I say more about how we extended modal realists distinguish ourselves from a Meinongian-style solution in Chapter 6.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided the basics of modal realism. I have articulated what possible and impossible worlds are and why we might be motivated to include not only possible worlds but also impossible worlds in our ontology. What is more, I have motivated and outlined an elaboration of the Lewisian project, a new variety of modal realism known as extended modal realism. This variety of modal realism I will argue provides us with a new and under-explored solution to the problem of non-existence.

The Problem of Non-existence

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I outline the puzzle of non-existence. I allude to the fact that Crane's diagnosis of where the puzzle of non-existence is false and supply a full argument for this in the following chapter. I argue that rather than the problem of non-existence primarily being a puzzle of thought, it is, in fact, a puzzle about what there is. The focus of this chapter is to set up the problems of non-existence that extended modal realism can help with. I ultimately target two problems concerning truth and one concerning thought. When it comes to the problem of thought, I mainly focus on Crane's formulation of the puzzle; the reason for this is that the way Crane sets up the problem of non-existence has become standard in the way that the problem of non-existence is engaged within the contemporary debate. And even though I disagree with Crane about where the fundamental puzzle is, I don't disagree that the puzzle he articulates is an important element

related to the foundational issue. I admit, in some respect, that any successful solution should not only handle the puzzle of what there is but also the puzzle of thought.

You might think about Chapters 3 and 4 as two parts of one large chapter subdivided for ease of reading. In this chapter I highlight that the puzzle of non-existence isn't exactly one uniform puzzle. Rather, it is a puzzle that comes in many different styles. My goal across these two chapters is to show that the most fundamental way to think of the puzzle is as a puzzle about what there is. This fundamental way of understanding the problem of non-existence underpins the other varieties of puzzles. I use this chapter to demarcate the kinds of puzzles about non-existent objects that are directly relevant to this thesis.

The purpose of this thesis is to provide the details for a new, under-explored, but seemingly obvious solution to a well-known and well-researched problem in metaphysics. The problem over time garnered the name "The Problem of Non-existence" and the solution is a variety of modal realism known as extended modal realism, which has been developed at length by Yagisawa (2010). In this chapter, I focus on laying out the problem since although the problem is well known, a clear formulation is often not given. As Crane (2012, 417) says:

> The problem of non-existence or "non-being" is often said to be one of the most ancient and intractable problems of philosophy. But like many such problems—the mind-body problem, the problem of universals, the problem of change—there is often

> as much unclarity about how to formulate the problem as there
>
> is about how to solve it.

I use this chapter to provide a clear formulation of the puzzles.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. In §3.2, I look at some of the motivations that Crane highlights for looking at this problem in the first place. Then in §3.3 I sketch some of the ways that the problem of non-existence has been set up. Thankfully Sainsbury (2018) has made this an easy task by consolidating them in his recent book on the topic of non-existence. In §3.4.1, I suggest that Crane's way of setting up the puzzle on a problem of thought is problematic and provide an argument for this in Chapter 4. Crane has become an influential figure in the non-existence and intentionality literature, and his way of thinking about the puzzle is extremely commonplace. I argue that there is a more fundamental way of looking at the puzzle that underpins all other ways. Before concluding, in §3.5 I highlight the two problems that non-existent objects make for truth. I will handle these problems of truth in Chapter 9.

3.2 Motivations

Crane (2012, 423) points out that there does seem to be a general interest in the non-existent. He cites a list published by *USA Today* of the 101 most influential people who never lived. The Marlboro Man, Big Brother, King Arthur, Santa Claus, Hamlet, Dr Frankenstein's Monster, Siegfried, Sherlock Holmes, Romeo and Juliet, Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Uncle Tom

all featured on this list. Crane tells us that although the list is humorous, it indicates an important feature of our interaction with non-existent objects. Crane states the list indicates

> ...how pervasive and ubiquitous our talk of the non-existent is. Not only do we indicate the influence and fame of these people (Sherlock Holmes is more famous than any living detective, as Terence Parsons (1980) has pointed out) but hours are spent wondering about their non-existent emotions (Siegfried fell in love with his aunt, you know), their non-existent families (how many children did Lady Macbeth have?). (Crane, 2012, 423)

The motivation for looking at this puzzle is partly because of our interest in fictions and other non-existent entities as Crane highlights. It is partly because of philosophical curiosity and the chance to establish a new player in the non-existence game (extended modal realism). The introduction of this new theory in the puzzle has an interesting consequence. It refocuses the objects of our concern not only to fictional characters but also more mundane kinds of non-existence, the future, the past, how things could have been, and how things could not have been. These things are often talked about in ordinary conversation as well as in philosophical contexts without a care for the ontological status of such things. I am not advocating that standard conversation be constrained by ontological commitments; rather, I merely intend to show that if this problem is a genuine one, then it is one that is pervasive as opposed to one that isn't just confined to concerns

about fictional characters. Although fictional characters do make excellent examples, as many philosophers before me have noticed for example, Russell (1905) used the present king of France and Parsons (1981) used Sherlock Holmes as their case studies.

3.3   Puzzles About Non-existence

It is common for us to think about the exploits of our favourite fictional characters. I might, for example, think about the adventures of Tin-Tin and Snowy. Sometimes we might even feel emotional about some fictional character: I might pity Anna Karenina or fear Freddy Krueger. Fictional characters have become the primary candidate for philosophers to use as examples of non-existent objects. They are, however, not the only kind of non-existent objects. I can also express intentional attitudes to objects at other times and to the objects of alternative states of affairs, that is to say, objects described by how things could have been and how things could not have been. It might quickly be objected to with the question, "How can we stand in intentional relations with an object that does not exist?" This question is at the heart of the problem of non-existence. Here I detail some examples of non-existent objects then provide a statement of some of the relevant puzzles of non-existence.

3.3.1   Thinking About Non-existent Objects

Given their dominating presence in the literature it is reasonable to say that fictional characters have become the primary example for authors to use when they want to discuss non-existent objects. Fictional characters are not the only kind of non-existent object, however. In this section, I draw attention to a number of other kinds of non-existent objects which we can consider.[1,2]

FICTIONAL CHARACTERS: Fictional characters are the common example of a non-existent object which agents think about. I think about Frodo and how he might succeed in his quest; I think about the inhabitants of 221B Baker Street and what cases they have solved. I think about Anna Karenina and the fate that might befall her. However, fictional characters do not standardly exist so how can we make sense of our thoughts about them.

MYTHICAL BEINGS: Another common example of non-existent beings are mythical beings, for example the likes of Pegasus. Like fictional characters, the standard position is that mythical beings do not exist.

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[1] I use object in a very general way just to indicate what other philosophers might call a "something".

[2] I do not mean to indicate that there is something wrong with the focus on fictional characters. After all our gut response to this question probably reveals our answer to the problem of non-existence in general. However, when it comes to theory choice, we might think that if a theory can better account for edge cases than its competitors can, then we ought to prefer it.

MISTAKEN REFERENCE: Cases of mistaken reference also provide examples where we think about a non-existent object. Take the following case: I believe that I am being followed by the shortest spy; however, unknown to me, my belief is a false one. In this case it might be said that I am thinking about a non-existent short spy.[1]

EMPTY REFERENCES: Empty references are referring terms that do not have an object to match up with the reference examples, such as "the present king of France", "the president of the United Kingdom", and "the queen of the United States". In these cases too, the object of our thought is a non-existent object.

IMPOSSIBLE OBJECTS: It also seems straightforwardly obvious to me that I can think about the round-square, or the box which is both full and empty at the same time. I might even be so puzzled by such entities that I think about them quite often.[2]

OTHER TIMES: Depending on your thoughts about the metaphysics of time, your opinion about this example might differ. However, let us, for now, adopt the basic and what many philosophers call —-although without very good reason—,"the common-sense" theory of time. The so-called

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[1]The shortest recorded spy was Richebourg (1768–1858) a Frenchman who measured measured 58 cm (1 ft 11 in) as an adult. He was "employed by the aristocracy to act as a secret agent during the French Revolution (1789–1799), dispatching messages into and out of Paris, whilst disguised as an infant and carried by his 'nurse' " (Guinness World Records, nd).

[2]See Priest (1997) for the example of the box which is both full and un-full. And Priest (1999) for examples of impossible artworks.

common-sense theory entails what exists is the present, the past has gone out of existence and the future is yet to come into existence. If this is the case and the past and the future do not exist, then what is it I am worried about when I express that I am concerned about my exam tomorrow? The exam (and tomorrow) has not come into existence yet, what is my feeling of concern directed at? The same goes for the past. The past ceases to exist when it becomes present. If this is the case, how can I stand in intentional relations with past events? It seems like I can express remorse and regret for things I once did. If the objects of my remorse or regret are truly non-existent, how is such an act possible?

COUNTERFACTUALS: Counterfactuals are understood as alternative ways events could have gone.[1] They often take the form if... then... One such counterfactual would be, "if I had not been such a careful driver, then I would not have been able to avoid the ice on the road, and my friend (and myself) would have been hurt in a car crash". Such a situation might move some people to express sadness at the potential hurt that might befall one's friend or themselves. Some people might have a visible physical response for example, a down-turned mouth or even tears. How could an agent express such sadness? The situation didn't happen. My friend and I are fine. We didn't actually drive on any icy roads. The question, "what is our melancholic agent sad *about*?" naturally arises.

There are plenty of cases where we express intentional attitudes towards

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[1]If you are fictionalist about counterfactuals then you might just consider this category a variety of fiction.

supposedly non-existent objects. These problem cases have been bundled together into a problem dubbed the "The problem of non-existence".

In this section, I highlight a variety of related puzzles featuring non-existent objects as catalogued by Sainsbury (2018, 6–9).[1]

A puzzle about unicorns: As I write these words, I am thinking about unicorns. If you understand me, you too will thereby be thinking about unicorns. So we are thinking about something, indeed the same thing: unicorns. In fact, there is something—namely unicorns—we are thinking about. But there are no unicorns. So, in thinking about unicorns, there's not anything we are thinking about; that is, we are not thinking about anything—in other words, we are thinking about nothing. But we are thinking about something—unicorns.

A puzzle about seeking: Ponce De Leon looked for the fountain of youth. But there is no fountain of youth, so there wasn't anything he was looking for. So he wasn't looking for anything. But of course there was something he was looking for—the fountain of youth.

A puzzle about landscape painting: A representational painting may be a landscape painting even though the artist had no specific landscape in mind;

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[1]In Sainsbury's retelling of these puzzles concerning aboutness these are not specific to non-existent objects and have been excluded from the list below, for example his *puzzle about plurals.* I will also not be dealing with *Prior's puzzle extended to visual experience:* formulated in the following way *(a)* X's visual experience of Y constitutes a relation between X and Y when Y exists, but *(b)* not when Y doesn't; but *(c)* X's visual experience of Y is the same sort of thing whether Y exists or not. This is not the kind of puzzle that my proposed solution can handle in a uniform way; for more on puzzles about non-existence and hallucination, see Azzouni (2010).

the painter did not paint "from life". If it's a landscape painting, then it's a painting. It's a painting of a landscape. Given the artist's intentions, there's no landscape it's a painting of—that is, it's not really a painting of a landscape at all. So it both is and is not a painting of a landscape.

Prior's puzzle about thinking: (a) X's thinking of Y constitutes a relation between X and Y when Y exists, but *(b)* not when Y doesn't; but *(c)* X's thinking of Y is the same sort of thing whether Y exists or not. Something plainly has to be given up here; what will it be? (Prior, 1971, 130).

Prior's puzzle extended to truth and falsehood: (a) X's thinking that p constitutes a relation between X and the fact that p when p is true, but b not when p isn't; but *(c)* X's thinking that p is the same sort of thing whether p is true or not.

Although Sainsbury presents a range of problems regarding our thinking about non-existent objects, I do not think the solution I propose in the subsequent chapters applies equally to all of them nor do I think I can present a well-unified and cohesive thesis if I try and answer them all. However, I do think that the extended modal realist solution applies, in a general way, to all the problems when it comes to solving the fundamental issue that underlies these questions. In a sense, these problems are underpinned by questions about what there is. For if the non-existent object were able to stand in a relation to our thinking or seeking subject, these questions would have a straightforward answer.

Of all the highlighted issues regarding non-existent objects, I focus on three in particular. There are two problems about truth, which given that the extended modal realist solution naturally comes with a commitment to accidental truth-maker maximalism these problems can be solved fairly straightforwardly. I will cover the details of these problems and the proposed solution in Chapter 9. The other type of problem I focus on is a problem of thought. I argue that with some minor additions, the extended modal realist can provide a solution to problems of non-existence that relate to thinking, which I detail in Chapter 12 which concerns semantic instrumentalism.

The three problems that I focus on in this thesis are Prior's problem and the two problems about truth. The reason for picking these problems is that they are the most widely discussed in the contemporary analytic literature about non-existence. However, it is important to distinguish these problems since even though I argue that a single theory is useful in all cases, both the puzzle about thought and the puzzles about truth are not problematic for identical reasons. And exactly the same response cannot be given in both cases since even though ontological commitment to non-existent objects straightforwardly helps with the metaphysical element of Prior's problem and the problems of truth, a metaphysical solution says nothing about thought, so something else needs to be said in that respect.

3.4   Prior's Problem

Prior's problem repeated: (a) X's thinking of Y constitutes a relation between X and Y when Y exists, but *(b)* not when Y doesn't; but *(c)* X's thinking of Y is the same sort of thing whether Y exists or not. Something plainly has to be given up here; what will it be? (Prior, 1971, 130).

Prior's problem can be divided into three steps. If we were to assume that thinking in standard cases is relational, how do we make sense of this when it comes to the case of non-existent objects, for there is nothing to satisfy the second place in the relation?

1. An agent (*a*) *F*s something (*x*) non-existent.

2. An agent (*a*) cannot *F* something (*x*) non-existent if *F* is a relation.

3. *F*ing something (*x*) constitutively involves bearing a relation to it.

The first statement seems obvious; you can think of a non-existent object even though that object is non-existent. For example, you can think of Pegasus, the future, a square circle, or other ways the world could have been even though these objects do not exist.[1]

On the face of it, the second claim is also straightforward; it relies on the assumption discussed by Hawthorne and Manley that no relational expression

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[1]Under the metaphysics I offer, some of these objects do exist but for the sake of setting up the problem, let's say they do not. Furthermore, some philosophers might try to tell me I cannot represent impossible things such as square circles or positively charged electrons. In response, I can provide two cases where this feat is achievable, see Priest (1997, 1999). You do not need to conjure up a mind's-eye picture to successfully represent something.

can be *about* an object unless that object exists (Hawthorne and Manley, 2012, 9).

The final claim is the controversial one; it rests on the concept of intentional thinking as a relation. Although there are those who doubt the relational nature of intentionality, it is reasonable to think of intentionality as a relation as the default position (Yablo, 2014). Dummett (2014, 36) explains the problem of non-existence thus: "How can we stand in an intentional relation with an object if that object does not exist?" Dummett states that "intentionality is naturally taken to be a relation between the mental act, or its subject, to the object of that act". Dummett (2014, 36) continues by articulating the problem: "how can there be a relation when the second term of the relation does not exist?"

You might choose to get off the bus here and disagree that intentionality is a relation. However, for those who want to maintain the relational structure of intentionality, the problem of non-existence is one problem they must consider. The problem of non-existence is: "how can we represent something that doesn't exist, given that representation involves bearing a relation to it and we cannot bear a relation to something that doesn't exist" (Kriegel, 2007, 307).[1] The problem arises when there is an existing agent standing in an intentional relation with a non-existent object. The indeterminate nature of non-existent objects prompts the question, "What is in the object box?" In order to solve this problem, we need to do two

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[1]I use the term Problem of Non-existence, in place of Kriegel's intentional inexistence, for, as I explain in Chapter 11 I think Kriegel has in mind something closer to the Problem of Non-existence.

things: we need not only to suggest what goes in the object box, but we also need to say something about the relational nature of thought. Which I do in Chapter 12.

3.4.1 Crane's Development of the Puzzle

Crane takes the puzzle to be one about intentional thought or aboutness. His characterisation does make one important element of the puzzle obvious, that is a full answer to the puzzle must say something about the structure of thought. However, the metaphysical element which seems to underpin all his discussion is left underdeveloped. I will discuss this later in Chapter 4.

We might sum up the problem with the Platonic phrase: "how can we *think* or *talk* about that which is not?" This phrasing of the problem gets to the root of the issue quickly. At its core the problem of non-existence is how we can hold in our mind or express things about that is not part of reality. Crane makes the following comment comparing existent entities with non-existent entities:

> When the great explorers crossed the oceans to investigate new lands, it was because they thought there was something out there, and they wanted to find out what it really is. It isn't like this with non-existences: it's not as if we think there are all these non-existent things "out there" and we want to find out what they "really are". (Crane, 2012, 418)

I contend, contra Crane, that this is *exactly* what our engagement with non-existent entities is like. Whether Crane and I agree about exactly what the puzzle is can be put to the side for one moment for I detail my response to Crane in the following chapter. There I argue that Crane has misdiagnosed the problem and that it is this misdiagnosis that leads Crane to be overly focused on the problem of non-existence as a problem of thought. Rather, I suggest that we should recast the problem as a metaphysical one. However, I admit a suitable answer should be able to accommodate the element of the puzzle that is related to thought as well; it is just not where the fundamental issue is.

3.5 Two Problems About Truth

There are two further problems which non-existent entities create that I will be addressing. The first is how can we say that there are truths about that which does not exist; the extended modal realist can handle this problem fairly well. The second problem concerns true negative existential statements which many, such as Salmon (1987a), take to be the most difficult aspect of the problem of non-existence. In this section, I sketch both these problems before developing them and providing solutions in Chapter 9.

3.5.1 Truth About that Which Does not Exist

The problem about truth as Crane (2013) puts it is: If non-existent things are not *part of reality*, then how can there be any truths about them? The

problem of truth is somewhat less complicated in its setup than the problem of thought.

How can it be true that Holmes lives at 221B if there is no Holmes or no 221B.[1] It seems that in order for there to be truths, there must be things for those truths to be about. But many feel the pull of the intuition that it is true that Holmes lives at 221B. The presence of non-existent objects causes problems for accounts of truth.

The issue here is only that for things to lack truths is for them to not be *part of reality.* The extended modal realist solution I have on offer literally affirms that the objects we would normally say are non-existent objects are part of reality, so if this is the requirement for truths, then extended modal realism meets it easily. I call this accidental truthmaker maximalism. I say more about this in Chapter 9.

3.5.2 True Negative Existential Statements

The second problem that relates truth and non-existent entities is about issues concerning true negative existential statements. These statements introduce an entity via an existential expression such as "There is" or "There are", then state there is no such entity. For example, the following state-

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[1]During the period when the Holmes stories were set, the numbers on Baker Street did not go as high as 221. Later Baker Street was extended, and in 1932 the premises of 219–229 Baker Street were occupied by the Abbey National Building Society. The Holmes Museum occupies 237 and 241 Baker Street and even though Abbey National closed in 2005 the location of the Holmes Museum has not changed (Stamp, 2012).

ment, in which angle brackets signify a proposition:

$$\langle\text{There is not a hippopotamus in this room.}\rangle \qquad (3.1)$$

It seems like the proposition that ⟨ There is not a hippopotamus in this room ⟩ is one which is capable of being true. But Russell (2012, 189) noted something was difficult about statements which take a similar form to 3.1 since it is unclear what it is that makes negative existential statements true, for seemingly their truth cannot be confirmed by any entity. Mumford (2007, 45) says: "For any statement that says how things are *not*, it is difficult to know in virtue of what it is true."

By contrast, if we take the statement:

$$\langle\text{There is a hippopotamus in this room}\rangle \qquad (3.2)$$

Mumford (2007, 45) tells us:

> If true, 3.2 is true in virtue of something in the world. Specifically, 3.2 would be true in virtue of the hippopotamus that is in this room. If we tried to generalise from 3.2, and say that all truths are true in virtue of something in or about the world, then what of apparent truths like 3.1? What is it in the world in virtue of which statements like 3.1 are true?

This is the problem of negative existential truths.

3.6 The Limits

I promised I would say something about the limits of this thesis. The solution I want to offer is not a panacea for all problems regarding non-existent objects, for even though it can easily say something about the problem related to truth and with some additions make a contribution to the problem about thinking, I do not address all cases of non-existence; for example, I do not consider the representation of maps of fictional locations nor of paintings of non-existent landscapes. I avoid these cases in this thesis since their creation involves artistic intention and this invokes secondary issues that I wish to avoid in order to maintain a narrow scope. However, I do think that we should be able to see how we can generate similar solutions in cases of relations towards non-existent objects in the cases of maps, paintings and the like. However, I will not say much about these extensions in this thesis save for some brief comments in a section that addresses future work and developments of this project.

Another limit of this thesis is that it does not say very much about the history of this problem. My focus is to develop a new application of a fairly new theory. What is more, fairly recently the problem of non-existence has received new attention and thus my goal is to join that contemporary literature. For this reason I do not spend much space detailing ancient, medieval, Russellian or Meinongian contributions to the problem. I do, however, highlight where these authors have been influential on the contemporary debate.

3.7   Conclusion

In this chapter, I have highlighted the various problems which are related to non-existent objects. I have drawn attention to the particular problems that are most relevant to this thesis. I have mentioned that there is disagreement about the fundamental part of the problem of non-existence and that I do not think it is located where Crane thinks it is; the most important level included in the puzzle of non-existence is one about what there is rather than one about truth. I have also demarcated those problems that are tangential problems, which I think I can say something about but which will not be covered in the main body of this thesis; however, speculative comments will be provided at the end of the thesis where I identify scope for future work.

Reply to Crane

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I reply to Crane's argument that the problem of non-existence is a problem of thought. I argue contra Crane that the problem of non-existence is a metaphysical problem about what there is. I make this argument on the grounds that Crane makes metaphysical commitments implicitly from the very start and that in order to set up the puzzle in the way Crane wishes, he must rely on a distinction which he attempts to deny.

Instead, I argue that the problem of non-existence is, at the fundamental level, a problem about what there is. In his 2012 paper, Crane argues that the problem is a problem of thought and in order to solve the problem we need to examine the process of thought and what exactly the concept intentionality refers to. For Crane the problem is generated by a misunderstanding of the thinking process. For Crane—in the case of thoughts about non-existents—that intentional thought is non-relational solves the

problem. However, I argue that Crane mislocates the problem. I make this argument because Crane displays a lack of sensitivity regarding the quantificational use of "something" and ultimately relies on a distinction between existence and being that he attempts to deny from the outset. I also argue that Crane makes ontologically substantial commitments implicitly despite denying that the problem is a metaphysical one. I do not deny that the problem of non-existence involves thought or reference; this is clear in how Prior (1971) formulates the puzzle. The purpose of this chapter is merely to show that the foundational element of the puzzle is at the level of metaphysics. In order to solve the puzzle, we need to make a commitment to the metaphysical matters before moving on to looking at other elements of the problem.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Crane's formulation of the puzzle has become standard in the discussion of the problem of non-existence and I see my reply here as a way of refocusing how we understand the puzzle of non-existence. In this chapter I focus on a very particular part of Crane's 2012 paper in which he articulates his motivations for framing the problem the way he does. I accept that details of Crane's theory more broadly might answer some of the questions I raise in this chapter. However, I contend that framing a puzzle in a certain way should not be motivated by the solution you wish to deploy to solve it. Thus we must have independent reasons for framing the puzzle the way we do.

First, in §4.2 I outline the relevant part of Crane's position. Second, I outline three problems that arise from the way that Crane articulates his

motivations. I conclude that although Crane highlights an important element of the puzzle of non-existence, what he calls *the* puzzle is not the most fundamental way of formulating the issue. Finally, I highlight how I suggest we proceed in regards to this problem. In short, my proposal is to get our ontology in order before moving on to examining thought.

4.2 Crane's Position

Crane takes it that the problem of non-existence is "one of the most ancient and intractable problems of philosophy" (Crane, 2012, 417). He argues that the problem of non-existence should be understood as a problem of thought. Crane tells us that his motivation for locating the puzzle here is that:

> Compare existing entities: when the great explorers crossed the oceans to investigate new lands, it was because they thought there was something out there, and they wanted to find out what it really is. It isn't like this with non-existence: it's not as if we think there are all these non-existent things "out there" and we want to find out what they "really are". They *really* are nothing; but people nonetheless think and talk about them. And this is true on a "Meinongian" as much as on an ontologically orthodox conception of the issue. I therefore locate the significance of this problem in the study of thought or mental representation. All thought is about something. In other words, whenever someone thinks, they think about something. One of the peculiarities of

thought is that some of the things we think about exist, and some of them do not. Crane (2012, 418)

Based on this passage, we could say that Crane thinks non-existent things, unlike existent things, are not out there for people to find or investigate. Crane suggests here that non-existent entities are nothing. But nonetheless, he admits that people do think about them. However, he acknowledges that all thought is about something, and thus locates the puzzle of non-existence at the level of thought.

4.3 Something and Nothing

In this section, I argue that there is an error with Crane's reasoning that given his line of thought leads him in the direction of locating the puzzle as a puzzle of thought rather than locating the puzzle at the level of metaphysics. I suggest that once we have seen the issue with Crane's reasoning, we will be more inclined to think about the puzzle as a puzzle about what there is rather than a puzzle of thought. The first issue for Crane is that he denies a distinction that he later relies on. The second issue is that it is far from clear what Crane means by "nothing"; lack of clarity on this matter leads to issues down the line. Finally, there is the issue that Crane does not seem to be sensitive to the quantification reading of "something". In this section I divide it into three subsections, each highlighting a problem for Crane's diagnoses of the problem.

4.3.1 Problem 1

The first problem for Crane is that he denies the distinction between being and existence. Crane (2012, 417) says:

> ...the solution places no weight on a supposed ontological distinction between being and existence. Such a distinction in so far as it can be made at all, has no bearing on the problem of non-existence.

Here I argue that the claim that the distinction between being and existence has no bearing on the problem is false. First, the very fact that a position on the distinction between being and existence has been taken should be understood as that distinction having a bearing on the problem. It rules out viable options to the puzzle, for example that articulated by Priest (2014) and Parsons (1981), for they take the contrary option and argue—and some might say convincingly—that there is, in fact, a distinction between being and existence. Parsons (1981, 6) highlights that when students are taught elementary logic and examine the two statements:

(a) Tables exist

(b) There are tables

The instructor will provide the same symbolism; $(\exists x)Tx$. Parsons points out that when this symbolisation is offered, it is presented as if it does

not come with any metaphysical implications. However, Parsons (1981, 6) argues this is not the case stating: "Symbolizing both (a) and (b) in the same way amounts to equating the quantifier 'there is' with the quantifier 'there exists', a question which makes sense only if what exists is what there is; and that is the metaphysical view I am now questioning."

Priest's view differs but he still calls for us to acknowledge a difference between what there is and existence. Like Parsons, Priest's view has Meinongian origins but he takes it that his view is closer to that of Routley (1980) and thus refers to the position as *noneism*. Priest points out that "non-existent objects do not have some inferior mode of being, such as 'subsistence'. They have no mode of being whatever. They do not exist in any sense of that word (at the world in question, of course —they may, or may not exist at others; they may not even exist at any world)" (2016, 14). But nonetheless, Priest thinks we can still quantify over such objects, and thus what there is (what we can quantify over) goes beyond what exists. I say more about Priest's view in Chapter 6. Unlike Parsons and Priest, Crane wants to deny that their distinctions have any bearing on the matter.

What is more, the fact that Crane denies this distinction pushes him to say that non-existent objects are "nothing". It is this thought that ultimately motivates Crane to think of the puzzle as one of thought, for if he truly thinks that non-existents are *nothing*, that is to say, things which cannot be quantified over, then he has no other choice left to him but to explain the problem as one about thought. Since he must reduce non-existents to something.

I will argue in §4.3.3 that Crane has to take a position on this and ultimately in order to get his account going, he must rely on something very much like this distinction even though he attempts to deny it from the outset.

4.3.2 Problem 2

The second issue with Crane's line of thought is that he clearly states that non-existent things are *nothing* and that all thought is about something. He also admits that we do think about non-existent objects. If we take the claim at face value, it is difficult to make sense of Crane's claim. For something cannot be nothing and something at the same time. It is far from clear how Crane understands "nothing". On the one hand, we might understand nothing to literally mean no-thing. No-thing is a term that means the object has no place in the universe, and it isn't something we can quantify over. This seems straightforwardly at odds with Crane's claim that thoughts are about something. On the other hand, Crane might mean by "nothing" that non-existent objects are *nothing* out there in the world. In the first case, there is straightforwardly a clash between something and nothing. If we understand Crane's claim in the second way, then I say that the issues raised in §4.3.1 come again. If we cannot understand his statement in the straightforward way, then it turns out that Crane does seem to have a nuanced view of being and existence and this, in turn, does have some bearing on the problem of non-existence, which Crane attempted to deny was the case.

4.3.3   Problem 3

The third issue for Crane's way of thinking about the puzzle is that it does not respect the quantificational use of "something". We might think that the word "something" expresses quantification. Some understand "something" to mean "some thing" in the same way some people read $\exists x$ as "something x". The lack of comment on this matter leaves Crane in a confusing position where he seems to employ the being/existence distinction that he denied previously. As we have seen, some philosophers such as Parsons (1981) think that there is a difference between being (what there is) and what exists. Crane in his early quote denies his solution invokes this distinction and seems to disavow it altogether. However, Crane says that when we think, we think about something, but some of these things we think about exist and some do not. It sounds like Crane is now quantifying over things which do not exist, thus relying on the being/existence distinction he wanted to avoid. At the very least, this is unclear and needs clarification. However, this is more than just a matter which needs clarification; in order for Crane to get his position off the ground, he must rely on a very similar distinction to the being/existence distinction that he has previously denied.

We can read "something" in a quantificational way, where we understand "something" as *some-thing* to refer to a particular thing. This I call the quantificational reading; the non-quantificational reading is where we use "something" to refer to no particular thing. Priest (2016, 13) offers a quantificational reading of "something". Priest suggests that we ought to read

$\exists x A(x)$ as something, x, is such that A(x). Priest argues that "some-thing" acts as the quantificational expression $\exists x$. If we follow Priest's lead, then Crane is left with the claim that there are things which have existence and some things which do not. This is the very being/existence distinction he was trying to avoid.

At this point, one might object on the grounds that we should not consider the quantification reading of "something" as something reasonable. If we did not go for this quantificational reading, then Crane would be left in the position that he would have to say that "there exists some object that exists", which appears to be uninformative and completely trivial. He would also have to say that "there exists something that does not exist", and this looks to be contradictory. Therefore, it is not clear how Crane can draw distinctions between nothing and something, existence and non-existence without relying on the being/existence distinction or something very much like it.

One option for trying to understand Crane's position is to interpret him as saying "there is something that doesn't *really* exist", that is to say "there is something that only exists in our thoughts".[1] However, this position amounts to the denial of non-existent entities, although what we are left with are only existent entities, some of which are only present in our minds. The distinction is then between existing things, not between existing things and non-existing things. If this is how we ought to understand the position, then that is unproblematic. However, my gripe is with the fact that this

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[1]As you can see, this reading is different from Parson's understanding, who thinks that "there is" differs ontologically from "exists".

amounts to a smuggled-in and pre-theoretic ontological commitment. Some of you might note that the strategy I adopt is not completely dissimilar to this, where there is distinction between "real" things at different world-stages. However, I maintain that I am able to establish a genuine—albeit deflationary—distinction between existence and non-existence covered in Chapter 8.

4.4 Conclusion

I have highlighted that Crane is implicitly committed to taking an ontological stance of matters relevant to the puzzle of non-existence before suggesting that he is motivated to think that the puzzle is a problem of thought; at the very least he is guilty of making the error that Parsons warns against, which is to present matters of logic as being divorced from matters of metaphysics. I have also suggested that Crane appears to be relying on a distinction which he denied needing in order to get his position going.

Either Crane relies on the being/existence distinction or denies it is a thing, and thus, either way, it has a bearing on the problem of non-existence. As a result of this, we ought not to follow Crane's lead in thinking that the puzzle is primarily one about thought; instead, we should think of the puzzle as a foundational one about what there is, a metaphysical puzzle. I have argued that we should avoid the way Crane sets up the puzzle since the only way that Crane can motivate his position is by already taking a stance on these

metaphysical questions from the outset. I say more about my proposal throughout this thesis, but at the heart of it, my position is that we need to establish what exactly non-existent objects *are* before we can say how we think about them.

CHAPTER 5

Intentionality and Intensionality

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, I drew attention to two kinds of problems concerning non-existent entities: problems of truth and problems of thought. Both these problems invoke aboutness; they are concerning truths *about* non-existent objects or thoughts *about* non-existent objects. The use of the term "about" in these problems relates to different technical uses for the aboutness relation. When it comes to thought, aboutness corresponds to the concept known as *intentionality*. However, in the case of truth, aboutness refers to what has become known as *intensionality*.

The goal of this chapter is to provide a detailed overview of some relevant terms that are used in this thesis, in particular the use of the term intentionality and the role it might play in the problem of non-existence. The aim is to introduce, in detail, the terms intentionality (and some of the related concepts) and intensionality. I also indicate the difference between

how these terms are used.

Here I also want to draw attention to the fact that intentionality is not a well–defined concept. I am trying to highlight that different usages of intentional can influence the direction that the problem of non-existence goes in. I even suggest that a particular conception of intentionality can, in part, help forward a certain solution to the problem of non-existence. For if you build into your definition that intentionality is non-relational or relational, this pushes one in a particular direction when it comes to potentially viable solutions to the problem of non-existence. I am trying to avoid it being our definition of intentionality that informs our metaphysics. Rather, I try to forward the idea that it is our metaphysics that ought to inform our definition of intentionality.

Despite all this, in this chapter, I try to frame intentionality as neutrally as possible. The purpose of this chapter is mainly introductory, but it also functions to make the reader aware of the potential problems which are related to understanding "intentionality". Due to the nature of this chapter and the structure of the overall thesis, I save my argumentative comments for later chapters. I presently want to draw particular attention to Searle's theory of intentionality, which I think is neutral enough to serve as a general introduction to the term as it is used in contemporary analytic philosophy but detailed enough not to leave out any relevant features of the term.

I also use this chapter to draw attention to some concepts related to intentionality; they are representation and singular thought. In the case of representation, it has been suggested that to think about an object is to

represent an object. Thus the terms "intentionality" and "representation" have become closely related. As for intentionality and singular thought, the paradigm cases used in the problem of non-existence are often cases of singular thought, for example, "Graham is thinking about Sherlock". On top of the fact that intentionality and singular thought are commonly associated, I wish to point out that those who deny the relationality of intentionality may struggle to deny the relationality of singular thought for it has been suggested that singular thought is constituted by acquaintance relations. Finally, I examine the term intensionality and how this relates to the previously mentioned problems about truth and will be relevant for the chapter concerning that issue.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. In §5.2 I introduce the concept of intentionality and look at some of its historical development. I aim to keep the historical discussion fairly brief, trying to touch on the most significant developments only; I include greater exposition about the scholastic interpretation in the appendix of this thesis. I also discuss some complications with straightforwardly adopting Brentano's position, to whom we arguably owe the contemporary understanding of the concept. I explain that there is scope to interpret his position in both a relational or non-relational way. I point out that there are contemporary philosophers who also take aboutness to be a relation. In light of these difficulties, I develop Searle's approach to the term in order to provide the reader with an introduction to the term, which is as free from baggage as it can be. Then in §5.3 I examine the close relation between intentionality and representation. In the next

section, §5.4, I draw attention to the relationship between intentionality and singular thought. In §5.5 I provide some analysis concerning the term intensionality and how this term relates to the problem of non-existence.

5.2   Intentionality

The concept of intentionality arguably has roots in medieval philosophy, as pointed out by Priest (2016, 68), most notably in the work of Buridan and Ockham (Klima, 2015). Since the medieval times the next notable discussion of intentionality comes from Brentano. For Brentano, intentionality characterised mental activity (Brentano, 2012, 88). Brentano makes the further claim that "every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself although they do not all do so in the same way. In a presentation something is presented, in a judgement something is acknowledged or rejected, in love something is loved, in hate hated, in desire desired, etc."(Brentano, 2012, 88). Berto elaborates and points out that Brentano might have been wrong by claiming that all mental states bear intentionality. However, most scholars agree that at least some mental states do (Berto, 2018, 3). Crane (2013, 4) tells us that "every intentional state or episode has an object — something it is about or directed on". Yablo defines intentionality in terms of aboutness: "the relation that meaningful items bear to whatever it is that they are on or of or that they address or concern" (Yablo, 2014, 1). Sometimes intentionality is simply described in terms of directedness or aboutness (Mumford and Anjum, 2011, 185). It is contro-

versial as to whether intentionality is a relation or not. Kriegel (2007) has argued for a variety of phenomenal intentionality suggesting that intentionality involves the agent instantiating an adverbial property. Discussion of whether intentionality is a relation or not will be saved for another Chapter. Here I take for granted that it is at least *standard* to think of intentionality as a relation between a subject and an object.[1]

What is more, the intentional element of our attitudes isn't particular to one kind of mental act but is common among a range. The most generic kind of intentional act is "thinking about". Other than "thinking about", directional emotions are the intentional acts which feature most heavily in our daily lives. Ratcliffe (MS) tells us, "It is fairly uncontroversial to maintain that some or all emotions either are intentional states or at least incorporate intentional states." It is for this reason that emotional attitudes and the generic "thinking about" feature heavily in the examples of intentional attitudes given in Chapter 3.

5.2.1 Early Thoughts on Intentionality

Searle et al. (1983, 1) introduces the term intentionality in the following way:

> Intentionality is that property of many mental states and events
>
> by which they are directed at or about or of objects and states

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[1]By *standard* I mean something like "is necessary to generate the problem in the first place". Without the initial assumption that intentionality is relational — at least in some respect — it seems like the problem wouldn't get going.

of affairs in the world. If, for example, I have a belief, it must be a belief that such and such is the case; if I have a fear, it must be fear of something or that something will occur; if I have a desire, it must be a desire to do something or that something should happen or be the case; if I have an intention, it must be an intention to do something. And so on through a large number of other cases. I follow a long philosophical tradition in calling this feature of directedness or aboutness "intentionality".

In Searle's discussion of intentionality, he hits on an important and very valid point. Searle in (Searle et al., 1983, 1) states "in many respects the term is misleading and the tradition something of a mess". A significant amount of confusion comes from the issue that the term intentional appears to have its first appearance in the work of medieval philosophers who used the term in a way that is much more similar to the contemporary use of the word intensionality with a focus on what the terms of sentences are about. In order to have a good understanding of the medieval understanding of intentionality, a good deal of technical vocabulary is necessary. This vocabulary does not feature anywhere in this thesis nor is it central to my overall argument and thus I have covered it in appendix V. The medieval philosophers claimed that verbs of the intentional kind have the power to *ampliate* the supposition of terms following them. Thus 'I understand the Antichrist' is true since "the Antichrist" *supposits* for a future entity due to the ampliation of "understand". Moreover, verbs may ampliate not just to past and future objects, but to merely possible objects too. For example,

in "I seek 221B Baker Street", "seek" ampliates the supposition of "221B
Baker Street" so that it may refer to a possible but non-existent object. It is
interesting and valuable to consider the origin of the term for it is obvious
to see how the idea that there needs to be a *something* in intentionality
came about. However, the medieval understanding of the term has little
bearing on the contemporary usage of the term which has a greater focus
on thought but arguably still retains some of the relationality that is clear
in the terminists use of the concept.

5.2.2 Intentionality Going Forward

Prior (1971) arguably revitalised the contemporary interest in intentionality
as he laid the groundwork for Crane's 2013 work with a similar title.[1] Prior
indicates that he is happy to accept that in the case of regular thought —
that is thought that does not feature a non-existent object— intentionality
is relational.

When analysing *"Thinking of"* statements, Prior states:

> The first thing to be said here is that, prima facie at least, we
> *are* now concerned with a "relation" in the strict sense. There
> is no question here, at all events not immediately, of a function
> of which one argument is a name and the other a sentence...
> (Prior, 1971, 111)

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[1]Crane merely adding the definite article.

Prior (1971, 111) says, "It is true, of course, that thinking that $y\ \phi's$ is one way of thinking about y, e.g. thinking that Joan is beautiful is one way of thinking about Joan. But this connection between the topics of thinking *of* and thinking *that* is a straightforward one, with plenty of parallel cases in general logic of two-place predicates."

Prior's comments indicate that at least in the standard cases, intentionality appears to have a relational structure. However, Prior (1971, 112) also says "[T]here are strong reasons for *not* regarding 'X is thinking of Y' as expressing a relation between X and Y."

To get a better understanding of the development of intentionality, it is helpful to look back at how the term was introduced into the modern discussion. The modern use of the concept intentionality has its roots in Brentano (2012, 48) who states: "Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way."[1]

Brentano's thesis can be stated as *intentional states have an intentional object: this is what the intentional state is directed on, or is of, or is about.*

However, there are still some issues with the interpretation of Brentano's articulation of his position, since some of his followers seem to have a relational understanding of intentionality, while others think that intentionality

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[1]Although the modern use of intentionality is attributed to Brentano, it seems like Reid also put forward a similar notion. Reid states: "In perception, in remembrance, and in conception, or imagination, I distinguish three things—the mind that operates, the operation of the mind, and the object of that operation. That the object perceived is one thing, and the perception of that object another, conception, of remembrance, of love and hate, of desire and aversion. In all these, the act of the mind about the object is one thing, the object is another thing. There must be an object, real or imaginary, distinct from the operation of the mind about it." (Reid et al., 1895, 292)

must be non-relational. Those who think that intentionality is a relation regularly make reference to a thesis often stated in the form above.

Meinong, a student of Brentano, defends the thesis, "the realm of objects is far wider than of existents" and Findlay, supporting this position states, "The world of actual existents is only a poor selection out of an infinitely rich and various range of possible objects..."(Findlay, 1963, 42). Meinong expressed concerns about the "prejudice in favour of the actual". According to Meinong, it is this prejudice that led us to "ignore the unreal and treat it as a mere nothing" (Meinong, 1988, 485–486). Findlay, expanding on Meinong, states "that we are able to think of objects that do not exist" and in these cases "the objects that are before us are undoubtedly something, they are distinct from the experiences by whose means they are given to us" (Findlay, 1963, 43). Prior, characterising Meinong, states that for Meinong, "there are many true statements that we can make about many objects; for example, though it is not a fact that a golden mountain...exists, he thinks that it is unquestionably a fact that the golden mountain is both golden and mountainous" (Prior, 1971, 122). Arguably Meinong's view stems from Brentano's comment that:

> Every mental state possesses in itself something which serves as an object, although not all possess their object in the same way. In a presentation something is presented, in a judgement something is acknowledged or rejected, in love something is loved, in hate hated, in desire desired, etc.
>
> (Brentano, 2012, 48)

Findlay interprets Brentano differently, when developing Brentano, Findlay attaches particular importance to a passage in which Brentano holds "the intentionality of mental states to be a case of a unique logical category: the category of a determination which is *relation-like* without being a proper case of a relation". According to Findlay "intentionality...is a relational property which is one sided, which does not involve the being of a corresponding relation or related term."[1]

On the other hand, there are many philosophers who find reason in Brentano and make the claim that intentionality must be non-relational.

> It might occur to someone to say that whenever a person related himself mentally to something as object, this object must always *be* just as properly as he himself, even though it need not always *exist* just as he does...I confess that I am totally incapable of deriving any sense from this distinction between being and existence. (Aquila, 1976, 38)

Aquila (1976, 38) highlights another passage from Brentano:

> If someone thinks something, that thinker must of course exist, but the object of his thinking need by no means exist...Thus the thinker is the only thing which mental reference requires.

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[1] However, it is unclear how seriously Findlay takes the relationality of this relation-like property, for he states: "an incontestable fact that in describing a state of mind as being *of* this or *of* that, must not be taken to imply that there *is* anything having the character attributed to our object. That this would be an illicit transformation is of course clear to all ordinary speakers: from the fact that X is striking an F one can infer that something is an F, but is some F of which X is thinking." (Findlay, 2014, 35)

The term of the so-called *relation* need not be given at all in reality. On account of this, one might doubt that we are here really dealing with *etwas Relatives,* and not rather with *einem Relativen ähnlichen,* which one might accordingly call *etwas Relativliches.* The similarity consists in the fact that just as when one thinks about a relation in the proper, similarly when one thinks about a mental act, he must in a certain sense think two objects — one, so to speak, *in recto*, the other in *obliquo.* If I think about a flower-lover, then the flower-lover is the object which I think *in recto,* the flowers are what I think *in obliquo.* But this is similar to the case where I think someone who is taller than Caius. The taller one is thought in *recto*, Caius in *obliquo.*

According to Aquila, in this passage Brentano makes a distinction between relational and merely relation-like properties, and he counts intentionality as a case of the latter. If we take Brentano's comments in this way, then it is hard to understand why the puzzle of non-existence has garnered so much traction. The reason for this is because the term intentionality is thought by some to be straightforwardly relational, contra interpretations of Brentano; for example, philosophers such as Yablo claim that intentionality or about-ness is a relation. Yablo (2014, 1) states, "the relation that meaningful items bear to whatever it is that they are on or of or that they address or concern." If we have an extensional metaphysics, a relational concept of intentionality makes sense. Berto (2018) has continued this analysis. Others

think that what is constitutive about intentionality is representation and takes representation to be a relational term. Others think that it is *de re* singular thought that generates the problem of non-existence; I think this is more common given the way the debate has evolved.

Whatever we take from this, something to highlight is that those who take intentionality to be relational have the ontology to do so while those who take it to be non-relational often employ a much more narrow ontology. I would like to advise that our view on intentionality should not detail one's ontology; rather, one's ontology might influence one's position on intentionality.

5.2.3   Searle on Intentionality

In light of the difficulty defining the concept intentionality, we can turn to Searle who helpfully provides some clarifications concerning the term intentionality.[1]

Searle states on his account:

> ...if a state S is Intentional then there must be an answer to such questions as: What is S about? What is S of? What is it an S that? (Searle et al., 1983, 1–2)

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[1]In Searle et al. (1983) "Intentional" is with a capital "I' is distinguished from "intentional" with a lower case "i". The former refers to the kind of aboutness or directed in question whereas the latter refers to meaning to do something. I do not keep up this way of distinguishing between the two throughout this thesis apart from when directly quoting Searle. Firstly, because I think it is obvious what kind of intention I am talking about and secondly, because other authors who I quote did not adopt this way of distinguishing the terms.

What is more, on Searle's characterisation it allows that there are some types of mental states which are intentional and others which are not. This is not an uncommon distinction to make —Crane makes one very similar— but the way Searle makes this distinction is helpful. For Searle:

> Some types of mental states have instances which are intentional and other instances which are not. For example, just as there are forms of elation, depression and anxiety where one is simply elated, depressed, or anxious without being elated, depressed and anxious about anything, so, also, there are forms of these states where one is elated that such and such has occurred or depressed and anxious at the prospect of such and such. Undirected anxiety, depression, and elation are not intentional, the direct cases are intentional.

(Searle et al., 1983, 1–2)

If there are unintentional mental states, they are like Searle's undirected mental states; that is to say, they are non-intentional because they are undirected in virtue of the kind of mental attitude. This differs from Crane's (and Prior's) position, which contends that states are non-intentional if they lack an intentional object, which appears to presuppose a metaphysics of intentionality. Thus in this respect, I suggest we go with Searle's position as our introduction for neutrality.

Secondly, Searle draws a distinction between intentionality and consciousness. He maintains that:

Many conscious states are not Intentional, e.g., a sudden sense of elation, conscious states are intentional, e.g., I have many beliefs that I am not thinking about at present and I may never have thought of. For example, I believe that my paternal grandfather spent his entire life inside the continental United States but until this moment I never consciously formulated or considered that belief. Such unconscious belief, by the way, need not be instances of any kind of repression, Freudian or otherwise; they are just beliefs one does not normally think about. In defense of the view that there is an identity between consciousness and Intentionality it is sometimes said that all consciousness is consciousness *of*, that whenever one is conscious there is always something that one is conscious of. But this account of consciousness blurs a crucial distinction: when I have a consciousness experience of anxiety, there is indeed something my experience is an experience of, namely anxiety, but this sense of "of" is quite different from the "of" of Intentionality, which occurs, for example, in the statement that I have a conscious fear of snakes; for in the case of anxiety, the experience of anxiety and the anxiety are identical; but the fear of snakes is not identical with snakes. It is characteristic of Intentional state, as I use the notion, that there is a distinction between the state and what the state is direct at or about or of... (Searle et al., 1983, 2)

Searle continues with distinctions highlighting the difference between intentionality and intention. Searle points out:

> The obvious pun on "Intentionality" and "intention" suggests that intentions in the ordinary sense have some special role in the theory of Intentionality; but on my account intending to do something is just one form of Intentionality along with belief, hope, fear, desire, and lots of others; and I do not mean to suggest that because, for example, beliefs are Intentional they somehow contain the notion of intention or they intend something or someone who has a belief must thereby intend to do something about it.
>
> (Searle et al., 1983, 3)

Searle points out that the term intention is used in the sense of someone intends to do something, while intentionality relates to directedness mentioned earlier, intentionality thus seems to be an active cognitive process. Finally, Searle comments that:

> Notice that Intentionality cannot be an ordinary relation like sitting on top of something or hitting it with one's fist because for a large number of Intentional states I can be in the Intentional state without the object of state of affairs that the Intentional is "directed at" even existing. I can hope that it is raining even if it isn't raining and I can believe that the King of France is bald even if there is no such person as the King of France.

(Searle et al., 1983, 4)

Importantly Searle notes that while intentionality is not a relation like a physical relation, he permits that it can be a kind of relation and nothing about his account precludes this. He states:

> an Intentional object is just an object like any other; it has no peculiar ontological status at all. To call something an Intentional object is just to say that it is what some intentional state is about. Thus, for example, if Bill admires President Carter, then the Intentional object of his admiration is President Carter, the actual man and not some shadowy intermediate entity between Bill and the man. (Searle et al., 1983, 16–17)

So from here on out, I continue with something very much like Searle's account of intentionality in mind. It is detailed enough to capture the relevant features of this mental faculty but is neutral enough to not come with any metaphysical baggage. Searle indicates the neutrality of this position in the comment above.

5.3 Representation and Intentionality

When considering intentionality, we should also be aware of the relevant related terms. Some philosophers think that to have an intentional attitude about an object is to *represent* that object. And even though some might

be able to deny the relationality of intentionality, it might be more difficult with representation.

When characterising the *orthodox view* of intentionality, Kriegel (2012, 79) states:

> ...mental representation is a two-place relation holding between a representing state and a represented entity (object, event, state of affairs).

If we recall the puzzles articulated by Sainsbury in the previous chapter, Searle points out that "Intentional states, and the puzzles they raise, all involve representation" (Searle et al., 1983, 20). And it seems as if we can represent things that do not exist. For example, I can represent Holmes even though we standardly think that there is actually no Holmes. When painting a picture I could represent a landscape which does not respond to any landscape at our world. Although Searle might be right in pointing out that these puzzles involve representation, in Chapter 11 I argue the terms intentionality and representation are not interchangeable.

5.4 Intentionality and Singular Thought

I mentioned previously the importance of being aware of the terms related to intentionality; in this section I highlight the relationship between intentionality and what is known as singular thought. There is significant convergence between the term intentionality and what has become known

as singular thought or *de re* thought. When we think about an object, we are thinking in an intentional and singular way. It would be reasonable to say that all singular thoughts are intentional, that is to say, they are about something in particular. However, it would also be reasonable to say that it isn't the case that all intentional expressions are singular.[1] What is more, acquaintance relations are often taken to be a precondition for singular thought. Burge (1977, 51) famously stated, "a *de re* belief is a belief whose correct ascription places the believer in an appropriate non-conceptual, contextual relation to objects the belief is about." The concern is then even though some have attempted to suggest that intentionality is non-relational, they face the issue that if singular thought is intentional and singular thought requires acquaintance relations—of some kind—then at least in these cases where intentionality rests on these acquaintance relations, intentionality appears to be constituted by a relation, for as Burge (2010, 72) states, "being in many mental states constitutively requires that there be relations between those mental states and a subject matter". What is more, the paradigmatic cases involved in the problem of non-existence are ones which tend to involve singular thought. For example, these problem cases often take one of the following forms:

1. Alexius is thinking about the Golden Mountain.

2. Mark is thinking about Bertie, the pug that is both portly and not portly.

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[1]And the relationality of non-singular thought is a different matter.

3. David is thinking about his counterpart who expresses a preference for automobiles over locomotives.

4. Theodore is thinking about a sea battle that takes place in the future.

5. Jonathan is thinking about a sea battle in the future.

6. Terence is thinking about Holmes.

Sainsbury attempts to escape the concerns I have raised with a similar trick to those who try to escape the relationality of intentionality employ. Sainsbury (2010, 300) points out that one might think there is a distinction between external singular thought and internal singular thought. He states:

> Some thoughts are *externally singular*: there is an object which the thought is about. Some thoughts which are not externally singular are *internally singular*: although there is no object the thought is about, it recruits resources of a kind appropriate to external singular.
>
> (Sainsbury, 2010, 300)

The distinction seems to amount to a thought being external if there is some object which it is about and internal if there is no object. Sainsbury provides a helpful example to clarify this distinction.

> Jack wants a sloop (I am using "thought" broadly, so that wanting is a species of thinking). The desire is externally singular if

there is a sloop (a "specific sloop") he wants. There are two ways which the desire can fail to be externally singular (so we cannot describe the case just in terms of Quine's notional/relational distinction, for we need three pigeon-holes and not just two.) The desire can be wholly non-specific: the desire is, as Quine (1948, 117) famously put it, for relief from slooplessness. But the content of the desire can alternatively possess internal singularity. This is so if Jack has engaged in very specific imagining: "She's called The Mary Jane; 42 ft, a nanteen sail...." Of an existing sloop Jack might truly say: "*That's* not the sloop I want; I want *The Mary Jane*; and in fact she should be ready in a couple of months — I've already signed the contract with the shipyard." Alas, tragedy strikes, and *The Mary Jane* that features in the content of the desire is the kind of concept appropriate to external singularity, though that kind of singularity is absent, so the desire counts as internally singular.

(Sainsbury, 2010, 300)

Put simply, according to Sainsbury (2010, 301) "External singularity is a relation: a subject is related to an object. Internal singularity is not relational in this way."

Again the problem I have highlighted previously raises its head here too. Whether a thought is external or internal seems to depend not on anything about the thought itself but on the ontology one adopts before analysing thought. The question is, were Sainsbury to adopt a perfectly extensional

ontology, would he be happy to admit that all thought was extensional? Based on his account he should, but I do not think he would be happy to admit to this.

5.5 Intensionality

Another distinction that needs drawing is between Intentionality and Intensionality. Put quite simply, the distinction between the two terms can be characterised as follows: *intentionality* is a term that relates to what thoughts are about whereas *intensionality* is a term that relates to what words are about.

Sainsbury (2010, 305) provides four conditions which if any hold indicates a verb V is intensional. In the following set of conditions "NP" refers to some noun phrase and "F" stands for some object:

1. A sentence of the form "NP1-V-NP2" can be (genuinely and literally) true even if the corresponding "there is no such existent, actual concrete thing as NP2" is true.

2. A sentence of the form "NP-V-an F" can be true even if "there is no existent, actual concrete F such that NP-V-it" is true.

3. A sentence of the form "NP-V-an F but no F in particular" can be true.

4. Sentences of the form "NP1-V-NP2" and "NP2=NP3" can both be true even if "NP1-V-NP3" is not.

Each condition comes with a corresponding example.

1. "The Greeks worshipped Zeus" is true even though "There is no such existent, actual concrete thing as Zeus" is true.

2. Condition two can arise in two ways. The first way is through lack of anything answering to the noun in the indefinite phrase, as in: "The Greeks worshipped a God" is true even though "There is no existent, actual concrete god such that the Greeks worshipped it" is true. The second is through unspecificity, as in Quine's famous example. It may be that "I want a sloop" is true, read as implicitly qualified by "but no sloop in particular", even though "there is no sloop such that I want it" is true. Sloop desires can be specified in two ways, the externally singular way and the internally singular one. The former is what Quine (1956) calls, appropriately enough, the relational case: the state consists in a relation between a [subject] (S) and a sloop. In the latter case, the subject has desires which are specific in their contents even though they fail to be relational: John does not want any old sloop but a particular sloop, *The Mary Jane* (even though there is no such sloop and never will be).

3. The third mark is the possibility of truth when "but not F is particular" is added to something in the form "NP-V-an F"; the possibility of an unspecific reading. Arguably, the third mark can fail even when the second mark is satisfied. "The Greeks worshipped a god, but no god in particular" cannot be true, but many will think that the infer-

ence from their worshipping a god to there being a god they worship is suspect.

4. The fourth mark is the supposed failure of substitution of identical to preserve truth. On standard views, this can't apply if the first mark is present, for empty terms cannot enter into truths of identity. As a further sign of the possible divergences among the marks, many think that "worship" does not satisfy 4, even though it does satisfy 1.

The terms intentionality and intensionality are closely related, but the distinction made here can be helpful. As I proceed in this thesis, I will use the term intentionality when I am talking about thoughts and propositional attitudes. I will be using intensionality when I am talking about the meaning of words and the truth of propositions.

5.6 Conclusion

There is significant controversy as to whether intentionality is a relation or not. There are those who think that intentionality is non-relational and those who think it or some constitutive part of it is. In this thesis, it is my aim to introduce a new player to the problem of non-existence and not to argue significantly in favour of one conception of intentionality or another.

In this chapter, I have outlined intentionality and the related terms. I have merely introduced the term so that an unfamiliar reader can get a general

handle on the terms as I proceed. In the later chapters, I provide more substantial discussion about what I take to be the nature of intentionality.

Although the majority of this chapter has had the purpose of introducing terms and avoiding argumentation, I have, in places, pointed out that to insist that intentionality is non-relational is a part solution to the problem of non-existence; thus, in this chapter I have tried to introduce the concept in a neutral way that does not introduce and preclude relationality to intentionality. In my opinion, the relationality of intentional is not detailed by any theory of intentionality; it is detailed by one's ontology. Those with fully extensional ontologies might be more inclined to think of intentionality as relational, and if you have more of an intensional ontology, then you might naturally think of intentionality in a non-relational way.

Ways of Responding to the Problem of Non-existence

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I articulate some of the most recent, well-known and viable responses to the problem of non-existence. I conclude the chapter by proposing a new and underexplored option for handling the problem of non-existence. This new option makes use of a metaphysical framework known as extended modal realism that I outlined in Chapter 2. This extended modal realist framework allows for a perfectly extensional theory of intentionality and sufficiently solves the problem of non-existence.

The problem turns on the assumption that in order for a relation to hold, it requires the existence of both its relata (Hawthorne and Manley, 2012, 9). This problem has been discussed at length by Crane (2013). Crane takes a similar line to Prior (1971). Ultimately both Prior and Crane ap-

proach the problem by challenging the relational structure of intentionality. More recently there has been a resurgence in closely related Meinongian-style solutions. These approaches have notably been forwarded by Parsons (1981), Zalta (1988), Priest (2016) and Berto (2018).[1] In this chapter I explore the option for a new solution to the problem of non-existence, one which has only been hinted at by Yagisawa (2014).[2]

The new solution I am offering makes use of the metaphysics of extended modal realism. The extended modal realist solution is functionally much like the neo-Meinongian approach, particularly Priest's version. Both extended modal realism and neo-Meinongianism share the similarity that they include, straightforwardly, in their ontology the objects of our intentional attitudes. Given this feature, both approaches solve the problem of non-existence by satisfying the relational structure of intentionality. Admittedly, the way this is achieved differs. I take this difference to be what ultimately separates modal realist-style positions from Meinongian-style positions. The difference comes in how things exist or don't exist. Some of the more straightforward ways of distinguishing extended modal realism from neo-Meinongianism will not work. extended modal realism and noneism

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[1]Berto calls his position "Modal Meinongianism" and Priest calls his position "Noneism"; it is reasonable to say they are both varieties of neo-Meinongianism even if they both diverge significantly from traditional Meinongianism. I take it that Parsons would be happy to have his position referred to as neo-Meinongian without any additional caveats. I have decided not to focus on detailing traditional Meinongianism. The position has undergone much scholarship. In order to keep this project manageable, I will not retrace what has already been written on the subject. Rather, I try to show where my position fits into the contemporary literature.

[2]Caddick (2012) employs a system which resembles parts of both modal realism and Meinongianism. However, she does not do so in relation to intentionality. Rather, she is more focused on how we can use this hybrid system to understand our engagement with fiction qua literary devices better.

use singular quantification and both include non-existent objects in their ontologies. However, for the noneist, their non-existent objects lack "being". Whereas under extended modal realism non-existent objects are just as real as existent objects. What distinguishes non-existent and existent objects under extended modal realism is their position relative to an observer: their modal index. Rather than the objects of our intention being those objects which lack being, the objects of our intention are possible or impossible entities, which do not exist but are real.[1] The sole purpose of this chapter is to survey some of the most prominent solutions to the problem of non-existence and to introduce what I take to be a new and more successful solution to the problem of non-existence.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. In §6.2 I recap what the problem of non-existence is and how it has been developed. Then in §6.3, I will survey some of the solutions to the problem; there have been too many to cover them all so I will focus on what I take to be recent archetypal solutions. I will point out, as many have done before me, that solutions which are not underpinned by ontological commitments will fail. I do not take the lack of ontological commitment to mean that only solutions which are ontologically committed to non-existents can be successful, rather that all successful theories must respect the *de re* aspect of the problem of non-existence. To answer this aspect of the problem requires a metaphysical framework. An attempted solution which ignores this dimension is a non-starter. Solutions that take the object of our intention as some purely mental object lack the

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[1]See Chapter 7 for more details on how it is I distinguish between existence and non-existence.

relevant ontological underpinnings and fail to genuinely provide an answer to the problem of non-existence. Finally in 6.5, I will outline a new solution to the problem of non-existence which relies on the metaphysics of a position known as extended modal realism. I will conclude with a sketch of some reasons as to why we might opt for the extended modal realism response which will be elaborated on in a separate chapter. In short, we should prefer extended modal realism because it can provide a more versatile and a more fine-grained account of intentional relations with non-existent objects than competing theories can. Throughout out this chapter I make critical comments about other viable options for solutions to problems of non-existence these comments are provided only to show that there is space for a new theory to occupy. They are not intended to knockdown objections to any of these theories.

6.2 The Problem of Non-existence

Here I quickly recap the problem of non-existence which I outlined in detail in Chapter 3. The problem at hand has been characterised neatly by Prior in the following way:

> X's thinking of Y constitutes a relation between X and Y when Y exists, but not when Y doesn't; but X's thinking of Y is the same sort of thing whether Y exists or not. Something plainly has to be given up here; what will it be?
>
> (Prior, 1971, 130)

The problem of non-existence can be formulated neatly as an inconsistent triad made up of the following propositions which cannot be jointly held (Crane, 2001, 24).

1. All thoughts are relations between thinkers and the things which they are about.

2. Instantiations of relations entail the existence of their relata.

3. Some thoughts are about things which do not exist.

(3) seems evident given the examples provided in the previous section. (2) rests on the common philosophical assumption that relations entail the existence of their relata. Although (2) and (3) are largely uncontroversial, (1) has received significantly more discussion. Notably Prior, Crane and Kriegel have all challenged (1) on the grounds that thoughts about objects are not *always* relations. Crane (2001, 26) takes the position that "Not all thoughts are relations between thinkers and things they are about." However, not even Crane can deny that some thoughts are relations. What is more, this position seems to come out of a response to the problem of non-existence and isn't independently motivated.[1]

I am in no doubt that the mind is complicated and the entire process of "thinking about something" cannot be explained by the presence of a metaphysical relation. However, what I am interested in is the metaphysical dimension to the problem of non-existence, and it seems fair to say there

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[1]This is particularly obvious in Crane (2001).

is a well-established view under which it is at least *standard* to think that thoughts about objects are relations (of some complex kind).

6.3 Possible Responses

Before I get to the various successful responses, I will first address one response which doesn't get very far. One of the immediate and most natural ways to respond to this question is to suggest that non-existent objects are purely mental abstracta. That is to say, when we stand in an intentional relation to a non-existent object, it is a relation with a pure representation. The strategy of a representational approach is to have a subject stand in an intentional relation with a "surrogate object" in effect rejecting (1). Given this move, our subject no longer stands in an intentional relation with a non-existent object. Instead, they stand in an intentional relation with a surrogate for the non-existent object. A surrogate, in this case, might be an idea or an imagining that acts as a stand-in for an object.[1] At first glance it looks like positions of this kind do avoid the paradoxical element of the problem of intentionality.

However, Priest provides a series of arguments to suggest that this cannot be the case. Priest's argument takes the form that even if presented in the most charitable way, a formalisation of an intentional relationship involving a representation acting as a surrogate for a non-existent object will fail.

Priest breaks his argument down into steps showing, in turn, that each

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[1]It seems like Lamarque (1981) defends such a position.

formulation is a dead-end for the representationalist. Priest concludes that there is nowhere for the representationalist to turn, so an alternative strategy must be pursued. In Priest's formulation he uses the symbol "𝔊" rather than "∃" on the grounds that reading ∃ as "there exists" is just too strong. He suggests we read 𝔊x as "something x". I agree that his point is correct, important and valuable. It is a mistake to read straightforward existence into the existential quantifier. I don't agree, however, that we need to substitute a new symbol. We ought to get ourselves into the good practice of reading ∃x as "something x" in all circumstances. Therefore, I will use ∃ in retelling Priest's argument against the representationalist.

6.3.1 Attempt 1

The first move the representationalist can make is to re-analyse the statement "Anna fears Zeus" so that what Anna (a) fears is something which exists, for example a mental image. Let us say Anna has a representation of Zeus. We will use F' to indicate the kind of fear one would have towards a representation. In this picture, the content of our object box is a mental representation.

However, Priest (2016, 58) points out this is not a satisfactory analysis on the grounds that it does not account for the statement, "there is someone whom Anna fears, but who is in fact, a very nice man". This can be given the form:

$$\exists x (aF'x \wedge Mx)$$

To make sense of this, the quantifier must range over the representation, but then the second conjunct, according to Priest, is nonsense: the representation is not a man at all, nice or otherwise (Priest, 2016, 58). Priest is effectively arguing that representations are simply not the kind of things which can be nice, mean, or otherwise (at least not in the same way a person can be nice). Therefore, this analysis does not correctly express what the representationalist meant to express.

6.3.2 Attempt 2

Another attempt the representationalist could make to save their view is by invoking the relation "x is a representation of y" (xRy). We would then give the sentence the form:

$$\exists x \exists y (aF'x \land xRy \land My)$$

Priest presents further problems with this formulation: how are two people supposed to fear the same thing if it a representation? Supposedly Anna and Ben (b) fear the same thing which is a representation formalised as:

$$\exists x (aF'x \land bF'x)$$

This will not do either since here both agents merely fear a representation: there is no way of telling that Anna and Ben have exactly the same mental representation of the object. Another formalisation we could try is:

$$\exists x \exists y \exists z (aF'x \land bF'y \land xRz \land yRz)$$

Priest lets us know that this could work if Anna and Ben both fear the same existent object (z). But of course, if the object or state of affairs in question does not exist, then non-existent objects are still being invoked; if this were the case, then the theory would not truly be a representationalist theory (Priest, 2016, 58–59).

6.3.3 Attempt 3

Following Priest's arguments, he suggests that at this point it would only be natural to define an equivalence relation between representations, "$\sim$", such that $x \sim y$ iff x and y are representations that appear to be of the same thing, z, and if z exists, then Anna and Ben actually are fearing the same thing. We can then give the sentence the form:

$$\exists x \exists y (aF'x \wedge bF'y \wedge x \sim y)$$

However, without noneism, Priest points out, it seems difficult to understand the equivalence relation "$\sim$". Different representations of the same object can be arbitrarily different. If x and y are merely representations, how are we to understand they are equivalent? There are obvious metaphysical concerns about the identity conditions of representations that are highlighted by Priest.

The arguments that Priest provides show that any theory that attempts to employ a surrogate to substitute the object of our intention will struggle. Even given the strongest formulation, they are at a significant disadvantage since it is common for subjects to share an intentional object, but under

a pure representationalist picture, this cannot happen easily. Moreover, without metaphysical commitment, or elaboration, representationalism faces the challenge that there is nothing behind the representation. If this is the case, then without anything behind said representation they encounter the strange position of standing in intentional relations with purely mental entities, which are not the kinds of things that can be scary, nice, or otherwise. If we agree that a relation to some purely mental object will not work, we are able to characterise some desiderata for a solution to the problem of non-existence. A good solution to the problem should either provide an object for the agent to stand in a relation with or it should say why the object is not needed.

However, this does not rule out direct, intentional relations that also include a mediary mental state, for example fearing x via a belief about x, or pitying y via imagination about y. Whatever mental mechanics are in play have no bearing on the metaphysics of the issue. To not accept this would reduce us to a view where all we could express intentional attitudes about are just those things we have direct perception of; this is of course absurd. So, we must continue to use F' rather than F simpliciter in our formalisations.

To my mind there are two viable and archetypal responses to the problem of non-existence. The first archetype is to maintain the traditional structure of intentionality and suggest that the object of our intentional attitude is real, exists, or in some other way is in the domain of which our intentional attitudes can access. The other kind of approach accepts that objects of thought are non-existent (in the everyday way) and instead deny that in-

tentionality is a genuine relation. Priest (2016) promotes a solution of the first kind while Crane (2001, 2013) promotes a solution of the second kind. The first kind satisfies the relational structure of intentionality. The second explains why the relational structure does not need satisfying. These kinds of solutions are detailed below. Although these two positions are certainly archetypal responses, there is a third option offered to us by Sainsbury (2018) which I will also present. Sainsbury's solution claims to maintain both the intuition that intentionality is relational and the intuition that we cannot stand in relations with non-existent objects. Sainsbury's solution is arguably the middle ground between the two archetypes.

6.3.4   Towards Non-being

As an alternative to the representationalist theory, Priest provides us with an obvious and neat strategy for dealing with intentional predication towards non-being and that is to say existent objects can stand in intentional relations with non-existing objects. He calls this strategy noneism. Priest states,

> when one fears something, one has a direct phenomenological experience of a relation to the object of the fear. And the phenomenology is quite independent of whether or not the object actually *exists*. What more appropriate, then, to suppose that objects may exist or not, and that their existential status is ir-

relevant to whether or not they can be the target of intentional
states? (Priest, 2016, 58–59)

In a nutshell, Priest thinks it is possible for us to stand in an intentional
relation with a non-existent object in just the same way as we can stand
in a relation with an existent object. For Priest it is straightforwardly the
non-existent object, the object without being, that we are standing in an
intentional relation with. This is Priest's general strategy. He allows that
the objects of our thoughts exist and literally characterise the properties
they have. Priest, however, develops his solution to the problem of non-
existence by saying more about intentionality.[1] In relation to intentionality,
Priest (2014, 159) says:

> So let R be any intentional relation (perceives, admire, fears,
> dreams...). The aRo iff there is some R-mental state of a, s such
> there is an i-couple $a, s - o$. (Of course, a can bear more than
> one intentional relation to the same object.)

For Priest (2014, 159) an intentional mental state is simply "one that is the
subject pole of an appropriate i-couple".[2]

We could describe intentionality for Priest as a relation between two parts
of one object. He continues and states that since an i-couple is an object it

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[1]Priest's characterisation principle (CP) differs from that of traditional Meinongian-
ism; see (Priest, 2016, 83–85). Priest's take on the characterization principles has little
impact on his theory of intentionality and thus it will not be detailed in full here but
sketched below.

[2]Priest describes an i-couple as a single thing with two poles, a subject pole s and
an object pole o. He also notes that since the i-couple is a single thing it will have a
gluon (Priest, 2014, 159).

has a gluon g.[1] Given that $s = g = o'$ Priest can take the relation between s and o to constitute intentionality. For Priest intentionality "captures" an object simply because the mental state s is glued to its object o via o'. For Priest gluons are literally the glue of intentionality. Priest summaries his position on intentionality as follows:

> Intentionality has been explained in terms of there being a certain object, an *i*-couple. And the intentional bond is the gluon of that unity. This is a substantial explanation of intentionality.[2](Priest, 2014, 160).

6.3.5 Characterisation Principle

Priest not only allows us to stand in relations with non-existent objects but he also maintains that these non-existent objects literally have the properties which characterise them. Priest (2016, 83) describes the standard Characterisation Principle (CP) as follows:

> When we represent an object to ourselves we may do so in terms of its properties. Thus, we represent Holmes as living in Baker St, being a detective of acute powers of observation and inference, etc.; we, or the Ancient Greeks, represent Zeus as being the head of the Greek Pantheon, as living on Mt Olympus, etc.;

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[1]I will not detail Priest's gluon theory here. For a detailed discussion on gluon theory see (Priest, 2014).

[2]Priest admits that it does not tell us when the relation of intentionality obtains and suggests that we ought to look to other theories to tell us what objects exist and when. In this case he suggests this is the remit of cognitive science (Priest, 2014, 160).

we or the nineteenth-century astronomers who proposed its existence, represent Vulcan—the planet, not the god—as being a planet that has a sub-Mercurial orbit, and whose existence accounts for the precision of Mercury's perihelion; and so on. It would seem that these objects, must in some sense, have the properties that they are characterised as having. If they didn't we wouldn't know what we were talking about when we talk about them. Moreover, we would seem to be able to think about, imagine, tell a story about an object with any old bunch of properties that we can put together.

Priest, however, takes issue with the traditional formalisation of the CP on the grounds that there is no principled way of deciding what predicates are characterising.[1] As a result, Priest makes the suggestion that the objects which we characterise with a representation have the characterising properties, not at the actual world, but in the worlds (partially) described by the relevant representation (Priest, 2016, 84). Priest states:

> Holmes has the properties he is characterised as having not at this world, but at those worlds that realise the way I represent the world to be when I read the Holmes stories. And Vulcan has the properties it is characterised as having at those worlds that realise the theory of the nineteenth-century scientists who postulate its existence.

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[1]For details see Priest (2016, 83–84).

(Priest, 2016, 84)

Priest is able to respond to the problem of non-existence in the first instance by allowing for there to be something which satisfies the object box in the relational structure of intentionality, namely objects which literally have the properties they are characterised as having. Moreover, his gluon theory allows him to develop the intentionality relation as one between a subject and object—in an *i*-couple—connected by a gluon.

6.4 Intentionality Is not a Relation

Potentially we are not satisfied with the traditional structure of intentionality and might opt for a solution that rejects intentionality as a relation. As mentioned this strategy has been promoted firstly by Prior (1971, 112–130). Prior considers a number of reasons why we might doubt that intentionality is a relation and thinks "...there are strong reasons for not regarding 'X is thinking of Y' as expressing a relation between X and Y" (Prior, 1971, 112). However, in an effort to keep the discussion contemporary, I will focus on the argument advanced by Crane (2001, 2013). Crane's solution to the problem is to appeal to a different concept of intentional object. He states "An intentional object is not a kind of object, but rather the intentional object of a thought T is what is given in answer to the question 'What is T about?'" (Crane, 2001, 26). If this question has an answer then the thought has an intentional object. Crane takes it that if this is the case then our best option is to reject the claim that all thoughts are relations

between thinkers and the things they are about. His grounds for this are that "relations must be relations between things, yet the intentional object of thought is not a real thing. After all, intentional objects are not such things"(Crane, 2001, 26).[1]

Crane (2001, 26–27) draws a distinction between *externalism* and *internalism*. Externalism is the view that some thoughts are *broad* and intentionalism is the view that intentional states are *narrow*. If a mental state S is broad, then the existence of S entails the existence of its object. Internalism denies that an intentional state always entails the existence of the thing it is about. A thought is narrow when its existence does not entail the existence of its objects. So thoughts about non-existent objects are on the face of it narrow. Crane argues that the view not all intentional states are relational comes naturally from the idea that not all intentional states have intentional objects.

6.4.1 Relational Intentionality but Non-relational Representation

Sainsbury (2018) offers a solution to the problem of non-existence which he thinks does justice to both the intuition that intentionality is relational and also to the intuition that we cannot stand in relationships with non-existent objects. His strategy begins with the denial of Brentano's thesis, and holds that some intentional states can lack intentional objects, this

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[1]Crane adds the caveat that this is not to say that *no* thoughts involve relations to real existing things; it is just that not all of them do.

strategy, he says, allows us to use intentional objects in a perfectly sensible way. Sainsbury takes the position that there is nothing problematic about empty (non-relational) representation (2018, 143).[1] Sainsbury sharpens his position, stating:

> My approach to resolving Prior's puzzle involves distinguishing different species of relationality: factual, semantic, phenomenal, and metaphysical. Only the last has a serious claim to be fundamental: all intentional states have the same degree of metaphysical relationality, for they all involve a two-term relation between a subject and a representation.(Sainsbury, 2018, 144)

Sainsbury describes the kinds of relationality in the following ways.

1. *Factual relationality.* A fact is n-place relation just if it involves n terms. (The word "relational" is often used for facts involving two or more terms. One-term facts are often called non-relational.)

2. *Semantic relationality.* A fact is n-place semantically relational iff it can be stated by a sentence dominated by an n-place verb, one that takes n noun phrases to make a sentence.

3. *Phenomenal relationality.* An intentional state is phenomenally $n+1$-term relational iff in being in the state, it is for the subject as if there are n things before her mind.

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[1] Sainsbury draws a distinction between representation and representation* where representation* is extensional. Sainsbury (2018, 143) insists that representation may be empty, but representation* may not.

4. *Metaphysical relationality.* An intentional state is metaphysically *n*-term relation iff in its metaphysical nature it involves *n* terms.

   (Sainsbury, 2018, 144–146)

Despite Sainsbury's distinction drawing, his solution to the problem of non-existence comes down to the fact that he thinks our representation of non-existent objects is non-relational and that only our thinking about concepts is relational. It might be objected that Sainsbury might be faced with Priest's challenges against the representationalists. However, I will not articulate the challenges for a second time. Sainsbury (2018, 27) argues that intentional states are always relations to representations, so they are relational in that sense. However, Sainsbury says that some representations involved in intentional states are relational but others are not. In the case of the concept OBAMA the representation is a relation, but in the case of PEGASUS it is not.[1] Sainsbury (2018, 27) claims that PEGASUS—and other *purely* fictional objects are not real, and therefore our representations are non-relational, but OBAMA is real and therefore our representation is relational.[2] For Sainsbury empty concepts are non-relational representations; this is how Sainsbury provides a solution to Prior's problem.

> When we say truly that the concept PEGASUS represents Pegasus or the concept UNICORNS represents unicorns we are not

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[1] Sainsbury uses capitalisation to denote a concept rather than an object.

[2] Sainsbury (2018, 150) notes that thinking about something like Obama is "relational twice over" since it involves both a relation to the concept OBAMA and the object Obama.

assigning either concept a relatum. There are truths of the form
"x represents y" even when there is no such entity as y.

(Sainsbury, 2018, 150)

Sainsbury's solution solves Prior's problem by denying that our representation of non-existent objects involve relations to empty concepts, which he takes to be unproblematic and states:

> my account smoothly makes room for both intuitions, with no appeal to nonexistents. Subjects of intentional states are always metaphysically related to a representation, satisfying the intuition of relationality. But if the representation itself is empty, the subject is not related to anything beyond it, satisfying the intuition of non-relationality. (Sainsbury, 2018, 142)

Whether we think theories in the style of Priest's, Crane's, or Sainsbury's are successful is not the point of this chapter. My goal here has been to outline various possible solutions to the problem of non-existence and show how a new solution based on extended modal realism can fit in. My solution effectively treats the problem of non-existence as a metaphysical problem about what there is. Crane himself alludes to the elegance of an ontology-focused strategy. Crane states, "...it certainly solves our problem of intentionality in a very elegant and simple way. By appealing to an ontology of non-existent objects, we can preserve the idea that every intentional state is a relation to a real object while still maintaining that we can think about

things which do not exist (since real $\neq$ existent)" (2001, 24). This is the line I take when it comes to solving the problem of intentionality.

6.5 Extended Modal Realism

6.5.1 The Extended Modal Realist Solution

A modal realist solution to the problem of non-existence has received relatively little attention. However, recently Yagisawa (2014) has highlighted the usefulness of a modal realist approach; in particular, he has highlighted the benefits of extended modal realism. Yagisawa states that his theory of existence has benefits when it comes to dealing with non-existent objects and intentionality relations. Yagisawa (2014, 14) states:

> You admire Miss Marple and marvel at Vulcan, but how can this be if Miss Marple and Vulcan flatly lack the property of existence? If there exists no such thing as Miss Marple or Vulcan, how can you stand in a genuine relation to either of them?

Yagisawa claims that the kind of existence that features in extended modal realism is free of such an objection. According to extended modal realism, Miss Marple and you both exist relative to an appropriately chosen set or frame. We have already seen that Yagisawa's theory of existence has problems and because of that I take a slightly different approach, under which both you and Miss Marple exist relative to the index of an observer.

Modal realism is a metaphysical system in which there are other ways things could have been, that is to say other modalities are real. extended modal realism is the view that not only are possible states of affairs real but so are impossible states of affairs, or to use Yagisawa's language "possible and impossible world-stages". When it comes to the problem of intentionality, extended modal realism has the distinct advantage over Lewisian modal realism that all worlds belong to a single universe. For Yagisawa and extended modal realism, worlds are not disconnected, concrete wholes; rather, they are points in the modal dimension of the universe. The universe is extended in this modal direction just as it is in the temporal direction. The modal stages of the universe we call world stages. In the previous chapter I have suggested a change to the extended modal realist's theory of existence. I suggest that existence is an indexical just like actuality is. And that we treat the term real as a phrase to denote that the universe is a proper class of everything that there is. We now have a picture of where we can't say that Miss Marple exists (unless she is actual) but we can say that she is real and part of the universe. As I have noted previously, what it takes to be non-existent is just not to be actual. I suggest it is at this point where extended modal realism makes use of some noneist tools; according to Priest, we simply can stand in intentional relations with non-existent objects. I suggest the modal realist can do the same. I present this in more detail in Chapter 12. However, when cashed out against the background of extended modal realism, to have an intentional attitude towards something non-existent is just to have an intentional attitude towards some possibila or impossibila: a real something. extended modal realism solves

the problem of non-existence simply by having an object to place in the object box, a very real but non-existent, non-actual object.[1] Under my picture, extended modal realism is also at liberty to use the "∼" relation as articulated by Priest. We are on good grounds to think that the extended modal realist picture will work for the same reasons that the noneist picture works. Modal realism also, as a matter of happenstance rather than principle, satisfies some variety of the CP. The objects we represent have those properties at some possible or impossible world, not because they are represented as having them just because that is the way the universe is.

Under extended modal realism the account of intentional attitudes towards a fictional character we give is like this: I (the agent) stands in a genuine intentional relation with something. Lewis tells us plainly that we have doxastic access to other worlds (Lewis, 1986, 27).[2] It seems that straightforwardly modal realism is helpful in solving the problem of non-existence. In the case of fictional characters it looks like noneism and modal realism are on fairly equal grounds; however, in the conclusion of this chapter, I touch on some reasons why we might overall prefer the modal realist approach.

The solution to the problem comes quickly and is straightforward. However, it would be beneficial to build out the theory.

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[1] I treat intentionality and representation as extensional relations. And I do not buy into the distinction between about/about* and representation/representation* made by Sainsbury (2018).

[2] Lewis is quite explicit that we at least have doxastic access to at least some other worlds. However, this has been called into question. I provide more details of the extended modal realist solution in Chapter 11.

6.6 Conclusion

I have shown that there is a modal realist response to the problem of non-existence. The modal realist takes it that there are non-existent objects. The modal realist also takes it that we can think about non-existent objects as just those objects which are at other modal locations. This straightforwardly answers the problem of non-existence and shares some similarities with the noneist response. So we might begin to wonder why we should go with the modal realist way rather than the noneist way. The most appealing reason why we might go the way of the modal realist opposed to the way of the noneist is that modal realism allows us to make some sense of the attitudes we have to these non-existent objects. That being said, in the case of fictional characters, the two positions are relatively equal. However, in the case of other instances of non-existence, modal realism wins out. Take for example desiring a certain outcome or fearing a future event. Under the modal realist pictures, these are perfectly intelligible events. What you are desiring or fearing is a person or state of fears that could have been the case. And since we do not privilege the actual, these possibilities could have been actuality for us. Sinhababu (2008) makes a good case for desiring possible love interests. If Sinhababu is correct then I think the fact that the modal realist can make sense of complex relational *de re* attitudes such as love gives us a distinct advantage over the noneist. Discussion of complex attitudes towards non-existent but possible entities will not be covered here but saved for Chapter 12.

Part II

Existence and Quantification

Existence

7.1 Introduction

When considering non-existence, it is helpful to have a handle on the related issue of existence and quantification. In this chapter, I survey some of the well-articulated and well-known positions about existence and quantification. In Chapter 8, I provide my own stance on this matter.

The following discussion might lead some to think that existence is a complicated and difficult to define notion. I disagree with this. I think with the indexical understanding we can clearly define what it is for something to exist and for something not to exist.

The subject of existence has had a long philosophical tradition, and various theories have been proposed to explain the term. In this chapter, I sketch the historically iconic thoughts on existence. This chapter is not a comprehensive overview of all the available positions. Instead, it is a whirlwind

tour touching on the views of the most historically significant players in the existence game. In the first part of the chapter, I focus on whether "exists" ought to be understood as a predicate. In the second part I look at the evolution of the particular quantifier. From this analysis we should conclude that the association of the quantifier with existence is a relatively new idea; it isn't something we need continue with and is a potentially problematic association.

It should be noted that what I present here may be considered slightly divergent from what is philosophically popular. The discussion of existence is normally framed as one between Russell and Meinong. It is normally presented that Russellians take existence to be expressed by the particular quantifier and Meinongians take existence to be a predicate. I will avoid setting up the debate as a juxtaposition between these two thinkers, for it oversimplifies the matter in a harmful way. The historical picture I paint is less clean and more scattered. The reason for this is that the Russell/Meinong dichotomy is a false one, which stems from the paradigms created by the discussions following the work of Russell and Meinong rather than by the writers themselves.[1] Moreover, Griffin raises concerns about whether Russell was engaged in an ontological project or a logical one (Griffin, 1985). Nowhere in "On Denoting" nor in *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* does Russell provide an explicit 'theory of existence'. Instead, Russell provides a "theory of descriptions" and explains how the term "exists" fits into this theory. The existence literature is far from uni-

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[1]Some might think this debate about 'exists' ultimately turtles down into one about which kind of logic we use: free logic or classical predicate logic. If this is the case then we *really* have a debate where the historical authors are talking past each other.

form, and carving it up into neat groups is by no means an easy task, not least because we will see that there are very few authors who are in genuine disagreement, other than those who disagree at a fundamental level. Most authors on the topic share the thought that "existence" and by extension "exists" is not a *proper predicate*. And by proper predicate I mean it does not detail a property of an object. However, in various forms, most authors land on the thought that "exists" is a *kind* of predicate in one way or another, that is to say, it takes the place of a predicate in sentence structure. The discussion between most authors boils down to whether "exists" is a logical predicate or just a grammatical one.

7.2 Exists and Predication

A logical predicate is something that is said of a subject; it is a Boolean value that can either be true or false. In philosophical logic, if something is a logical predicate it stands for the property of a subject. Take again our declarative sentence "Jane(x) runs(P)". In classical logic, this would be formalised as $\exists x(Px)$.

There are two problems with the historical debate. First is that most authors agree that "exists" is not straightforwardly a predicate and will want to make some kind of adjustment to the status of "exists" as a predicate. Those authors who say that "exists" is a predicate do so with a caveat. The second problem is the natural temptation to conflate logical and grammatical predicates. The conflation of "exists" as a logical and grammatical

predicate is what Thomson refers to as "Mr Pears' difficulty".

> A predicate is a certain type of word or phrase, such as "runs",
> "is warm", "is married to the younger sister of a violinist". Then
> whatever *existence* may be, it is certainly not a predicate, since
> it is not a word or phrase.[1] So, then, it may seem that the
> question must be "Is (the verb) 'exists' a predicate?" That is
> how Mr Pears tacitly takes it. And if that is the question, then
> there seems no reason for not returning an affirmative answer.
> (Pears and Thomson, 1963, 103)

Thomson, in response to Pears, explains that there is more than one way
of looking at "exists". He suggests that rather than taking our cue from the
word "predicate", we could instead take our cue from the word "existence"
and ask something about it. If this were the case, then the question would
be, is "existence" an attribute objects have?

Thomson's under-recognised comments help us to clarify the issue of exist-
ence. He points out that there are at least three ways to look at the debate
over the term "existence" (and "exists"). The first is whether existence is
an attribute or property that the subject or object has. The second way is
whether "exists" is a *grammatical predicate*. Finally, there is the question
as to whether "exists" is a *logical predicate*. Even with Thomson's distinc-
tions in place, the literature is still far from clear. I will use the way that
Thomson carves the debate to outline the historical context.

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[1] "Existence" is most certainly *a* word. I think what Thomson means is *existence* is
not the right kind of word.

7.3 Types of Existence

This section is split into subsections; each contains a cluster of views about existence which are loosely grouped together. There are those who think existence is a property of an object, those who think "exists" is a predicate (of a special kind), and are those who think existence is divorced from the existential quantifier. Finally, there are those philosophers who think existence is closely linked to the existential quantifier and think "exists" is not a (logical) predicate.

7.3.1 Existence as a Property

First, I look at those philosophers who think that existence is a property of an object. That is to say, existence adds something to the object. Aquinas makes a distinction between essence and existence. Aquinas argued that one could have an understanding of what a man or Phoenix is while being ignorant of whether it has being in reality(Aquinas, 1968, 55).[1] So, existence can be something in addition to the essence of an object. The crux of Aquinas's argument is that existence can be a separate property as existence is not part of the nature of most objects, and so those objects can be conceived of separately from their existence. The Thomistic position that existence is a property is generally unpopular. Most contemporary

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[1]Aquinas does not think this is the case for all beings, however. Aquinas states, "...there must be a reality that is the cause of being for all other things, because it is pure being" (Aquinas, 1968, 57). Aquinas here is referring to God, a being where essence and existence cannot be separated.

philosophers agree that existence is not a straightforward property. However, there appears to be significant disagreement about what existence is. Although there is reason to think this disagreement is not as deep as many would have us believe, as I show as the argument develops in what follows.

7.3.2 Exists as a Predicate

Those who think "exists" is a predicate do not necessarily think that it is a property. And those who think "exists" is not a logical predicate do not necessarily think that it is not a grammatical predicate. Now, let's turn our attention to the second group: those who think "exists" *is* a predicate, but that it has special or selected uses. Pears argues that "exists" is a predicate. It is used when the subject which is predicated of (is supposed to exist at one time) is said to exist at another time (Pears and Thomson, 1963). The correct usage of "exists" as a predicate would be in a sentence such as "Dinosaurs no longer exist". Another case when, according to Pears, it would be correct to use exists as a predicate would be in cases where existence is presupposed in one world and asserted in another. An example of what is meant by this is "The house I dreamt about really exists".

Alston suggests that it is permissible that "exists" can be used as a predicate in some places. For example, exists could be used as a predicate in cases where X is presupposed to have one mode, and we can predicate existence of it in another mode. Alston states, "The way is then open to regarding 'King Arthur really existed' and 'Centaurs do not really exist' as subject-predicate statements" (Alston, 1960, 459).

7.3.3 Existence and Quantification

Before I provide the remaining two views in this section, I will use this paragraph to provide a brief aside and expand on the different readings of the existential quantifier. In classical logic, the existential quantifier symbolised as "∃" is read as "there exists", and it is commonly thought to be existence entailing. However, this is not the only way that ∃ can be read. In a free logic, the existential quantifier can be read in a neutral way: a way which is not existence entailing. Under a neutral reading, the existential quantifier is read as "there is" or "something".[1] Using a free logic, we can escape concerns about existence statements being tautological. Sentences such as "swans exist" is not tautological under a free logic. In a logic where the existential quantifier is read as "exists", this sentence is tautological, and it would be read as "There exists some swans that exist". However, in a logic where the existential quantifier is read as "something", the sentence then would be read as "something swans exist" or as "some swans exist". In free logic, we can express the existence of swans by using "exists" as an informative logical predicate.

Back to the overview of positions on "exists". There are those who take "exists" to be a special kind of predicate. Routley analyses existence by using two kinds of quantification. Routley thinks there is existentially *loaded* quantification and existentially *neutral* quantification (Routley, 1980, 174–180). According to Routley, we use "exists" as the word in cases of loaded

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[1](Lambert, 1991) coined the term "free logic" to mean a logic free from existential assumptions. (Priest, 2016) notes that the existential quantifier can be read as "something" in all cases. I follow Priest's usage.

quantification, whereas "there are" and "some" are used in cases of neutral quantification. Given this we can say that for Routley "exists" is strictly a predicate but we can make more fine-grained "existence-type" statements by using "there are" or "some" in cases where we do not mean to use loaded quantification.

Parsons, who followed in Routley's footsteps, also argues that exists is a predicate but of a special kind. "Exists" is a kind of predicate that Parsons refers to as an "extranuclear predicate". An "extranuclear predicate" is a predicate that does not stand for a property. On the other hand, "nuclear predicates" do stand for properties of objects. What is more, the addition of "exists" as an extranuclear predicate is informative, and it details the ontological status of the swans in question. So under Parsons's theory, using "exists" as a logical predicate would also be permissible since he operates with a free logic where $\exists$ is not necessarily existence entailing.

To make Parson's point more clear, I use his example and divide predicates into two kinds (Terence, 1980, 23).

Nuclear Predicates: "is blue", "is tall", "kicked Socrates", "was kicked by Socrates", "kicked somebody", "is golden", "is a mountain".

Extranuclear Predicates: Ontological: "exist", "mythical", "is fictional".
Modal: "is possible", "is impossible"
Intentional: "is thought about by Meinong", "is worshipped by someone".
Technical: "is complete".

7.3.4 Existence and Logical Predication

The final position is advanced by those that argue that existence is not a predicate of the logical sort, the sort which stands for an attribute or characteristic of the object. Instead of thinking of 'exists' as a logical predicate, this group suggests existence is captured by the existential quantifier. Those who fall into this group take it that existence should not be used as a logical predicate on the grounds that it is tautological. This thought arguably has its origins in Kant's work and popularised by Quine. Kant tells us that existence is not a real predicate. Kant states existence is not "a predicate which is added to the concept of a subject and enlarges it" (Kant, 1999, Ch.3, Sect. 4). Kant argues that adding exists to the subject is tautological. To say the "lion exists" amounts to saying there "exists a lion that exists". The idea that existence is not a logical predicate is supported in modernity. Moore and Kneale continue this line of thought. Kneale states, "The sentence 'tame tigers exist' may mislead philosophers into thinking that existence is a predicate, because it is grammatically similar to such sentences as 'tame tigers growl' and 'Rajah growls' " (Kneale and Moore, 1936, 164). Kneale argues that existence is only a grammatical predicate and is so often confused for a logical predicate because it takes its place in the grammatical structure of sentences. Moore follows a similar line and states "exists", in this usage [about tame tigers], does not "stand for an attribute"(Kneale and Moore, 1936, 180). And Peetz concludes with a more moderate view, stating it is just not accurate to say that "exists" is not a predicate. However, Peetz continues: "but it cannot be used, as most

other predicates can, to describe a characteristic (or habit) which something has"(Peetz, 1982, 401).

Despite all this line drawing for ease of digestion, we should note that Berto (2012, 49–50) states "even that the Quinean, famous for the thought that exists is expressed by the particular quantifier, should admit that 'exists' is a predicate. The Quinean ...after reflecting upon the fact that her logic allows for an existence predicate of individuals in the most well known way: *x exists*$=_{\mathrm{df}} \exists y(y = x)$. The Quinean predicate is definable, reduced to the existential quantifier and identity". Berto (2015, 243) makes a similar point: "The point of Quineanism is that the property at issue is reduced to the quantifier — and identity. Both quantification and identity are logical notions. So existence is, in a precise sense, a logical property". Given this, I think it is reasonable to say that debates about what "exists" refers to are very muddled and difficult to unpick. Ultimately, it seems that when it comes down to it, most authors are generally in agreement that exists is some kind of predicate; some think it can be reduced and some deny that reduction. The difference in views comes at the level of ontology and what we are happy to admit to our ontology. Therefore it really seems that meta-ontology commitments about how to understand "exists" are reflected by ontological commitments about what there is rather than meta-ontological detailing ontology.

In the following part of the chapter, I provide an analysis of how we ended up in this situation.

7.4 How We Got Here

As I mentioned in the introduction, I will say more about the development of existence and the particular quantifier. In this section, I will highlight how we came to be in a position where the existential quantifier became existentially loaded. Priest (2016, 330) tells us it was not until very recently. This is a tale of how certain usage after many years can become 'tradition' or 'dogma' without anyone batting an eyelid. Priest's retelling of the history between the quantifiers and existential loading pinpoints two characters, Peirce and Frege as the starting point, and this is where we pick up the story.[1][2]

7.4.1 Peirce

The first use of something like the particular quantifier we use in contemporary logic was introduced by Peirce. Peirce writes the particular quantifier as ϵ and reads it simply as "some" which we can see in the following example:

> Here, in order to render the notation as iconical as possible we
> may use ϵ for *some*, suggesting a sum, and π for *all* suggesting
> a product. Thus, $\epsilon_i x_i$ means that x is true of some one of the

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[1]I accept that other authors might retell this history a bit differently and potentially someone might say that Priest has a particular agenda. To this I have to say this is not a history of logic thesis; I have to pick some retelling to go for it and I think Priest is clear and sets up the issues well enough.

[2]In Priest's retelling he re-writes the particular quantifier as $\mathfrak{G}$ in line with the rest of *Towards Non-being*. In this case, I will not use Priest's notation as I have not provided the fore-grounding to do so; the particular quantifier will be written as $\exists$.

individuals denoted by i...(Peirce and Kloesel, 1993, 180, Italics original)

Peirce writes "$\epsilon_i x_i$ means that x" this would now be written by contemporary logicians as "$\exists ix(i)$". The notion is close enough to the contemporary quantifier, but it is understood to just be read as 'some'.

7.4.2 Frege

For Frege particular quantification expressed in *Begriffsschrift* notation, is often read as "there is" (*Es gibt*) (Frege, 1980, 35, 73). However, Priest (2016, 331) points out that Frege also refers to such sentences as "existential" (*Existentialsätz*) (Frege, 1980, 35). For Frege sentences like this also ascribe the property of existence (*Existenz Eigenschaft*) to a concept (Frege, 1980, 73). In the following quote we can see that in Frege's view, existence is a second-order concept.

> I have called existence a property of a concept. How I mean this
> to be taken is best made clear by an example. In the sentence
> "there is at least one square root of 4," we have an assertion,
> not about (say) the definite number 2, nor about —2, but about
> a concept, *square root of 4*; viz. that it is not empty. (Geach
> and Black, 1960, 48–49, italics original)

It would be wrong to read any metaphysics into this, for as Priest (2016, 331) highlights, "This is just the standard way that mathematicians talk

when showing that *something* satisfies a certain condition; that its concept is, as Frege puts it, not empty. It is simply an idiom."

When remarking on the mathematicians' use of exists, Frege says, replying to Peano:

> Existential sentences, beginning "there is" *("es gibt")*, are closely related to particular ones: compare the sentence "there are numbers which are prime" with "some numbers are prime". This existence is still too often confused with reality and objectivity. (McGuinness, 1984, 239)

When it comes to what Frege might have meant by reality, Priest (2016, 332) posits that Frege might have meant physical reality as opposed to some kind of platonic reality. "One reason for thinking so is that in his 1919, *The Thought*, Frege seems to see a close connection between what is real (*wirklich*) and its cognates, and what has causes (*wirken*) (to cause)."

When it comes to thoughts, Frege takes them to be abstract objects, stating: "The thought, admittedly, is not something which it is usual to call real." Frege goes on to say:

> Thoughts are by no means unreal, but their reality is of quite a different kind from that of [material] things. And their effect is brought about by an act of the thinker without which they would be ineffective, at least as far as we can see. (Frege, 1967, 38)

Frege's comments indicate that he thought abstract objects, although they are real, they behave in a different way from physical objects. Drawing our attention to an important feature, Priest (2016, 332) emphasises that "Frege contrasts the existence of 'there is' not only with the real, but with the objective. As the rest of *The Thought* makes clear, thoughts are entirely objective. So the distinction he is drawing cannot be abstract and concrete existence."

When it comes to existence as a predicate, Priest notes that Frege casually wrote "because existence is a property of concepts, the ontological argument for the existence of God breaks down" (Frege, 1968, 65). However, no further comment is provided, and it might be thought that this remark contradicts what has just been said. However, Priest highlights other comments from Frege which seem to support his analysis provided above. Priest (2016, 333) draws attention to lecture notes concerning the ontological argument for the existence of God. In these lectures, Frege explains "...that *existence* may mean either a first-order property of an object or a second-order property of a concept to be a part of the definition of "God". However, "we always want to ask ourselves whether there really is such a thing", i.e., whether *something* satisfies the concept." Based on this, it does seem that Frege's position is compatible with his comments on Peano and with the analysis that Priest has provided.

7.4.3   The Backward E

The contemporary symbol for the particular quantifier ∃ comes from Peano's *Formulaire de Mathématique.* However, in this case, ∃ was not used as a quantifier. For Peano, ∃ was introduced as a monadic predicate of sets, expressing the property of being non-empty (Priest, 2016, 333).

7.4.4   Enter Russell

Russell's use of this notation was originally limited at first, and most notably, he did not use Peano's ∃ in *Principles of Mathematics* (Priest, 2016, 334). Even in "On Denoting" in which Russell rejects his former view that there are objects that don't exist, the use of the quantification symbol does not appear nor is there any association with existence and the particular quantifier (Priest, 2016, 334). However, there is a shift in *Principia Mathematica.* Here, Russell uses the same terms to frame the particular quantifier, but here we also see the introduction of the 'backward E' for the particular quantifier (Priest, 2016, 335).

> The symbol "$\exists x \phi x$" may be read as "there exists an x for which ϕx is true", or "there exists an x satisfying $\phi \hat{x}$", and this conforms to the natural form of the expression of thought. (Russell and Whitehead, 1997, 15)[1]

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[1]Priest notes that this work is co-authored so some of the views may be Whitehead's rather than Russell's.

However, even at this point Priest argues that nothing about Russell's view indicates "anything more than a mathematical idiom to the effect that something satisfies a certain condition or is a member of a class. Nor is there any argument to the effect that the particular quantifier is existentially loaded in any serious metaphysical sense" (Priest, 2016, 335).

It was only in the lectures in Russell (1918) where first he explicitly linked and defended that existence is expressed by the particular quantifier.

Russell's main argument for this position is as follows:

> It is perfectly clear that when you say "Unicorns exist", you are not saying anything that would apply to any unicorns there might happen to be, because as a matter of fact, there are not any, and therefore if what you say had any application to the actual individuals, it could not possibly be significant unless it were true. You can consider the proposition "Unicorns exist", and see that it is false. It is not nonsense. Of course, if the proposition went through the general conception of the unicorn to the individual, it could not even be significant unless there were unicorns. Therefore when you say "Unicorns exist," you are not saying anything about individual things, and the same applies when you say "Men exist". (Russell, 2009, 67)

It is Russell's claim that if an existence predicate — and *a fortiori* the existence predicate — to something that does not exist, the result lacks meaning (Priest, 2016, 336).

Russell continues his argument asking us to consider two inferences (Russell, 2009, 67).

In the first case, we are asked to consider

1. Men exist

2. Socrates is a man

3. Socrates exists

compared to

1. Men are numerous

2. Socrates is a man

3. Socrates is numerous

It is Russell's claim that there is the same sort of fallacy involved in both. From this, we are supposed to notice that the conclusion of the first is ungrammatical, as is that of the second. However, Priest (2016, 337) points out:

> ...the analogy is lame, as should have been clear to Russell had he not already been in the grip of his view. To say that men are numerous is indeed to say that many things are men. In the right context, this is true, as is the other premise. The conclusion, however, is *clearly* nonsense. The inference is therefore fallacious.

Priest also takes it that the first argument is false but simply due to its form:

1. $\exists x(MxE\hat{x})$

2. Ms

3. Es

Priest (2016, 338) highlights a final argument from Russell:

> You can see this in various ways. For instance, you sometimes know the truth of an existence-proposition without knowing any instance of it. You know that there are people in Timbuctoo, but I doubt if any of you could give me an instance of one. Therefore you clearly can know existence-propositions without knowing any instances that make them true. Existence-propositions do not say anything about the actual individual but only about the class or function. (Russell, 2009, 68)

Priest takes a dim view on Russell's argument and raises the point that maybe we should doubt whether Russell seriously "believed that the particular quantifier encodes existence" due to the quality of his argument. Priest (2016, 388) states:

> Of course you can know the truth of a sentence starting with a particular quantifier, such as $\exists x(Mx \wedge Ex)$, without knowing

the truth of any particular instance, just as you can know the truth of a disjunction without knowing the truth of one of the disjuncts. But this is *irrelevant.* It remains the case that the quantifier is existentially unloaded, and that existence may be expressed by a monadic predicate.

Priest's analysis of Russell indicates that we should potentially not think of "∃" as expressing existence in any kind of heavy metaphysical way; rather, Russell's usage is in line with mathematical logic.

7.4.5 The Significant Step

Up until now, we have seen that there is at least some gap between metaphysical existence and the particular quantifier. Although Russell's use of symbolisation and association with the term existence might have led some to associate the two, Priest argues that it was not until much more recently that the particular quantifier came to signify existence. It is Quine's view that the particular quantifier expresses existence. Or in Quine's dictum "to be is to be the value of a variable" (Quine, 1948, 32). It is worth looking at Quine's position in full:

> At this point McX begins to wonder whether there is any limit
> at all to our ontological immunity. Does *nothing* we say commit
> us to the assumption of universals or other entities which we
> may find unwelcome?

I have already suggested a negative answer to this question, in speaking of bound variables, or variables of quantification, in connection with Russell's theory of descriptions. We can very easily involve ourselves in ontological commitments by saying, for example, that *there is something* which is a prime number and larger than a million. But this is, essentially the *only* way that we can involve ourselves in ontological commitment: by our use of bound variables. The use of alleged names is no criterion, for we can repudiate their namehood at the drop of a hat unless the assumption of a corresponding entity can be spotted in the things we affirm in terms of bound variables. Names are, in fact, altogether immaterial to the ontological issue, for I have shown, in connection with "Pegasus" and "pagasize", that names can be converted into descriptions, and Russell has shown that descriptions can be eliminated. Whatever we say with the help of names can be said in language which shuns names altogether. To be assumed as an entity is, purely and simply, to be reckoned as the value of a variable. (Quine, 1948, 31–32)

In sum Quine takes the position that names and predicates are not existentially committing in themselves. However, Quine doesn't provide an argument as to why quantification *is* existentially committing. Quine merely assumes that the domain of quantification is made up of existent objects.

Priest states "So if neither names, nor predicates, nor quantifiers are ontologically committing, what is? To say that something exists, of course!

Quine, one might say, is one of those philosophers who have united in ruining the good old word 'exists'. At any rate, if Russell used bad arguments for the view then Quine used none at all" (Priest, 2016, 340).

In what follows, I provide what some philosophers might consider to be one of the most damaging paragraphs for non-existent objects. I also think that it is one of the most harmful paragraphs in analytic philosophy, for the argument is almost entirely motivated by rhetoric. I present the full paragraph with Priest's highlighting of these rhetorical moves in bold.

> Wyman's **overpopulated universe** is **in many ways unlovely**. It **offends the aesthetic sense** of us who have **a taste for desert landscapes**, but this is not the worst of it. Wyman's **slum of possibles** is a **breeding ground for disorderly elements.** Take, for instance, the possible fat man in the doorway; and, again, the possible bald man in the doorway. **Are they the same possible man, or two possible men? How do we decide? How many of them are alike? Or would their being alike make them one? Are no two possible things alike? Is this the same as saying that it is impossible for two things to be alike? Or, finally, is the concept of identity simply not applicable to unactualised possibles? But what sense can be found in talking of entities which cannot meaningfully be said to be identical with themselves and distinct from one another?** These elements are **well-nigh incorrigible**. By

a Fregean therapy of individual concepts some efforts might be made at rehabilitation; but I feel we'd do better simply to **clear Wyman's slum** and be done with it. (Quine, 1948, 23–24)

This quote begins with purely defamatory comments about *possibilia* claiming that they are offensive; unfortunately for Quine, merely being offended by possibilia is not a good argument about their inclusion in one's ontology. As has been highlighted in bold, we can see that the majority in this passage is not argumentation but rather rhetoric. Following this comes a series of questions concerning the identity conditions of possibilia, but here again, no argument is present. There is merely a series of rhetorical questions designed to push the reader into doubting possibilia. But none of Quine's potential answers are shown to be implausible. Ultimately *possibilia* are dismissed by Quine due to his preference and not because of any argument.
[1]

What is potentially more egregious is that as (Priest, 2016, 341) states, almost the entire paper is carried by its rhetoric rather than by argument. Priest provides two examples: "Wyman, by the way, is one of those philosophers who have united in ruining the good old word exists" and "For McX

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[1]Furthermore, Casati (2017) argues that the way Quine argues for his position introduces an inconsistency. Casati's arguments amount to inconsistencies introduced by taking McX and Wyman to be fictional entities; if this is the case then Quine under his own theory will not be able to distinguish them for he admits that it is not possible to provide identity conditions for such entities. However, these philosophers are presented as distinct individuals in 'On What There Is'. Thus by using fictional philosophers as a straw man, Quine traps himself in an inconsistency. I will not detail Casati's argument at length, but I think what I have said gives sufficient flavour for his argument. I choose not to provide the full argument for even as Casati (2017, 2) admits, their argument "...should not lead [us] to dismiss Quine's position"; rather, the argument highlights a problematic feature of the argument as presented in "On What There Is".

this is an unusually penetrating speech". Moreover, even Wyman and McX are rhetorical devices for they are fictional philosophers whose persons are not held by any historical philosophers but have rather been gerrymandered to suit Quine's needs.[1] This is problematic predominantly because Quine's paper has become hugely influential and the view he offered has become exceedingly popular and ingrained in the minds of many philosophers and logicians. Quine's paper not only associated the particular quantifier with existence but it also damaged the reputation of *possibilia*. However, neither of these outcomes were achieved via argument but rather as Priest (2016, 342) says they were "as a result of Quine's silver rhetoric".

7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sketched some of the various historical positions on existence, and I have provided some analysis for how the particular quantifier became existentially loaded. This chapter provides the setup for the next, in which I provide my theory of existence and explain how I understand the particular quantifier. I do not take existence to be expressed by the particular quantifier. Rather, I take it that existence should be expressed by an indexical. I take it that the existential quantifier expresses the domain of quantification; it expresses "what there is" in the dictum of the extended modal realist: it expresses reality. In the next chapter, I provide a theory of existence that admits that there is something to quantification

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[1]Although it is commonly thought that McX is supposed to be a hyper-Platonist and Wyman to be kind of pseudo-Meinong.

and ontological commitment, for the domain of quantification is merely set in terms of your metaphysics which may differ from philosopher to philosopher. You might say I suffer from the Quinean hangover, which is hardly surprising given the trajectory of modal realism, so I uphold what might be thought of as the "common-sense" notion that 'there is everything that there is'. However, the metaphysics of extended modal realism allows us to maintain this and makes room for possibilia, and with my modification, we can meaningfully make sense of non-existence within this framework.

Indexical Existence

This chapter offers an indexical theory of existence. The indexical account of existence allows modal realists to speak meaningfully and clearly about existence and non-existence. The indexical theory operates in the extended modal realist framework, although it shares many linguistic and logical similarities with Lewis's theory of existence. I, however, argue that the metaphysical underpinning of extended modal realism and language used by the indexical theory is more precise when it comes to talking about existence and non-existence compared to Lewis's approach. I also argue that the indexical theory of existence is more successful than its closest competitor, Yagisawa's relational existence.

8.1 Introduction

The primary concern of this chapter is to explore an underdeveloped option for modal realists seeking a theory of existence.[1] The indexical theory is Lewisian in flavour, but operates within the extended modal realist system. The indexical theory of existence achieves what Lewis did with restricted quantification, but the toolkit of extended modal realism allows the indexical theory to be more precise about existence and non-existence talk. The benefit of using the extended modal realist system is that we have access to modal tensing and primitive reality, according to which "reality does not entail existence" (Yagisawa, 2010, 23).[2] These features of extended modal realism allow for a genuine distinction between the words "existence" and "non-existence", something which seems troubling for Lewisian modal realists who only have the tools for distinctions in scope. One might point out that for Lewis, everything exists. This does not seem to match up well with the language we use when we talk about non-existent objects. We do seem to want to say that some things exist and some things do not.[3]

The second concern of this chapter is to point out that the indexical theory of existence allows modal realists to use "existence" in a straightforward

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[1]Van Inwagen (1980) hinted that this option is open for modal realists but doesn't go into details on what a theory like this would look like. Branquinho (2012) notes the option of an indexical theory of existence in a Meinongian context but does not develop the theory at great length either.

[2]The extended modal realist framework is one in which there are both possible and impossible worlds in a single five-dimensional universe. In this Chapter, I do not argue for this position, but it has been developed at length by Yagisawa (2010).

[3]The importance of our engagement with non-existent objects has been highlighted by Crane (2012).

and easily definable way; we might say it allows modal realists to use "existence" in a deflationary way. I argue that if modal realists are searching for a deflationary theory of existence, then we ought to go for the indexical theory of existence as it has advantages over its closest competitor, Yagisawa's relational account of existence. The first reason to prefer the indexical account is a positive one. The indexical theory allows for a more precise account of "existence" than either Lewis's restricted quantification or Yagisawa's relational theory. The second reason to prefer the indexical account is that it does not encounter the same issues as the relational account and ultimately it is, on balance, more deflationary—at least in one sense— than the relational account.[1]

There are two strands running through this chapter: a metaphysical project that establishes an indexical and deflationary theory of existence and there is also a linguistic strand, in which I will state when it is true to say something "exists" and when something does not "exist". The topic of existence is so heavily steeped in metaphysics that even the linguistic part of the project cannot be undertaken in total isolation from the underlying metaphysics. I put forward the view that it is true to say something "exists" if it is picked out by a relevant indexical. As a result of this theory, "existence" like, "actual" is an indexical, changing mean based on the context in which it is uttered. I reserve the term "real" to capture talk about things in a maximal sense.[2]

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[1]The kind of deflation I am referring to here is a commitment to less metaphysical machinery. That is to say, a view with less "stuff" is more deflationary than a view with more "stuff".

[2]The reason for setting out the terminology in this order is two-fold. First, it is the established way for extended modal realists to use the terms. "Real" as a primitive,

I am not the first extended modal realist to supply a deflationary theory of existence.Yagisawa (2014) provides a deflationary theory of existence too. Yagisawa thinks that existence is a shallow notion and it can be defined within a mathematical discipline. Yagisawa offers us a relational analysis of existence in which existence is set membership (Yagisawa, 2014, 1). However, I will contend that Yagisawa's analysis of existence suffers from two issues. The first issue is that Yagisawa's theory is not as deflationary as he takes it to be since it relies on more metaphysical commitments than necessary. The second issue is that Yagisawa's relational theory also ultimately collapses into a view where existence is a property, a consequence he was hoping to avoid from the start. For these reasons, I argue that modal realists searching for a lightweight theory of existence will be better off with my proposal than Yagisawa's since both theories ultimately get to the same place yet the indexical theory does not face the issues of Yagisawa's relational account.

For those looking for context, I say that many objects are real, even non-existent ones, and that the term "existence" (or "exists") is a description of real objects. Aside from existing objects, there are also objects that are real but do not exist. What there is is tied to what is real and is distinguished from what exists. Mirroring "existence", "non-existence" is a term that describes a different group of real objects. Finally, that which is unreal features nowhere in reality. Thus, unreal objects cannot properly be

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while "exists" can be analysed (Yagisawa, 2010, 8–9). Second, setting the terminology out this way allows for a useful divide that helps resolve the problem of non-existence. Some of the benefits of using extended modal realism as a solution to this problem have been highlighted in Thomas (2019).

described with either of the terms "existent", or "non-existent".[1]

The structure of this chapter is as follows. In §8.2 I outline the indexical theory of existence, drawing attention to the important distinction between "real" and "exists". Then in §8.3 I outline what it takes to be considered a deflationary theory. In §8.4 I outline Yagisawa's theory of deflationary existence, and in §8.5, I provide some reasons why Yagisawa's notion of existence is not as deflationary as he would like us to think. My primary concern is that the metaphysical weight has been moved away from existence as a property to existence as a relation. If this is the case, then the weight that existence carries has not got any lighter — it has just moved about. I do think, however, this is the least charitable way to read Yagisawa's proposal, and thus my objection comes with a caveat, and I discuss the more charitable way to read Yagisawa, which is not free from objections either. Yagisawa and I both share the view that existence is shallow and easily definable. However, the details between our theories of existence differ. In §8.6 I summarise the view I have offered. I conclude that the indexical theory is not only practical and useful when it comes to existence talk, but it provides a more deflationary account of existence than its closest competitor theory.

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[1]When we are talking about the unreal we mean literal nothingness.

8.2 The Indexical Account

Before I get onto the topic of existence, it is helpful to quickly detail some other relevant concepts, what it is to be an object and what reality is. The indexical theory, I argue, is a way for extended modal realists to maintain their position that reality does not entail existence without needing to employ Yagisawa's relational account of existence.[1]

8.2.1 Objects

A straightforward theory of objects underpins the discussion of existence. I take objects to be just those things which we can quantify over and predicate about.[2] They are just things like that. For something to count as an object, it must belong to the domain everything which I call the "universe".[3] To use different language, if something is part of the universe it is an object. "Object" here is used in a very general way; it is just a thing that shares in the universe. The only non-objects are nothings, and these non-things do not belong to the mereological sum of everything, those things which do not belong to the "universe". The term "universe" is an all-encompassing term for all space, physical, modal, and temporal. Literally speaking, the only non-objects are those things which are *no-things*. In short, "something

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[1]My motivation for upholding this distinction in this chapter is primarily a practical one. But Yagisawa (2010, 8–23) provides metaphysical motivations that I will not detail nor comment on in this chapter.

[2]It follows that all objects are things and all things are objects.

[3]Please note, I use the term domain rather than set. This is a purposeful move: domains are proper classes and unlike sets can be maximal and can be the fusion of parts Lewis (1991, 98).

x is an object if it is part of the domain **U** (everything)". This is a very general description of objects, but objects are a very general class, so a general definition is apt.[1]

8.2.2 Reality

If an object is part of the universe, then it is real. There is just one sense of real, and it is a binary notion: things are either real, or they are not. Objects are either part of the universe or they are not objects at all. To clarify my position on reality, it is helpful to draw a comparison with Lewis's use of existence *simpliciter*. My use of "real" shares a similarity with Lewis's use of wide-scope existence or existence *simplicter*. Lewis thinks that there is one sense of existence. Lewis states,

> I do not have the slightest idea what a difference in the manner of existing is supposed to be. Some things exist here on earth, other things exist extraterrestrially, perhaps some exist no place in particular; but that is no difference in the manner of existing, merely a difference in location or lack of it between things that exist. Likewise, some things exist here at our world, and other things exist at other worlds; again, I take this to be a difference between things that exist, not a difference in their existing. (Lewis, 1986, 2)

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[1]I am not aware of anyone who explicitly holds this position. However, discussion on the mereology of classes can be found in (Lewis, 1991). And Priest characterises objects in a general way like this in the 2017 Robert Curtius Lecture of Excellence.

In a separate paper, Lewis (1990, 154) says:

> We of the establishment think that there is only one kind of
> quantification. The several idioms of what we call "existential"
> quantification are entirely synonymous and interchangeable. It
> does not matter whether you say 'Some things are donkeys' or
> "There are donkeys' or "Donkeys exist" — you mean exactly
> the same thing whichever way you say it. The same goes for
> more vexed cases: it does not matter whether you say "Some
> famous fictional detective uses cocaine", "There is a famous fic-
> tional detective who uses cocaine", or "A famous cocaine using
> fictional detective exists" — whether true or whether false, all
> three statements stand or fall together.

Like Lewis thinks there is just one sense of "existence", I think there is one
sense of "reality", and we agree that there is one kind of quantification but
disagree in its reading. For Lewis, the term "existence" does the ontological
work of drawing the boundaries of "what there is". For me, the term "real"
does the same work. However, Lewis's use of existence *simpliciter* and my
use of the term "real" cannot be read as synonyms since, as Yagisawa (2012)
highlights, Lewis is committed to unrestricted quantification. Moreover, it
is the primitiveness of reality that is partly what distinguishes the indexical
view in the extended modal realist system from Lewis's view.

> When [the ersatz modal realist] says there are no other worlds,
> and no other-worldly possible individuals, he says it with his

quantifiers wide open. He means to quantify over *everything,* without *any* restriction whatever, ignoring *nothing.* (And these quantifiers too are meant to be entirely unrestricted. I doubt that any perfect disambiguation is possible: all our idioms of quantification alike are flexible, subject to tacit restriction. But I think that, wilful misunderstanding aside, my meanings should be clear.) (Lewis, 1986, 137)

Although Lewis and I use different terms, we share the same ends. We use the terms "exists" and "real" to set our ontological boundaries and while Lewis's might be open, mine are closed.[1]

The term "real" refers to the domain of everything which I have named the "universe". This large domain includes all the objects there are.[2] I would say that everything that is part of the universe is real, but not necessarily everything that is real exists. My choice of words here might prompt questions from some readers, which I hope to clarify in what follows in this paragraph and in the remaining sections. Yagisawa points out that "...the question of reality is entirely separate from the question of existence and that failure to keep terms separate tends to cause grave confusion, especially in modal metaphysics"(Yagisawa, 2010, 9). I agree with Yagisawa that "real" is a primitive notion, and therefore it is more foundational than existence. Thus "real" should be used to set the largest boundaries while

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[1]For discussion about restricted quantification and extended modal realism, see Yagisawa (2012).

[2]What is part of the domain is up for debate and this topic will not be broached here.

"exists" is reserved for more precise boundary drawing. However, concerns are often brought against the extended modal realist's use of "real". Yagisawa (2012), replying to Kim (2012), provides some helpful comments on this matter. The concern is that Yagisawa and extended modal realists appear to be committed to an inconsistency regarding what we call "real". Yagisawa says:

> I reject an absolutely unrestricted collection of anything, whether it forms a domain for quantification or not. But I appear to embrace reality as completely unrestricted; anything whatever is real.[1] (Yagisawa, 2012, 79)

Kim's critique brings out an important feature of extended modal realism which it is helpful to clarify. Yagisawa continues:

> I refuse to envision an absolutely unrestricted collection, domain, totality, whole, or what have you along those lines. But I do envision reality. So, reality is not an absolutely unrestricted collection (or domain or totality or...). When I say that the notion of reality is a basic metaphysical notion, forming the bedrock of metaphysics, I mean, inter alia, that it is not explicable in other terms. To say that the reality is an absolutely unrestricted collection (or domain or...) is to explicate the notion of reality in other terms. Therefore, I refuse to say so. (Yagisawa, 2012, 79)

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[1]To capture the use of 'unrestricted' in this second instance I will use unrestricted*.

One might still object that the fundamentality of reality hasn't been argued for, and this is just mere insistence. This is an objection I have to agree with. However, it is not the aim of this chapter to further defend the extended modal realist's conception of "real". My aim is to provide an alternative theory of existence for those already attracted to some variety of modal realism.

Before I go on, it would serve me well to say something about what it means to be unreal on my account. To be unreal is to not feature anywhere in the universe. There are no unreal things. These "nothings" are not part of the universe.

8.2.3   Existence

With our definition of what it is to be real in hand, we can turn our attention to existence. Existence is a term used differently by different philosophers. There are at least two broad senses in which things can exist. First, there is existence in the unrestricted* sense. The unrestricted* sense of "existence" refers to what exists across all domains. Second, there is the restricted sense of 'existence', or what exists in a certain domain. Most philosophers think that when we use 'exists' in everyday speech, we are usually using it in a restricted way because we normally want to talk about what exists at some particular location. If these philosophers are correct and the restricted sense is the ordinary use of "exists", then the unrestricted* sense of "exists" must refer to what exists in all domains. If this is the case, then "exists" in the unrestricted* sense and "real" as I use them have the same meaning.

Because "exists" (unrestricted*) and "real" have the same meaning, we should collapse both terms into the single term, "real". So my focus is on restricted existence. Following Priest (2016), I read the existential quantifier as "something", rather than exists in all cases. I collapse "A thing(s) x exists" and "there are x(s)" into "something(s) x". The upshot is that under my system, "exists" is free to be used as a word just to describe objects in a certain context. This is a technical linguistic move; in the unrestricted* sense, the existential quantifier and its translations refer to quantification over what is real. In what follows, I provide a way for us to square this move with a precise notion of existence.

My proposal is to treat the term "existence" just like Lewis treats "actuality". Regarding "actuality", Lewis says:

> Our actual world is only one world among others. We call it alone actual not because it differs in kind from all the rest but because it is the world we inhabit. The inhabitants of other worlds may truly call their own worlds actual, if they mean by "actual" what we do; for the meaning we give to "actual" is such that it refers at any world i to that world i itself. "Actual" is indexical, like "I" or "here", or "now": it depends for its reference on the circumstance of utterance, to wit the world where the utterance is located. (Lewis, 2013, 85–86)

Lewis also states:

I suggest that "actual" and its cognates should be analyzed as
indexical terms: terms whose references varies, depending on
relevant features of the context of utterance. The relevant fea-
tures of context, for the term "actual", is the world at which
a given utterance occurs. According to the indexical analysis I
propose, "actual"...refers at any world w to the world w. "Ac-
tual" is analogous to "present", an indexical term whose refer-
ence varies depending on a different feature of context: "present"
refers at any time t to the time t. "Actual" is analogous also
to "here", "I", "you", "this", and "aforementioned" — indexical
terms depending for their reference respectively on the place, the
speaker, the intended audience, the speaker's acts of pointing,
and the foregoing discourse. (Lewis, 1970, 184–185)

I suggest that we treat "existence" as an indexical, just like Lewis describes
"actuality". "Existence" should be analysed with a varied reference, de-
pending on the relevant features of the context of utterance. The upshot
of this is that "existence" can be variable. Some might be sceptical about
this, but in the following section, I provide some positive reasons as to why
we might go for the indexical theory and in §8.4 I provide some reasons to
avoid the closest competitor the indexical has, the relational account.

8.2.4 Why Go This Way?

The reason we might think that the indexical theory of existence is useful is that it can provide a fine-grained and precise account for the variety of ways we use the term "exists".

It is helpful for us to talk about what exists immediately; this use of "exists" is "what exists around here", or "what exists locally". We might open the fridge and say "there exists milk". On the contrary, if there was no milk in the fridge, we might say "there exists no milk". This local existence is the first and most common-sense way in which something can exist. Things also exist by being present. We might say that computers exist because they are present objects. On the contrary, we might say that dinosaurs are non-existent because they are not present: they are in the past. The final kind of existence is actuality. Actuality is the modal status for being at the actual world. We might say that "I exist and that I am actual", while we might say that a counterpart of mine is "non-existent but possible". What makes it the case in all three of these instances that the objects in question exist is that they exist in the frame of reference for the relevant speaker of the existence statement.[1] In the case of milk in the fridge, we can say there is milk in the fridge because, from our frame of reference, there is milk in the fridge. The same goes for computers. There exists computers because, for us presently, there are computers. Actuality picks out the world at which the utterance is made. In all these cases we would want

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[1] The mention of counterparts is by no means a commitment to counterpart theory; instead, this statement merely serves as an example.

to say something exists, but we wouldn't want to say they all exist in the same way. The benefit of the indexical theory of existence is that it allows for different kinds of existence statements to be true without additional metaphysical mechanics. Instead, we can make our language more precise with the introduction of tensing.

Tensing is the practice of adding a subscript letter to our metalanguage to indicate tensed predication. Modal tensing works in a similar way. It is the practice of adding a subscript letter to indicate where in modal space something is. Yagisawa makes use of modal tensing; he takes the analogy between times and worlds seriously. He also takes it that we can and should tense verbs in temporal discourse. Myself and Yagisawa think such a move can be made with modal discourse too. This is modal tensing. Yagisawa provides four modal tenses: actuality, mere-possibility, (metaphysical) impossibility, and a modal tense used for predicating about modal space in a general way. These tenses are denoted with the subscript letters $_{a,p,i}$ and $_m$ (Yagisawa, 2015, 319). I will not discuss modal tensing at length here; what is important is that there is a toolkit for a precise metalanguage available to extended modal realists. I simply use the tensing schema to distinguish between predicating about existence in different contexts and with different degrees of specificity.[1] We can use the tensing schema to indicate the variety of different ways we might use existence statements. For example, to talk about what exists at actuality, we would use one tense, what exists at the present moment another, what exists locally another and so on.

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[1]Yagisawa uses modal tensing for a different purpose; for details see Yagisawa (2010, 73–93) and Yagisawa (2015).

"Existence" is then just the term we use to describe the objects picked out by an indexical. There are three degrees that we would obviously want to give an account for so I will focus on these for now. Objects can appear spatially, temporally, and modally; modality is the most primitive and the broadest so I will start with it. To express an existence claim about an object (x) we would say that "something $(x)_a$". "Something $(x)_a$" and "There is something actual" have the same meaning. Depending on the context, it would be permissible to add additional subscript letters at will to account for more specific existence statements; for example, we might use $_n$ for now and $_l$ for local. We could read "something $(x)_n$" as "something is now" or "something $(x)_l$" as "something (x) is local". We only need to introduce additional subscript letters if we want a more fine-grained description of existence which is possible and ought to be encouraged under this schema.[1] If a more fine-grained language is desired, then we should simply introduce additional subscript letters to indicate more fine-grained tenses. I see no reason why this is not possible, provided the introduction is stipulated in the metalanguage. When speaking in broad terms "something $(x)_a$" functions as a descriptor for all three obvious ways we might want to talk about existent objects. My conception of existence makes use of existence as actuality in the modal sense. I say what "exists" is what is "actual"; for a modal realist, "actuality" is an indexical that shifts with the utterance of the speaker. So "existence" becomes an indexical as well.[2]

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[1]Yagisawa (2010, 78) sees this kind of metalanguage as "overkill" but where Yagisawa sees overkill I see an opportunity for precision.

[2]It has been suggested that my framework is unable to account for disagreement about existence. However, this objection only comes about when there is a mixing of frames of reference. The confusion comes from cases where one subject is talking about

Someone might challenge the view I have on offer, suggesting that I have simply moved issues about existence to issues about reality. To this point, I have two responses. First, the distinction between reality and existence has already been made by Yagisawa, and it is my goal to provide an indexical theory of existence that we extended modal realists can use. I am not creating a new distinction, but I am working within an established framework (Yagisawa, 2010, 49). Secondly, in some ways, I have to accept that the objector has made an accurate criticism, metaphysical questions about 'what there is' still need an answer, but this is not part of the scope of this chapter and will be established in a separate work. Moreover, there are two reasons the move is independently motivated. The first reason is that it serves to further distinguish between the existential quantifier and the term "exists", a distinction whose benefit has been pointed out by Priest (2016). The second reason for switching terms is that it allows for a genuine juxtaposition of terms between existence and non-existence. Without this terminological clarification there would be some philosophers who would be forced into clumsy language such as "non-existent objects exist", or "impossible objects exist". With a small terminological distinction these philosophers are afforded the ability to say "non-existent objects are real" and "impossible objects are real but do not exist". I am left with technical terms for unrestricted quantification and restricted quantification, namely "real" and "exists" respectively, a toolkit which if nothing else is practically

restrictive existence, and another is talking about a more general kind of existence. The introduction of tensing helps remove this confusion. To genuinely disagree about existence, subjects must be talking about the same tense. However, there is one case where disagreement would be impossible; no two subjects can share a purely subjective frame of reference so the impossibility of disagreement, in this case, should be expected.

useful.

The indexical theory allows for precise, fine-grained existence talk with the possibility of genuine disagreement. The indexical theory is similar in flavour to Lewis's approach which he achieved by using restricted quantification, and I have achieved with tensing. These options are logically similar but differ in their metaphysics. What is more, the tensed metalanguage of the indexical approach allows for us to meaningfully say that there are non-existent things, something which is more difficult to do under Lewis's system especially with any degree of specificity; however, this is easily handled in the indexical theory. This solution comes with little extra metaphysical weight, and I argue it has advantages over the relational account proposed by Yagisawa.[1]

8.2.5 Non-Existence

I have provided an indexical theory of existence, so the implications of such a theory must also stretch to non-existence.

If existence is just what is picked out by the indexical "exists", then non-existence is just those things which fall outside the range of the indexical in that particular context. "Non-existence" describes objects that are real but are not picked out by the speaker's use of existence. For example, objects covered by the other two modal statuses, possible and impossible, would be considered to be non-existent when the speaker in the context of their actual

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[1]Of course we are committed to modal realism, but if we aren't, a modal realist using this indexical theory would seem like a strange thing to do.

world is talking about what exists. The same goes for other temporal modes past and future, and the other local modes, that is to say things that fall outside that particular local context. So, following our statements about "exists", the objects that are non-existent also depend on the context. Just as existence is a light notion, so is non-existence. And just like our desire to give a fine-grained account of existence, we might too want to give a fine-grained account of non-existence. We can use the same move to achieve this. In our metalanguage, we can introduce subscript letters to account for ways objects might be non-existent. We could define p for objects that are non-existent and possible objects and the subscript letter i for objects that are non-existent and impossible. We describe non-existent possible objects as "something $(x)_p$". We read this as something is possible. We talk about non-existent impossible objects as "something $(x)_i$". We should read this as something is impossible. If someone was so inclined, they could add more tenses for those past, future, and non-local modes; it would just be a matter of defining this introduction.

8.2.6 Summary

What follows is an itemised list of statements that make up the tenets of the indexical theory of existence.

1. There is just one notion of reality, and it is restricted and fundamental.

2. To be real is to be part of the proper domain "the universe".

3. Existence is an indexical which picks out objects based on the speaker's usage.

4. Non-existence just ends up being those objects which aren't picked out by the speaker's use of the indexical "exists".

8.3   What Is Deflation?

I have suggested that the indexical theory of existence is a deflationary theory of existence. In the following sections, I argue that those modal realists looking for a deflationary theory of existence would be better off with the indexical theory than Yagisawa's relational theory.

Deflation in ordinary language is thought of as taking the air out of something, making it lighter, or removing weight. In metaphysics, we might consider deflationism to be something different. In a discussion about ontology, deflationism is sometimes juxtaposed against realism and associated with anti-realism. But to think that deflationism is always associated with anti-realism is false, as Tahko (2015, 73) points out. There are deflationists such as Thomasson who take themselves also to be realists.[1] To handle this division between different kinds of realists in debates about ontology, Chalmers makes use of the heavy and light distinction introducing heavyweight realism and lightweight realism (Chalmers et al., 2009, 78). Another way we might think of deflation is in the same way as Thomasson (2014) uses it. According to Thomasson:

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[1]See Thomasson (2009) and Thomasson (2014).

> The deflationary approach thus involves rejecting the idea that
> there is a shared substantive criterion for existence. We do, how-
> ever, have a purely formal criterion for existence, namely given
> by a schema (E): entities of kind K exist iff the application con-
> ditions actually associated with "K" are fulfilled. (Thomasson,
> 2014, 116)

Both the relational and the indexical theory are deflationary in Thomas-
son's sense; they reject that there is a substantive criterion for existence and
instead prefer a formal criterion. In the former, the criterion is whatever
is the member of the relevant set and in the case of the latter existence is
whatever is picked out by the relevant indexical. So when judging whether
one theory is more deflationary than the other, we are best off using some-
thing more like our ordinary language notion of deflation because what we
are talking about in this context is existence as something which is "meta-
physically light". The metaphysically light notion of existence is something
like the utterance "x exists", which commits us to very little. The less we
are metaphysically committed to, the more deflationary our notion of ex-
istence is. The stereotypical metaphysically inflated view of existence says
"x exists because x has the property of existence".

I certainly think there are things that do exist and things which do not exist.
For me existence is doing *some* work. However, the work it is doing is light
work compared to the way other metaphysicians employ it. The reason
existence can be so light is that I make up for it by commitment in other
areas. I am committed to the reality of possible and impossible worlds. The

reality of other worlds makes it quite easy to give up the weighty notion of existence. Given the reality of possible and impossible worlds, I can set out metaphysical boundaries by other means.

8.4 Yagisawa's Deflationary Existence

In this section, I articulate Yagisawa's theory of existence. Following this, I provide some reasons as to why we might prefer my indexical account of existence over Yagisawa's relational account.

Yagisawa's theory of existence ultimately has Quinean roots. Quine takes it that "The ontological commitment of a theory is revealed in its quantificational logical regimentation: to exist according to a theory so regimented is to be eligible for being the value of a variable, i.e., to be included in the universe of discourse over which the variables are to range" (Quine, 1969, 15). Yagisawa cashes this out as "The universe of discourse is simply a (non-empty) set of things. So, to exist according to the theory is to be a member of a certain set of things appropriately associated with the theory" (Yagisawa, 2014, 3). Yagisawa essentially takes the Quinean idea and expands on it. In line with the Quinean theme, Yagisawa takes the set-theoretical relational nature of ontological commitment. That is to say, for a thing to be ontologically committed to by a theory is for the thing to belong to a certain set of things appropriately associated with the theory (Yagisawa, 2014, 3). The twist that Yagisawa adds is that he suggests we should understand existence in the same way. Existence for Yagisawa is

the obtaining of the membership relation between an object and the set of things in which the object is contained.

Yagisawa offers us a theory of existence where existence is a relation between an object and a set.[1] According to Yagisawa (2014, 2), "A thing exists or does not exist relative to something else." Yagisawa uses the term "thing" very generally to include not only what more restrictive philosophers call objects but also stuff, properties, relations, events, and states of affairs. Under the deflationary position, Yagisawa is ordering existence as membership of a given set. He says:

> On any particular occasion of existential discourse, if membership in the set S under discussion is to be understood along the lines of "for any x, x is a member of S iff x is F," then existence relative to S amounts to being F. Existence talk is eliminable this way extensionally case by case. This is the sense in which my proposal is deflationary. In general, any set of any things may serve as the second relatum of the relation of existence. If a given thing is a member of the set, the existence claim is true, and if not, untrue. The general picture is as simple as that. (Yagisawa, 2014, 3–4)

Cashed out, the statement "Pegasus exists" is true if and only if Pegasus belongs to the set we are quantifying over (whatever this set might be). If

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[1]In Yagisawa (2014) a slightly different but very similar definition is provided. In this chapter, I treat Yagisawa's position as a unified theory of existence. In conversation with Yagisawa he has confirmed that (Yagisawa, 2014) is intended to be an elaboration on (Yagisawa, 2010).

the set of quantification were actuality, I would say that Pegasus doesn't exist because there are no Pegasi at actuality. If our domain of quantification were possible and impossible worlds, I would say that Pegasus does exist because there could be a Pegasus at a possible or impossible world. This domain-relative model allows us to make sense of the existence of entities such as Pegasus. We can say meaningfully that Pegasus doesn't exist here, at the actual world, but that Pegasus does exist elsewhere, at a possible or impossible world.

However, despite the seemingly straightforward analysis Yagisawa can provide, I suggest we have good reasons for avoiding Yagisawa's relational account and favouring the indexical account. I make this argument for two reasons. The first reason to prefer the indexical account is that it does not collapse into a properties account of existence which Yagisawa admits he is attempting to avoid from the outset. The second reason for preferring the indexical account is that if the modal realist is looking for a deflationary theory of existence, then I argue that on balance, the indexical account is more deflationary than the relational account. Both accounts render existence as something easily definable and shallow. However, the indexical theory is less committing than the relational account. If we think a lightweight account is virtuous, then the indexical account should be preferred.

8.5 How Deflationary Is Yagisawa's Deflationary Existence?

Yagisawa takes it that views that consider existence to be a property are heavyweight, while his view is lightweight. On the face of it, Yagisawa's position is certainly more deflationary than the position that existence is a property. However, Yagisawa's deflationary existence is not as deflationary as it could be.

There are three ways that we could interpret Yagisawa's proposal, one way which is more deflationary than the other two, one which seems the right way to interpret Yagisawa, while the remaining two which seem the wrong ways to interpret Yagisawa. However, as we will see, none of these options gives Yagisawa a truly deflationary theory of existence.

1. Existence is a relation.

2. Existence is set membership.[1]

3. Existence is set intersection.

In (1) existence is a metaphysical relation that holds between an object and the set. In (1) we might think that in this case, the relation is of the metaphysically heavy sort. That is to say, the relation is one of dependence

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[1]Some might argue that set membership is a relation, between an object and a set. However, there is certainly a difference in the kind of relation at play in cases one and two.

or some other metaphysically weighty relation. In (2) existence is to be a member of the relevant set; this can be cashed out as "If membership in the set S under discussion is to be understood along the lines of "for any x, x is a member of S iff x is F," then existence relative to S amounts to being F". In (3) existence is to be located at the intersection of two relevant sets. However, none of these conceptions of existence are free from problems. Although (3) might seem distinct from and more deflationary than (2), (3) simply collapses into (2). Moreover, (2) either collapses into (1) or we end up being committed to not only relations and sets, but also to particular facts about these sets. I will spend this section showing why this is the case and why these proposals are not *really* deflationary conceptions of existence.

8.5.1 Existence Is a Relation

We might say that "x exists if it bears the existence relation to something else y".[1] I will use the letter "E" to indicate the existence relation. We would say that "x exists if there is a y and xEy" holds. If we think of existence like this, then existence is a relation. Under this picture, it does not take us long to get to a point where we might think that the existence relation is a kind of dependency relation. However, this is a metaphysically heavy relation. This kind of relation commits us to some things, namely the relation, whatever that relation is like, and the relata. We might say that x depends on y

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[1]One might suggest that existence might supervene on another relation; this, however, only serves to push the problem one step back. The theory of existence would still involve a metaphysically heavy relation.

for its existence, just as we might say that my existence is relational to the universe (if there was no universe, there would be no me). In this case, it is difficult to see why we should think of the dependence relation as being metaphysically weighty but the existence relation as something metaphysically light; both are relations of a similar sort. If existence is this kind of relation, then it is not metaphysically light.

This is the metaphysically heavy way to interpret Yagisawa, and I think it is false to think of his account in this way. In conversation, Yagisawa confirmed that he didn't have in mind any kind of dependency relation. His intention was to emphasise that existence was a relation rather than a property, i.e. a *binary* relation rather than a unary relation (assuming a general theory of relations which subsumes properties as relations).

In two places, Yagisawa does give us reason to believe that he thinks existence is a relation. Yagisawa states, "I propose a relational analysis of existence..."(Yagisawa, 2014, 1). In separate work, he says (Yagisawa, 2010, 51) "Existence is not a property but a relation...". In these instances, Yagisawa does clarify what he means by "relational", and it is something a lot closer to set membership. However, the uncharitable reader might not grant this so readily.

8.5.2 Existence Is Set Membership

The more charitable and more accurate way to read Yagisawa's proposal is to interpret deflationary existence as set membership. However, this

approach is not without its issues. The concern here is that this conception collapses into (1) and faces the same issues. We say x (a thing) exists (E) if it is a member of the relevant set (S). The relevance of a set is context-dependent and can change given the speaker's usage. We would say x exists if $x \in S$.[1] This amounts to saying that something exists in so much as it is a member of the right set. What the right set is can vary across contexts. For example, we might be talking about tea-bags in relation to all the things or that of things in the kitchen. It is then true to say tea-bags exist if there are tea-bags in the kitchen. If our set were the living room, it would be false to say that tea-bags exist if there were no tea-bags in the living room. This, I believe, is the correct way to interpret Yagisawa, but it is not the most deflationary. Existence as set membership commits us to metaphysical facts about which things belong to what sets. In the examples I have given it cannot be that tea-bags *belong*, in the strict sense, to the kitchen set or it would be uninformative to say that tea-bags exist *because* of their relation to the kitchen. Existence as set membership is lighter than existence as some kind of dependency relation. However, we are still committed to a relation and the existence of the set. We can get lighter.

8.5.3   Existence Is Set Intersection

The final way I can think that we might interpret Yagisawa is existence as set intersection. I am not sure if this is what Yagisawa had in mind, but

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[1]The existential quantifier has been dropped in all cases to avoid unnecessary confusion regarding existence that might come with its introduction. The English "if" has been used to avoid confusing it with logical implication.

it does make sense given his proposal, especially considering the context-relevant division of sets. It seems that at any time we quantify over objects, they always belong to some set, even if it is a singleton set that contains just that object. Let us say that the singleton set containing just x is $\{x\}$. Then x exists if $\{x\} \cap S \neq \emptyset$. The advantage of this is that it appears like our talk of sets amounts to nothing more than a linguistic carving of what there is.[1] Existence on this view is then just the intersection of a singleton with a larger set.

8.5.4 Some Problems

Yagisawa faces two problems, which are explored in this section. The first is that whichever way we cut things, this theory of relational existence is more heavyweight than the indexical account. In (1) Yagisawa would be committed to a metaphysically heavy existence relation, which is certainly not deflationary. Some of us might even think that relations are more suspect than properties. Either way, I do not think it is the correct way to read Yagisawa's proposal. So, it is a non-starter. The second problem is that no matter what account Yagisawa gives, this proposal collapses into a property account of existence, a consequence he was explicitly trying to avoid.

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[1]At most we are committed to there being sets, rather than sets and particular facts about those sets.

8.5.5 The First Problem

In cases (2) and (3), Yagisawa is committed to sets, at least.[1] Problematically either (2) collapses into (1) where set membership is understood as a metaphysical relation, or in (2) Yagisawa is committed to the reality of sets and some metaphysical facts about these sets, that is which things belong to what sets. There must be facts about which things belong to what sets and not to others. If these metaphysical facts were not in place, then existence would be uninformative. For example, without these facts, there is nothing to rule out tea-bags being part of the kitchen set in a fundamental way. If this is the case and tea is fundamentally part of the kitchen set, then it is uninformative to say that tea exists *because* it bears membership to the kitchen set.

Someone might argue in case (3) that we have escaped commitment to the existence relation and if we went for this option, then we would only be committed to sets. However, not only is this conception not Yagisawa's proposal, but even if it were, it quickly collapses into (2), since a set-theoretical formulation of (3): $\{x\} \cap S \neq \emptyset$ is equivalent to $x \in S$. So this option doesn't get us very far.

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[1]Yagisawa highlights three ways we might think about sets. (i) We might think of the *in* relation as the membership relation. (ii) Another way we might understand a set or domain is as a mereological whole. Understood this way, the *in* relation is synonymous with the part-of relation (Yagisawa, 2010, 51). Understood in either of these ways, set membership quickly falls foul of the problems facing (1). Yagisawa does provide the alternative suggestion that a domain is a plurality. When talking of domains under this conception consists of talking about certain individuals in a plural way that does not involve anything other than those individuals; not the set of those individuals, the mereological sum of those individuals, or any other object that somehow results from those individuals. This view has been explored by Boolos (1984, 1985) and by McKay and MacKay (2006).

8.5.6   The Second Problem

Yagisawa faces the problem that it is unclear how existence as set membership is different from existence as a property and that because set membership is a relation between a thing and a set, (2) has all the problems of (1). However, the problem does not stop here. Since for every binary relation, there corresponds a unary predicate, so anything that can be done in terms of relations can be done in terms of predicates. Relations are not any more light (or heavy) than predicates. In set-theoretic terms, we might think that we identify the property with a set. Halmos (2017, 42) tells us "It is ubiquitous mathematical practice to identify a property with a set, namely with the set of all objects that possess the property". If Halmos is correct, then Yagisawa faces a problem: we are back where we started with existence as a property rather than a relation.

If we think existence is just to be a member of a set, then this is just a property. And we cannot escape this problem by saying that existence is membership of *some* particular set. The reason that existence as membership of *some* set fares no better is because of an implication of the Union Axiom.

Axiom 1 (*Union*).

$$\forall F \exists A \forall Y \forall x (x \in Y \land Y \in F \to x \in A)$$

The Union Axiom, states that "for every collection of sets there exists a set that contains all the elements that belong to at least one set of the given

collection" (Halmos, 2017, 12). Given this principle of set theory, even if we try to select a particular set, we are back to where we started with existence as a property.[1]

In this section, I have shown that the relational analysis of existence faces a number of problems. These problems arise given the fact that the relational analysis takes existence to be a relation and rests on the axioms of set theory; as such, the relation involved can be reduced to a property, thus leaving those who favour the relational analysis in a position that they wished to avoid from the outset. The indexical account does not encounter the same issues since it does not rely on set theory or a relation for its analysis of existence.

8.6   Conclusion

What I have presented is a different way of thinking about existence, which maintains the distinction between reality and existence in a way that shifts the metaphysical burden to other aspects of ontology and as an effect, we are left with a lighter notion of existence. I have put forward an indexical theory of existence which can be made use of by modal realists. I argue that it has advantages over its closest competitor theory, Yagisawa's relational-deflationary existence. Yagisawa's proposal is on the right lines in that it allows for lightweight existence, but for a *really* deflationary existence he needed to go further. I have also used this chapter to create some linguistic

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[1]Thanks to Sara Uckelman for this objection.

distinctions which aid the existence/non-existence debate. I have presented a picture of reality that tells us that there are many objects that are real and that some of these objects exist while others do not. I have suggested that existence or non-existence is nothing more than an indexical term. I use the word "real" to do the work of ontological boundary setting.

Moreover, this chapter highlights the practical benefit of the indexical theory as it allows for fine-grained and precise existence talk. For precise metaphysical talk I would be in favour of encouraging using the tensed paraphrasings. If you follow my theory of indexical existence, you are left with a practical and lightweight theory of existence.

Part III

Solutions To Problems About Truth

CHAPTER 9

Accidental Truthmaker

Maximalism

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter I detail a position on truthmaking that I call *accidental truth-maker maximalism.* I use this name because my commitment to truthmaker maximalism comes as a result of my commitment to extended modal realism rather than as a commitment to the truthmaking principle itself; I say more on this in the final section of this chapter. I show how this position functions as a solution to problems concerning truth that are involved in the problem of non-existence. I argue that set against the metaphysics of extended modal realism, we can easily answer questions about the truths concerning non-existent entities. In this chapter, I also argue that by borrowing and developing the Lewis–Rosen proposal, we can also handle the problem concerning true negative existential statements, which many, such

as Salmon (1987a), take to be the most difficult aspect of the problem of non-existence. The Lewis–Rosen proposal is to take qua–versions of objects as truthmakers for propositions. The Lewis-Rosen proposal will be outlined in more detail in 9.5.

In Chapter 3 I highlighted the problems that involve non-existent entities which extended modal realism solves. Two of those problems involve truth. One of the problems concerning truth and non-existent entities asks how can there be truths about things which do not exist? This chapter details that solution. I also argue in this chapter that if modal realists and extended modal realists are going to employ the Lewis-Rosen proposal to handle concerns about negative existential truths, then the extended modal realist ontology can improve on their solution and thus should be favoured.

One of the relevant problems concerning non-existent objects is a problem about truth. One way in which this problem can be solved is by invoking truthmaker maximalism. Truthmaker maximalism is the position that for every truth there is something which makes it true. Extended modal realism neatly solves the problem about truth via a commitment to what I refer to as accidental truthmaker maximalism. I say that given the richer ontology of extended modal realism we can easily accommodate truths about non-existent objects. There is, however, a second and potentially more troubling concern that relates truthmaking and non-existence. This second concern is about true negative existential statements such as 'no unicorns exist'. Jago (2013b) has highlighted the issue that certain maximalist theories have with these statements.

In this chapter, I argue that accidental truthmaker maximalism can overcome both the straightforward question regarding truths about non-existents and the hard question about true negative existential statements. What is more, I use this chapter to reply to some concerns about the motivation for truthmaking theory raised by Dodd (2002) and echoed by Jago (2020) that there are issues with motivating truthmaker maximalism. I argue those who subscribe to accidental truthmaker maximalism can, to some extent, escape these concerns since my version of truthmaking only comes as a consequence of the metaphysics that governs the universe. The reason I call it 'accidental truthmaker maximalism' is that our commitment comes only in virtue of the ontology of extended modal realism and not because of an independent reason to forward the truthmaking principle.

The structure of this chapter is as follows, In §9.2 I highlight what truthmaker theory is, why we might go for it and how we might start to develop the theory. I will not examine all alternatives to the truthmaker theory of truth as it is very much outside the scope of the thesis to do so. Then I briefly re-articulate the problems of truth that are created by non-existent objects and the reasons that a truthmaking theory faces problems. In §9.4, I articulate what I take to be the solution to the problems. The solution to the first problem comes quickly and simply in virtue of the commitments of extended modal realism. However, there are two issues that relate truth and non-existence. The first is how do we say true things about non-existent objects. I argue that extended modal realists can accommodate this issue straightforwardly. The second problem concerns negative exist-

ential statements such as 'there are no unicorns'. I argue we can respond to this problem with a similar response offered by Rosen and Lewis (2003). I argue that if we apply the Lewis-Rosen proposal to a metaphysics of extended modal realism, we get better results than the original Lewis-Rosen proposal. In Chapter 10 I reply to concerns raised by Dodd (2002), Jago (2013b) and Mumford (2007).

9.2 Truthmaking

The truthmaker principle is in short, in order for something to be true, there must be *something* that makes it true. Various philosophers have taken this to be an obvious principle. According to Austin (1950, 23), "It takes two to make a truth...When a statement is true, there is, *of course*, a state of affairs which makes it true." Dodd (2002, 69) points out that in Austin's statement of the truthmaking principle, the "*of course*", is revealing. Dodd states that by using the phrase '*of course*' Austin puts his finger on what we might think of as a 'prevailing mood in analytical philosophy'(Dodd, 2002, 69). "For Austin is claiming that the truthmaker principle is not just true, but it is obviously true. It is something which no self-respecting philosopher would wish to deny" (Dodd, 2002, 69). Dodd highlights that Armstrong shares a similar sentiment, stating that the truthmaker principle is "fairly obvious once attention is drawn to it" (Armstrong, 1989, 122).[1]

However, some philosophers such as Mumford (2007) have tried to inde-

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[1]Dodd does not agree with the obviousness of the truthmaker principle, and I will come onto his objections later in this chapter.

pendently motivate the value of the truthmaker principle. Mumford suggests that truthmaking is an attempt to extend the correspondence principle. The correspondence principle in short is the principle that truths relate to a fact or feature of the world. Mumford states:

> Truthmaker theory has nevertheless been regarded as a promising programme as it could be regarded as an attempt to make the correspondence theory of truth metaphysically substantial. Like the correspondence theory, it understands truth to involve some relation between logico-linguistic items, such as propositions, speech-act types or utterances, and nonlinguistic entities in the world, some truthmaker theorists think this holds for every truth (for example, Armstrong (2004)). They are truthmaker maximalists and say that every truth has a truthmaker. (Mumford, 2007, 47)

Unlike Austin and Armstrong, I do not think that the truthmaker principle is 'obvious'. My motivation for hoping that truthmaking turns out to be successful is it would be a happy coincidence if truthmaking worked out. But what is more, I suggest that truthmaking follows very naturally from the broad metaphysical picture I am offering; we might say it "falls out" of the metaphysics.[1] The kind of truthmaking that I think sits well with extended modal realism is what some refer to as the "weakened version" of

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[1]I do not think that truthmaking and extended modal realism necessarily come together for you could, in theory, give a different theory of truth while maintaining extended modal realism but it seems that if we are extended modal realists, to begin with, then truthmaking fits nicely.

the principle, as articulated by Bigelow (1988, 132) in the mantra "truth is supervenient on being". By supervenient, Bigelow means "One sort of thing is said to be supervenient on another when you *could not have any difference in things of the first sort unless there were some difference in things of the second sort*" (Bigelow, 1988, 132, italics in original).

Bigelow elaborates on this by expressing truthmaking as supervenience in the following formulation:

> *Truthmaking*: If something is true, then it would not be possible for it to be false unless either certain things were to exist which don't, or else certain things had not existed which do. (Bigelow, 1988, 133)

The essence of Bigelow's position is that there is a close relationship between truth and how things are and if how things are changes, then so does what is true. I've sketched the truthmaker principle here; in the next section I examine it in some more detail.

9.2.1 Truthmaking: A Closer Look

Dodd (2002) does not endorse truthmaking, but in his 2002 paper he does provide good reasons why we might go for Bigelow's weakened version of truthmaking. In what follows, we take a closer look at truthmaking. When we say that every truth has a truthmaker, we mean that for every truth, there is something in the universe which makes it so. That is to say a

truthmaker for $\langle p \rangle$ is an entity whose existence guarantees the truth of $\langle p \rangle$ (following convention I too write "$\langle p \rangle$" for "the proposition that p") (Dodd, 2002, 71). According to Armstrong (1997, 115), such an entity would necessitate that truth.

Armstrong says "If a certain truthmaker makes a certain truth true, then there is no alternative world where that truthmaker exists, but the truth is a false proposition" (Armstrong, 1997, 115). Dodd (2002, 71) interprets this intuition as: "if an entity a is a truthmaker of $\langle p \rangle$, there exists no possible world in which a exists and yet it is not the case that $\langle p \rangle$. In other words, the existence of a is supposed *logically to entail* that p."

Dodd (2002, 71) indicates that we can state the truthmaker principle (TM) in the following way:[1]

Definition 1 (TM)**.** If $\langle p \rangle$ is true, there must be at least one entity whose existence entails that $\langle p \rangle$ is true.

There are some obvious cases where truths have truthmakers the way that (TM) states. For example Graham Priest is the truthmaker for both $\langle$ Graham Priest exists $\rangle$ and $\langle$ Graham Priest is a member of the species *homo sapiens* $\rangle$. In these cases, according to Dodd (2002, 72) so-called "essential predications"—propositions ascribing an essential property to an object— are made true by the objects concerned.

There are two problems that face (TM) which (Dodd, 2002, 72) indicates should prompt us to reformulate the principle as Bigelow's weakened ver-

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[1]I use (TM) to stand for the truthmaker principle as it is a common notation in the literature.

sion. The first problem is related to contingent truths and the second to negative existential truths.

9.2.2   Contingent Truths

The first reason as to why we might want to offer a more finessed version of truthmaking is that as Dodd points out, (TM) commits its supporters to the existence of more exotic entities (Dodd, 2002, 72). Dodd states:

⟨Michael Dummett is a philosopher⟩ cannot be made true by the man: he could have existed and yet not been a philosopher. So what of the other candidates? Equally obviously, neither the set of the man and the property of being a philosopher, nor the mereological fusion of the man and the property can do the job: there are possible worlds in which these exist yet Dummett is not a philosopher. Consequently, it seems as if there must exist a *state of affairs* of Dummett's being a philosopher, if this truth is to have a truthmaker at all. This state of affairs will be the unity of the man and the property of being a philosopher, something which exists only if Dummett really is a philosopher.

Dodd is concerned that in light of these issues, the direction of argument is wrong. He notes that Armstrong argues for the existence of these states of affairs with what he calls "the truthmaker argument" (Armstrong, 1997, 113–119). It should not be that our commitment to (TM) leads us to posit states of affairs to satisfy (TM); rather, states of affairs ought to

satisfy (TM) from the start. As we will see, this concern is not one that faces those who support extended modal realism. What is more, while some philosophers might be of the opinion that 'exotic entities' ought to be avoided, I, for one, welcome them and all the advantages that they bring.

9.2.3   Negative Truths

The second reason that Dodd (2002, 72–73) highlights as a reason as to why we might want to reformulate (TM) is the presence of negative truths a point he makes by referring to a quote from Lewis:

> ...it is the case of negative truths which has led many who are sympathetic to (TM) to think that it nonetheless stands to be true, not because certain things exist (to make it true), but because counterexamples do *not* exist (Lewis, 1992, 216).

Dodd highlights that those in favour of (TM) are left in a position by which they must make a choice to stand by (TM) taking ⟨ Unicorns do not exist ⟩ to be made true either by a negative state of affairs or a *totality state of affairs.* Or, if they prefer a less metaphysically weighty option, they might wish to limit the scope of (TM), suggesting that only atomic truths have corresponding truthmakers, and that molecular truth is derived from atomic truths. The final option is to reformulate (TM) in a way which captures the essences of (TM) without committing ourselves to the existence of truthmakers for negative truths. The intuition we want to uphold is that

what exists determines what is true. This gives us the position of Bigelow (1988, 132) that *truth supervenes on being.*

We can reformulate (TM) in a weakened way:

Definition 2 (ST). [1]

If $\langle p \rangle$ is true, then either at least one entity exists which would not exist, were $\langle p \rangle$ false, or at least one entity does not exist, were $\langle p \rangle$ false. (Bigelow, 1988, 133)

9.3 Problems for Non-existent Objects and Truthmaker Theory

I have shown how we would want to formulate the truthmaker principle and looked at some initial motivations for adopting the position. In the following section, I look at two problems that non-existent objects cause for truth. The first problem is straightforward: how can we say true things about non-existent objects? The second problem is more challenging and concerns true negative existential statements.

9.3.1 Truths about Non-existent Objects

Crane (2013) explains the problem non-existent objects make for truthmaker theory in the following way: If non-existent things are not *part of reality*, then how can there be any truths about them?

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[1](ST) stands for supervenience thesis; it is a weakened version of (TM).

That is to say, if we have a broadly truthmaking account of truth and think that non-existent things are not part of reality, then how can we say true things about them? For example, how can it be true that Holmes lives at 221B? But other than truths about fictional entities there are more concerning cases. We might think that being worried about truths about fictions is rarefied to the philosophy seminar. But there are other more *normal* cases of non-existents that we often want to say true things about: the past, the future and counterfactual situations. As for temporal statements we might want to say it was true that there were dinosaurs, and it will be true that the sun will rise tomorrow. We might also want to say true things about the way things could be; we might say it is true that I could have been wearing a red shirt at the time of writing this (for I am wearing blue actually). We might even want to express truth about impossible states of affairs; we might want to say true things about the square-circle or Bertie the beagle who is both portly and not-portly.[1]

The fact that for there to be truths about non-existent objects they must be part of reality and the fact we do seem to want to make truth-apt statements about non-existent things do not sit well together. This is one problem of non-existence and truth.

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[1]To use the example discussed by Jago (2013a) and Yagisawa (2015).

9.3.2 Negative Existential Truths

Another problem that non-existent objects create are problems about negative existential truths. Take the following:

$$\langle \text{There is not a hippopotamus in this room.} \rangle \qquad (9.1)$$

It seems like the proposition ⟨ There is not a hippopotamus in this room ⟩ is one which is capable of being true. But Russell (2012) notes something was difficult about statements which take a similar form to 9.1: statements of this kind seem to lack an obvious truth maker, for there doesn't appear to be a hippopotamus in the room. Mumford (2007, 45) says: "For any statement that says how things are *not*, it is difficult to know in virtue of what it is true."

By contrast, if we took the statement

$$\langle \text{There is a hippopotamus in this room} \rangle \qquad (9.2)$$

If true, 9.2 is true in virtue of something in the world. Specifically, 9.2 would be true in virtue of the hippopotamus that is in this room. If we tried to generalise from 9.2, and say that all truths are true in virtue of something in or about the world, then what of apparent truths like 9.1? What is it in the world in virtue of which statements like 9.1 are true?

(Mumford, 2007, 45)

This is the problem of negative existential truths.

Armstrong (2004, 51) says:

> Problems about not-being have been with philosophy since the
> time of Parmenides, at least. They constitute some of the
> most difficult problems in the discipline of metaphysics. Within
> truthmaking theory they appear as the question what truth-
> makers we are to provide for truth of non-existence, for instance
> the truths that centaurs and unicorns do not exist, and all the
> true denials that things that do exist have certain (positive)
> properties or relations, for instance the lack of whiteness of cer-
> tain swans.

However, Armstrong's strategy will not work for those with modal realist
inclinations for we will want to appeal to a relation between things to solve
the problem rather than appealing to relations between facts. Armstrong
offers a solution for those with a *Factualist* ontology rather than a *Thingist*
(Reist) ontology; modal realism is most certainly a *Thingist* ontology.[1]

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[1]The Factualist view is that all there is is a world of states of affairs; this view is very
close to Wittgenstein's view that the world is a world of facts not things. Armstrong
(1997, 1) says that these two views are "substantially the same". Armstrong (1997, 1)
characterises states of affairs in the following way:

> A state of affairs exists if and only if a particular (at a later point to
> be dubbed a thin particular) has a property or, instead, a relation holds
> between two or more particulars. Each state of affairs, and each constituent
> of each state of affairs, meaning by their constituents the particulars, prop-
> erties, relations and, in the case of higher-order states of affairs, lower-order
> states of affairs, is a contingent existent. The properties and the relations
> are universals, not particulars. The relations are all external relations.

Armstrong claims that for those with Thingist views, negative truths are problematic since you can only point to what there is and nothing else (Armstrong, 2004, 53). Armstrong thinks that the world is a world of facts (states of affairs, in his lexicon) and thus avoids the problems that face Thingists.[1] The sketch of Armstrong's position is that 'general facts are required (at any rate given that they are contingent). But I [Armstrong] will argue in addition that provided we allow ourselves general facts then *no further* negative facts are needed among our truthmakers' (Armstrong, 2004, 54, italics in original). For Armstrong there is no need to introduce a special sort of state of affairs to account for existential statements when existential facts supervene on monadic and polyadic facts.[2] Take the example that there exists one horse; for Armstrong it is monadic and polyadic states of affairs that involve horses which would be truthmakers for the truth that at least one horse exists; according to Armstrong, this is satisfactory and nothing needs to be added. When it comes to negative existential statements such as ⟨ Theaetetus is not flying ⟩ Armstrong considers two options; first he argues "that the conjunction of states of affairs [facts] that exhausts Theaetetus' positive properties is a necessary part of the truthmaker for ⟨ Theaetetus is not flying ⟩"(Armstrong, 2004, 56). Armstrong points out that this conjunction, when taken by itself, fails to *necessitate* ⟨ Theaetetus is not flying ⟩. It may well be the case that the big conjunction could exist but Theaetetus may be flying. Armstrong's solution to this is

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[1]I take it that Armstrong uses the term state of affairs rather than fact to distinguish his position from the broadly Wittgenstein position by which he was influenced.

[2]The use of 'special state of affairs' signifies a difference from Armstrong's state of affairs that are more like facts.

to make additions to his big conjunction: "If we had, in addition to the list, the truthmaker for ⟨ this is the conjunction of all Theaetetus' positive properties ⟩ then, it seems, we could have a necessitating truthmaker for ⟨ Theaetetus is not flying ⟩" (Armstrong, 2004, 57). However, ultimately Armstrong concludes this first strategy would be more uneconomical and instead offers a solution in this general form:

> ...for every negative truth $\neg q$ there exists a positive truth p that is incompatible with q. The truth that p will have a straightforward truthmaker. By the Entailment principle (valid in general, at least) this will also be a truthmaker for $\neg q$.(Armstrong, 2004, 60)

Armstrong goes some way to solving the problem for those who think the world is one of states of affairs and what is more, Lewis admits that his solution — to which mine is very close — is potentially very similar (albeit preferable) to Armstrong's. I will leave Armstrong's proposal for now and pick it back up after I have detailed Lewis's proposal.

9.4 The Modal Realist Approach

I start with the problem concerning truths about non-existent objects for it can be solved fairly quickly, then move onto the concern about negative existential truths which requires significant development, and I explore a way to elaborate on the Lewis-Rosen proposal in the following section.

9.4.1 Truths About Non-existent Objects

The concern is how can we say true things about that which does not exist. However, as we have seen, Crane tells us that the condition for something to have truths said about it is for it to be part of reality. If this is the condition which must be met, then extended modal realism clearly meets it.[1]

The extended modal realist metaphysics is one where the universe is extended in five dimensions; the universe includes all temporal and modal dimensions, all equally as real as each other. The dimensions I am referring to are the three spatial dimensions, one temporal and one modal. It is easy for the extended modal realist to meet Crane's condition since that is what our metaphysics dictates is the case. To use the example of Bertie again, it is true Bertie is not-portly at the actual world because there is a stage (the actual-world stage) of Bertie that is not-portly; it is true that Bertie could be portly because there is a possible-world stage of Bertie where he is portly; and it is true that Bertie is portly and not-portly because of an impossible-world stage of Bertie.[2]

A potential reason why the solution comes so quickly is that it seems implicit in Crane's articulation that truth ought to supervene on being which

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[1]See Chapter 2 and Chapter 7 for what we mean by the term 'reality'.

[2]Someone might object, that it is unclear how anything could be false. In response to this, I say we must remember that judgements of truth must be understood as quantified statements. Thus within a restricted domain, there will only be the relevant truthmakers associated with that statement. If we were to examine our statements in the broadest possible sense, we will in a sense be able to *find* a truthmaker for any statement we desired, but this is just trivial truth. This is what we ought to expect from a metaphysics that includes possibilia and impossibilia.

is exactly the kind of truthmaking principle that falls naturally out of extended modal realism.

When it comes to fictional entities, the extended modal realist handles them in the following way. Say we take the statements

$$
\begin{aligned}
&\text{There is no Sherlock Holmes. Sherlock Holmes does not exist.}\\
&\quad\text{Sherlock Holmes is just a fictional character}(Braun,\ 2005).
\end{aligned}
\tag{9.3}
$$

Extended modal realists take (9.3) to be consistent when examined through the lens of extended modal realism. Such a statement appears contradictory for we are predicating about an entity which we state does not exist. However, Yagisawa points out that the apparently contradictory nature of the statement can be explained in the following way:

> What the first conjunct of (1)[9.3] says, when charitably interpreted, is that there actually is no Sherlock Holmes. In fact, being fictional entails not actually being existent. But true predication requires the reality of what the predication is of. Thus, if the third conjunction of (1)[9.3] is true, then there is such a thing as Sherlock Holmes in reality at large. (Yagisawa, 2010, 259)

Thus truths about fictional entities are made true by truthmakers not at the actual world but at some other world.[1] It seems therefore that the

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[1]Yagisawa (2010, 259–277) motivates the claim that Holmes would be an entity at an impossible world.

extended modal realist has an easy time solving this puzzle.

9.5 Solving the Problem

I deal with the second more difficult problem concerning negative existential truths. Ultimately I endorse a position close to Lewis's revised opinion on truthmaking, which I detail first. Followed by Lewis and Rosen's treatment of negative existential statements, here I also highlight the gap which I think can be filled when extended modal realism is applied. I end this section with a comparison of Armstrong's and Lewis's positions. Lewis notes that the two might end up being closer than expected; I argue that even if the two are close, we have good reason to go for Lewis's proposal over Armstrong's. In the following section I provide some developments on what I refer to as accidental truthmaker maximalism.

9.5.1 Lewis and Truthmaking

Lewis previously rejected the truthmaker theory on the grounds that truthmakers demand necessary connections between distinct existences, which Lewis thought conflicts with his Humeanism (Lewis, 1999, 219). Lewis "argued that states of affairs are truthmakers for contingent predication. But states of affairs violate Hume's prohibition of necessary connections between distinct existences" (MacBride, 2005, 128). After Lewis changed his mind about truthmaking, he characterised the principle as follows:

Any proposition has a subject matter, on which its truth value supervenes. (Lewis, 2003, 25)

Given the general modal realist picture, this alone would get us pretty far as I have shown in the section above. There are many objects at many worlds which the truth of propositions can supervene on. The question for Lewis is how we can square this position with Humeanism and what to do about negative essential statements.

However, Lewis (2003) and Rosen and Lewis (2003) found a way to reconcile truthmaking with Humeanism. Lewis was able to make this move by invoking his counterpart theory (Lewis, 1971, 1986). For Lewis, something can be essentially *F* without being intrinsically *F*. Under Lewis's picture, I am identical to my body, yet I'm essentially a person whereas my body is not.

Lewis found a way to endorse truthmaking and Humeanism (Lewis, 2003) by making use of his already established counterpart theory (Lewis, 1971, 1986). Under counterpart theory, "an object has the property of being *F* iff in some possible world a counterpart of x has *F*. Therefore x is essentially *F* iff every counterpart of x is *F*" (MacBride, 2005, 127). The counterpart relation is one of similarity rather than of identity. Counterparts of x are just those objects which are similar to x in certain respects. What is more, different conversational contexts are enough to make different similarities relevant.

For any object x its counterparts are selected relative to a counterpart rela-

tion R. In cases where all the counterparts of x are F then we can say x is essentially F. However, by a different counterpart relation $R*$, a different selection of counterparts will be chosen and some of these may turn out not to be F; thus x can turn out to be only F accidentally. MacBride (2005, 127) argues that this shows that "counterpart theory is able to provide a relativistic account of essentialism...since the truth of essential judgements are relative, relative to the counterpart relation conversational cues select." Lewis noticed that a benefit of counterpart theory is to be able to make use of truthmakers without invoking necessary connections between distinct existences. Remember we can define truthmaking as Armstrong (1997, 115) does: "if a certain truthmaker makes a certain truth true, then there is no alternative world where the truthmaker exists but the truth is false." In other words: a truthmaker for a $\langle p \rangle$ is a thing that merely by existing necessitates the truth of $\langle p \rangle$. In short Lewis's proposal is to treat *necessitating the truth of $\langle p \rangle$* like any other modal property we might attribute. The modal property is possessed relative to some counterpart relations but not others.

Under Lewis's counterpart theory, something can be some way F without being F intrinsically. Jago elaborates on Lewis's move:

> In Lewis's story, I am identical to my body, yet I'm essentially a person, whereas my body is not. Since the counterpart relation is one of similarity, which is a matter of contextual salience, attributions of essential properties vary with context. Picking me out *qua person* raises my personhood to salience, creating a

context in which only people are my counterparts and hence in which I'm essentially a person.

Lewis (2003) treats truthmaking in a similar way. The truthmaker for ⟨this lemon is juicy⟩ is the lemon, *qua* juicy. That entity is just the lemon, insofar its juiciness is raised to salience (the effect of the '*qua* juicy' locution). It is perfectly consistent, in some other context, to hold that the lemon might not have been juicy. (Jago, 2013b, 465)

This statement deserves some unpacking, and MacBride (2005, 129) provides comments that are very helpful:

It is important to bear in mind that essential properties are relative, relative to a counterpart relation. If some of a's counterparts fail to be F that it is because we are thinking about a under a relation R that selects counterparts of a regardless of whether they are F. But if we select some more fine-grained relation $R*$ that selects only F counterparts of a then a will be essentially F (relative to $R*$). The operator "... *qua* F" may be employed to evoke this counterpart relation. Every world where a *qua* F is a truthmaker for the proposition that a is F. This is not an isolated case. *a qua just as she, he is, it is* is also a truthmaker for a is F. This name evokes an especially fine-grained relation, one that selects only counters that are in-

trinsic duplicates of *a* and relative to which *a* has all its intrinsic properties essentially.

The following example is helpful: consider my black cat Kellogg. Kellogg cannot be the truthmaker for ⟨ *Kellogg is Black* ⟩ since we know that Kellogg might have been some other colour. However, if we focus on Kellogg *qua* black, the difference between the object-simpliciter and the *qua*-version of the object emerges. Whereas Kellogg is accidentally black but Kellogg *qua* black is essentially black. That is to say in all worlds in which Kellogg *qua* black has a counterpart is a world where Kellogg is black. Therefore, Kellogg *qua* black is a truthmaker for ⟨ *Kellogg is black* ⟩.

To some this might seem odd; someone might object that Kellogg and Kellogg *qua* black are distinct since they have different modal properties. Kellogg could survive the loss of his black colour but Kellogg *qua* black could not. However, those who make this objection have forgotten their counterpart theory. As MacBride (2005, 130) reminds us, "things have their modal properties relative to counterpart relations. So *a qua F* can be identified with *a* because when we attribute different modal properties to it we do so relative to different counterpart relations. Again it is the use of names—in this case "a qua '*F*' and '*a*'—that are key to use with the relevant relations." Given this, it looks like what we are left with is an account of truthmaking that doesn't involve any unexplained connections between distinct existences. Although it is true that *a qua F* exists just in case *a* if *F* —some of you might say there is a necessary connection— but it does not occur between distinct existences since, *a qua F* just is *a*. This

account is also not mysterious; the connection obtains in virtue of being F is part of what it takes to be a counterpart of *a qua F* (MacBride, 2005, 130).

9.5.2 The Case of Negative Existential Statements

Lewis and Rosen extend this move to deal with negative existential statements. The Lewis-Rosen proposal is to accept that if we can take qua-versions of things as truthmakers — that is to say "if we are entitled to take ordinary things as truthmakers by supposing that they make propositions true relative to peculiar counterpart relations that are evoked by peculiar names for ordinary things — then the suggestion is to apply it to cases of negative existentials (Rosen and Lewis, 2003, 39).

However, Lewis (2003, 32) points out that without development, his original account could be "parodied to its discredit". Rhetorically Lewis asks would it be possible to deal with negative existential statements in exactly the same way as existential statements. Take another example of a cat called Long. "Long qua unaccompanied by unicorns" may be another name for Long, one which evokes a peculiar counterpart relation. Under this peculiar counterpart relation, a counterpart of Long will meet the following conditions provided to us by Lewis (2003, 32):

1. it is one of his counterparts under the ordinary counterpart relation evoked by the name "Long" (pretend for simplicity that this is fully determinate); and

2. it is unaccompanied by unicorns — that is, it is in a world where there are no unicorns.

We end up in the position where Long qua unaccompanied by unicorns is a truthmaker for there are no unicorns. On the grounds that any world where he exists, any world where he has a counterpart under the counterpart relation evoked by the named Long qua unaccompanied unicorns, is a world where there are no unicorns. Lewis thinks this is a cheap trick since,

> the 'peculiar counterpart relation' is so very peculiar as not to be a genuine counterpart relation at all. The 'similarity' if we may call it that, between things that are unaccompanied by unicorns is, in the first place, one that would strike us in almost any context as utterly unimportant similarity. It is, in second place, an entirely extrinsic similarity. Two things both unaccompanied by unicorns could be as different as you please intrinsically. Their surroundings too, both nearby and remote, could differ intrinsically in any respect other than the absence of unicorns. (Lewis, 2003, 32–33)

For a counterpart relation to be satisfactory, it must be based on similarities that appear to have some importance and they should also rest predominantly on intrinsic similarity. Lewis (2003, 33) elaborates: "...a satisfactory counterpart relation will often give a lot of weight to intrinsic similarity between the contexts in which the counterparts are embedded in their worlds. For instance, in the case of match of origins, we have

the intrinsic similarity of the parts from which the two counterparts have originated."

The difference according to Lewis between "Long qua unaccompanied by unicorns" and "Kellogg qua black" is that the first statement does not meet the similarities that we would find important nor does it meet intrinsic similarity. However, in the second case *more* weight is given to the intrinsic similarity than the counterpart relation evoked just by "Kellogg" (Lewis, 2003, 33).

Lewis and Rosen, when developing Lewis's original proposal, suggest that we cannot take cat Long *qua* unaccompanied by unicorns as a truthmaker for the truth that there are not unicorns for this makes use of a 'peculiar counterpart relation and a peculiar counterpart relation is not a genuine counterpart relation at all, being founded on an unimportant and unduly extrinsic respect of similarity' (Rosen and Lewis, 2003, 39). However, if we were to use the qua-version of a better chosen thing, we can establish a more satisfactory counterpart relation (Rosen and Lewis, 2003, 39).

Let us begin a fairly simple case of restricted negative existentials—cases where a particular domain is specified. Take the truth that there are no unicorns in this room. (At the moment, but let that restriction remain tacit.) We then say that this room$^+$ consists of this room and everything in it, including the air, the furniture, and if there are any, the unicorns. This room$^+$ *qua* including no unicorns is a truthmaker for the truth is that there are no unicorns in this room. Rosen and Lewis (2003, 39) point out that "This time, the peculiar counterpart relation evoked is founded on an

entirely intrinsic and salient respect of similarity. But we could instead have used this room *qua* containing no unicorns; the counterpart relation is still satisfactory, being founded on intrinsic similarity not between the counterparts themselves — the rooms — but between the more inclusive things — rooms$^+$ — that are saliently related to the counterpart rooms."

Lewis and Rosen believe they can extend their account all things being equal to less restricted negative existential truths such as there are no unicorns on this planet, or even that there are no unicorns in this galaxy and even, in this galaxy and throughout its history.

Rosen and Lewis (2003, 39) then turn their attention to unrestricted negative existentials. For example, the truth that there no unicorns anywhere, they suggest that we ought to take as truthmaker for a qua-version of the entire world and consider various options. (i) The totality of everything there actually is. That way, our counterpart relation can again be founded on intrinsic similarity. What is a counterpart of the world? One opinion is to say it would be an entire possible world, the totality of all there is in its world. (In that case, a counterpart of the actual world in a world W would have to be the world W itself, nothing less). (ii) Another option would be for it to just be a proper part of a world. If this were the case, might our four-dimensional world have as a counterpart a four-dimensional slice of some five-dimensional world? Ultimately they are forced to leave this matter open, stating: "We suppose this is one of those questions about the counterpart relation that has no determinate answer; in other words, there are counterpart relations under which the world is essentially total, and

there are counterpart relations under which it is not" (Rosen and Lewis, 2003, 39–40). I will return to this issue shortly.

Lewis and Rosen say it is not their present purpose to give an account of the counterpart relation for the world itself; rather, it is their aim to examine whether the counterpart relation is a *satisfactory one.* They argue yes on the grounds that:

> Being unaccompanied is an extrinsic property, to be sure (Lewis, 1983; Langton and Lewis, 1998). So similarity in respect of being unaccompanied is an extrinsic respect of similarity. However, the property of being completely unaccompanied (unlike Long's property of being unaccompanied by a unicorn) does seem quite important to the character of anything that has it. Further, it is normally linked to quite an important intrinsic property: being, at least ostensibly, self-contained because the world is completely unaccompanied it will never, short of a miracle, be affected by signals or visitors suddenly arriving as if from elsewhere. (Rosen and Lewis, 2003, 40)

In the case of specific (restricted) negative existential statements such as

$$\langle \text{there are no hippos in the lake} \rangle \qquad (9.4)$$

We get a specific truthmaker: the lake *qua* unaccompanied by hippos. Jago (2013b, 465) admits that this approach is parsimonious, stating "all the

entities referred to by *qua*-phrases are already required by Lewis's modal realism. It's also (by design) compatible with Lewis's Humeanism, which many take to be an advantage." Jago criticises this proposal on the grounds of triviality which I will handle in a later part of this chapter. For now, I would like to express another concern with the Lewis and Rosen proposal on which extended modal realism easily overcomes.

9.5.3   Extending the Lewis-Rosen Proposal

Rosen and Lewis (2003, 41) suggest it does not matter what our metaphysical commitments to possible worlds are and that one could equally be a fictionalist about possible worlds or a realist. In this section I argue it does matter and that by adopting the extended modal realist's framework we can develop, with benefit, the original Lewis-Rosen proposal by filling in some of the gaps left in their articulation of the theory.

In the restricted cases the proposal looks like it fares well and can straightforwardly be applied to the extended modal realist metaphysics. However, in the unrestricted cases, there is a problem for Lewis and Rosen as they say they cannot give a definite answer as to what the counterpart of the world might be. I argue extended modal realism can supply an answer here.[1] The extended modal realist has two potential answers to the question. The first answer is an easy one. The extended modal realist is at liberty to say that a counterpart of the world is just a world-stage in the five-dimensional uni-

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[1]In true Lewisian style I also suggest that if a theory is more explanatory, then we have good reason to consider it preferable compared to its competitors.

verse (where modality is the fifth dimension). This is a feature of extended modal realism not present in Lewis's theory.[1] The second answer is that the extended modal realist would treat all cases as restricted cases, and this question would not really arise for them. Yagisawa tells us that:

> I reject an absolutely unrestricted collection of anything, whether it forms a domain for quantification or not. But I appear to embrace reality as completely unrestricted; anything whatever is real. Is this not incoherent?...I refuse to envision an absolutely unrestricted domain, totality, whole, or what have you along those lines. But I do envision reality. So, reality is not an absolutely unrestricted collection (or domain or totality...).[2](Yagisawa, 2012, 79)

The extended modal realist can not only straightforwardly answer Lewis and Rosen's questions about what a counterpart of the world would be given its metaphysical commitments to the universe as a whole, but what is more the very same question does not even arise on extended modal realism given the denial of unrestricted quantification. I suggest therefore that the extended modal realist goes forward with a maximal truthmaking account much like the Lewis-Rosen proposal but with a metaphysics that helps avoid some of the troubling questions that arise if we operate with Lewisian modal realism.

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[1]Nor in fictionalist versions of Lewis's theory à la Rosen.

[2]See Chapter 8 for how I try to square Yagisawa's claim.

9.5.4 Comparing Armstrong and Lewis

We've now seen Armstrong's and Lewis's solutions for handling negative existential statements. Lewis thinks there is similarity between his position and Armstrong's. Lewis (2003, 34–35) provides five comparisons between his view and Armstrong's which I will summarise below.

1. "States of affairs are particulars, spatio-temporally located and unrepeatable" (Lewis, 2003, 34). The state of affairs of Kellogg's being black is located exactly when and where Kellogg is. The same is true for qua-versions of things. Kellogg qua black is nothing else other than Kellogg therefore of course Kellogg qua black is located exactly where Kellogg is.

2. "Necessarily, the state of affairs of a's being F exists just in case a thing a and property F exist and a has F" (Lewis, 2003, 34). Take the example of Kellogg being black exists just in case Kellogg is black. The connection between Kellogg and being black holds just in virtue of blackness being part of what it takes to be Kellogg's counterpart, under the peculiar counterpart relation evoked by the name 'Kellogg qua black'. And not for any other *mysterious* reason.

3. The state of affairs of a's being F can be described as being composed, but in a non-mereologically way of two constituents: the particular a and the universal F.[1] Lewis provides an analogy to help us un-

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[1]It seems hard to understand what exactly states of affair are, given this if mereology is the general theory of composition it makes no sense to talk of things which are composed in a non-mereological way; this is not something I will get into in this thesis.

derstand this. "If necessary connections between distinct existences are forbidden, then mereological composition (in which the whole is not distinct from its parts but rather is partially identical to each of them) becomes a licence for necessary connections. Maybe it means to say that a state of affairs that is unmereologically composed of its constituents bears a necessary connection to them: the necessary connection considered in the previous paragraph. If that is what the claim of unmereological composition means, we already have seen that it applies just as well to Kellogg qua black".

4. It is denied that states of affairs are composed mereologically of *a* and *F*. Otherwise, the blackness of Kellogg would exist if Kellogg and blackness did, irrespective of whether Kellogg was black or not, and "at least under a counterpart relation that validates mereological essentialism"(Lewis, 2003, 35). Kellogg qua black is not mereologically composed of Long and blackness either for Lewis. Kellogg is part of Kellogg qua black because Kellogg is part of the whole Kellogg qua black, but the same does not go for blackness (Lewis, 2003, 35).

5. Finally, and importantly, Lewis points out, "We are not given a fully general denial that states of affairs are identical to ordinary particulars that are the subjects of predications" (Lewis, 2003, 35). Lewis does provide one special case in which this identity is asserted. "Let *F* be the complete intrinsic character of *a*, including all of *a*'s intrinsic properties, or, at any rate all of them that are genuine universals. (I shall assume questionably perhaps, that all the rest supervene upon

these.) Let *a* be a so-called 'thick' particular, taken to include the whole of *F*. ('Include unmereologically', whatever that means.) Then the state of affairs of *a*'s being *F* is identified with *a* itself" (Lewis, 2003, 35). Lewis thinks his proposal matches this. Kellogg the 'thick' particular has the same existence conditions as Kellogg qua *F* where *F* is 'just as he is'. Kellogg the thick particular and Kellogg qua just as he is, acts as a truthmaker for all true predications with Kellogg as the subject. And Kellogg qua just as he is, like all other qua-versions of Kellogg, is identical to himself (Lewis, 2003, 35).

Lewis states:

> So in the end, the only difference I can find between Armstrong's proposal and mine is that I claim in full generality, and Armstrong claims only in a special case, that the truthmaker for a true predication is identical with the subject of that predication. (Lewis, 2003, 35)

What is more, even though this is all Lewis can find, he thinks that the prima facie similarity of the two proposals is because they are "constrained alike by the goal of finding truthmakers for predications" (Lewis, 2003, 35). Even if the two views are similar, Lewis seems to have the advantage of generality. However, I think there is a second reason as to why I should prefer Lewis's proposal. Armstrong's influential solution seems to be generally incompatible with the background ontology I am operating with if we take seriously his distinction between Thingist and Factualist ontologies. In this

project I am preserving our reist intuitions when it comes to non-existent objects and if we were to go with Armstrong's solution it would undermine these reist tendencies. But what is more, not only do Lewis's comments highlight a similarity between his and Armstrong's position, Lewis might also be indicating that the distinction between Thingist and Factualist ontologies (especially when by facts we mean states of affairs) are not so big either. For if "States of affairs are particulars, spatio-temporally located and unrepeatable" (Lewis, 2003, 34), then there is very little difference between states of affairs and entities located at other worlds acting as truthmakers (especially in the case of extended modal realism). It seems that if there is to be a collapsing on Factualist and Thingist ontologists, the direction of collapse is towards the Thingist; it is for this reason we are better off with Lewis's proposal than with Armstrong's.

9.6   Accidental Truthmaker Maximalism

We've seen that truthmaking plus extended modal realism is useful for solving problems about truth and non-existents. I've shown that even though Lewis and Rosen believe their account of truthmaking to be ontologically neutral when it comes to one's stance on possible worlds, there are significant advantages to adopting the approach of the extended modal realist, for it can fill in the gaps left in their initial exposition of the theory.

Here I detail why I call this accidental truthmaker maximalism. The reason for calling this kind of truthmaking *accidental* is that a feature of extended

modal realism is that there is as part of the universe anything we could want to quantify over. Therefore, for any proposition there is naturally a truthmaker for that proposition, provided it can be obtained with a suitable *qua* object and a satisfying counterpart relation. Consequently truthmaking of the kind offered by Lewis and Rosen and extended modal realism go hand in hand. I have shown how in conjunction with extended modal realism it can straightforwardly solve the two problems concerning truth that are caused by non-existent entities. Extended modal realism fares well with these cases because it has the right kind of ontology to do so. Once made explicit, we see that there is no issue with the employment of a truthmaking-style theory. I have shown we can easily handle cases about truths concerning non-existents and how with some development we can employ an improved version of the Lewis-Rosen proposal. However, there is the upshot that many propositions will *accidentally* come out as true. First, it seems that for almost any proposition we could offer, there will be a truthmaker for it in the five-dimensional universe; for this reason it is important to be precise about how we restrict quantification.[1] What is more, it seems as if even seemingly impossible propositions might have viable truthmakers. Using Lewis's schema of proper name and intrinsic property we can construct the following example: Kellogg is qua calico and black. We might think that this qua-version of qua picks out an impossible counterpart by which Kellogg is calico and black; however, we know that such a situation is already permitted under extended modal realism. For Yagisawa (2015) points out there is an impossible world stage of Bertie

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[1]See Chapter 8.

in which he is both portly and not-portly. Being portly seems to be just as much of an intrinsic property as colour does. If such a situation could occur, then according to extended modal realism, there is a truthmaker for Kellogg is qua calico and black; it just is not a counterpart at this world, but at some impossible world. This seems like a quirk of the theory but one we should expect.

Despite all this and the benefit of truthmaker maximalism, it is a contentious doctrine; in the next chapter I provide and reply to some objections.

CHAPTER **10**

Truthmaker Maximalism Replies

10.1   Introduction

In the previous chapter I outlined accidental truthmaker maximalism, a theory that develops on the Lewis-Rosen proposal with a different background metaphysics, which fills some of the gaps not explained in the initial exposition of the Lewis-Rosen view. In this chapter, I reply to a range of objections against not only the Lewis-Rosen style strategy but also against truthmaking in general. I also look at one alternative theory of truthmaking that some might think would have been a good option to take and show why I think it is unappealing. The structure of this chapter is as follows: in §10.2 I provide an argument to defend accidental truthmaker maximalism against a potential objection from Jago. In §10.3 I examine an alternative way to handle negative existential statements. I highlight that in Mumford's way of handling negative existential statements overlooks the viable option of invoking a modal realist style theory. Moreover, I show

that Mumford's own position is problematic. Finally, in §10.4 I respond to some general concerns about invoking the truthmaker principle.

The objections in this chapter can broadly be split into two kinds: problems against the motivation for the truthmaker principle and problems against the truthmaking principle itself. When it comes to motivation for the truthmaking principle, Dodd (2002) argues that there is no satisfactory motivation for a truthmaking account (of any kind). I argue contra Dodd that the accidental nature of my account can answer some of his worries and his major concern seems to be alleviated given what follows from modal realism. Although Jago (2020) argues in favour of truthmaker maximalism, he hits on a similar point; it is not the inconsistency of the principle but rather the motivation that puts people off truthmaker maximalism. He states:

> Arguments against maximalism rarely attempt to demonstrate inconsistency. Perhaps truthmakers for 'negative' truths are ruled out by some metaphysical principle (Molnar, 2000, 84). Perhaps true negative existentials are 'true for lack of false-makers' (Lewis, 1992, 216). Perhaps truthmaking does not require entities as truthmakers (Melia, 2005; Schneider, 2006). Perhaps truthmaker theory as a whole 'lacks a proper motivation' (Liggins, 2008, 192), so that 'we have no reason to believe the principle' (Williamson, 1999, 253). Even if true, none of this shows that maximalist friendly ontology is inconsistent. An entity may be logically possible even if it conflicts with a metaphysical principle, even if it is theoretically unnecessary,

and even if all arguments for it are poorly motivated.[1] (Jago, 2020, 2)

To concerns about motivation, in short, I say, the kind of truthmaking maximalism I am offering shifts the location of motivation to a commitment to a foundational metaphysical theory. If you accept this metaphysical theory, then it would be reasonable for you to accept truthmaker maximalism too. If you reject the theory, it is no wonder you reject maximalism. I am not asking that you accept truthmaker maximalism in virtue of a strong belief in the value of the truthmaker principle but rather I am arguing that the truthmaker principle is a natural companion of extended modal realism.

The second kinds of objections are ones against the truthmaking principle itself. Jago (2013b) provides a triviality objection that can be run against the Lewis-Rosen proposal. However, I argue that in some respect this is what we should expect and thus I intend to show that this is not something we should be worried about and also demonstrate that the setup of Jago's criticism is in conflict with comments from Lewis (2013). Mumford (2007) ignores the explanatory power that a suitable metaphysics can offer, and it looks like his own account will suffer in cases where we introduce statements about broader domains.

I've partially responded to concerns about motivation here and for now I will focus on the second kind of objection. Jago and Mumford each have

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[1]Jago (2020, 2) hits on the kind of maximalist metaphysics I have in mind although he explicitly does not endorse it. He says, "Even if all these 'negative' entities fail the test, there are other maximalist approaches. Rosen and Lewis (2003) rely on possibilia and tricks with counterpart relations. I doubt mere possibilia exist, but Lewis's pluriverse is surely consistent."

their own criticism which I provide in 10.2 and 10.3 and reply to. I return to concerns about motivations in §10.4.

10.2   Reply to Jago

Jago (2013b, 465) objects to the Lewis-Rosen proposal on the grounds that it faces a triviality objection. Consider:

$$\langle \text{Vulcan does not exist} \rangle \qquad\qquad (10.1)$$

According to Lewis (2003, 32), we would not want to claim that Elvis, *qua* unaccompanied by Vulcans, is what makes 10.1 true. Elvis has nothing whatsoever to do with Vulcans so, why should it be that 10.1 is made true by the unaccompaniment of Elvis? Elvis has nothing to do with whether there exists Vulcans. This would just be an example of what Lewis referred to as a 'cheap trick' in the previous chapter. Lewis says in the genuine account, the invoked counterpart relations must "rest upon similarities that strike us as having at least some importance" and "rest predominantly upon intrinsic similarity" (Lewis, 2003, 33).

However, Jago (2013b, 465) contends that even with this restriction in place, we can still run the triviality objection.[1] He asks us to consider all the intrinsic duplicates of Elvis. All these duplicates are intrinsically similar to Elvis in many ways. If we were to select from the duplicates those which

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[1]Trivial in the sense that our proposition is made true by things we think should not be relevant truthmakers.

are unaccompanied by Vulcans, they will remain exactly similar to Elvis in many respects but differ extrinsically from Elvis in the respect that they are not accompanied by Vulcans.

But Jago says "our way of selecting those Elvis duplicates as a group in this way rests on many, many intrinsic respects plus just one extrinsic respect. So 'intrinsic duplicates of Elvis unaccompanied by Vulcans' is a way of selecting counterparts that rest predominantly (albeit not totally) on intrinsic similarity, just as Lewis requires" (Jago, 2013b, 465).

Lewis and Rosen take 10.1 to be made true by the world, *qua* unaccompanied by Vulcans.

Jago continues that even on Lewis's own grounds, picking out Elvis *qua* intrinsically as he is and not accompanied by Vulcans provides the context for us to treat Elvis as a truthmaker for proposition 10.1. And thus Jago says:

> Triviality has not been avoided. (True, it is not clear to what 'rest[ing] predominantly upon intrinsic similarity' amounts. Yet Lewis needs this notion to avoid his own 'cheap trick' objection, and so the onus is on him to make precise sense of the notion in a way that avoids this kind of objection.) (Jago, 2013b, 465)

The first point of response against Jago is that it seems to sit poorly with how Lewis sets up the tenets of modal realism. Lewis seems to reject situations in which there is singular change, and all else remains the same, whereas Jago's criticism seems to be prefaced on this. Lewis (2013, 9) says:

> We might think it best to confine our attention to worlds where kangaroos have no tails and *everything* else is as it actually is; but there are no such worlds. Are we to suppose that kangaroos have no tails but their tracks in the sand are as they actually are?

The setup of Jago's challenge appears to rest on the very thing (or something close enough) to that which Lewis rejects in this passage.

What is more, Jago's objection is hard to place in light of our developed Lewis-Rosen proposal in the 'unrestricted cases' ranging over a universe with every way things could be and could not be present. It seems that triviality is what we should expect to find. Therefore it seems that in light of my adjustments that the objection of triviality, although accurate, doesn't come with much bite.

10.3   Reply to Mumford

My reply to Mumford is not so much a reply but a pointing out of a serious neglect.

In his 2007 paper, Mumford sets himself up to reply to Molnar. Molnar (2000, 84–85) claims that there must be negative truths because that conclusion is entailed by the following four premises:

Mi The world is everything that exists.

Mii Everything that exists is positive.

Miii Some negative claims about the world are true.

Miv Every true claim about the world is made true by something that exists.

Mumford counsels correctly, pointing out that Molnar cannot find positive truthmakers and maintain these four conditions. So something must be denied.

Mumford ultimately develops a response that amounts to the rejection of Miii. And he provides arguments as to why we ought to maintain Mi and Miv. For Mii Mumford says:

> Mii has almost a ring of apriority about it. How can these facts both exist and be negative? Indeed, how can any existent really be negative?[1] (Mumford, 2007, 49)

As for Miv, Mumford says:

> Because of such difficulties with negative facts, other truthmaker theorists are prepared instead to sacrifice [Miv] and forego maximalism (for examples Simons 2005). This is an admission that there are some truths for which truthmakers theory does not hold. The theory would be applicable only to positive truth,

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[1]Jago (2020) disagrees with the move Mumford makes here but I will not get into their debate.

which says something *is*. For negative truth, which says something is *not*, we have to concede that they are true but without having truthmakers. The weakness of this response, however, is that it dispenses with the very claim that is the initial motivation of the theory. (Mumford, 2007, 49)

But when it comes to Mi, Mumford just says: 'The rejection of Mi seems out of the question' (Mumford, 2007, 67). To not argue as to why we ought to maintain Mi and not reject it is to ignore the most straightforward solution to the inconsistent tetrad. This is simply a case, I argue, of missing out on explanatory power by insisting on employing an impoverished ontology. If we approached Molnar's inconsistent tetrad with the right tools for the job, we would see quickly that denying Mi would be an obvious solution and be the one we should take.

So far, I have cast doubt on why we might go for the Mumford proposal in the first place given that it ignores the advantage of going for what looks like the most straightforward option and thus suffers dialectical issues. Here I look at one reason why even if we were to accept the Mumford proposal it would be problematic.

Mumford's position is to treat negative truths as falsehoods. He suggests that the following two statements are equivalent.

1. $t\langle p \rangle \leftrightarrow \neg f\langle p \rangle$

2. $f\langle p \rangle \leftrightarrow \neg t\langle p \rangle$

Mumford uses some examples to make his point clear: Take the statement:

$$\langle\text{It is raining}\rangle \tag{7_O}$$

According to Mumford, a 'typical philosophical articulation' of 7_O might be:

$$t\langle\text{It is raining}\rangle \tag{7_P}$$

We might understand this as "It is true that it is raining". Mumford (2007, 52) notes that according to the truthmaker theory, as he outlined it, "$t\langle p\rangle$ when $\langle p\rangle$ has a truthmaker T..." This gives us the existential commitment of (7_P), namely:

$$\langle\text{It is raining}\rangle\text{has a T} \tag{7_M}$$

Turning to negative truth, Mumford examines the statement:

$$\langle\text{It is not raining}\rangle \tag{8_O}$$

Mumford suggests this ought to be translated as

$$f\langle\text{It is raining}\rangle \tag{$8_P I$}$$

Mumford continues, stating:

I am going to stick with $(8_P I)$ as the correct philosophical account and I interpret the metaphysical commitment of $(8_P I)$ as:

(8_M) ⟨It is raining⟩ has no T.

Here I argue that when we introduce truth in a set domain, the Mumford account does not handle it well. Take for example "It is not raining outside my window now"; Mumford would say this is a falsehood because it does not have a truthmaker (it is not presently raining outside my window). However, what if we take the example 'It is not raining in the North East of England' and imagine that in Newcastle there is a heavy downpour, but in Tees Valley, it is a bright day. How is Mumford's account supposed to make sense of this? For there appears to be both a truthmaker (the bright day in Tees Valley) and a non-truthmaker (the rain in Newcastle) for the statement in question. What is more, given the climate of the North East of England, this is a very likely state of affairs to occur. The standard account gives a direct answer, that it is raining in the North East in virtue of the Newcastle truthmaker and does not take into account the potential false-maker of Tees Valley. We get a straightforward but potentially coarse-grained answer, but this is exactly what we should expect when giving such a wide-scope quantification.

Mumford on the other hand would presumably say the claim has to be treated as it is false ⟨ it is raining in the North East ⟩ and this is incorrect because ⟨ it is raining in the North East ⟩ has at least one truthmaker, in Newcastle. But it isn't clear how this gets Mumford out of any kind of trouble for his equivalent statement that it is false that it is raining in the

North East is directly contradicted by the Tees Valley truthmaker, which is surely an unwanted consequence. The Mumford account must recognise the presence of the truthmaker at Tees Valley unlike the standard account where it can be ignored at the sacrifice of fine-grainedness. However, this lack of fine-grainedness is of no real concern for it can be remedied with restricted quantification.

Therefore it appears the equivalence that Mumford introduced between:

1. $t\langle p \rangle \leftrightarrow \neg f\langle p \rangle$

2. $f\langle p \rangle \leftrightarrow \neg t\langle p \rangle$

just does not hold once we start thinking about truth in a set domain. If we try to force the equivalence to hold, we get the unwanted consequence of apparently directly conflicting statements, both of which end up being verified under the Mumford account.

10.4   Reply to Dodd

I end this part of the chapter by highlighting and replying to some methodological concerns raised by Dodd (2002). Briefly, Dodd's concern is that any version of the truthmaker principle is not well motivated and cannot be. His main concern is not with any technical problem concerning the principle but with the principle itself. Rather, Dodd (2002, 70–71) is concerned that those who employ the truthmaker principle are not able to justify it. Dodd states:

I believe there to be a reason for this: It cannot be justified. As we shall see, John Bigelow circumvents the truthmaker theorist's traditional problems with negative truth by diluting the truthmaker principle until it is restatable as the thesis that truth supervenes on being, in which 'being' is construed as *whether things are.* My contention is that the truthmaker principle, even when weakened in the way Bigelow envisages, cannot be respectably motivated. It only gains its patina intuitiveness by virtue of confusion of fallacious argument. (Dodd, 2002, 70–71)

Since I employ Bigelow's thesis or something very close to it, Dodd's concerns are ones I should address.

Dodd (2002, 73–74) raises the objection that "the truth value of ⟨ the ball is red at t ⟩ seems to supervene, not on *whether* things are, but on *how* things are." Dodd points out that it seems possible for there to be two possible worlds which contain the same existent, only in one the ball is red at t and the other it is not red at t. It therefore seems what is different in the case of these two worlds is not in what exists but in *how* things are in respect to what exists.[1] In one world the ball instantiates redness at t; in the second world it does not.

Dodd (2002, 73–74) states "The truth of ⟨ The ball is red at t ⟩ is not, it seems determined by the existence of some entity (*viz.* a state of affairs

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[1]It is this feature which distinguishes this problem from the problem of contingent truths raised in 9.2.2. The problem raised in 9.2.2 argues what exists is contingent; the problem here argues it is not what exists that is important for truthmaking but it is *how* the existing things are which is important for truthmaking.

of trope); it would seem to be because some entity (*viz.* the ball) has the property in question *t.*"

It is unclear what exactly Dodd's objection is here if we remain true to our modal realist inclinations. The objection is, in short, that if our guiding principle is that truth supervenes on what exists, then there are cases where this principle fails. Consider our case of the ball: here it would seem the guiding principle would fail, for truths about the ball would be true not in virtue of what exists but rather in virtue of what there is. However, for a modal realist (at least for those who subscribe to some variety of counterpart theory) what there is and how things are are just one and the same. This might strike some readers as a strange statement so I will spend some time developing it. If we consider the totality of what there is, there is no difference from a God's-eye perspective between what there is — what exists — and how things exist. Recall the counterpart relation explained in the previous chapter. I exist just as I am at this world; to explain how things might be different, we have to examine a different world and a different counterpart, but then we are just talking about what exists at that world, and how things are remain the same. Let me provide another example. Take this mug in front of me: it is blue but it might have been red, or some other colour. To explain how things might be different in respect to the colour of my mug, we would examine a different possible world, but then all this amounts to is examining what exists at a different world. Therefore, given our metaphysical background it makes sense to collapse what exists and how things exist into one and the same thing, given that modal realists

can make sense of difference by the counterpart relation across worlds. It is then hard to see a distinction between how things exist and what exists and ultimately, difficult to make sense of Dodd's objection when we keep in mind our metaphysical system in operation.

Therefore Dodd's initial concerns seem untroubling. Dodd even concludes:

> If the claim that truth supervenes on being means that truth supervenes on *how* things are, then it should command our assent. (Dodd, 2002, 84)

Therefore it seems that even in light of Dodd's concern, truthmaking in conjunction with an extended modal realist position is one that we have good reason to think of as a strong one.

10.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided some responses to three potential issues concerning truthmaking. First I have looked at direct objections to the Lewis-Rosen proposal. I have shown that we can defend against Jago's objection on the grounds that the setup of his objection is in direct conflict with the setup of modal realism. What is more, given the commitments of extended modal realism, an outcome of triviality might be what we should expect.

I have looked at an alternative suggestion for making sense of truthmaking in the case of negative existential statements, one which involves a lot less

metaphysical baggage and I have shown why we might want to avoid it. I say to Mumford's concerns not only do they ignore modal realism as a viable option but it also looks like Mumford's own theory fares poorly. Finally, I address concerns about generally motivating the principle. I have shown that some of the concerns regarding motivation put forward by Dodd can be avoided.

Part IV

Solution To The Problem
About Thought

Extended Modal Realism — A New Solution to the Problem of Intentional Inexistence

1

11.1   Introduction

The problem of intentional inexistence was originally raised by Brentano (2012, 1874) and has notably been developed by Prior (1971) and Crane (2013). The concern is that, if intentionality is a relation between two objects, then for a relation of this structure to hold, it requires the existence of both its relata. The problem is essentially, How can we stand in an

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[1]This chapter is published in *Philosophia* as a paper by the same name; thank you to the anonymous referees for their helpful comments. The form present in this chapter contains minor amendments.

intentional relation with an object if that object does not exist? Dummett states that "intentionality is naturally taken to be a relation between the mental act, or its subject, to the object of that act". Dummett continues by articulating the problem: "how can there be a relation when the second term of the relation does not exist?" (Dummett, 2014, 36).

There are four ways one can go to solve this puzzle. First is to deny that intentional acts towards non-existent objects are possible. Second, one could, like Prior, challenge that intentionality is a relation. Crane developed this line of thought and challenged whether intentionality is *always* a relation. However, this move, made by Crane (2001, 2013), is a reaction to the problem of intentional inexistence and is seemingly not independently motivated. Thus, we might think it is the standard or common-sense position to think of intentionality as a relation. Alternatively, Priest (2016, 58–59) favours the approach that we can stand in intentional relations with non-existent objects. Another option is to suggest that the objects of our intentions exist as parts of possible worlds. The view that there are real modalities other than the actual one is known as modal realism. Traditionally this view is attributed to Lewis (1986). However, Lewis's modal realism is not the only option available. Since Yagisawa (1988), a version of modal realism called extended modal realism has been in development. Under extended modal realism existence is a set-theoretic notion.[1] Modal realists such as Lewis think that there are non-actual concreta of which possibilia are a

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[1]Under extended modal realism objects exist only if they bear the membership relation to a given set. See Yagisawa (2014) for Yagisawa's theory of existence.

kind and we stand in intentional relations with such things.[1,2] Extended modal realism succeeds with the problem of intentional inexistence where Lewis's modal realism could not. extended modal realism was introduced as an extension of the Lewisian project in Yagisawa (1988) and developed in Yagisawa (2010). Although it was not intended as an answer to this problem, it works well. As far as I am aware, Yagisawa has not yet formulated an explicit answer to the problem of intentional inexistence. However, it is clear he is aware of its usefulness from his comments (Yagisawa, 2014, 14).

In this chapter, I respond to Kriegel who dismisses modal realism as a solution to the problem of intentional inexistence on the grounds that even presented in its strongest form it does not meet the principle of representation (Kriegel, 2007, 311). The modal realist would attempt to solve the problem of intentionality by suggesting that the objects of intention are not non-existent but rather exist as a part of a possible world. The principle of representation is that causal contact is a precondition for the possibility of representation (even if it is not constitutive of the representation itself). Under the most well-known form of modal realism, that of Lewis, possible worlds are spatiotemporally isolated wholes, and according to Kriegel the fact that Lewisian possible worlds are causally isolated renders modal real-

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[1]What exactly possibilia are depends on ones ontology. For Lewis (1986) they are parts of concrete possible worlds. Whereas Yagisawa remains non-committal on the concreteness of his worlds (Yagisawa, 2010, 179: fn 7). However, it is still open as to whether the world-stages of objects are concrete or not. To do justice to different kinds of modal realism, when defending modal realism in this chapter, I will use the term 'non-actual objects'. This term ranges over possibilia and impossibilia remaining non-committal on their concreteness. The concreteness of worlds and world-stages is a point where extended modal realism would benefit from some clarification and development.

[2]Although Kriegel's primary concern is with possibilia, I anticipate that the same criticisms made against possibilia would also be made against impossibilia.

ism insufficient to pass the principle of representation. However, extended modal realism can respond to this problem.

The outline of this chapter is as follows: in §11.2, I provide some comments on the nature of intentionality and its structure. Here I also motivate the problem of intentionality formulated as an inconsistent triad. In §11.3 I outline some responses to the problem of intentionality, then in §11.4, I provide Kriegel's description of modal realism and I highlight why Kriegel thinks modal realism fails. In §11.5, I provide a brand of modal realism (Extended modal realism) that Kriegel did not consider and show how it meets the principle of representation. I end with the disjunctive conclusion that either extended modal realism passes the principle of representation or that the principle of representation should be rejected since it cannot be satisfied by many other theories. If the former is correct, then on Kriegel's grounds I have established a successful modal realist solution. If the latter is correct, then we have reason to reject the principle of representation as a reasonable criterion by which to judge a response to the problem of intentional inexistence.

11.2   Intentionality

Kriegel gives us no definition of intentionality. However, since Kriegel wishes to establish intentionality as an adverbial property rather than a relation it would be helpful to have a grasp on the term in question. For Brentano intentionality characterised mental activity (Brentano, 2012, 88). Berto

elaborates and points out that Brentano might have been wrong by claiming that all mental states bear intentionality. However, most scholars agree that at least some mental states do (Berto, 2018, 3). Crane (2013, 4) tells us that "every intentional state or episode has an object — something it is about or directed on". Yablo defines intentionality in terms of aboutness: "the relation that meaningful items bear to whatever it is that they are on or of or that they address or concern" (Yablo, 2014, 1). Sometimes intentionality is simply described in terms of directedness or aboutness (Mumford and Anjum, 2011, 185). As I consider the problem of intentional inexistence, I have in mind Mumford and Anjum's definition. I have elected to employ this definition since it is neutral on whether intentionality is a relation or not, and establishing whether intentionality is a relation or not is not the primary purpose of this chapter.

Figure 11.1 outlines the standard structure of intentionality, where we have an existing agent a bearing an intentional act towards an existing object x. The direction of the intentional act F is indicated by the arrow symbol.
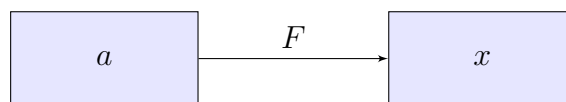

Figure 11.1: The structure of intentionality

11.2.1 Intentionality and Representation

Before I begin in full there is a quick aside. I should note that Kriegel is happy to switch the terms representational and intentionality. He states,

"what all these have in common is that they involve intentionality or *representation*: they represent something" (Kriegel, 2007, 308, Kriegel's emphasis). Kriegel also reorganises the problem of intentional inexistence, replacing the obviously intentional term "thinking of" with the less obviously intentional term 'represents' (Kriegel, 2007, 308). It is not entirely clear what Kriegel aims to achieve by switching the terms 'representation' and "intentionality". It is Kriegel's project to establish that representation and intentionality are not relations and thus this general project might have something to do with the shift in terminology. It is undeniable that intentionality is a kind of representation. One could argue that *Intention* is a particular genus of the family of *Representation*. Priest states, "The intentionality of mental states is one kind of representation. It is not the only kind" (Priest, 2014, 160). Even if it is true that representation is not a relation, this says nothing about intentionality, unless Kriegel thinks what is true of the family is true of all its "genera", which is plainly false. What is true of some *Canidae* is not necessarily true for all *Caninae*. For example, *Caninae* have distinguishing characteristics including small, simple, well-spaced premolars and a humerus without an entepicondylar foramen. The fact that *Intentionality* belongs to the family *Representations* does not mean *Intentionality* cannot have distinguishing features, such as being relational. If Kriegel thinks the terms are equivalent, then a switch is permissible. However, there is reason to think that the terms are not strictly equivalent and therefore a switch is not acceptable. My thinking about the lion is an intentional act that represents the lion. However, a map of Newcastle also represents Newcastle but the map's representation is not intentional in the

same way that thinking about a lion is. Given the fact that there are some representations that are not intentional in the same way mental acts are, the two terms cannot be switched *salva veritate.*

In order to do justice to both sides of this debate over whether intentionality and representation are relations, I will assume that intentionality and representation are equivalent. I use the letter "F" to indicate the presence of intentionality or representation. Since if intentionality and representation are equivalent, then using a neutral letter to indicate the presence of either term is fair. However, if the terms are not equivalent and there is an objection to using a neutral letter to signify their presence, then Kriegel has made an argumentative misstep which needs to be addressed. The motivation for this might be that it seems less controversial for us to think of representation as non-relational than intentionality as non-relational. Kriegel's argument rests on developing Chisholm's account of perception as a non-relational form of representation. Therefore, it is of obvious benefit to Kriegel if he can bring intentionality closer to the same kind of representation as Chisholm had in mind (Chisholm, 1957).

With this aside out of the way, I will return to the problem at hand.

11.2.2 The Problem of Intentional Inexistence

The problem of intentional inexistence can be broken down into three propositions.

1. An agent (a) Fs something (x) non-existent.

2. An agent (a) cannot F something (x) non-existent if F is a relation.

3. Fing something (x) constitutively involves bearing a relation to it.

The first statement seems obvious; you can think of a non-existent object even though that object is non-existent. For example, you can think of Pegasus, the future, a square circle, or other ways the world could have been even though these objects do not exist.[1]

On the face of it, the second claim is also straightforward; it relies on the assumption discussed by Hawthorne and Manley that no relational expression can be *about* an object unless that object exists (Hawthorne and Manley, 2012, 9).

The final claim is more controversial; it rests on the concept of intentionality as a relation. You might choose to get off the bus here and disagree over whether intentionality is a relation. However, for those who want to maintain the relational structure of intentionality, the problem of intentional inexistence is one problem they must consider. The problem of intentional inexistence is: "how can we represent something that doesn't exist, given that representation involves bearing a relation to it and we cannot bear a relation to something that doesn't exist" (Kriegel, 2007, 307).

The problem arises when there is an existing agent standing in an intentional relation with a non-existent object. The indeterminate nature of

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[1]Under the metaphysics I offer some of these objects do exist but for the sake of setting up the problem, let's say they do not. Furthermore, some philosophers might try to tell me I cannot represent impossible things such as square circles or positively charged electrons. In response, I can provide two cases where this feat is achievable, see Priest (1997) and Priest (1999). You do not need to conjure up a mind's-eye picture to successfully represent something.

non-existent objects prompts the question, What is in the object box?

11.3 Responses

There are a number of responses which Kriegel deems to be unsuccessful. Before I reach the one I would like to defend I will sketch two others, namely the "abstracta" and "mental concreta" views, which are two forms of the same idea. The idea behind both of these responses is that when we are thinking of non-existent objects, we are thinking about something. In the first form our intentional act is about existent abstracta and in the second form of the idea our intentional act is about mental concreta. When you think of Sherlock Holmes you are thinking about something which exists, but only an "abstract entity that 'lives' altogether outside space-time or of a mental object that 'lives' only in your mind" (Kriegel, 2007, 310).

Kriegel dismisses both these options on the charge of "familiar intuitive, ontological, epistemological, and phenomenological difficulties" (Kriegel, 2007, 310).

1. Intuitively, Bigfoot seems to be a non-mental concretum, though one that does not exist, rather than an existing abstractum or mental concretum.

2. Ontologically, commitment to abstracta and mental concreta is a liability that we should not have to incur merely to account for the facts of representation.

3. Epistemologically, the notion that we are in direct representational contact with abstracta or mental concreta throws a veil of appearances over the realm of external concreta, producing a corrosive scepticism about our knowledge thereof.

4. Phenomenologically, the entities we are aware of when we think of dragons and parrots present themselves to us, from the first-person perspective, as external concreta, not as mental concreta.

(Kriegel, 2007, 310–311)

11.4 Aborted Modal Realism

The problem of intentional inexistence is an inconsistent triad (Kriegel, 2007, 309). To escape inconsistency we need to deny one of three propositions. The standard modal realist response amounts to denying the first proposition, (1). Kriegel quickly discusses modal realism in the following way: 'A more recent version of the view under consideration is that, when we seem to ourselves to think of dragons, we are thinking of *possibilia*' (Kriegel, 2007, 310).[1]

Kriegel explains that against one ontology, ersatz modal realism, modal realism simply collapses into the abstract view. However, against a back-

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[1]Kriegel does not mention by name anyone who actually holds this position. I know of no one who genuinely held this position in 2007. However, since the publishing of Kriegel's paper, a closer view has emerged. Now the closest position I know of is a view held by Bourne and Bourne (2016). However, their focus is on time in fiction rather than intentionality.

ground of Lewis's modal realism, the suggestion is that we are thinking about non-mental concreta that do not exist in the actual world; they do exist elsewhere in modal space *simpliciter* (Lewis, 1986, 3).[1] By Kriegel's own admission this solution does avoid the problems associated with the abstracta and mental concreta views (Kriegel, 2007, 311). Despite it being successful in avoiding some objections, according to Kriegel, modal realism should be aborted on other grounds.

11.4.1 Lewisian Modal Realism

Lewisian modal realism is the view that there is a plenitude of other worlds where all manner of possibilities take place. It is the view that what could have been the way at this world is the way things are at some other world. Lewisian worlds are concrete wholes made of parts and individuals. These parts and individuals are referred to as possibilia.

According to Kriegel, the Lewisian version of modal realism is not a viable option to solve the problem of intentional inexistence. Kriegel has two objections. The first is that modal realism exacerbates the ontological problem inasmuch as it commits us to the existence of non-actual concreta (Kriegel, 2007, 331). Kriegel's second objection is that modal realism is inconsistent with the principle of representation. Kriegel defines this principle as follows:

> ...representation is always grounded in causal contact with the

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[1]By "simpliciter" Lewis means that objects exist in the same way objects at actuality exist.

represented. On some views, causal contact is constitutive of representation. The requirement I have in mind is much weaker: that causal contact is a precondition for the possibility of representation (even if it is not constitutive of the representation itself). Since there is no trans-world causation, representation of non-actual concreta is inconsistent with this principle. (Kriegel, 2007, 311)

Kriegel argues these two reasons are good enough to abandon modal realist solutions to the problem of intentional inexistence. In the following section, I take each reason in turn and provide counter-arguments to both.

11.5   Modal Realism Defended

11.5.1   Defence 1

The first defence of modal realism I offer is against the challenge that its introduction "exacerbates [2] the ontological problems, inasmuch as it commits us to the existence of non-actual concreta" Kriegel (2007, 311). This is a methodological concern which comes about due to what you are willing to buy into and trade-off. It is clear that Kriegel is not willing to accept non-actual objects, and thus their advantages are not available to him. If you are willing to accept non-actual objects then you gain access to philosophical benefits that come with them. One of which is a simple answer to the question "What goes in the object box?" in the case of agents bearing

intentional relations to a non-existent object. If you choose to decline non-actual objects then you must also abandon their benefits. This is a position Kriegel has put himself in, and it is not a deficiency of modal realism itself.

What is more, Kriegel opens himself up to criticism on the grounds of employing false parsimony. Kriegel's reaction to non-actual objects reveals he is sympathetic to economic theories and implies that he believes more economic theories are somehow superior to less economic theories. However, this is to misuse parsimony. Sober (1981, 1, italics original) states, "The principle of parsimony counsels that *we should hypothesise that an entity does not exist* if its postulation is to no explanatory point." With Sober's formulation to hand, it is clear that non-actual concreta are no threat to the violation of the principle of parsimony. The presence of non-actual objects play an explanatory role and therefore we are on no grounds to cite them as "strange" metaphysical entities that ought to be avoided.

11.5.2 Defence 2

The second concern that Kriegel highlights is that modal realism fails to meet the principle of representation. This criticism targets a feature of Lewis's version of modal realism under which there is no trans-world causation since Lewis's worlds are totally isolated from each other.[1] Thus, modal realism set against this ontology cannot meet what is asked of it by the principle of representation. However, Lewis's modal realism is not

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[1]Lewis believes his worlds are both spatiotemporally and causally isolated; see Lewis (1986, 70) and Lewis (1986, 78).

the only brand of modal realism on offer. Extended modal realism is a brand of modal realism under which there are both possible and impossible worlds. Under extended modal realism, worlds are points in modal space.[1] In extended modal realism, objects are not only temporally extended but they are also modally extended.[2] To use the temporal analogue, we might say that I have past and future stages; likewise, we might also say I have possible and impossible stages.[3] However, unlike Lewis's modal realism, in extended modal realism there is only one universe in which all objects and their stages belong.

Another dissimilarity between Lewis's modal realism and extended modal realism is that under extended modal realism my modal stages are related in part-hood to my actual stage. Given this part-hood relation and the single universe, the possible and impossible stages of objects are not totally isolated as they would be if they belonged to different Lewisian worlds. The part-hood relation does not mean that there can be some kind of butterfly effect between modal parts. The actual parts of an object cannot change the way the possible or impossible parts of objects are, at least not in a chain-like way. Yagisawa clarifies the relationship between possible worlds: "I regard what Lewis calls 'possible worlds' as modal parts of one and the same universe. The universe's modal parts are not possible worlds, but the universe itself as it is at possible worlds, its world-stages" (Yagisawa, 2010, 44). He continues: "*my modal space* (collection of all possible worlds

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[1]Extended modal realism was originally introduced in (Yagisawa, 1988) and developed in (Yagisawa, 2010).

[2]Yagisawa (2010, 44–45) plays up the temporal analogue between modal realism and eternalism, an analogue that Lewis plays down.

[3]Yagisawa calls these modal stages "world stages" (Yagisawa, 2010).

I embrace and all objects existing at them) contains many concrete objects all of which are modal parts of one and the same universe" (Yagisawa, 2010, 44). The best way to understand the relationship between world-stages is to compare them to Lewisian worlds. For Lewis, worlds are spatiotemporally unrelated by definition. However, this is not quite the case under extended modal realism, since "The space and time of one world are the same space and time of many other worlds. Space and time permeate many different worlds. The space and time that exist at the actual world, however, do not exist at some remote possible worlds, being replaced by alien space and time, or no space or time at all (if that is possible)" (Yagisawa, 2010, 45–46).

Let us consider Jane as she is in a spatial region r at a time t at a world w_1, and John as he is in r at a different world w_2. The proponent of extended modal realism supplies two ways we could understand spatiotemporal relations:

1. The first way we could understand the spatiotemporal relation is as "Jane at w_1 is in r at t, and so is John at w_2. They are in the same region of space at the same time. They are also in the same universe, albeit at different modal points. In that sense they are certainly spatiotemporally related."

2. The second way is as a physical relation between Jane and John. "Jane at w_1 could not reach out and touch John at w_2, or anyone or anything at w_2, no matter how fast or how far she travels through space and time at w_1."

(Yagisawa, 2010, 45–46).

In sum, the answer Yagisawa gives to the question as to whether possible worlds are spatiotemporally related is yes. By this, he means that two or more worlds can have the same space-time. Objects at possible worlds can share the same spatial and temporal regions but differ in their modal location.

What remains is to question what is meant by "causal contact". If causal contact in the principle of representation comes down to spatiotemporal relations then Yagisawa provides two ways to interpret this. The first way that we could interpret causal contact is that causal contact amounts to the space-time being the same at different worlds. The second way we could interpret causal contact is in the physical sense in which Jane could reach out and touch John. Let us call them causal contact[1] and causal contact[2] respectively. If causal contact requires agents to be connected to the objects of our intentions in Yagisawa's second sense, causal contact[2], then the condition is absurd and should be rejected. There is no way that I could be causally connected in this way with many kinds of ordinary objects. The reason for this might come down to a number of factors, including practical possibility, physical possibility, or metaphysical possibility. For example, I can think about the centre of the earth without being causally connected[2] to it. I can think of stars that are billions of light years away without being causally connected[2] to them. And I can think of Sherlock Holmes without being causally connected[2] to him either.[1] If we take causal

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[1]A critic of my position might insist that we could be causally connected[2] to the

contact to mean causal contact[2] then it reduces the objects of our intention
to only those objects which are spatially accessible to us, which is absurd.
However, if the requirement is set with Yagisawa's first sense in mind, causal
contact[1], then extended modal realism meets this condition in virtue of
some worlds and their objects being unified by spatiotemporal relatedness
(Yagisawa, 2010, 45). Under extended modal realism, at least some worlds
are spatiotemporally related, the ones where the space and time are the
same. If all that is required for causal contact is spatiotemporal relatedness
then extended modal realism can, at least in some cases, meet this minimal
demand. However, an objector might say spatiotemporal relatedness in
this sense does not seem to capture what is wanted from the principle
of representation. The principle of representation seems to require direct
causal contact between the represener and the represented. Modal realism
is not out of the woods just yet. Our final option is to challenge the principle
of representation.

11.5.3 Defence 3

My third and final defence of modal realism is to argue that the principle
of representation is asking too much from any theory. It seems to be used

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centre of the earth via a chain of causal connections. And although we are not directly
connected to the centre of the earth, this chain of connections is sufficient to be causally
connected[2] to the centre of the earth. By way of response I say that there is no way there
can be a complete chain like this which is causal connects[2] an agent to an object which we
are not in direct acquaintance with. Causal connect[2] requires a direct connection. This
challenge admits we are not in direct acquaintance with the object and thus this isn't a
case of causally connect[2]. A chain of this kind would be one of causal connect[1] which
we know extended modal realism can satisfy. Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for
alerting me to this possible criticism.

as an ad hoc condition to rule out modal realism as a viable solution to the problem of intentional inexistence. The inclusion of the principle takes too much else with it, including Kriegel's own solution. The principle of representation states that causal contact is a precondition for the possibility of representation. However, we have already seen that there are plenty of objects that we are not in causal contact with which we can represent with ease, fictional characters and distant stars for example. It seems that set against many ontologies, not just modal realism, this principle is troublesome. It precludes anyone with an anti-realist ontology of fictional characters from representing them. It also limits those with Meinongian ontologies in the same way. Realists are no better off. Unless the objects of our representations are located at actuality in the strict sense and even when this is the case, what it means to be in causal contact with an inexistent object located at actuality seems difficult to define if not impossible. Acceptance of the principle limits the scope of the relevant objects of our representation too much. Moreover, if we take this principle seriously not even Kriegel's own account survives, unless he thinks we are in causal contact with Bigfoots (Kriegel, 2007, 314). The principle of representation says nothing about only applying to relational accounts of representation and thus it surely applies to Kriegel's non-relational account too.

11.6 Conclusion

Modal realism can minimally meet the principle of representation in certain cases. Or we take the more sensible option and reject the principle of representation altogether. It is a restrictive principle that rules out too many instances of standard representational acts with no good reason and seems inadequate to deal with cases of intentional inexistence. I have shown that there is still hope for a modal realist answer to the problem of intentional inexistence by rejecting that a direct causal connection need hold between the agent and the object of representation.

Semantic Instrumentalism

12.1 Introduction

Those of us with extended ontologies often attempt to answer the problem of non-existence by suggesting our thoughts are *about* non-existence or non-actual yet existing (*simpliciter)* objects. However, a problem for these kinds of responses is they neglect to tell us how we can think about such objects. "Thinking about" is normally understood to involve some variety of the "acquaintance relation", which given the nature of the target objects cannot easily be achieved. In this chapter, I argue that semantic instrumentalism allows those with extended ontologies — specifically those with a modal realist ontology — to sufficiently respond to this concern regarding the problem of non-existence.

There are some philosophers who respond to the problem of non-existence by broadening their ontology and include among the viable objects of thought non-actual entities. They might say that those objects which are non-actual

are non-existent. I am one of these philosophers. However, these solutions are often unpopular and often associated with Meinongian-style ontologies.[1] Burge (1983, 83) is particularly negative about such positions, stating that "A few theorists have found Meinong's idea worth pursuing. But I shall not discuss them. My view, which appears to have been Russell's, is that quite apart from various more technical objections that might be raised, Meinong's approach is, to put it bluntly, silly." Although I do not offer a Meinongian-style solution to the puzzle of non-existence, I do offer one which also has the result of extending one's ontology beyond what is actual. I suspect my suggestion would be subjected to similar criticism from those people who are sympathetic to Burge's naysaying. My proposed solution to the problem of non-existence is to employ a variety of modal realism, known as extended modal realism.[2]

I take it that part of the reason why philosophers are suspicious of these kinds of solutions is that they, like Quine (1948, 23), have an aesthetic preference for desert landscapes. However, there is a more serious reason why solutions that extend their ontologies are unpopular as ways of handling the problem of non-existence, that is they only get us so far regarding a solution to the problem of non-existence. The puzzle of non-existence can be divided into two questions. The first question is, when Alexius is thinking about a square-circle, what is it that he is thinking *about*? The second question is, how can James be having a singular thought about

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[1]The most recent and detailed of which I am aware of is from Priest (2016).

[2]I will not retell the extended modal realist ontology in detail. For an overview of extended modal realism, see Yagisawa (2010). To see how this can be usefully applied to the problem of non-existence, see Thomas (2019).

that kind of object if that object is non-existent? Most philosophers take it that acquaintance of some variety is involved in this kind of singular thought.[1] Of course, no one, not even those of us with exotic ontologies, would endorse the position that we are straightforwardly acquainted with non-actual objects. Thus, those of us who think that extended ontologies are helpful regarding the problem of non-existence must provide an account of singular thought that does not rely on acquaintance.

In this chapter, I argue that semantic instrumentalism is an option for those with extended ontologies —particularly extended modal realism — to introduce singular thought about non-actual objects without acquaintance. Semantic instrumentalism is not a new position and was most famously articulated by Kaplan (1989b), although originally put forward in a short paper by Harman (1977). The view has received recent attention from Jeshion (2010) who builds on semantic instrumentalism and develops her own position called "Cognitivism". What is more, it appears that Yagisawa (1983) also holds a similar view, which is rarely mentioned in the literature on semantic instrumentalism. The fact that Yagisawa holds such a position is significant given his extensive contribution to the Extended Modal Realist project.

Even though semantic instrumentalism is not a new view, its combination with an extended ontology like extended modal realism is an underexplored strategy. Yet the combination is a natural suggestion. The pairing leads to

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[1]For acquaintance theories see: Russell (1910), Burge (1977), Donnellan (1979), Lewis (1979), Evans (1982), Boer and Lycan (1986), Bach (1987), Salmon (1987b), Kaplan (1989a), Brewer (1999), Recanati (1993), Soames (2003, 2005) and Pryor (2007).

a powerful solution to the problem of non-existence.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: in §12.2 I introduce the problem of non-existence as articulated by Prior (1971) and do some housekeeping which involves collapsing the distinctions between, intentionality, singular thought and *de re* thought which have previously been made by Crane (2013). I recap the important parts of the Extended Modal Realist solution to the problem of non-existence in §12.3. In §12.4 I introduce and articulate semantic instrumentalism and highlight its benefits when engaging with extended ontology solutions to the problem of non-existence.[1] In §12.5 I respond to some objections to semantic instrumentalism which include some objections from Jeshion (2010) and a reply to those who might be sceptical about whether the introduction of semantic instrumentalism is helpful when intentionality is considered to be a representational mental state. Finally, in §12.6 I conclude that the combination of semantic instrumentalism provides those with an extended ontology a full and novel solution to the problem of non-existence.

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[1]I take it that those with a Meinongian rather than modal realist ontology could make use of something like semantic instrumentlism; however, the modal realist has the advantage on the grounds that it is stipulated by semantic instrumentalism that the referrer must believe that the object of their thought exists. The Meinongian will have trouble meeting this condition for non-actual objects. However, the modal realist can easily meet this demand as they are at liberty to say that the non-actual objects exist *simpliciter*.

12.2 Prior's Problem

Prior's problem has become the canonical way to articulate the problem of non-existence. Prior (1971, 130) states:

> *X*'s thinking of *Y* constitutes a relation between *X* and *Y* when *Y* exists, but not when *Y* doesn't; but *X*'s thinking of *Y* is the same sort of thing whether *Y* exists or not. Something plainly has to be given up here; what will it be?

Since Prior's articulation of the puzzle, the notion of "intentionality" has become entwined with "thinking about" or "thinking of". It is even fair to say that in analytic contexts "thinking about" is sometimes used synonymously with intentionality. However, Crane (2013) has gone to significant lengths to pull apart the two, even though Crane is not entirely incorrect in making this distinction since we would not want to associate the intentionality of the sensation of pain, nor the intentionality of a street sign or of a map with the intentionality of singular thought. This distinction is not present in Prior's puzzle which is very obviously considering the so-called "thinking about" relation, and if this is what has become known as "intentionality"—even if for bad reasons—so be it.

Crane also makes the distinction between singular thought and *de re* thought on pain of his own position collapsing. Crane (2013, 153) states: "If singular thought were the same kind of thing as *de re* thought, then the position I am trying to sketch in this chapter would be impossible." Drawing a dis-

tinction on the grounds of forwarding one's position is not a good reason for drawing a distinction. Thus, we should be sceptical about Crane's reason for making a distinction. However, this chapter is not a criticism of Crane's style of argument, and so I will not examine it further. I do not need to draw a distinction between singular thought and *de re* thought for my position to get off the ground, so I won't. It is my strategy to examine Prior's problem in its naive form.

However, there is a distinction between two types of thoughts I will draw which has been well established in the literature, and that is between *de dicto* and *de re* thought.[1]

Jeshion (2010, 2) articulates the distinction in the following way:

> Thoughts of the first type are variously known as descriptive, *de dicto*, conceptual, or notional thoughts. Thoughts of the second type are known as singular, *de re*, purely referential, or relational thoughts.

Unlike the singular thought/*de re* distinction, the *de dicto*/*de re* distinction does play an important purpose. If we attempt to solve Prior's problem by accepting that singular thought is relational but the kind of thought we have about a non-actual object is anything but *de re* thought, we have made no progress in solving Prior's puzzle.

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[1] See Burge (1977) for discussion regarding *de dicto* and *de re* thought.

12.3 The Extended Modal Realist Solution

extended modal realism is a brand of modal realism under which there are both possible and impossible worlds. Under extended modal realism, worlds are points in modal space and objects are not only temporally extended, but they are also modally extended.[1] To use the temporal analogue, we might say that I have past and future stages; likewise, we might also say I have possible and impossible stages.[2] However, unlike Lewis's modal realism in which worlds are isolated universes, the extended modal realist believes that there is only one universe in which all objects and their stages belong. The extended modal realist solution to the first question asked by the problem of non-existence is quick and straightforward to understand. It responds to the natural question that results from Prior's problem: "What are our thoughts about when they concern a non-existent object?" The response goes that when we are thinking of some non-existent object, we actually have in mind some possible (or impossible) object, something which exists *simpliciter* but is non-actual.[3] So we say that when we are thinking about something 'non-existent' what is going on is that we are thinking about some non-actual section of modal space.

The objection might come that in order to think about some object you

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[1]Yagisawa (2010, 44–45) plays up the temporal analogue between modal realism and eternalism, an analogue that Lewis plays down.

[2]Yagisawa calls these modal stages "world stages" (Yagisawa, 2010).

[3]Under extended modal realism existence is a set-theoretic notion. Objects exist only if they bear the membership relation to a given set. I think we would be better off using a different term to refer to what Lewis calls existence *simpliciter* but there is not space to go into this here. My brief suggestion is to reserve the term "exists" for "exists at the actual world" and "real" for "exists *simpliciter*".

must stand in some causal relation, or some acquaintance relation to that object.[1] However, it is not clear how the Extended Modal Realist can stand in any kind of acquaintance relation with non-actual objects. The Lewisian Modal Realist fares even worse with this challenge since they operate with completely isolated worlds. I suggest that the Extended Modal Realist also ought to subscribe to semantic instrumentalism, a position that allows for *relational* singular thought without the need for acquaintance or any other kinds of causal relations which are relied on by other extensional theories of thought.[2]

12.4 Semantic Instrumentalism

Semantic Instrumentalism is the position that we can sustain singular thoughts about objects simply by introducing directly referring terms. When articulating semantic instrumentalism, I rely heavily on the framing of Jeshion (2010). Not only does Jeshion provide a clear and systematic account of semantic instrumentalism but I also opt for Jeshion's framing because the ideas voiced by Kaplan in *Dthat* (Kaplan, 1978) — a pre-curser to *Demonstratives* (Kaplan, 1989b) — concerns the reference of sentences and not the singular thoughts of agents. Jeshion's framing of the position is obviously regarding singular thought and thus much more inline with my aims even if Kaplan's original ideas were not.[3]

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[1]An objection of this kind has been raised by Kriegel (2007).

[2]For an example of an extensional theory of thought which relies on causal relations see Burge (2010).

[3]Jeshion does make a note about some of the interpretive issues regarding Kaplan's trajectory of thought regarding semantic instrumentalism (Jeshion, 2010, 118 fn.22).

Under semantic instrumentalism, we are free to introduce a *dthat* expression or descriptive name into the language and so transforming an arbitrary singular thought into a directly referential one, in turn giving rise to a singular thought about the term's referent (Jeshion, 2010, 118–119). For Kaplan, reference and singular thought is *a matter of what we choose to do*. If we want to refer to some object *X* directly, then all we need to do is use a *dthat* expression or a descriptive name as a means of securing direct reference, in turn, singular thought. These devices exemplify all the properties of tools. We use them — control and manipulate them — to secure singular thought (Jeshion, 2010, 119).

Jeshion highlights the following footnote from *Demonstratives* which provides an overview of semantic instrumentalism:

> There is a disagreement as to how the given object must be given to one who introduces a proper name word with the second intention (the intention to originate a word rather than conform to prior usage). Must he be acquainted with the object, directly acquainted, *en rapport*, perceiving it, causally connected, or what? My liberality with respect to the introduction of directly referring terms by means of "dthat" extends to proper names, and I would allow an arbitrary definite description to give us the object we name...But I am aware that this is a very controversial position. Perhaps some of the sting can be removed by adopting an idea of Gilbert Harman. Normally one would not introduce

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However, reference to the issues regarding the differences between *Dthat* and *Demonstratives* is not mentioned.

a proper name or a *dthat*-term to correspond to each definite description one uses. But we have the means to do so if we wish. Should we do so, we are enabled to apprehend a singular proposition concerning remote individuals (those formerly known only by description). Recognising this, we refrain. What purpose — other than to confound the sceptics— is served by direct reference to whosoever may be of a dubbing in terms of description and the active contemplation of characters involving dthat-terms — two mechanisms for providing direct reference to the denotation of an arbitrary definite description — constitute a form of cognitive restructuring; they broaden our range of thought. To take such a step is an action normally not performed at all, and rarely if ever done capriciously. The fact that we have the means — without special experience, knowledge or whatever — to refer directly to the myriad individuals we can describe does not imply that we will do so. And if we should have reason to do so, why not?

(Kaplan, 1989b, 560, fn. 76)

Jeshion (2010, 120–125) identifies five interconnected features of Kaplan's semantic instrumentalism. First is that there is no constraint by epistemic acquaintance conditions when it comes to the introduction of *dthat* expressions and descriptive names. The only thing required to introduce a *dthat* expression or descriptive name is for the introducer to have some minimal understanding of the mechanisms of direct reference. The introducer must

be adept at using the description and have the intention to introduce a name.

Jeshion explains that this feature comes in two parts. Although the theses are given with descriptive names, they can be easily extended for other DIRTs (Descriptively Introduced Referential Terms).

1. **Free Descriptive Name Introduction**: One can always introduce a descriptive name "N" into the language by fixing its reference with a definite description "the F," used attributively, *so long as one believes there exists a unique referent of "the F".*[1]

2. **No Constraints**: there are no conditions on introducing descriptive names into the language apart from *believing or knowing there is a unique F* and saying or stipulating "Let N refer to the F".[2]

(Jeshion, 2010, 120, my emphasis)

The second and third features of semantic instrumentalism pertain to our cognitive relation to semantic intentions. To secure direct reference and singular thought, about a named individual, one only needs to have an intention to originate a name. What is more, to originate a name is just a matter of one's choosing to do so. To have a singular thought is possible

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[1]I take that "exists" in this usage corresponds to the unrestricted usage employed by modal realists to talk about non-actual entities, what Lewis (1986) called "existence *simpliciter*". For if "exists" did not refer to the unrestricted usage, then semantic instrumentalism would be an uninteresting and unneeded position.

[2]Jeshion importantly highlights that to say there are *no constraints* isn't the same as saying that there aren't *any* limitations for introducing descriptive names, *dthat* expressions or other DIRTs. Instead, it indicates a minimal condition that the referrer must have the right semantic intention; they must believe — as I emphasised— that there is a unique referent of "the F".

about any object, *if we want to.* It is just a matter of will if we want to secure singular thoughts about the present king of France, square-circles, or Sherlock Holmes. To achieve singular thought, we need to form an intention to introduce a DIRT for the desired object. This gives us two more theses.

3. **Intentions Constrain Public Name Introductions**: At any time *t*, one can introduce a descriptive name whose reference is fixed with "the F" just in case one has an intention to introduce a directly referential expression into the language.[1]

4. **Free Naming Intention Production**: One can have an intention to introduce a descriptive name or any other DIRT into the language if one chooses to do so. (Jeshion, 2010, 121)

The fourth feature is the converse of the third that if we have the will we can refrain from thinking singular thoughts about any objects.

5. **Free Choice to Not Think Singularly**: One can refrain from thinking singularly about an individual *I* by refraining from introducing a directly referential expression, whose reference is fixed with "the F," where *I* uniquely satisfies the description "the F". (Jeshion, 2010, 122)

The fifth feature is about the manipulation of direct reference required for achieving singular thoughts about objects to which we lack acquaintance,

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[1] 'Intention' as used here is not the same kind of 'intentionality' associated with Prior's problem. The form might be switched with the word 'plan' without any loss of meaning; the same cannot be said for the latter.

even though Kaplan is clear that the introduction of a descriptive name or *dthat* expression is sufficient for singular thought about the referent. We should note that:

> His [Kaplan's] writings do suggest, in addition, that the manipulation of the apparatus of direct reference is also *necessary* for singular thought about an individual with which one is not acquainted. After all, Kaplan never explores even the *possibility* of alternative sources of securing singular thought in the absence of an acquaintance relation. So, while Kaplan never explicitly states this aspect of his Semantic Instrumentalism, it is a subtext of *Demonstratives.*
>
> (Jeshion, 2010, 122)

This gives us our sixth thesis.

6. **Necessity of Semantic Manipulation**: The only mechanism by which one could have a singular thought about an individual *I* with which one is unacquainted is by DIRT introduction — by manipulating the semantics of direct reference.[1]

   (Jeshion, 2010, 122)

Jeshion points out that these theses taken together give us an account of our ability to freely introduce DIRTs that are rooted in our intentions, which in

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[1]Although I accept Jeshion's point here that Kaplan did not consider alternatives, it must be noted that if we take Kaplan's claim "that we do not even need to be weakly causally connected to the object of our thought" seriously then manipulation of semantics is the only available option.

turn is rooted in our choice to do so. However, these tenets do not provide an account of why our thoughts about individuals we think of with DIRTs count as singular and not descriptive thoughts (Jeshion, 2010, 122).

Jeshion highlights that Harman (1977) provides a way for the semantic instrumentalist to ensure that their thoughts are singular thoughts. Harman introduces the idea of 'mental names' which are "mental representations of individuals just as names in language are public linguistic representations of individuals' (Jeshion, 2010, 123). Importantly, 'mental names may be introduced by those who *believe that there exists a unique thing satisfying a certain condition*" (Jeshion, 2010, 122, my emphasis). I draw attention to this as it shows that mental names can only be introduced by those who take seriously that there is a unique thing that corresponds to their mental name. This stipulation, made by both Harman and Kaplan (emphasised earlier), blocks objections like those made by Priest (2016, 58–59). Priest's objections are aimed at those who attempt to solve the problem of non-existence with "purely representational theories" which involve the use of a "surrogate object". In the case of the semantic instrumentalist, there is no surrogate: the singular thought is straightforwardly direct. The thought of an agent concerning an object is singular when the agent thinks with the stipulatetively introduced mental name. This thesis can be put in the following way.

7. **Mental Names Sustain Singular Thought**: Thinking of an individual *I* with a mental name that refers to *I* is sufficient for thinking a singular thought about *I*.

(Jeshion, 2010, 123)

To achieve singular thought, nothing is needed apart from thinking with a mental name. For the Semantic Instrumentalist, any agent can have singular thoughts about objects which they do not stand in acquaintance with simply by introducing a mental name for that object and then thinking about the object with that mental name.[1]

semantic instrumentalism provides a view where agents can successfully achieve singular thought about objects which they are not acquainted with so long as they can be denoted with a definite description or another DIRT. The only restriction seems to be that the linguist has the correct intention, which is to say they take seriously the existence — in the unrestricted sense — of the object of their singular thought.

Jeshion (2010, 124) provides a summary of the tenets of semantic instrumentalism:

1. **Overall statement of Kaplan-Harman Singular Thought Production**: One can have singular thoughts about an individual with which one is unacquainted (I) by virtue of introducing a directly referring expression, whose reference is fixed with "the F," and I satisfies the description "the F".

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[1]Jeshion (2010, 123) notes that "Harman thinks of the act of naming as being, in the first instance, a cognitive act, not simply a public stipulation or a physical act like a stroke of a pen. Harman sees the agent as directly introducing a mental name into cognition." This implies that Harman's theory is more liberal about singular thought than Yagisawa's theory who says that a demonstrative act is require; see Harman (1977) and Yagisawa (1983) respectively.

2. **Free Descriptive Name Introduction**: One can always introduce a descriptive name "N" into the language by fixing its reference with a definite description "the F" used attributively, so long as one *believes there exists* a unique referent of "the F".

3. **Mental Names Constrain Public Name Introduction**: One can introduce a descriptive name whose reference is fixed with "the F" just in case one has introduced a corresponding mental name into cognition.

4. **Free Mental Name Production**: One can introduce a mental name into cognition if one chooses to do so.

5. **Free Choice to Not Think Singularly**: One can refrain from thinking singularly about *I* by refraining from introducing a directly referential expression, whose reference is fixed with "the *F*," and *I* satisfies the description "the F."

6. **Necessity of semantic manipulation**: The only mechanism by which one could have a singular thought about an individual with which one is unacquainted is by DIRT introduction — by manipulating the semantics of direct reference".

7. **Mental Names Sustain Singular Thought**: Thinking of *I* with a mental name that refers to *I* is sufficient for thinking a singular thought about *I*.

(Jeshion, 2010, 124, my emphasis)

Semantic instrumentalism, as articulated above, provides a way for agents to have direct, unmediated singular thoughts about objects which they are unacquainted. Such a theory has an obvious benefit to those who would use an extended ontology to solve Prior's problem. So long as they take seriously that their DIRT is genuinely referring to some object, then an agent is able to sustain singular thought about such an object.

However, semantic instrumentalism is not without its problems. Jeshion provides some criticisms to semantic instrumentalism which I will articulate and respond to below. Before I get there though, one might wonder why at this point the Extended Modal Realist wouldn't side with "Cognitivism", Jeshion's own position intended to ameliorate the issues with semantic instrumentalism. The reason for not siding with "cognitivism" is a practical one. I reject the **Significance Condition**: "a mental file is initiated on an individual only if that individual is significant to the agent with respect to her plans, projects, affective states, motivations" (Jeshion, 2010, 136). The first reason for rejecting the significance condition is that it seems evident that I can think singularly and dispassionately about all kinds of regular objects which are not especially significant to me: space rocks, the chair to my left, the penny in the bottom of my bag, and I could continue with plenty of other mundane examples. If Jeshion were to reply that "these objects serve my argumentative project and are therefore significant on those grounds", then that seems gerrymandered. If we can gerrymander the significance condition to suit any object, the significance condition has become too liberal. Without the significance condition in place we might

as well be semantic instrumentalists since we've now allowed for singular thoughts about the very kind of objects we were meant to be ruling out by the introduction of significance condition. The second reason for rejecting the significance condition is that there is no need for someone with an extended ontology to introduce it in the first place. Those of us with extended ontologies can easily satisfy the most significant hurdle of semantic instrumentalism, namely believing that the object of our singular thought exists *simpliciter*.

12.5 Objections and Responses

12.5.1 Free Mental Name Production

The first issue that faces semantic instrumentalism is to use Jeshion's term 'Free Mental Name Production'. The challenge comes in two parts. The first part of the challenge insists that:

> One cannot simply choose to have a mental name for an individual. Semantic instrumentalism supposes that we can *will* singular intention. But how? By thinking harder, more intensely, with feeling? This lacks plausibility. Few embrace voluntarism about belief or the production of other (non-semantical) intentions. (Jeshion, 2010, 125)

By way of response to the first part of this objection, we can say that

this objection merely amounts to the rejection of the central premises of semantic intrsumentalism; it amounts to no more than the incredulous stare. Just because a theory might be met with this incredulous stare is no good reason to deny it. A straightforward denial of a position is not an argument against it. In true Lewisian fashion, I suggest that the advantages are outweighed by the apparent conflict with common sense.

The second part of this objection is:

> Mental name production is not wholly under agential control. It is under cognition's control.
>
> What distinguishes those instances in which mental names are introduced and those in which their production is stalled? The answer concerns not the individuals-to-be-named's epistemic relation, but rather that individual's *significance* to the subject. A mental name can be initiated only if the individual-to-be-named is in the relevant way significant to the thinker. (Jeshion, 2010, 125–126)

Relevance is not a feature of semantic instrumentalism but it is of Jeshion's cognitivism. Here we can respond that merely asserting a central premise of one's own position is no argument against a theory. What we have here is a case of denying the plausibility of a theory only serving to establish one's own position in its place. Semantic instrumentalism is controversial, but it is consistent, and this first objection does nothing to undermine that. It merely offers an alternative.

12.5.2   Free Choice To Not Think Singularly

The second objection concerns our ability to choose not to think singularly.
It goes as follows:

> When the conditions are ripe for singular thought, cognition
> creates singular thoughts for us, and we cannot put a halt to
> them. Think of our Unabomber example. When I heard about
> the Unabomber, I, like everyone else, was well aware of the
> epistemic gaps in the community's relation to the bomber and I
> knew that "Unabomber" was a descriptive name. Even if I had
> had a desire "not to confound the sceptics" I could not have
> prevented myself from thinking singularly about him. Because
> I feared him and was moved to avoid university mailrooms, my
> mind treated him on a par with other individuals to whom I
> orient my actions. I could not have reined in my thought to
> ensure that it is descriptive and non-singular. (Jeshion, 2010,
> 127)

This objection seems to imply that there is something about the relation,
"singular thought", that entails the agent to act in certain ways. Singular
thought is a plain old relation like many other kinds. The fact that I stand
in a relation to the chair to my right—the being-right-of relation does not
entail that I act a certain way to the chair. My relation might inform the
range of possible actions in regards to the chair but it does not entail a

particular one. In the same way the behaviour of an agent is not entailed merely by a "thinking of relation", although the presence of the "thinking of relation" may inform the range of actions for that agent.

12.5.3   Necessity of Semantic Manipulation

The final of Jeshion's objections to semantic instrumentalism is:

> ...that manipulating the apparatus of direct reference is the only mechanism for securing singular thought in the absence of acquaintance. If the mind brings about such thought for us, as I suggested above, agential manipulation of semantics is not necessary, and consequently some other cognitive mechanism is in place to carry it through. (Jeshion, 2010, 128)

Jeshion suggests that although directly referential semantics does have a role to play still, the process is complicated and involves direct reference and perception. It is hard to see how this objection isn't merely an expression of favour for cognitivism. I will also say that those people taken by semantic instrumentalism will be so because the theory is free from the involvement of perception, so what Jeshion implies is a weakness of semantic instrumentalism is actually a strength.

12.5.4   What About Intentionality?

So far I have said relatively little about intentionality, and some might suggest that semantic instrumentalism is of no help if we consider the problem of non-existence to be about intentionality rather than merely 'thinking about'. The reason one might object in this way is that one could consider intentionality to be a representational attitude. Priest (2014, 160) says, "The intentionality of mental states is one kind of representation. It is not the only kind." And Kriegel (2007) seems to think that intentionality and representation are interchangeable. They might also contend that "thinking about" does not involve any kind of representation. So, although semantic instrumentalism might get us singular thought about non-actual objects, it does not get us intentionality. As I have suggested already, "intentionality" — at least — in the analytic tradition has become synonymous with "thinking of" or "thinking about". Whether this is a good or a bad thing, I will not discuss. However, I will say something to those who think that intentionality is representational and "thinking of" is not. If we take the problem of non-existence to involve intentionality (as something representational), you might construct the problem in the following way, where F indicates intentionality as a representational mental state.

1. An agent (a) Fs some non-existent thing (x).

2. An agent (a) cannot F some non-existent thing (x) if F is a relation.

3. Fing something (x) constitutively involves bearing a relation to it.

The challenge might come that my suggestion of semantic instrumentalism does nothing to solve *this* puzzle; all I have done is establish non-representational singular thought. In order to respond to this objection, I make use of two theses provided by Burge (2010). When discussing representational mental states, Burge tells us two things. The first is that:

> ...*being in* many mental states constitutively depends on relations between an individual and a subject matter beyond the individual. (Burge, 2010, 61)

The second is that:

> It is trivial that many mental states causally depend on relations between environment and individual. (Burge, 2010, 64)

Based on what we have already said, we can make small adjustments to Burge's theses so that they can be used to ground representational thought about non-actual objects in the *de re* singular thought which we have already established via semantic instrumentalism. We can straightforwardly meet the conditions for the first thesis. By definition *de re* singular thought is relational, so no adjustment is needed there. As for the second, the suggestion I make is to drop the mention of "causal relations". We ought to just say that "many mental states depend on relations between the environment and individual". As a result of subscribing to extended modal realism our environment is extended to include non-actual objects, and given the

commitment to semantic instrumentalism, we stand in relations with those non-actual objects just in virtue of having singular thoughts about them.

Given the adjustments I have made to Burge's conditions, we can respond adequately to those who might pressure my suggestions on the grounds that to think about something in an intentional way involves more than just the presence of the "thinking of" relation but also requires a representational aspect.

12.6   Conclusion

In this chapter, I have articulated semantic instrumentalism, which might be the only viable theory for someone who wants to maintain that we can have singular thoughts about non-actual objects. I argued that semantic instrumentalism plus the Extended Modal Realist solution to the problem of non-existence as articulated in Thomas (2019) make a powerful combination when it comes to solving the problem of non-existence. The pairing not only allows us to say what our thoughts are *about* but also how our thoughts can be singular thoughts. I ended with some replies to objections from Jeshion and comments about representational intentionality. Semantic instrumentalism is undeniably a strange thesis and appeals to a small subsection of philosophers. However, "strangeness" doesn't constitute an argument against a theory. The explanatory power that semantic instrumentalism brings to the table makes it a worthwhile theory to consider.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have established a new application for extended modal realism, a theory developed originally as an extension to Lewis's modal realism project. In short, extended modal realism is the view that if we accept Lewis's argument for possible worlds, then we should also accept a similar argument for impossible worlds. Arguing for impossible worlds from possible worlds was noted by Naylor (1986) but this position was significantly elaborated on by Yagisawa (1988, 2010). I have argued that extended modal realism is a viable and helpful solution to problems of non-existence, most notably problems about thought and problems about truth; I have shown that where modal realism was thought to be unsuitable when it came to these issues, we can in fact construct a version of the doctrine which is explanatory and helpful in solving these problems.

I started this thesis by introducing extended modal realism in Chapter 2. I pointed out the significant problems of non-existence I would examine and responded to in this thesis in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4 I motivated the

idea that the standard way of looking at the puzzles concerning thought
— as provided by Crane — is problematic and that we should refocus our
attention on the problem of non-existence as one about what there is, as
opposed to one about thought. There has been a tendency for philosophers
to conflate these issues; I've attempted to demarcate the problematic as-
pects of questions concerning non-existence as clearly as possible. Central
to problems of non-existence is the concept of "intentionality" and other
closely related terms, for example singular thought, *de re* belief, and inten-
sionality. Given the importance of these terms to the problems I examined
in this thesis, I spent Chapter 5 detailing these terms, their significance as
well as any problems that surface when using these terms. In Chapter 6
I highlighted that these problems have a number of solutions and argued
that there is a new player at the table which has received some attention
but is often quickly dismissed. Lewis's modal realism is often mentioned in
papers concerning non-existence. And even though many scholars before
have seen the potential of such a theory, few have explored it fully. Often
the fuller expositions of modal realism and non-existence involve dismiss-
ing modal realism on the grounds of it being a fantastical theory, which
are poor grounds to dismiss an explanatory powerful thesis. I have shown
that there is a particular variety of modal realism, extended modal realism,
which we should favour, at least when examining cases of non-existence.
When examining non-existence it is important to have clear articulation of
what is meant by "existence".

In Chapter 7 I provided an overview of the term existence and I also

used this chapter to highlight some problems associated with the term. In Chapter 8 I provided a new way that the extended modal realist can think about existence; here I set my theory apart from Yagisawa's modal realism, for we fundamentally disagree on how existence ought to be expressed. I argued that the theory of existence I offer has advantages when talking about existence and non-existence. I also argued that it has advantages compared to the theory of existence offered by Yagisawa (2014), for Yagisawa believes that existence should be expressed in set-theoretical terms, whereas I argued that existence ought to be expressed as an indexical.

I provided solutions to these puzzles in Chapters 9 and 11. In Chapter 9 I offered a solution to the problems of truth. I showed that we can broadly employ the Lewis-Rosen proposal with additions from extended modal realism which strengthens the position. In Chapter 10, I replied to objections from Dodd, Jago, and Mumford. And in Chapter 11 I provided a new solution for the traditional problem of intentionality.

In Chapter 12, I gave an account of thought that is fitting with the extended modal realist's metaphysics. Thus I have provided a full account of how one might respond to the problem of non-existence when it comes to thought, for a metaphysics without a serviceable theory of thought I argued was an impoverished solution.

In order to do this, I have suggested that we should think of the problem of non-existence as, centrally, a metaphysical problem. In Chapter 8, I provided a new way of thinking about existence within the extended modal realist framework. The theory I provided has significant advantages over

that of Yagisawa's and does not require any drastic changes to the underlying metaphysical picture. In the latter two parts of this thesis, I showed how extended modal realism provides a solution to two of the most serious problems concerning non-existent objects: problems concerning truth and the problem concerning thought. In the case of problems about truth, I highlighted that the Lewis-Rosen proposal can be developed using modal realism to make it a stronger version of truthmaker maximalism when it is combined with extended modal realism. In Chapter 11 I showed that extended modal realism is a viable solution to the problem of thought. The majority of this thesis focused on highlighting new applications for extended modal realism, but I also included original contributions to extended modal realism as a theory itself.

Overall, while this project solves only a fraction of the problems related to non-existence, the novelty of this project is that I've done so with a new theory which has previously received only passing attention when it comes to its virtues for solving problems of non-existence. More often modal realism (extended and otherwise) is mentioned in the non-existence debate but dismissed before it really has a chance to get going. I've shown here that there is reason to accept that modal realism, particularly extended modal realism, has great theoretical benefit when it comes to solving problems of non-existence.

13.1 Further Work

Before this thesis ends, I will identify five areas for extending and continuing my philosophical work. The first three might seem obvious while the last two might strike some readers as slightly unexpected, but nonetheless I consider them worthy projects that require significant research to be completed in sufficient detail.

13.1.1 Non-standard Non-existence

This thesis has focused on a new application of extended modal realism and has provided some significant developments on the theory. However, there is, as with any topic, always more that can be said. One obvious extension is to take this solution to alternative cases of the representation of other non-existent objects or places, for example maps, signs, and drawings of fictional people or landmarks. If we think about representation in these cases, then it is obviously straightforward that extended modal realist theory can accommodate them.

13.1.2 Existence

The second area that I think I could continue to work on is the theory of quantification articulated in Chapter 8. Although I have shown the value in the alternative theory of quantification when it comes to non-existence, I think the theory of indexical existence may prove fruitful in other areas,

particularly in those cases where we want to refer to things that are not present or actual without invoking ambiguity. Existence as a relation and existence as a predicate are both views which have received attention but existence as an indexical has received little attention. The suggestion is that existence is a metaphysically light notion and therefore, indexical existence allows for an extremely fine-grained theory of existence without additional metaphysical import.

13.1.3 *De Re* Belief Without Acquaintance

Although working on this thesis has led to the investigation and interest in many side topics, one in particular deserves time and attention for future work. An area which significant research needs to be done before development is possible is in the area of *de re* belief without acquaintance. Semantic Instrumentalism seems like a promising project for securing reference when the referent does not exist. I have provided enough detail to solve the problems detailed in this thesis, but I think there is scope for further development on this topic and hopefully turn it into a project of its own. In Chapter 12 I allude to a theory of *de re* thought without acquaintance. When outlining this theory I made reference to Harman (1977) and Kaplan (1989a). Both these authors put forward a similar theory, which involved *de re* singular thoughts about objects to which we are not standardly acquainted. However, neither of their views have been fully developed and I believe only occur in a fraction of these authors' published works. The second reason why exploring this project more is of interest is that a theory of *de*

re belief without acquaintance has also been expressed by Yagisawa (1983) but has not received development either and again, I only encountered it in a single paper of his. It falls outside the scope of this thesis to develop a substantial theory of *de re* thought and instead I have opted to scaffold my suggestions on existing work. One reason for exploring this avenue is admittedly merely academic curiosity. There are, however, independent reasons which motivate the need for additional scholarship, for example reference to absences and reference to theoretical entities. Throughout this thesis I have presented arguments to show that there are cases where we seemingly do have *de re* beliefs without acquaintance, or at least we behave as if we do. In order to investigate and develop such a theory fully, the first step would be to investigate the regularity of *de re* thought in daily life. It seems to be there are many cases, which other theorists attempt to explain away, but I think the strategy would be to accept the data at face value. The next would be to research the trajectory of Harman's, Kaplan's and Yagisawa's thoughts to see if a revised theory could be provided in a satisfactory and defensible way. Part of the reason why such a project is worthy of attention is that we often speak as if the beliefs we have about objections to which we are not acquainted are *de re*. For example, we speak about things that we could not possibly be acquainted with in a *de re* way. Problematically — at least, I think — contemporary theories that attempt to handle this quirk of language deny that the belief we have related to our expression is genuinely *de re*; instead, they wish to explain this phenomenon by parsing this seemingly *de re* expression as a *de dicto* expression. However, if the phenomenon is commonplace then surely the strategy to tackle this prob-

lem is to accept the regularity of such beliefs rather than explain them as something else.

13.1.4 Modal Realism as a Philosophy of Life

Throughout my work on this thesis, I have become interested in a more diverse philosophy, particularly in issues relating to mental health and well-being. It is normally thought that being present is helpful for those struggling with mental health, in particular those with depression. Kashdan (2010) highlights a number of reasons to think that those who are "psychologically flexible" have some resilience when it comes to mental health. Pigliucci (2019) also states that for a philosophical position to be a philosophy of life, two conditions are required. First, a metaphysics, a general account of how the world hangs together and second, a general account of how we should behave. I believe that there is scope to develop modal realism (modal-realist-style theory), not only a philosophy of life but one which if taken seriously can improve psychological flexibility. When it comes to how to act, modal realism counsels that there are other worlds just like ours and that many of these worlds are inhabited with people just like us, and many of them are totally different. How should we interpret this as guidance for our behaviour? My suggestion is that modal realism implies that we should be open and aware of the range of possibilities that happen to people just like us. I suggest that this awareness of this range of possibilities encourages flexible behaviour. I think it would, therefore, be interesting to investigate the relationship between analytic metaphysics and philosophy

for life and to see if this can have any influence on informing good practice for mental well-being.

13.1.5 Modal Realism and Priority Monism

The final area of further research which has grown from this thesis is to argue that extended modal realism should be understood as a variety of priority monism. Priority monism is the view that the whole is more fundamental to its parts; such a view has been articulated by Schaffer (2010). My reason for thinking that extended modal realism would be a stronger theory if understood as a variety of priority monism is that Yagisawa argues that the reality is more fundamental than what exists, but does not provide substantial argument for this. If we can draw an analogy between the whole and reality and parts and what exists, it could be argued that reality is more fundamental than what exists for the same reasons that the whole is more fundamental than the parts; if this is true then the substantial arguments that Schaffer provides for priority monism could benefit extended modal realism.

Part V

Appendix

Intentionality Before Analytic Philosophy

Medieval Intentionality

The term Intentionality has not always been used in the way that analytic
philosophers use the term. I think it is of value to point out that this is
the case although this information adds nothing directly to my argument.
There is valuable scholarship that has been undertaken on the history of the
term which I would be remiss to leave out completely. Therefore, although
in the original draft this material featured within the main content of a
chapter, for the sake of brevity I have moved it to an appendix.

It is important to draw attention to the medieval use of the term 'inten-
tionality' in some detail since this is arguably the first emergence of the
term used in a philosophical context. I follow the retelling of Priest on this
matter for he closely relates the medieval accounts to the general purpose of

this thesis since he had a similar aim in *Towards Non-being*. Like me, Priest wants to introduce a new theory to deal with problems of non-existence and intentionality.

According to Priest medieval accounts rest on the general logical theory that was in use at the time. It would be helpful to draw attention to the most relevant features of this logical theory.

> Medieval logicians took simple sentences (i.e. those not containing connectives such as disjunction and the conditional) to be constituted by two terms related by the copula (hence the name for these logicians: ("terminists"), e.g. *"every person is one with a father"*. (Priest, 2016, 68, italics original)

In this case the term "everyone person" is related to the term 'one with a father' by the coupla "is". Terminists typically account for the semantics of such sentences such as *"every person is one with a father"* by invoking various properties of the terms and of their parts. For those terminists such as Ockham, the *signification* of a term is just its extension; for example, the term "penny" signifies pennies. However, Priest points out that another group of medieval philosophers found Ockham's position to be untenable.

> For Buridan, for example, the concept *F* is abstracted from *Fs* then adopt the convention of letting the sound "penny" signify the concept *penny*. So by convention, the sound "penny" ultimately signifies pennies via its immediate signification of the concept. (Priest, 2016, 68)

The next important term to examine is *supposition.* The supposition of a given term is dependent on the sentence where that term appears. The supposition is what a term refers to and comes in various forms:

1. *Impersonal supposition*: There are two kinds: *simple supposition*, for example in, "Man is a species", "man" supposits for a universal; and *material supposition*, for example in "Man has three letters", "man" supposits for a word.

2. *Personal supposition*: Where the term supposits for what it signifies. Personal supposition has two subdivisions. When a term supposits for a particular object, in the same way as a proper name or definite description might, it was said to have *discrete* supposition. Otherwise, the term would have *common* supposition, and supposited for a bunch of things.

The next relevant term is *ampliation.* Verbs or their features may change the supposition range of the terms in the sentence in which those verbs occur. For example, consider the sentence "The Pope is walking." In this sentence, "The Pope" has discrete supposition and supposits for a particular man, who exists. However, if we consider the sentence "Plato walked." Anyone who is dead (arguably) no longer exists. Hence, there is nothing for the "Plato" to supposit for. To allow it to supposit, the tense of the verb "walked" must allow the term "Plato" to supposit not just for the present objects, but the past objects too. For the medievals, the concept of ampliation goes further. Take the sentence "The hydra is walking" is

false, since the subject refers to nothing presently. However, "The three-legged dog will walk" is true as the future tense of the verb ampliates the subjects to present and future objects, and the three-legged dog will exist (and walk) in the future. However, things do not stop here. Constructions other than tense are able to ampliate. It is possible that France may invade America next year; however, many other things that we could hope for will not happen next year. The modal term "may" ampliates "France invading America" to supposit not only for the present, past, and future things, but also merely *possible* things. Other modal terms do the same. [1]

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[1]Priest points out that it is also worth noting that we can reverse-ampliate and thus, we can restrict a range. For example, the sentence "In my pocket" restricts the supposition of 'coins' to only those in my pocket.

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