USE OF THESES

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OBJECTS AND ONTOLOGY
IN
MEINONG'S JUNGLE

by
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Except where acknowledged within the text, all parts of this thesis represent my own original work.

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We join spokes together in a wheel,
but it is the centre hole
that makes the wagon move.

We shape clay into a pot,
but it is the emptiness inside
that holds whatever we want.

We hammer wood for a house,
but it is the inner space
that makes it livable.

We work with being,
but non-being is what we use.

ABSTRACT

It is often sensible, coherent and true to deny that certain things exist. When talking about fictional characters, imaginary objects of thought, and impossible things, it is also appropriate to attribute specific features which distinguish these subjects of discourse. Sometimes it is important to make such attributions in order to ascertain whether such items could exist in the first place. It therefore seems that there are nonexistent things, and that they are constituted in quite definite ways. At the very least, this is the most simple and intuitive way to explain a great deal of our discourse. It suggests that the term “object” does not necessarily mean “existent”.

Using a general phenomenological method, Alexius Meinong developed these observations into his theory of objects. He argued that existence is a substantial property, which has both instances and noninstances, and also claimed that we know about things which fail to exist through postulation, assumption, and imagination. The general principle of his original theory was that, for any property \( f \), there is an object: “the \( f \)-er” which has that property. He was later forced to modify this principle in response to Bertrand Russell’s objections, for it appeared to imply that the existent round square exists, which is false, and it also seemed to contravene the law of noncontradiction. Without a developed logical theory, his modifications were not very appealing. Consequently Russell’s alternative theory of descriptions, which dispenses with nonexistent objects, flourished.

The logical theory which Meinong could not supply was eventually constructed by Terence Parsons and Richard Routley, and variations were devised by Hector-Neri Castañeda and William Rapaport. They have made use of several distinctions, the most
important of which is that between characterising properties, which describe and classify things, and noncharacterising properties, which include existence and possibility. It is by invoking this distinction, and modifying Meinong's general principle so that "the f-er is f" is restricted to characterising properties, that Russell's objections are met. It is principally through the notion of the characterisation of a thing (its set of characterising properties) that the simple and intuitive explanation of our attributions of nonexistence can be reconstructed by a revised version of the theory of objects.

This work does not deal with Meinong's original theory in any detail. Instead, the version presented by Routley and Parsons is examined, and mostly endorsed. It is argued that the distinction between characterising and noncharacterising properties needs a more substantial justification than has been supplied, and an account of how to draw it is given. The problem of universals, which is relevant because it is an ontological matter, and because (it is argued) nonexistent objects really do instantiate properties, is also examined. In the first three chapters, I explain the basic theory of objects, attempt to show that universals are things which fail to exist, and provide an account of characterisation. The last two chapters are (mostly) independent of the first three, and address the problems of ontology. If the theory of objects is correct, then the question of what it is to exist is given an entirely new meaning. For one thing, it is then possible to give a substantial account of ontological status.

The main problem with the project of characterising existence is that it is difficult to distinguish existing things from fictions, because anything that a real thing can be, an imaginary thing can also be. My conclusion is a little radical: there is no way of separating fiction from reality, other than by the external and logical features of their stories. In effect, anything which exists has the same form as a fictional character, and even appears in stories. I consequently present a holistic ontology, in which universal coherence of stories and descriptions, and connection to the real world, are the criteria for existence.
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## BIBLIOGRAPHY
CHAPTER ONE: THE THEORY OF OBJECTS

The people we are tempted to call clods and boors are just those who seem to find nothing fascinating in being human; their humanity is incomplete, for it has never astonished them. There is also something incomplete about those who find nothing fascinating in being. You may say that this is a philosopher's professional prejudice - that people are defective who lack a sense of the metaphysical.

A. Watts, The Book, p. 129

1 Existence as a Substantial Property

The aim of this work is to construct a general ontology: a theory of existence, in the sense of an account of what it means to exist, and of what is ultimately real. This is a very basic metaphysical concern, and answers to philosophical questions about existence form the foundations of large scale research programs. In the analytical tradition, questions about general ontology have been treated in a certain way, and the answers that have been given by thinkers like B. Russell and W.V. Quine have been so widely accepted that students are often taught that the issues have been settled once and for all. Very few philosophers now believe that there are any open questions regarding the notion of existence, which is almost always taken to be the main subject of ontology. To exist is to be “spoken about”, “named”, “the value of a variable” within “serious” discourse, and true (scientific) theories. This means that existence is treated as a trivial property, satisfied by everything, instead of a substantial property. The reliance upon
linguistic criteria for reality is a central part of the prevailing methodology, and one of its
main problems is to explain those parts of language that do not fit in to the serious,
scientific and referential paradigms.

I shall attempt to construct a basic ontology using an unorthodox methodology,
involving the rejection of mainstream "classical" logic, and one of my aims is to arrive at
an analysis of the notion of existence. Rather than propose yet another logico-linguistic
account, I will develop a theory which allows the ontological predicate "exist" to possess
a metaphysical meaning. In doing so I shall invoke a specific contrast with things that fail
to exist. I am thereby committed to the thesis that there are such things as nonexistent
objects. For this reason, a large part of the work is devoted to the examination and
extension of a theory which allows for quantification over things which fail to exist.
Originally devised by A. Meinong, the theory of objects¹ was used to explain those
intentional acts which are directed at things without any presumption concerning the
ontological status of the thing. Thus in imagination and conjecture, or in activities
involving what Meinong called assumption, we might consider golden mountains, flying
horses, and many other things which we do not presume to exist at all, and sometimes
even know that they do not. The strategy used by the theory of objects to account for
such acts is that of adopting an existentially neutral language for the description of what
is presented to consciousness.

An explanation of terminology, in particular this "neutral language" is
necessary at this point. Throughout this work, the words "object", "thing" and "item" are
to be understood neutrally, which means that any ontological status that might be thought
to be implied by the use of these words is to be forgotten. On the other hand, the words
"entity", "existent", "existence", "real", "reality" and "being" are to be understood as
ontological terms, which not only carry the implication of ontological status, but can be

¹ Meinong's paper "The Theory of Objects", (in Realism and the Background of Phenomenology, ed. R.
Chisholm, 1960), is the locus classicus for this type of metaphysics.
used to state that an item possesses it. It is important to realise that these words are being used in this way, for there are some theorists who may wish to admit nonexistent objects into their ontology, where this means that they are prepared to grant them some form of being. For example, the early Russell adopted a version of object theory where he seemed to use "being" in a neutral way (at least, that is how I translate it):

Being is that which belongs to every conceivable term, to every possible object of thought - in short, to everything that can possibly occur in any proposition, true or false, and to all such propositions themselves. Being belongs to whatever can be counted....Numbers, the Homeric gods, relations, chimeras, and four-dimensional spaces all have being, for if they were not entities of a kind, we could make no propositions about them. Thus being is a general attribute of everything, and to mention anything is to show that it is.

Existence, on the contrary, is the prerogative of some only amongst beings.2

This position is effectively ruled out by the terminology that I will adopt, for in my way of speaking, there is no difference between the meaning of the predicates "x has being" and "x exists". This is probably a purely terminological matter, for I would concede that Russell was here adopting some sort of object theory, but simply understood "being" neutrally.

The theory of objects, then, is a grandiose philosophical endeavour which attempts to explain, describe, or otherwise classify and account for in general terms, absolutely everything. The word "everything" is here intended to mean everything that exists and also everything that fails to exist, and this is where the enterprise becomes controversial. Many philosophers have attempted to construct theories of everything - the task is perhaps the most profound and pressing of metaphysical concerns - but few have intended their theories to cover anything other than objects which exist, as most would hold that there are no nonexistent objects. This is not an irrational position, and there are (perhaps rather good) reasons for believing it - even Meinong, one of the most famous object-theorists, recognised a "prejudice in favour of the actual" in our thinking. Intuitively, it seems that we are surrounded by existent objects. Everything we perceive,

everything that our bodies can make contact with, exists (or so at least it can be plausibly argued), and this quite naturally tends to cloud our thinking. Nevertheless, the claim that everything that belongs to a certain class (perceptual objects, for example) exists, and the claim that everything whatever exists are very different claims, and ought to be assessed independently.

Before discussing arguments and theories in detail, there are some general points about object theory that need to be made. Many of the issues involved are problems of semantics, and it is not immediately obvious that a semantical theory, which deals with linguistic meaning, is relevant to a theory of everything. What will emerge, however, is that the deep semantical structure of language is existentially neutral - that the normal and natural meaning of subject predicate statements is such as to carry no implication or presupposition regarding the existence or nonexistence of anything. In a sense, then, ordinary language already contains, or embodies, a theory of everything, and we may witness, to use R. Routley’s phrase, “a semantical metamorphosis of metaphysics”3 (This phrase is actually used in a different context, but it suitably expresses my point as well). That is, if we accept that theories are sets of sentences (or propositions) ordered by implication relations, that natural language may deal with any subject matter, and we also accept Routley’s principle:

M1: “Everything whatever - whether thinkable or not, possible or not, complete or not, even perhaps paradoxical or not - is an object.” [JB, p. 2]

then it is not difficult to see how natural language and its logic together constitute a theory of all objects, and therefore a theory of everything. This, of course, does not imply that language users may come to know all true propositions, or even that every truth is epistemically accessible. Neither does it exclude the possibility of their being rival theories of objects, which may differ in their methods of representing the structure of natural language.

3 R. Routley, Exploring Meinong's Jungle and Beyond, 1980, p. 346. This text will henceforth be referred to as JB.
The main difference between the theory of objects and orthodox metaphysical theory is its treatment of the concept of existence. The object theorist will maintain that this is a genuine concept, in the sense that it has both instances and noninstances. Our understanding of this concept is partly an understanding of a nexus of contingent facts about the world in which we are embedded, and partly an understanding of the essential natures of certain things. It thus seems reasonable to claim both that no object exists necessarily, and that some objects necessarily do not exist: for example, impossibilia like the triangular circle. Like many of the concepts that we find no difficulty in employing in ordinary conversational contexts, but then puzzle over when considered in isolation from standard usage, the concept of existence may be clarified by philosophical analysis only to a limited degree. From a certain point of view, the contingency of existence is an incredible and inexplicable mystery - something that requires an explanation, perhaps by invoking a god whose essence involves existence. On the other hand, few are satisfied that the existence of something may be established simply as a matter of pure logic. This may be taken as one reason for concluding that classical logic, under its usual interpretation, is philosophically inadequate, for it is easy to produce theorems such as: (\exists x)(Fx \lor \neg Fx), which entails that something exists.

Since the mid-seventies, object theory has become more popular than it has ever been before. Papers and books by R. Routley (now R. Sylvan), T. Parsons, W. Rapaport, E. Zalta and H. N. Castañeda may all be counted as developments in the theory of objects, although the theses elaborated are by no means all compatible with each other. I will be principally concerned with the first of these authors, and since Parsons' views are so similar I will only mention the small differences between his theory and Routley's, and contrast this with the large differences between these two and the other three. I will defend the basic insight that all of these theorists have used, which I take to be that the treatment of existence as a genuine property leads to the dissolution or resolution of a large number of philosophical problems. There are, however, a few
details in the theory of objects which require greater elaboration, in order to rectify some of the defects, and these will be the subject of chapters Two and Three.

The central source of inspiration for almost all of the philosophers listed above is without doubt the theory elucidated by Meinong, whose famous debate with Russell has been much misunderstood. Meinong, in addition to taking "exists" as a predicate, held that any statement of the form:

1. The object which is f, is f.

is logically true, regardless of which predicate f represents. Russell attacked this principle, arguing that it has some catastrophic consequences. It yields, for example:

2. The object which is round and not round is round, and also is not round

and

3. The existent golden mountain is an existent golden mountain.

On a fairly natural reading of these sentences, (2) infringes the law of noncontradiction, and thus, Russell thought, is logically false, and (3) is simply false, for golden mountains, of any sort, do not exist. Meinong's replies to these criticisms were firstly, that the law of noncontradiction need not apply to nonentities like the round nonround, and secondly, that the existent'golden mountain is existent, but nevertheless does not exist.

Some of the recent theories of objects have been motivated in part by a desire to both interpret and render plausible these replies, as well as develop the logical theory that underlies Meinong's ideas. We thus find a plethora of proposed distinctions - between characterising (nuclear) predicates and non-characterising (extranuclear) predicates, between sentence negation and predicate negation, between different sorts of identity, different modes of predication, and even (perhaps) different sorts of existence. This may

4 N. Griffin's careful discussion of this interaction demonstrates that Russell owed a great deal to Meinong, and vice versa. See his paper "Russell's Critique of Meinong's Theory of Objects" in Grazer Philosophische Studien, Vol. 25/26, pp. 375-402.


be seen as objectionable in itself to many philosophers, and a general argument against
the whole enterprise may be formulated on this basis. Why bother inventing new
principles, distinctions and theories, it might be asked, just to account for something as
trivial as the existent golden mountain? Why not just apply Russell's theory of
descriptions and get rid of the blasted thing altogether? The reply to this question is that
firstly, we are then left with problems of intensionality and nonexistence in any case - in
particular, our pretheoretical intuition that the sentence “Pegasus is a flying horse” is
about Pegasus, and not about nothing, is left unexplained - and, secondly, it may turn
out, as Routley has suggested, that classical logic is one that is appropriate for reasoning
in the domain of entities, but there is nevertheless a wider area of discourse with a logic
of its own, which needs to be investigated.

2 Routley's Exploring Meinong's Jungle and Beyond

The “Jungle Book” (JB) is the most comprehensive exposition and defence of
the theory of objects extant. A large part of the work is devoted to a criticism of the main
opposition, the Reference Theory (RT) - the theory that truth and meaning are just
functions of reference - although it also contains much constructive metaphysics and
logic, including applications of the theory to such areas as the theory of identity, the logic
of perception, tense logic, the problem of universals, the logic of fiction and the
philosophy of mathematics and theoretical science. In addition to M1, the central tenets
of object theory (or the Theory of Items) are listed as follows [JB, pp. 2-3]:

M2: “Very many objects do not exist...”
M3: “Nonexistent objects are constituted in one way or another, and have more
or less determinate natures, and thus they have properties.”
M4: “Existence is not a characterising property of any object.”
M5: “Every object has the characteristics it has irrespective of whether it exists;
or, more succinctly, essence precedes existence.”
M6: "An object has those characterising properties used to characterise it. For example, the round square, being the object characterised as round and square, is both round and square."

M7: "Important quantifiers, in fact of common occurrence in natural language, conform neither to the existence nor to the identity and enumeration requirements that classical logicians have tried to impose..."

The distinction between characterising and noncharacterising properties is extremely important. Briefly, a property is characterising when it determines what a thing is like, or simply describes the thing. A discussion of the Characterisation Postulate will appear later in this chapter, and chapter Three addresses the nature of the distinction between properties in depth.

None of the above principles, apart from M7, are semantical theses. They are advanced as truths about the world and not as truths about language. In arguing for them, then, one must rely upon some background knowledge which will be generally accepted within a community. For example, everyone over the age of nine knows that Santa Claus does not exist, although there is no such consensus on the existence of God. It is such a stock of truths that Routley appeals to in arguing for the Independence Thesis (IT; or M5 above), which he states as "...items can and do have definite properties even though nonentities..." [JB, p. 28]. Some of the examples he gives are from mathematics and science:

For scientists and others can, and regularly do, talk and think very profitably about points in 6-dimensional space, imaginary numbers, transfinite cardinals and null classes, about perfectly elastic bodies, frictionless machines, ideal gases and force-free particles, without assuming or implying that they exist... [JB, p. 29]

Any attempt to account for, explain away, or reduce such discourse to discourse about entities (existent objects) is, according to Routley, misguided, for such programmes are based upon the assumption that all objects exist, and thus that anything there is to understand is existent. We already understand mathematics and science before
any reduction is attempted, so there is no point in reducing. Numbers, minds, gods and pixies are what they appear to be, and they all have their own special properties, and are connected to various other objects in different ways, regardless of whether or not they exist. Routley's philosophy resembles Wittgenstein's in the way that he wishes to leave everything as it is, eschewing reductionism and with it, a lot of pointless theorizing based on false choices (Platonism vs. Nominalism, for example).

An excellent argument for the Independence Thesis comes from considerations about many objects which are studied by scientists. We now know that the luminiferous aether does not exist. Suppose, contrary to the Independence Thesis, that the luminiferous aether has no properties, because it does not exist. Or alternatively, suppose that there are no true statements about the aether. On either assumption, it is impossible for us to come to know anything about the aether and its properties. Therefore, we cannot have any idea of what it is. Given no information about what it is, we cannot tell, and therefore do not know, whether or not it exists. This conclusion, though, is contrary to the facts. We do know that the aether is a nonexistent substance, one which fills all of space and is responsible for carrying electromagnetic waves. That is, we know that it does not exist because we know what its properties are, and have found them not to be exemplified in reality.7

Perhaps the statement "The aether is a nonexistent substance which fills all of space and carries light waves" is an extremely strange thing to say (in fact, it was intended to be so). This is because the statement appears to assert explicitly that relations hold between a nonexistent objects, and two things: space and light, which, given the context, are taken as existent. Now intuitively, it seems that any such relations ought to be intentional relations. Nonexistent objects are things that we may think about, hope for, and so on, but not things that we could touch or inhabit. Perhaps, then, it would at

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7 In fact, the situation is a little more complicated than this. There is a sense in which the aether was shown by experiment not to exist, and its place in reality was then usurped by a different structure.
least be more normal to say “The aether is a nonexistent medium which was thought to account for the transmission of electromagnetic radiation.” This is also undoubtedly true, but it is not to be taken as a denial that nonexistent (physical) substances are constituted in quite definite ways, which is what M3 asserts.

According to Routley, the statement:

(α) Phlogiston is a substance which accounts for combustion and oxidation.

is true, in one context at least - that of explaining the phlogiston theory - and indeed, necessarily true, for it follows from the very characterisation of the item [JB, p. 26]. In the context of an explanation of what actually does account for combustion and oxidation, though, (α) is false, and contingently so. The point is that what Routley calls the “existential loading” of a sentence, whether or not some or all of the terms occurring in that sentence are to be taken as referring (ie. denoting an existent object), is a contextual matter. Thus he notes that “In some ways then, (α) resembles “I am hot” or “Sherlock Holmes lived in London” which in one context can be true, in others false.” [JB, p. 27]. This need not imply that the nonexistence of objects is always determined by context. Pure mathematics, for example, is an existence-free science; there are no contexts in which its terms have existential loading, at least in ordinary language (the language of philosophers may be quite a different matter).

The Independence Thesis (IT), or as it is otherwise known, the thesis of the independence of Sosein (so-being) and Sein (existence, or being), is strongly supported by examples from fictional discourse, as is M2. The institution of fiction is a difficult phenomenon to define, and it is sometimes hard to determine the difference between making up stories and deliberately telling lies. Fiction includes not only novels and plays, but a lot of narrative and epic poetry, and may even extend to some nonstandard uses of language, and perhaps Opera. It has connections with mythology, legends and tales that are the products of a community’s history (and need not be written down), and
more vague and amorphous ties to film and television, and the visual arts. In virtually all of these cases, we are presented with a multitude of objects which do not exist, and they are represented, for the most part, as possessing certain definite properties.

Although there is a case for saying that the word "true" is not really applicable to sentences such as "Saint George slew the dragon", or "King Lear was betrayed", it seems that there are cases where we can be certain and cases where we can't. A student who claimed in an exam paper that Mr. Pickwick was a frog would be simply wrong - she would be claiming something that was false, and would be marked accordingly. This is best explained by supposing that there are certain states of affairs within fiction, and certain basic truths which are not open to interpretation. On the other hand, some new theory about the implications of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" may be more difficult to assess. In any case, discourse in and about fiction provides a fine example of a collection of contexts where existential loading is not present. It is also arguable that fictional and mythological truths are invoked in a great deal of ordinary conversation and everyday life.

In his book Nonexistent Objects (NO), Parsons uses examples of certain true statements about fictional characters as the major motivation for the endorsement of a theory of objects. His examples involve comparisons between reality and fiction, and thus are difficult to account by simply dismissing them as merely "true in the story". For example: "Ironically, a certain fictional detective (namely, Sherlock Holmes) is much more famous than any real detective, living or dead", and "Several of the Greek Gods were also worshipped by the Romans, though they called them by different names" [NO, p. 32], are both true in fact, and not just in the myth or story. For Parsons, one of the main advantages of the theory of objects is that it can account for the semantics of fictional discourse, and the truth of such nonfictional claims, in a natural way, without somehow bringing fictional characters into existence. His own relatively simple theory is
based upon the idea that fictional objects have exactly those properties that we are naively inclined to apply to them, so that, for example: "...Sherlock Holmes is a detective, solves crimes, lives in London, etc." [NO, p. 54]. It also uses a distinction between native objects, which are characterised by the stories to which they are native, and immigrant objects, which are imported by the story, and a hypothesis that links the theory of objects to the worlds of fiction. This "Link Hypothesis" involves the use of the distinction between nuclear and extranuclear (characterising and noncharacterising) properties, and will be discussed later.

Routley cites examples of nonexistence claims and intensional features in his defence of IT. In a statement such as "Mermaids do not exist", the subject term cannot have existential loading, or it would be inconsistent, which it is not. What is more, if subject terms generally had existential loading, all affirmations of existence would be redundant, which is also not the case [JB, p. 31]. He criticizes the Moore-Russell analysis of "\( \xi \) do(es) not exist" as "No existing thing(s) are (is) \( \xi \)" on the grounds that it fails to preserve features such as point, meaning and aboutness, and thus fails in certain intensional contexts. Someone who wishes for a mermaid may very well wish, not that some existing thing were other than it is, but that some object not included in the list of existent things, but with determinate features, did exist [JB, p. 33]. Also, as Routley points out, the Moore-Russell analysis of the sentence "Nothing exists" would presumably be "Everything is non-self-identical", which is logically false, although it is logically possible that nothing exists, and indeed it may at one time have actually been true [JB, p. 32].

It is instructive to examine the reasoning involved in showing that, according to the orthodox position, the nonexistence of everything is an impossibility. Roughly speaking, if "A does not exist" means that nothing is A, then "Everything does not exist"
means that nothing is anything. More precisely, if we generalise on the definition of "A does not exist" which is \( \neg (\exists x)(x = A) \), then "Nothing exists" must be:

(N1) \( (\forall y)(\exists x)(x = y) \)

which implies:

(N2) \( (\forall y)(\forall x)(x = y) \)

and thus:

(N3) \( \neg (a = a) \)

by two applications of universal instantiation. Generalising, we get:

(N4) \( (\forall x)(x = x) \)

However, this result is logically impossible, since it is a logical truth that for all \( x, x = x \): this is an axiom governing the identity predicate. This argument is an example of how orthodox logical theory, which accepts the assumption that everything exists (or that statements about what does not exist are never true, or that only what exists can truly have properties - all of these being versions of the Ontological Assumption (OA)) mistranslates contingent statements as logical truths or falsehoods. It can be proven that, if there were (neutrally) no objects, then nothing is anything, and that therefore it is necessary that there are objects, but it is not necessary that something exists.

Nonexistent objects enter into, or "participate in" a large number of intensional states of affairs, and are the relata for many intentional relations. They are things we imagine, ponder, search for, believe, conceive and fear. In logic and mathematics, they may serve as the objects of postulation and calculation, hypothesis and conjecture. As Routley says: "Intensional properties...typically carry no commitment to existence; we can as readily think of a unicorn as a bicycle." [JB, p. 34]. Nonentities, though, cannot be characterised, or defined simply as objects of thought, for there are many which will never be considered, or form the subject of any thought, and also, of course, we may think of existent objects. In thinking of any object, some concept or property is applied or ascribed to it, and we are free to take any conglomeration of characterising concepts.
whatever, and find some corresponding object for them in imagination. Indeed, the faculty of imaginative construction is the main access that we have to the total domain of items. The only restrictions that need be imposed are those that involve the use of non-characterising properties, but these are not restrictions on the way that we may think about items, only in the way they can consistently possess their properties.

Impossible objects, which have contradictory features, such as the round square, are certainly capable of being conceived, and thus Routley endorses T. Reid's thesis that it is false that whatever can be conceived is possible [JB, p. 356]. A point which needs to be emphasized is that, even when we are thinking about existent objects, we are only engaged in reasoning games which involve the application of concepts, and these may misrepresent the nature of the things concerned. Indeed, an existent item is something about which there is usually much more uncertainty and controversy than there is about fictions. Perhaps all of our thoughts about existent things ought to be taken as existentially neutral, at least until the whole nexus of contingent facts about internal constitution and causal connections is seen as presupposed in some way in our thinking.

Routley argues that statements such as:

(a) John fears a ghost.

"...simply will not vanish, under paraphrase or reconstrual, into statements which can be seen to involve no...reference to a nonexistent object." [JB, p. 35]. He considers four ways of attempting to analyse statements like (a):

1) Elimination by way of some theory of descriptions, which converts (a) into "John fears that a ghost exists"; and then "John fears that (∃x)(x is a ghost)" - but this fails to preserve both meaning and truth, and we are faced with counterexamples such as "John is thinking of Pegasus" which cannot be equivalent to "John is thinking that Pegasus exists", as well as "John is looking for a goldmine", where the conversion is not available [JB, p. 35];
2) Replacement of nonreferring terms by concept names, so that (a), which has the form aRb, is transformed to “aR*(the concept of b)”. This is often proposed by philosophers inspired by Frege, and also fails to preserve meaning and truth, since John may have no fear of concepts. What’s more, the new relation R* can only be explained in terms of R (fears) in any case [JB, p. 36];

3) Replacement of nonreferring terms by their names, so that aRb is translated as aR “b”, or aR*“b”, with R* as some new relation again. He cites Carnap as an example of someone who proposes such a paraphrase, and argues that it fails for the same reason that proposal 2) fails;

4) Taking (a) to simply be a description of John, so that “fears-a-ghost” becomes a complete predicate. But how is it that the word “ghost” functions to describe John in this phrase? Surely, as Chisholm argues, it simply tells us what sort of object it is that he fears.\(^8\) Routley thus concludes that statements involving intensional relations to nonentities, as well as statements with intensionally specified subjects, such as “The mountain I am thinking about is golden” are genuinely about the nonentities that are denoted (rather than “referred to”).

It is an important part of Routley’s project to provide a philosophically adequate treatment of intensionality. Rejection of the Reference Theory, he argues, entails a rejection of the indiscernibility of identicals, or as he likes to call it, Leibniz’ Lie (LL). He offers the following derivation of this principle from the RT: “...since according to the Reference Theory truth is a function of reference, if u and v are identical, ie. have the same reference, then A(u) is true iff A(v) is true, by functionality (ie. applying the definition of function); that is IIA (full indiscernibility) holds.” [JB, p. 97]. This means that the RT will only be able to make sense of extensional sentence connectives,

operators and predicates. Paradoxes arise once LL is accepted and we attempt to reason using intensional discourse. For example, consider the Quinean argument:

i) The number of major planets = 9.  
   premiss
ii) □(9 > 7)  
    premiss
iii) □(The number of major planets > 7)  
    i), ii), and LL

Exactly what this argument shows has been the subject of much debate. Quine concludes that intensional contexts, such as those using modal operators, are referentially opaque, but this is not really what is at issue. As Routley notes:

The tougher empiricist thesis...is that the paradoxes reveal, or help reveal, that there is something seriously wrong with, indeed ultimately unintelligible about, opaque contexts, and so with intensional discourse generally. But all that is revealed is that referential theories are inadequate to intensional discourse. [JB, p. 103]

Because Routley does not accept the RT, from which LL derives, much of his (long) discussion of theories that start with the premiss that the paradoxes present a problem which needs a solution is perhaps unnecessary. When he finally presents his own theory of identity, it is not presented as a solution, but as an addition to a neutral quantification logic, which may deal with nonentities as well as existent objects. Instead of adopting the "terminological strategy" of restricting what is to count as a property, which he regards as methodologically suspect [JB, p. 99], he proposes simply to distinguish different sorts, eg. extensional or referential features, among properties generally. He thus has the following axiom schemes for identity:

\[ x = x \]  (reflexivity of objects)
\[ x = y \supseteq A \supseteq B, \]  where B is obtained from A by replacing an (and hence, zero or more) occurrence of subject term x by term y, provided the occurrence of x is not within the scope of quantifiers or operators binding x or y or within the scope of an intensional operator (extensional indiscernibility). [JB, p. 115]

Identity for objects generally, then, is coincidence in extensional features. Parsons has a similar axiom for identity, except that it states that identity is coincidence in nuclear, or characterising features [NO, p. 74]. Routley also uses a notion of strict
identity, which involves coincidence of extensional features in all of the worlds of modal logic, and he is careful to point out that these are not all of the worlds there are, but only the complete and consistent ones [JB, p. 115]. The general extensional indiscernibility of identicals prevents the deduction of iii) above, for the obvious reason that LL is disqualified, and replaced by a more restricted rule of substitution. However, it is not likely to seem a very plausible solution to the paradoxes unless it is combined with some method for detecting intensional operators, contexts and predicates. Routley provides this in the form of a semantical definition of the predicate “ext(x)” (read “x is extensional”). Intensional functors are those whose semantical evaluation involves consideration of worlds other than the class of worlds at which they are being assessed for truth. Thus a functor \( \Phi \) is extensional “…(ie. \( I(\text{ext}(\Phi), \ a) = 1 \)) iff the semantical evaluation of \( \Phi \) in general involves no transfer from a (worlds)” [JB, p. 231].

The semantical analyses of modal logics which use the notion of a world are now well known and much discussed by philosophers. Routley’s suggestion here is that this idea is applicable to all intensional language. Thus in addition to the complete and consistent “possible” worlds, there are worlds of thought, conception, purpose and imagination which may not always be consistent and will virtually always be incomplete. Routley outlines, in his introduction to worlds semantics, the basic theory of worlds which may serve as the foundation of a universal semantics for all intensional and extensional language, as well as providing, in a sense, a “map” of Aussersein (the realm beyond being). Worlds, of course, are objects which do not exist, but nevertheless stand in certain relations to each other, and possess various other properties. There may be an exception in the case of the referential impoverishment of the actual world (factual world, \( T \), which, if it is thought of as a sum of existent objects, does exist, but if it is an abstract set of items or propositions, does not exist [JB, p. 203].
Routley takes the notion of a statement's *holding* at a world as primitive, and introduces the symbol \( \eta \) to represent this relation, so that "statement A holds at (or in) world c" is symbolised as \( A \eta c \). Then his basic interpretation function \( I \) is defined thus:

\[
I(A, c) = 1 \text{ df } A \eta c. \]

[JB, p. 202]

The symbol "I" denotes a function from well-formed-formulae and worlds to holding values \( \{0, 1\} \), and is used for stating the meanings of a large number of symbols throughout the Jungle Book. It is also used in the definition of truth, which is simply holding at the actual world:

\[
A \text{ is true iff } I(A, T) = 1 \]  
[JB, p. 203]

Worlds may be thought of simply as sets of objects with a certain structure; thus each world has a domain of objects, \( d(a) \), which may have various subdomains, such as \( e(a) \), the set of entities in a, and \( p(a) \), the set of possibilia in a [JB, p. 204]. The structure of a world may be represented by the statements which hold at that world, which Routley calls the range: \( r(a) = \{B: B \eta a\} \), and thus worlds may be individuated on the basis of their differing ranges, as well as their domains, but this does not mean that worlds cannot have common elements, nor that ranges may not overlap, or include other ranges, or be totally disjoint [JB, p. 205].

Every world has associated with it a referential impoverishment, which is a world whose range includes only referential statements about objects with extensional properties only, and whose domain is \( e(a) \), the existent objects of that world. The referential impoverishment of the actual world, \( G \), has a range \( r(G) \) which is determined entirely by the truth about what exists - the complete truth, according to empiricism. According to object theory, though, \( r(T) \) properly includes \( r(G) \), and \( d(T) \) includes many objects (an infinity of them) which do not exist. Routley offers the following simplistic statement of his general theory of the phenomenon of intensionality: "...where \( \Phi \) is a simple intensional connective, \( \Phi B \) holds in \( T \) in virtue of the fact that \( B \) holds in some other worlds different from \( T \) but appropriately related to \( T \). The relation involved is the
semantical analogue of the "pointing" feature of intentionality stressed by phenomenologists..." [JB, p. 206]. He further notes the corollary that T, the actual world, is not sufficient in itself for the recursive determination of the truth of all the statements that hold in it.

Because very many objects do not exist, a neutral logic is needed to deal with reasoning in ordinary language where no assumption of either existence or nonexistence is present in the use of singular terms. This logic will be an even more radical departure from referential strictures than free logic, which abolished existential generalisation in favour of the scheme: af & aE ⊃ (∃x)xf, (where "aE" means "a exists"), but unfortunately had "E" represent a universal predicate. Since (∀x)xE is a theorem in free logics, they are unacceptable from the perspective of object theory [JB, p. 77]. Routley introduces new quantifiers for use in his neutral logic Q; (Ux) - "for every object x", and (Px) - "for some object x", with the usual formation and interdefinability rules. The introduction of free and bound variables is standard, as is the substitution notation: "...A(t/x) is A unless x is free for t in A and then it is the result of substituting t for free occurrences of x in A." [JB, p. 177]. The axiom schemes and rule for Q are as follows:

- **Q1.** (Ux)A ⊃ A(t/x) (Instantiation)
- **Q2.** (Ux)(A ⊃ B) ⊃ A ⊃ (Ux)B, provided x is not free in A
- **RQ.** A ⊃ (Ux)A (Generalisation) [JB, p. 177]

The semantics for this system is given in terms of models. A model M = <T, D, I> consists of the actual world, T, the domain D of all objects, and an interpretation function I, which assigns to each subject term of the syntactical vocabulary an element of D (ie. I(x) ∈ D), to each n-place predicate at T an n-place relation on D^n (the n-place Cartesian product of D), and for elementary wff:

\[
I((x_1, \ldots, x_n)f, T) = 1 \text{ iff } I(x_1) \ldots I(x_n) > I(f^\mathbb{N}, T), \text{ ie. } (x_1, \ldots, x_n)f \text{ holds at } T \text{ iff the ordered } n\text{-tuple of objects } I(x_1) \ldots I(x_n) \text{ instantiates the relation of objects } I(f^\mathbb{N}, T). [JB, p. 172].
\]
The function $I$ may then be extended to all well formed terms and wff, if it assigns to every $n$-place function at $T$ an $n$-place operation on $D^n$, and the following rule is introduced:

Where $d$ is an $n$-place function term and $t_1, \ldots, t_n$ are $n$ terms; $I((t_1, \ldots, t_n)d) = (I(t_1), \ldots, I(t_n))I(d, T)$; $I((\forall x)A, T) = 1$ iff $I^*(A, T) = 1$ for every $x$-variant $I^*$ of $I$. [JB, p. 178].

As Routley notes, there is nothing syntactically unfamiliar in neutral logic - it is the role of the domain $D$, which contains both existing and nonexisting objects, that makes the semantics a different affair, and distinguishes the logic from the classical predicate calculus.

Proof of the adequacy (completeness and soundness) of the objectual semantics is thus similar to classical logic, and Routley also demonstrates that, with a little care, second order quantificational logic may also be "neutralised" [JB, pp. 223-236]. With the addition of the predicate constant $E$ for "exists", the existential quantifier of classical logic may be defined thus:

$$\exists x)A = df (Px)(xE \& A).$$ [JB, p. 179]

Routley also adds the predicate constant $\diamond$ for "is possible", and defines two more quantifiers:

$$\exists x)A = df (Px)(x\diamond \& A).$$

and $$\Pi x)A = df \neg(\exists x)\neg A.$$ [JB, p. 190]

Extensions of neutral logic to general descriptors, predicate negation (which I will come to later) and modality are also examined. It is argued that $S5$ is the appropriate logic for logical necessity and possibility, and that the standard objections to $S5$ - that it has the Barcan formulae, $\diamond(\exists x)A \supset (\exists x)\diamond A$ and $(\forall x)\diamond A \supset \diamond(\forall x)$ and their converses, as theorems, and that a quantified modal logic with identity inevitably has the formula $\square(x = y)$ iff $x = y$ as a theorem - fail with respect to a neutral version of $S5$. In such a logic, only the neutral versions of the Barcan formulae are theorems, and they are naturally free of the unwanted existence assumptions that make these formulae objectionable. Also,
strict identity is distinguished from extensional identity in Routley's system, so that the objectionable equivalence of necessary identity with identity is avoided [JB, p. 214]. Quantification generally, in ordinary language, has nothing to do with existence, and thus also in modal contexts, we are not committed to the necessary existence of any object in stating or believing a sentence using quantifiers.

As a purely formal system, or a set of calculi, neutral logic and its extensions work very smoothly. Philosophical questions, however, may be asked about the semantical concepts that Routley uses to explain his systems. For example, in the interpretation clause for elementary (atomic) wff above (the "critical" clause), the notion of "instantiation" appears, apparently as a primitive notion. It is not so clear, though, that instantiation is such an easy thing to understand. Later on in the book, in the context of a discussion of second order logic, the symbol "i" is introduced as an explicit relation that holds between properties and particulars; where pxA(x) is a subject term denoting the property of all and only the elements x that satisfy A (A(x) being a wff with just x free), the definitional equivalence:

\[ pDS. \quad (y_1,...y_n) i \rho x_1,...x_n A \iff A(y_1,...y_n|x_1,...x_n). \] [JB, p. 234]

is said to yield a virtual theory of attributes, which "...could have been introduced into first-order logic..." [JB, p. 234]. Later on still, in the context of a reply to Armstrong's regress arguments against any theory which relates particulars to universals, the symbol "i" is used for instantiation, and the following claim is made:

Consider what the theory of \( \lambda \)-conversion yields:

\[ aR \iff <a, \phi> \lambda \alpha (aR\alpha), \text{ ie. (for short) } <a, \phi>R^* \phi R, \text{ where } R^* = R = 1 \text{ and } \phi R = \lambda R = \lambda a\alpha (aR\alpha). \text{ Thus } R^* = R \text{ and no vicious regress ensues. What of circularity? It is immaterial: the (neutral) relational theory did not pretend to be, and is not, fully eliminative. The failure to be fully eliminative does not render a theory unexplanatory...} \] [JB, p. 637]

Instantiation, then, apparently explains itself. This is the conclusion to which we seem to be lead, given that the circularity is both admitted to be present, and it is
contended that this does not affect the explanatory power of the theory. This seems to be a weak point in Routley's overall metaphysic. He uses the notion of instantiation in the critical clause of his semantics, which is supposed to be a general interpretation of the logic of objects, and yet he has no real explanation of this relation. He argues that universals and other abstract objects are nonentities, but in order to treat them properly as such, consistency demands that they possess certain features themselves, and this inevitably means providing an account of the relationships they have to their instances. To avoid the problems of inconsistency that (he alleges) plague an immanent nonrelational theory of universals - "...particulars are connected with universals by a nonrelational relation." [JB, p. 642] - Routley maintains that instantiation is a relation, but one so basic that it may be analysed in terms of itself.

This is not really an adequate response, however, especially as it is possible to construct an alternative analysis. The notion of having properties is one that is necessary for an understanding of the Meinongian notion of an object, and both of these can be interpreted as basic logical or semantical ideas. They are presupposed in all thought and all experience, for the way in which things are "captured" by a thought (or a perception) can be explained by showing how its content makes reference to the properties objects possess. An explanation of instantiation might thus be given in terms of an account of the conditions under which predicative judgment in general is possible. This needs to be cashed out in greater detail, but it is arguable that a metaphysic which invites consideration of items that have no being must use a category of objects that is general enough to admit instances of things from any and all forms of conceptual organisation. That is, anything we may conceive is already an object, and the way that one could explain such a notion of "object", as well as the idea of "instance of a property", is by citing the most general features of conceptual organisation itself. Such a form of explanation, which uses a sort of transcendental reasoning, will be examined and defended in chapter Two.
Perhaps with regard to the formal semantics of neutral logic, the instantiation relation is not really needed. The set membership relation may do just as well, and Routley actually makes use of this device in the context of worlds semantics, for at one point he says that the evaluation rule for E is simply:

\[ I(tE, c) = 1 \iff I(t) \in e(c). \] [JB, p. 215].

This is particularly relevant to a criticism of Routley which has been made by W. Rapaport, who, while generally sympathetic to his overall project, sees problems in his treatment of existence. It is important to realise that Routley relies upon the distinction between characterising and noncharacterising properties, which allows him to say that existence is importantly different from ordinary "descriptive" properties. Now the clarity and effectiveness of this distinction are points that require a lengthy discussion, but Rapaport's criticism, I think, is a different matter. He construes Routley's instantiation relation as set-membership, and asks why, given the "intensionocentric" methodology of the book, such an extensional view of predication is adopted.\(^9\) This is a good question, but not a real criticism, since on Routley's view, intensionality is a matter of world-transfer rather than predication.\(^10\) His second point, though, is that "...if instantiation is set-membership, then [given the evaluation rule above] there is no difference between E and any other predicate...".\(^11\) What he means is that, on Routley's view, whatever difference there is between E and ordinary descriptive predicates is simply not reflected in their semantical treatment, since instantiation is the same for all properties, and thus there is only one "mode" of predication.

Rapaport's more general criticism of Routley's semantics is related to this point. His impression is that Routley has just provided a semantics which mirrors the syntax and makes it complete, without offering an account of "...what objects are, what

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\(^10\) Although, if \(e(c)\) is a world itself, and it is also true that \(\lambda \alpha \in \{d(c) \cdot \sigma(c)\}\), because properties do not exist, then perhaps the sentence "\(a\phi\)", where \(I(a) \in \sigma(c)\), does involve world-transfer.

\(^11\) Ibid., p. 548.
properties are, and how they are related (ie. an account of predication)". This, I think, is only partly true. While the objectual semantics does not account for the distinction between characterising and noncharacterising properties, since it does not give that distinction a semantical basis, Routley does give an explanation, at several places, of what objects are. In fact, M1 provides a fairly good definition of the term "object" itself - everything is an object. If further explanation is called for, perhaps this will do: objects are "...the most general items of signification." [JB, p. 172], or anything which is "...possibly thought of, reflected upon, conceived, presented to some sense...or...of which something is true." [JB, p. 172]. The term "object", as Routley uses it (and, incidentally, as the OED defines it) does not have the same meaning as the term "being", which carries the implication of existence.

The question of how far objecthood extends, or whether absolutely every constructible singular term denotes an object, is addressed at several points in the text, particularly with regard to what Meinong called "defective" or "paradoxical" objects, such as the Russell set, the liar statement, and the impredicativity property. Routley suggests that a neutralised paraconsistent object theory ought to have no problem in taking such objects as the values of variables, even though Meinong himself left the issue open [JB, p. 294, p. 502, and p. 867]. He also distinguishes between inconsistent subject terms, such as "the round nonround", and absurd subjects, such as "the wheels of happiness", or "Meinong's round idea" [JB, p. 215], but appears to arrive at no definite position as to whether the latter denote objects. If they are treated as nonsignificant terms, just as "the number seven dislikes dancing" is a nonsignificant sentence (which fails to express a statement), then perhaps we may have instances of non-denoting singular terms - perhaps.

12 Ibid., p. 548.
3 The Characterisation Postulate

Theses M4 and M6 are essential to the theory of objects. Characterisation supplies objects with distinctive extensional properties, and is the basis for most of our knowledge of the substantial features of nonentities. In ordinary conversation, the use of characterising descriptions provides all of the information that is essential for communication - the phenomenon of linguistic redundancy, studied by psychologists, illustrates this point. Whether the context is existentially loaded or not adds very little to the information content of utterances, whereas the choice of description is crucial. Using inappropriate terms to describe an object usually results in an accurate description of an entirely different object from the one intended, (sometimes the latter is a nonentity) and thus misinterpretation is made more likely. The characterisation of an object may be thought of as its definition, or essence, and must include a specification of those features of the thing which distinguish it from other things. The blue round square is a different thing from the round square, then, for it differs in one of its extensional features.

The Characterisation Postulate (CP), expressed as M6 above, is linked to the Independence Thesis by a relation that is at least close to logical equivalence. If objects have the extensional characterising features used to characterise them, then, given that existence is a noncharacterising property (M4: \( \lambda E \) is noncharacterising), the IT follows immediately. The converse is controversial; Routley offers a transcendental argument, that because nonentities have intensional features and may be distinct or identical, which were facts used to establish the IT, they must then have extensional features which characterise them, and provide the grounds for their distinguishability [JB, p. 45]. Rapaport offers a counterexample to this argument, that of an object which has just one property, which is an intensional one, although this could not be one that characterises the item, on Routley’s view, so that the very nature of such a thing is problematic.13 In

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13 Ibid., p. 544.
any case, the issue appears to be a little trivial. It is recognised that CP ⊃ IT, and that it is also true that the CP:

...provides a licence to do in any particular case what the IT indicates more generally that one should be able to do, namely to take any description which is legitimately constructed (i.e., which is characterising or assumptible) and employ it in the subject role to obtain distinctive true statements concerning the object it is about... [JB, p. 46].

This establishes a close link between the two principles, even if it is not strictly true that IT ⊃ CP.

The Characterisation Postulate is a principle of pure rationality. It may take the form of a purely logical law - the f is f (with appropriate restrictions on “f”) - and, if not intuitively obvious, it may be deduced from principles of meaning. Since being f is a part of the meaning of the subject term “the f” (or “the f-er”), it automatically follows that the f is f, or, as Routley argues: “...if being f is part of what is meant by “a”, then af is bound to be true, in virtue of the sense of a.” [JB, p. 47]. The restriction imposed, that f must be characterising, actually ensures that the CP will always be a necessary truth, for contingent truths, such as “I exist”, are precisely those that are not true by characterisation. The CP thus will not be applicable outside the realm of the analytic and the a priori. It explains how mathematical objects, and abstractions generally, may have their distinctive properties even though they do not exist, and indeed, it explains how mathematics and theoretical science are possible, as Routley says, for these disciplines operate by way of postulation and assumption [JB, p. 47]. That is, the deductive sciences always begin by characterising objects, and then explore, using deduction, the properties of these objects that follow from their characterisations. A similar method is used, of course, in reasoning and postulation that employs natural language.

It is important to realise that deduction and inference may operate using a number of different assumptions, often drawn from different fields of knowledge, and even using different information sources. A mathematician, for example, may solve a
single problem using principles from geometry, number theory, and analysis, and it may be that she uses the postulates of entire theories to come up with the solution. All of these postulates are to be taken as tacitly included in the characterisations of the objects concerned if the inferences used are to be counted as valid. It appears that Routley, normally an extremely careful thinker who rightly avoids all forms of premiss suppression\(^{14}\), is himself guilty of this sin when he lists some examples of the CP, and includes, along with the perfectly correct “Meinong’s round square is round” the statement “Meinong’s round square is not round (because square)” [JB, p. 47]. He has apparently suppressed the assumption that all squares are not round, and has, in any case, provided an example of the joint outcome of the CP and a disconnected postulate, rather than a strictly correct consequence of the CP.

This, of course, raises the issue of inconsistent and impossible objects, and just how a theory of objects may avoid Russell’s criticism that the round nonround violates the law of noncontradiction. Routley’s solution, as far as I understand it, is not really an elaboration of Meinong’s reply, that impossible objects need not obey this law. To begin with, proposition (1) above, as it makes no distinction among predicates, would probably be translated as:

\[(1)^\ast \text{ A (txA), with } \tau \text{ some descriptor.}\]

This is what Routley calls an unrestricted characterisation postulate (UCP) [JB, p. 255], and he rejects it as false without qualification. He gives three reasons for this rejection. Firstly, \((1)^\ast\) leads directly to the refutation of any logical law you care to consider. An example is the sentential law of noncontradiction (SLNC), for consider an object which is round and not round, symbolised as: \(\kappa(x \text{rd } \& \sim x \text{rd})\), where “\(\kappa\)” is intended to be a symbolic representation of the indefinite article “a”. By \((1)^\ast\), specialised to \(\kappa\), it follows that \(\kappa(x \text{rd } \& \sim x \text{rd})\text{rd } \& \sim \kappa(x \text{rd } \& \sim x \text{rd})\text{rd}\), which is a sentential contradiction, and not merely a conflict in the properties of an object [JB, p. 255]. Routley here quite obviously

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\(^{14}\text{See R. and V. Routley, “The Semantics of First Degree Entailment”, Nous 6, (1972).}\)
accepts Russell’s criticism, as it is directed against an unrestricted CP, and under a particular construal of proposition (2). Secondly, (1)* leads to unacceptable ontological proofs, as in the case of the existent golden mountain, and assumptions cannot determine the ontological status of assumed objects [JB, p. 256]. That is, the second of Russell’s criticisms is also accepted. Thirdly, (1)* is self-refuting: “...consider tyA(τxA), where y is not free in A. By UCP, ~A(τxA), refuting A(τxA).” [JB, p. 256]. Although both of Russell’s examples are used to refute (1)*, Routley does not conclude that a theory of objects is untenable, and thus he does not accept Russell’s conclusion. Instead, restrictions must be imposed on an acceptable characterisation postulate. The first proposal is:

FCP. □A(ξxA(x)), where A(x) is a wff (containing just x free) constructed in an allowable way from characterising predicates. [JB, p. 260]

The symbol “ξ” is a neutral choice operator defined earlier in the book: “Intuitively, ξxA(x) is an arbitrarily chosen item of the domain given satisfying A(x)...” [JB, p. 198], and is used to “eliminate” quantifiers thus: (PxB) =df B(ξxB). FCP thus can be expressed in English as "It is necessarily true that an arbitrarily chosen item which satisfies A(x) is A, where A(x) is constructed from characterising predicates." The question which naturally arises regarding FCP is what exactly is to count as an allowable construction. Routley permits only bound subject variables and predicate connectives (ie. predicate negation and predicate conjunction), and notes:

What is not allowable - apart from sentence negation - is higher-order quantification, predicate or sentential quantification, or predicates defined in terms of such quantification, notably ontic and modal predicates such as E and ∅, logical predicates, such as..., and theoretical predicates such as 'determinate' and 'complete'. [JB, p. 261]

This is an anticipation of his categorisation of non-characterising predicates, but for present purposes it is important to note that he distinguishes between sentence negation and predicate negation, and allows only the latter to form a part of the constructed wff A(x). This distinction is introduced early in the book, and is used to account for
impossible and incomplete objects. Predicate negation, symbolised "a¬f" (or (a₁,...,aₙ)¬fⁿ) is subject to neither the law of noncontradiction nor the law of excluded middle, although sentence negation, symbolised "¬af", is subject to both of these laws. So, while

a) x¬f ≡ xf  

b) ¬xf v xf  

c) ~(¬xf & xf)

hold for all x, the following do not hold generally:

d) x¬f v xf

e) ~(x¬f & xf)

f) ¬xf ⊃ x¬f

g) x¬f ⊃ ¬xf

h) (x¬f ⊃ u¬g) ≅ (ug ⊃ xf) [JB, pp. 88-89, and p. 193]  

Predicate negation is defended partly on the basis of our intuitions about properties, since we would want to say that the business of having properties is distinct from the truth of propositions, at least in the case of nonentities, and partly by an appeal to the data. The standard example is the sentence "The present King of France is bald". On Routley’s principles, this sentence is false, because there is nothing in the characterising description of the object denoted by the subject term to render the ascription of the predicate “is bald” true of the object [JB, p. 87]. Likewise, the sentence “The present King of France is not bald” is also false. On these points, it seems, Russell and Routley agree. But Russell is forced to deny that the King of France is a king, and this is where his theory fails to account for the data, since he is here denying something which is true in virtue of the very characterisation of the thing (and thus the meaning of the title "King of France"). Routley, on the other hand, may easily account for the fact that the present King of France is incomplete with respect to baldness (and much else besides) by way of predicate negation, since "¬κ(bald) & ¬κ(¬bald)” is not a violation of
the sentential law of excluded middle, but a statement asserting incompleteness with respect to baldness [JB, p. 196]. Similarly, proposition (2) has a different reading, where it is not statement-inconsistent but object-inconsistent. That is, it is a true statement that follows from a restricted CP and ascribes extensional properties to an inconsistent (impossible) object, and is symbolised:

\[(2)^* \ (\forall x)(x \text{rd} \land x \lnot \text{rd}) \text{rd} \land (\forall x)(x \text{rd} \land x \lnot \text{rd}) \lnot \text{rd}. \] (where t = "the").

Many nonentities are incomplete, and thus predicate negation is indispensible for a theory of objects. It simply dissolves a large number of puzzles about how high the golden mountain is, how many possible fat men can fit into a doorway, or how many angels can dance on the end of a needle. Incompleteness also enters into a number of mental states (though whether this is evidence of their nonexistence I will not venture to discuss): many thoughts and memories are only partial representations of their objects; after-images and dreams may be incomplete with respect to colour, depth, continuity, etc., and it is certainly possible to suspend judgment, to neither believe nor disbelieve a particular proposition. What's more, as Routley argues, many universals are indeterminate: "Since objects such as the Triangle are incomplete they are open to further determination, they can be "filled out" in different ways, by further characteristics; and this is what happens in exemplification by particulars." [JB, p. 93]. Thus the issue that divided Locke and Berkeley, that the ideal Triangle is neither equilateral, isosceles nor scalene, is easily resolved once it is realised that ideals, and universals generally, are incomplete, nonexistent objects. Predicate negation, then, is used to represent the incompleteness, or indeterminacy, of a wide range of objects, as well as the inconsistency (impossibility) of such objects as the round nonround. It must therefore not be seen as an ad hoc device, but rather as an essential part of object theory.

To return to the characterisation postulate(s): it is clear that the restrictions imposed on \(A(x)\) in FCP will ensure that proposition (3) above is not an instance of FCP.
which also has a t-form: \("A(txA(x))\), with A(x) as before" [JB, p. 262]), and thus, as was mentioned before, the existence of objects is left as a properly contingent matter. Routley also investigates other CPs, the most important of which is:

\[ \text{HCP}. \quad (Px)(chf)(xf = A), \text{ with } x \text{ not free in } A. \text{ [JB, p. 263].} \]

This is seen as the answer to the question "what (bottom-order) objects are there?" by ensuring that there is an object which satisfies the characterising (ch) predicates employed in any well-formed formula. This principle "mirrors" an abstraction scheme for predicates: \((Px)(chx)(xf = A), \text{ with } f \text{ not free in } A, \text{ and it may also have an n-place form, which Routley does not investigate. It is demonstrated, though, that HCP entails FCP [JB, p. 264].} \]

Parsons' theory of objects is remarkably similar to Routley's, and the main differences are to be found in the style of presentation rather than the content of the arguments. There is a more relaxed and systematic approach in Nonexistent Objects, rather than a battery of arguments for specific propositions. Parsons' theory is explained in ordinary language first, then axioms are introduced, after which follows a relative consistency proof for the system [NO, pp. 63-97], and then modal extensions and a theory of descriptions [NO, pp. 98-123]. The axioms that Parsons chooses are slightly different from the theses that Routley endorses, but they share exactly the same Characterisation Postulate, in the form of HCP. Parsons calls this axiom OBJ, and counts as one of his axioms for objects [NO, p. 74]. The other axiom for objects is the identity of nuclear (characterising) indiscernibles, and in addition to this he uses two axioms for properties, and two for an operator for what he calls "plugging-up", as well as the usual axioms for the predicate calculus. The differences here between his approach and Routley's are minimal, for even though he has a different abstraction axiom for what he calls "extranuclear" (noncharacterising) relations, his Watering Down Axiom employs a device that Routley also makes use of.
The notion of "watering down" is actually quite important for the development of much of Parsons' theory. There is a difference between nuclear and extranuclear properties and predicates, but there are also relations between them. In particular, for every extranuclear predicate, there is a nuclear version which is "watered down", in the sense that it does not have quite the same force or meaning as the extranuclear one. Parsons thus introduces an operator: \( w \), which, when attached to extranuclear predicate terms, operates on them to produce their nuclear counterparts. His axiom governing this operator is expressed in a rather complex form, since he wishes to make it general enough to cover all relations, but when it is restricted to simple, one-place extranuclear predicates, symbolised with capital letters \( P \) and \( Q \), it has the following form:

\[
\text{WD: } (Q)(x)(\text{E!}x \supset (Qx \equiv w(Q)x)) \quad [\text{NO, p. 73}].
\]

In English, the full statement of the axiom says that "...corresponding to anything we can say in the language of objects, there is a nuclear relation which relates real objects if and only if those objects are related as we say." [NO, p. 73].

The watering-down operation has at least two related uses. Firstly, as a partial concession to Russell's objection that the existent round square exists, it might be stated that the truth of the matter is that the existent round square merely presents itself as existing, in the context of its description, as does "the existent nonexistent", and thus it has only the watered down version of existence. This is exactly what Routley says [JB, p. 270] (he uses what he calls a "presentation operator", which performs the same role as \( w \)), and it seems that Meinong also came up with a similar idea [JB, p. 271], at least on one interpretation of his response to Russell. Secondly, watering down can be used in the theory of fiction, with respect to the Link Hypothesis, which connects what is true in a story to what is true without qualification. Parsons originally advocated the principle that an object native to a story has exactly those nuclear properties which are attributed to it in the story [NO, pp. 54-55]. This ensures that, even if it is true in a story that a character exists, it is not true simpliciter, for existence is an extranuclear feature.
In his review of *Nonexistent Objects*, K. Fine considers an objection to this principle, which addresses the problem of individuating two distinct native objects in stories where they have exactly the same nuclear properties, but differ in their extranuclear properties - for example, one is detested, the other admired. Parsons has a reply to this, which is that just as existents have the nuclear weakenings of their extranuclear properties, so the existents in stories have, within those stories, the extranuclear weakenings of their extranuclear properties [NO, p. 198]. Fine goes on to suggest a nuclear form of the Link Hypothesis, which says that "a native object of a story has the nuclear weakening of an extranuclear property iff it has the extranuclear property in the story".\(^{15}\) The watering-down operation is used here to state how the "story-bound" properties of fictional characters are related to their actual properties.

An interesting question regarding HCP is whether it really covers all bottom-order objects (ie. particulars) - both existent and nonexistent. Obviously, that something exists will not follow from HCP, but will it imply that there are objects, say bricks, bottles and cups, which, as it happens, do contingently exist? Will it say of such things that they have the characterising features they *do* actually have? This, I think, will depend upon the theory of existence, which Routley does not properly expound until chapter Nine of the Jungle Book. The principles of characterisation will yield objects of all varieties, and they will therefore entail that all of the ordinary characteristics of entities are instantiated, but HCP cannot be used to differentiate the existent from the nonexistent. In the end, it may be that context is essential to such specifications, but we are nevertheless drawn towards the idea that there is something special about what exists, and that this can be spelt out in an ontological theory.

It is fair to say that the Characterisation Postulate, in whatever form, only works if we operate with a *prior distinction between characterising and noncharacterising*

predicates. On what grounds, then, is the distinction to be drawn? How can we tell whether a predicate, or the property it represents, is characterising or not? Routley says a number of things about this distinction, but he never offers necessary and sufficient conditions, and he does not, as was noted, incorporate the distinction into his objectual semantics. It seems, in fact, that instantiation for noncharacterising properties is not really different from instantiation for characterising properties - so how do they differ?

Regarding the restrictions on FCP, it is argued that these are not ad hoc measures designed to preserve consistency, since characterising predicates are consequential, in that their determination depends upon the determination of lower order ones [JB, p. 261].

Perhaps this gives us a clue as to what sort of distinction is being made here. If a predicate is noncharacterising, then, to avoid double determination, it cannot contribute, or be a part of, the sense of a singular term. Then we may say, because sense is a matter of "mode of presentation" - the concepts used in identifying a subject of discourse - that insofar as we know what we are talking about, or are able to apply our conceptual scheme in understanding a term, we do so using only characterising predicates or concepts. The distinction thus may be interpreted as one between those parts of a language or a conceptual scheme that are employed in subject-identification, and those parts which cannot be so employed. This will be the case if we are to take Routley seriously in his assertions that sense, and not just reference, may determine truth, and we may also trust Frege's account of sense, when he says: "The sense of a proper name is grasped by everyone who knows the language or the totality of designations of which the proper name is a part...".16

Another clue as to the basis of the distinction is given by the remark that it is similar to the traditional distinction between predicates that can specify the essence of a

thing, and those that do not [JB, p. 265]. Routley also remarks that "A characterisation may be viewed as a liberalisation of the traditional notion of an essence..." [JB, p. 352]. Characterising predicates, then, supply information about the essential nature of an object. There may be a conflict here, though, if we are to turn to our conceptual scheme as an information base for determining the sense of singular terms, and then use it in an inference, for a CP will only use certain "disconnected" segments of the information base. For example, we know that the golden mountain is a mountain by using FCP, but we cannot conclude that this mountain has a peak, or indeed any other geological features, using just FCP. This conflicts, however, with our concept of a mountain, and perhaps even with the inner nature, or essence of a mountain, for standardly it is essential to such things that they have other, accompanying characterising features as well. What is needed, perhaps, is a way of expanding on FCP, to allow it to draw on information that is embodied in the use of descriptions, and not just the actual words. The addition to FCP need not take the form of a new postulate, but rather a theory of characterising features that allows the importation of new statements like "All mountains have peaks", or "All squares are nonround", and so on. I shall spend part of chapter Three attempting to construct such a theory, but nothing that I say is inconsistent with the principle that truth is primarily a function of sense, and not just reference.

Routley offers a "quasi-inductive elaboration" of the distinction, which is roughly summarised as follows:

**Ch-predicates** include:

1. **Descriptive** predicates, as opposed to evaluative ones, normally used in classification and essence-specification, as well as their predicate negations.
2. **Compounds** of ch-predicates - e.g. predicate conjunctions.

**~Ch-predicates** include:

1. **Ontic** predicates - those that imply existence or nonexistence, including modal predicates like "possible".
2). **Evaluative** predicates - eg. "good", "beautiful", etc.

3). **Theoretical** predicates - eg. "determinate", "simple".

4). **Logical** predicates - eg. identity, set membership, etc.

5). **Intensional** predicates - mostly relations concerning thought, belief and perception. [JB, pp. 265-266]

There are problems with extensional relational predicates which may tempt one into classifying relations generally as noncharacterising, but Routley resists this, for good reasons, as many objects, such as the present King of Russia, are characterised in relational terms. The problematic cases, where, for example, one takes \( d = 1x(x \text{ is married to Joan of Arc}) \), and infers that Joan of Arc was married, which is false, are dealt with by denying that the passive transformation from "d R-ed b" to "b was R-ed to d" is applicable in such cases [JB, p. 268]. It might be thought, though, that the original proposal, made with regard to sentence (a), which was that some truths are contextual, works just as easily and perhaps more smoothly. In the context of a characterisation of Joan’s husband, the sentence “Joan of Arc is married” is true, whereas in a proper historical context it is false. It ought to be remembered that there is nothing in the name “Joan of Arc”, or indeed in fictional names, which automatically implies existence or nonexistence - only the way it is used gives it referential loading.

A more damaging criticism of the above list is made by Rapaport. He argues that, out of predicate conjunctions and predicate negations of a descriptive term such as "red", one may form the predicate "red & ~red", which will be characterising. But where it is true that \( d = 1x(x(\text{red} \& ~\text{red})) \), we may infer that ~dE, and thus "red & ~red" is nonexistence implying, and so noncharacterising - hence the list is inconsistent in its specification. Routley might avoid this objection by simply removing the word "implying" from his definition of ontic predicates, although this would make it slightly weaker. Another tactic would be to insist that "red & ~red" only implies nonexistence when certain other premisses are taken for granted, or suppressed. These are the

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definitions of “possible” and “exists”, which are not defined using just characterising features. This, perhaps, is enough to sever the connection between redness and existence, and thus reply to Rapaport.

In the end, for all that is said in defence of the distinction, I do not think that Routley says enough. It is quite clear that he does not want to invoke some special mode of predication, or a different type of instantiation relation, which only noncharacterising properties can use, so that objects can have certain properties in a different way from the way they have ordinary descriptive properties. The motivation behind this, I think, is that this might imply that what is true of nonentities is true in a special, different sense of the word. Routley is keen to maintain that, for example “Sherlock Holmes is a detective” is just plain true, without any qualifications (apart from those of context, which we must suppose apply to all sentences in any case). This is part of his general doctrine that nonentities are objects, in the full-blooded sense - things that have properties just like entities do. If he is right, and there is only one mode of predication to correspond with only one way of being true, then the distinction between properties must be built into our system of concepts, rather than our ways of applying (instantiating) concepts. We must distinguish between the tasks that descriptive concepts perform, and those that noncharacterising concepts perform, and this is something that Routley fails to do.

I have made two general criticisms of Routley’s view of the jungle of nonentities. The question of instantiation, and the distinction between properties appear only as difficulties in the construction of the positive theory, however, and not as defects in the arguments against the Reference Theory and the Ontological Assumption. Given that the theory of meaning for large slabs of discourse, such as theoretical science, fiction, and intensional language, is simpler when a neutral objectual semantics is used, there is no reason to assume it to be false. Indeed, the onus of proof is upon those who claim that everything exists, for it is a far more difficult task to deal with all of the
counterexamples than it is to simply take ordinary discourse at its face value. If the main objection to a neo-Meinongian theory of objects is that it makes things too easy, or that it prefers to use theft instead of honest toil, then it is up to the objector to show why the extra work is needed. In any case, the two problems with Routley's theory should be seen as a call to work on the more constructive endeavour of giving a positive characterisation of properties, and finding a theoretical basis for distinguishing the two types of properties used in the theory of objects. These tasks are attempted in chapters Two and Three respectively.

4 Castañeda's Guise Theory

The connections between object theory, as presented by Routley, and guise theory, developed by Castañeda in "Thinking and the Structure of the World" (TSW), are perhaps somewhat tenuous. It certainly seems that Castañeda's theory is a contribution to the general project of understanding existence as a genuine property, but he is not committed to, nor does he even acknowledge, theses M1 to M7. What's more, he does not employ a distinction among properties, but instead distinguishes between forms of predication. The motivation behind guise theory is also rather different from the motivation behind the Routley-Parsons project, since it forms a part of a more general theory of perception, intensionality, and indexical reference. As well as this, guise theory incorporates a type of Platonism, as it takes properties in themselves to be the "ultimate components of the world" [TSW, p. 10], and this is not an explicit part of the theory of objects as Routley and Parsons have developed it.

In fact, this Platonism is heavily qualified. Castañeda divides the components of the world, Forms, into properties and operators, with the most important operators being: 1) the "brace" operator, which takes properties and forms sets, which are abstract individuals: \( \{F, G, H\ldots\} \); 2) the "c" operator, which operates on sets of monadic
properties to form concrete individuals: \( c \{ F, G \} \) [TSW, pp. 10-11]. Only concrete individuals, though, can exist, and thus Platonism, in the form of a doctrine of the existence of Forms, is not really embraced. Properties are the fundamental objects of the world, outside the realm of existence. Using the two operators just defined, Castañeda introduces the first of his four modes of predication, which is sometimes called "Meinongian predication", and sometimes "internal predication". He adopts a "bundle theory" of individuals, which allows him to say that, whenever a certain concrete individual, or ontological guise, has a property \( F \) as one of its constituent cluster of properties, then to predicate "\( F \)" of that individual is to state a necessary truth; that the \( F \)-er is \( F \) [TSW, p. 11]. Thus where \( a = c \{ F, G \} \), "\( a(F) \)" is necessarily true, since \( F \in \{ F, G \} \).

It appears that Castañeda endorses an unrestricted characterisation postulate, since he is prepared to say that the \( F \)-er is \( F \), without restriction on which properties "\( F \)" stands for. This is a major difference with Routley and Parsons, and also leaves his theory open to the Russelian objection concerning the existent round square. Castañeda does accept the distinction between predicate and sentence negation, on the other hand, for he says that this is part of an "intuition of the primary Meinongian predication" [TSW, p. 12]. The way he deals with the Russelian objection is tied to another disagreement with Routley, for he accepts that identity is governed by Leibniz' Law. That is, genuine identity is a matter of full indiscernibility in every possible respect. But Castañeda holds that there are other forms of sameness that are not identity, and yet are theoretically important. This is how he deals with intensional paradoxes like Frege's triad:

1) Tom believes that the morning star is Venus.
2) Tom does not believe that the evening star is Venus.
3) The morning star is the same as the evening star.
which is inconsistent given Leibniz' Law and the premise that 3) expresses a genuine identity. It is this latter premise that Castañeda denies, and thus he needs to construct a different interpretation of 3).

The interpretation that he arrives at is quite novel. As the primary Meinongian predication merely predicates an internal, constitutive property to an individual, it is a form of necessary predication, and yields only necessary truths. The truth about the actual world, however, is contingent, and thus suggests a different form of predication, "...connecting a concrete individual with other properties, which do not constitute it." [TSW, p. 13]. This must be an external mode of predication. Castañeda introduces a new dyadic relation, which he calls "consubstantiation", connecting concrete individuals contingently, and making both exist [TSW, p. 13]. Sentence 3) is then of the form:

\[ C^*(a, b). \]

Consubstantiation is an equivalence relation within the realm of existents, and indeed, the property of existence itself is defined as self-consubstantial:

Def. \[ x \text{ exists} \equiv C^*(x, x). \] [TSW, p. 15].

As an equivalence property, \( C^* \) is a type of "sameness" which is not identity, and it is distinguished by laws of consistence, contiguity, completeness and logical closure.

These laws are simply expressions of the "communizing" character of actuality, according to Castañeda, in that they illustrate how all actually existing individuals are not only restricted to a single world, but are also interrelated. They are formalised as follows, where "a[F]" is the F-protraction of the individual guise "a", which is simply the guise composed of all the properties of "a" together with the property F:

**Equivalence Laws:**

\[ C^*1. \ C^*(x, y) \supset C^*(x, x). \]
\[ C^*2. \ C^*(x, y) \supset C^*(y, x). \]
\[ C^*3. \ (C^*(x, y) \& C^*(y, z)) \supset C^*(x, z). \]

**Consistence:**

\[ C^*4a. \ C^*(x, x) \supset (x(F) \supset \neg x(\neg F)). \]
\[ C^*4b. \ C^*(x, x) \supset (x(\neg F) \supset \neg x(F)). \]

**Contiguity:**

\[ C^*5. \ C^*(x, y) \supset (y(F) \supset C^*(x, x[F])). \]
Completeness:  C*6.  C*(x, x) ⊃ (C*(x, x[F]) v C*(x, x[-F])).

Logical Closure:  C*7.  C*(x, x) ⊃ ((C*(x, x[F1]) & ... & C*(x, x[Fn])) ⊃ C*(x, x[G]), provided that "(F1 & ... & Fn) ⊃ G" is a theorem in quantification logic. [TSW, pp. 15-16].

Two more modes of external predication, or types of sameness, are introduced to account for different phenomena. Firstly, the intentional phenomenon of the mind’s relation to an object of thought is analysed as the "consociation" relation, which is again an equivalence relation within its field, but lacks the features of consistency, contiguity, completeness and closure. As an example of how this relation is used to analyse sentences ascribing intentional states to individuals, he translates the sentence "Meinong used to think of the round square." as:

C*(Meinong, Meinong [thinking of the round square]) & C**(the round square, the round square [being thought of by Meinong]), [TSW, p. 18].

Because Meinong exists, (or did once) consubstantiation appears in this sentence, but the second conjunct, which uses consociation, symbolised C**, simply asserts that a relation holds between an object and one of its protractions. This does not make it very clear what sort of relation is involved here. It seems, in fact, that consociation may represent a variety of different relations. Castañeda’s comments on the representation of an object’s empirical relatedness to a mind do not answer this question, but his stated truth-conditions for consociation may help:

"C**(a, b)" is true, if either (i) the guises a and b are thought of to be the same object, whether a fictional or real one; or (ii) b is a protraction of the form a[x believes (thinks, supposes, etc) that__ is F];...\(^{18}\)

Evidently we may think of consociation as a type of sameness that accrues to individual guises when any intentional state directed at these guises has the content that they are the same.

The last mode of predication is said to be an a priori relation, which deals with the internal constituents of an individual guise even though it has an external character. Conflation, symbolised *C, is again an equivalence relation, and thus a type of sameness, but is governed by the law of internality: *C(c{ ..., F, ..., G}, c{ ..., F & G, ... }) [TSW, p. 19]. Its truth conditions are that "*C(a, b)" is true if and only if the constituent properties of a are equivalent to the constituent properties of b.19 A good illustration of how these three external modes of predication are applied, and why they are distinguished, is provided by J. F. Rosenberg, who offers some illuminating examples. Water and H20, being different guises, since they are presented in different ways, or have different Fregean senses, are nevertheless the same substance in some way - at least according to some collection of theories. They are not identical guises, then, but consubstantiated, since they both exist. The irresolute Prince of Denmark and Ophelia's lover are also not identical, for they are distinguished by their modes of presentation, but since they are thought to be the same they are consociated guises. Since they do not exist, they are not also consubstantiated. Finally, 2 + 2 and 3 + 1 are distinguishable but necessarily the same number, and thus they are conflated guises.20

One criticism of guise theory is that the distinction between modes of predication does not help in replying to the Russellian objection about objects such as the existent round square. Castañeda says some very interesting things about existence. Regarding the dispute as to whether or not existence is a property, he says that on the one hand, it is the property Form C*, or at least the special monadic case of C* operated on by reflexivity, which expresses existence. On the other hand, "...existence is not a property, in that it is the contingency of the world underlying the property C*, but lying otherwise fathomless beyond the jurisdiction of the mind as the target of thought." [TSW, p. 20]. He is surely correct in saying that existence is contingency, or perhaps

19 Ibid., p. 195.
that what exists is a contingent matter, and this must imply that we will not be able to
derive the existence of anything using Meinongian predication. But his treatment of
Russell's problem does not appear to secure this restriction. He attempts to defend
Meinong's claim that the existent round square is existent but does not exist, by claiming
that there is an ambiguity in the sentence:

(14) The existing round square is existing.

Under one interpretation, using Castañeda's notation and numbers, (14) is an example of
a Meinongian predication, and thus expresses a necessary truth:

(14a) The existing round square (being self-consubstantiated).

Under a different interpretation, (14) is supposed to be a statement about actuality, with
"existing" included in the parenthetical description of the object, and thus, dropping the
parenthetical word "existing", it is the provably false sentence:

(15a) C*(the round square, the round square). [TSW, p. 22].

It seems that Castañeda's reply to Russell is to concede that there is a sense in
which the existent round square exists, and then to distinguish the precise sense in which
it is nonexistent, by introducing an external mode of predication. This is quite different
from the Routley-Parsons approach, which is that of denying that there is any sense in
which round squares could ever exist, but claiming that they might present themselves as
existent, and thus possess a watered-down version of the property. The flaw of the "two
modes of predication" approach is that it does not really offer a reply at all. Castañeda
endorses an unrestricted Characterisation Postulate, in the form of the rule for the
internal, or Meinongian form of predication. This does entail that the existent round
square exists, in at least one full-blooded sense of existence, and thus Russell's objection
is left without a reply. The fact that there is another analysis of existence according to
which the round square does not exist will not really salvage the situation. Introducing
such an analysis is rather like changing the subject, for Russell is still going to be
worried by the fact that all sorts of things can be proven to exist using internal
predication. At least with the "two types of property" approach, such proofs will not be available, and thus the theory will not imply falsehoods. The problem that Russell has addressed is the question of whether or not existence itself is an internal property, and Castañeda seems to be arguing that it can be, but it is also an external mode of predication. I do not see this as a satisfactory reply.

Perhaps some of the insights of guise theory can be retained within a theory of objects based on the distinction between properties. There is, after all, some similarity in these theories: both state that existence is an external feature of an object, although for Castañeda it can also be internal. With the appropriate restrictions on the Characterisation Postulate, however, guise theory may be accommodated by object theory. In an article on the two-modes approach, D. Jacquette has argued that the distinctions used by object theorists such as Rapaport and Zalta (both "two-modes" theorists) can actually be reduced to the nuclear-exTRANUclear distinction. He says:

The reduction of the dual copula or dual modes of predication distinction to the nuclear-exTRANUclear distinction is easy to accomplish, since the two predication modes arise entirely in connection with whether or not an object has the extrANUclear property of existence.\footnote{D. Jacquette, "Mally's Heresy and the Logic of Meinong's Object Theory", The Journal of the History and Philosophy of Logic 10, (1989), p. 5.}

Jacquette also shows exactly how this reduction can be accomplished, by introducing an extrANUclear Sosein function in addition to the extrANUclear property of existence, and producing equivalences that relate the modes of predication used by Rapaport and Zalta to these extrANUclear properties. His conclusion is that a theory that is equipped with the distinction between properties can define and recover the dual copula distinction, but not vice versa.\footnote{Ibid., p. 6.} If this is not enough to demonstrate the superiority of the former distinction, Jacquette also introduces another problem, which he calls the "Sosein paradox", and claims that only a theory which has a distinction between properties can provide an adequate solution to this problem. The details are complicated...
and largely irrelevant, however, and it is enough to note that a reduction is available for object theory, but not for guise theory or its variants. This is a sufficient reason for preferring the former, since whatever benefits come from the latter are obtainable in any case.

For the rest of this work, I will concentrate on the version of object theory that Parsons and Routley have developed. I will therefore use the language of properties and not that of modes of predication as a way of expressing the theses of the theory of objects. The work is roughly divided into two parts, the first of which deals with the broader concerns of object theory, an account of instantiation and a theoretical grounding for the distinction between characterising and noncharacterising properties. The last two chapters deal with the issue of the meaning of ontological status, or existence, and the final chapter presents a holistic ontological system that comprehends both fiction and reality.
Ideal objects, Meinong says, i.e. such as are incapable of existence, are always objects of higher order. Similarly, eg. does not exist, but subsists (besteht); similarly quadruplicity does not exist where there are four nuts.


1 The Problem

A theory which makes essential use of quantification over properties is not automatically committed to the existence of such things, but it must at least count them as things - i.e. as elements of the universe. An inspection of theses M3 to M6 reveals that the theory of objects makes essential use of properties, and therefore, as a comprehensive metaphysic, it ought to be combined with some philosophical explanation of what they are. The basic principles of object theory deliver no verdict as to the existential status of higher-order items such as properties, and thus an independent investigation of the problem is necessary. The full range of candidates for properties is given in the full range of predicates, and so we may start by postulating a property corresponding to each predicate term, whether or not it is an "invented" term. We must then explain how these things are related to the things denoted by subject terms, and indeed if they are related at all. That is, the instantiation relation, which Routley left
unalysed, ought to receive some sort of explanation. The task as a whole is to investigate what sort of a thing a property (or a universal) is.

The distinction between universals and particulars need not be understood solely as a means of explaining the distinction between subject terms and predicate terms. There are a large number of relationships which can be understood on the model of a generality which somehow "dictates" to a particularity. These relations fall into several categories. Firstly, consider the standard cases of a thing and its properties: the relation between a colour and a thing which has that colour; that between an animal species and an example of that species; or that between the property of thinking and a particular mental state. Many of these cases have the form of a function-argument relationship. Using Frege's terminology, an unsaturated predicate expression, which has an blank space or gap, as in "_is grey", cannot denote any item. However, there is a universal which is denoted by the noun "greyness", and the description "the property of greyness". Those items denoted by expressions which can fill the gap in an unsaturated expression to yield a true proposition are like arguments for a particular function. Even so, the function-argument relationship is not the same as the instantiation relation.

Secondly, there are cases of types and their tokens: consider the relationship between a novel and a particular copy of that novel; that between a word and its utterance or inscription; that between a piece of music and a performance of that piece; or that between a type of mineral and an particular rock of that type. Thirdly, there are a variety of interesting cases of generalities which provide a rule which has an application in a particular item: the relation between a law and its enforcement; that between a theory and its data; or that between a force and its expression in space. Lastly, there are simple cases of categories which do not necessarily provide any rule of application, but simply gather things into a certain collection: consider the relation between a cupboard and the
things it contains; that between the number three and a collection of three pigeons; and finally, the paradigm case of the relationship between a set and its elements.

All of these examples can be used to illustrate the distinction between universals and particulars, but in very different ways. The last type of relationship illustrates the logical function of a universal with respect to its instances. Even in the case of a cupboard or box with contains various objects, a certain separation of some things from others, or the drawing of a certain boundary, has been achieved by so relating them. This is a purely extensional relationship, and set membership is its model, but set membership is clearly not the same as instantiation, and sets are not paradigmatic universals. Membership is not necessarily a rule-governed relationship, for the members of a set may be anything you like, and thus it does not capture all there is to the distinction between universals and particulars. A rule-governed relationship is special in that it involves other relationships to generalities and universals of a certain type. Thus a law is always a part of some system of law, and may have several clauses; a force operates within a system of forces, and there are usually several components to the rule it supplies. A theory always specifies relationships between several different properties, and is not wholly determined by the data which gives it support, for it goes beyond a simple statement of observations or recognised truths, in order to explain them. There is an intensional relationship between a thing which supplies a rule, and a thing to which that rule is applied, in the sense that the latter item only falls into the appropriate category by obeying or following the prescription in question. A prescription or rule says how things are organised for all possible cases of its application, and thus it specifies what is the case in different possible worlds.

The other two types of relation, which involve the type/token distinction, and the property/thing distinction, can be seen as cases of the general relationship between rule-governed generalities and the particulars to which these rules are correctly applied.
In the case of types and tokens, the general rule is simply that of *copying* the type in the right way, preserving the information content present in the original. This is the rule used by a printing press, which is a paradigmatic example of a machine that produces tokens of a letter type. The more complex example of an orchestra which performs a token of a musical piece involves the mediation of other tokens in the form of the notation, and it is less obvious that the performance copies anything. In this case, a subordinate rule might be that of *following* the notation, which results in a reproduction of certain sounds, and thus a form of copying. The rules involved in relating a thing and its properties are varied and often complex. In the case of a general term which represents a property, there are rules governing its application, and these are rules of language usage. They often take the form of simply specifying what other predicates must apply if the thing is to fall under that general term. Thus we can specify the intension of a term by listing the properties which its applications must have: for example "camel" means "large mammalian creature born with four legs, at least one hump,...".

If the distinction between universals and particulars can be illustrated by these examples (even though not all of them are cases of the distinction: eg. the cupboard and its contents), perhaps the philosophical problem of universals can be understood as the problem of explaining how these relationships are possible, and what ontological status each of their terms has. The semantics of general terms is then only part of the problem, for not all of these examples involve either the sense or the denotation of predicates. Presenting the issue in this way, however, might seem to involve a certain prejudgment. Some philosophers have argued for a nonrelational theory of universals, but all of the examples above are examples of relationships. Instead of regarding this treatment of the problem as prejudicial, we might simply note that the examples themselves provide strong *prima facie* evidence that some sort of relationship does in fact hold between universals and their particular instances. This need not cripple the nonrelational theory at
all, for it can always be replied that *prima facie* evidence can be controverted. In any case, for the purpose of explaining the distinction, and shedding some light on the problem, these examples seem to be as good as any others.

The problem of universals, then, is the problem of explaining how certain apparent relations are possible. It is also the problem of the ontological status of abstractions, and almost all of the examples that I have cited are cases where an abstract item appears to be related to a concrete item. These issues are connected, for if one wishes to explain how such relations are possible by saying that there are objects that are related in some way, then this entails a certain reification of the abstract. Throughout the history of philosophy, it has been thought that if one believes that certain things are involved in relationships, then one is committed to the existence of these things. The theory of objects explicitly denies that this is the case, especially for mental or intentional relations. It is therefore in a position to explain the possibility of the relation between a property and its instances by postulating objects that are so related, but it need not be committed to the existence of properties, or abstract items generally. This is the sort of explanation that will be defended in this chapter. It will involve a theory of instantiation, which is an account of the relationship between a property or a universal and its instances, and will thereby resolve one of the problems with the object theory which Routley has presented. Instantiation will be analysed as a type of intensional relation, as has already been suggested, but there is also an extensional component to the function that universals perform, for they determine categories or sets for which there is an extensional membership relation.

I will begin with a consideration of general arguments for the proposition that there are abstract items, which does not presuppose the existence such things. I will then present an analysis of instantiation, and make use of Routley’s symbol "i" for this relationship. An objection to all relational theories of universals will then be considered,
the infamous Regress Argument, as it is presented by D. Armstrong in his book *Nominalism and Realism* (NR). From the account of instantiation given, a reply to this objection can be constructed. A number of other traditional theories and objections will also be examined, and it will be argued that each of these may lend support to the idea that universals are items which fail to exist. Finally, this thesis will be argued in detail, and Routley's "noneist" version will be defended.

2 General Arguments for Universals

Our notion of a particular thing is much more subtle and intricate than is usually supposed by philosophers. Whenever there is a thing, it must be maintained in its thingness by being related to other things. Even in the case of a thing which is characterised solely in terms of monadic properties, such as "the blue ball", there is at least one (noncharacterising) relation between whatever satisfies this description and whatever satisfies the description "the blue mouse", for both items bear the relation of "having the same colour" to each other. Using the notation of lambda-abstraction, this relation is: \( \lambda xy(x \text{ has the same color as } y) \). (The symbol "\( \lambda \)" is an operator that takes predicate expressions, with "gaps" for subject terms, and makes them into singular terms that designate objects. Thus "\( \lambda xy \)" means "the relation between \( x \) and \( y \) such that..."). This can expressed as the relation of being *equivalent with respect to colour*. In general, if an object is characterised at all, then it will be characterised in terms of properties that other objects also possess. This is so because whatever counts as a characterisation will necessarily count as way of placing the thing characterised into a scheme of categories which will apply to many other things. If it is true that things are necessarily related to other things in respect of sharing some of the same properties, then it follows that there are some properties. For the very expression "sharing some of the same properties" must be understood as involving quantification over properties. This is a very general argument for higher-order quantification, and it uses a certain conception
of "thing", which may be controversial. If things are not subtle and intricate in the way described, then perhaps it is not so plausible to argue in this way. Prima facie, however, it seems that this idea of a thing is precisely that which we normally employ.

As already noted, philosophers usually postulate universals in order to explain how it is possible that a certain type of relation connects such things as types and tokens, properties and things, rules and applications. Plato, for example, argued that the copying relation, mentioned above with respect to the type/token connection, is that which connects a particular to a Form. Nominalists, on the other hand, refuse to "postulate" universals at all, but they still attempt to explain the meaning of general terms by using some sort of relation. The empiricists argued that there were general ideas, which are actually particulars, but perform the same function as a universal in the activity of reasoning and thinking: they can represent any item which falls under a certain concept. A resemblance version of nominalism uses the relation of similarity to a paradigm particular in analysing the meaning of general terms, and thus has paradigms do the work of universals. There is, in fact, a network of theories in the philosophical tradition which may be understood as using a standard framework, whether they are realist, in the sense of asserting the existence of universals, or nominalist, in denying such existential claims. The framework within which these theories propose explanations for the function of general terms has been investigated by L. Goddard, and he claims that there is a general transcendental argument for the postulation of universals.

Goddard understands a theory of universals as an attempt to solve two types of puzzles: the semantic problem posed by the question "How can general words mean?"; and the metaphysical problem posed by questions such as "How can two different things possibly be the same?" or "Why are things what they are?".¹ He argues that the

structure of the explanations offered by different theories can be seen as connecting
two questions in a single solution. Words that are used predicatively are thus data
to be explained, and his notation for these words involves the use of a quotation
function, which has as its values the quotation-mark names of the values given to its
argument - so if φ = red, then qu(φ) = 'red'. The fact that these words have a constant
meaning over an indefinite number of applications is then explained, in the standard
framework, by its standing in some sort of relation, R, to an object, a, which is itself

downless, and so constant. Therefore, according to Goddard, the following
equivalence holds:

(1) x₁, x₂,... are φ = (∃a)(qu(φ)Ra & aSx₁, x₂,...)²

The nature of the relation, S, that a has to the objects x₁, x₂,...(which are its instances)
will depend upon the nature of the explanation of predication and meaning. Thus:

If a is a Platonic form, then S is the converse of the relation of participation or imitation; if a common property, then S is 'is shared by'; if a Lockean abstract idea, then S is 'is abstracted from'; if a concept, then the relation of comprehension; if a Russellian class, then the converse of the relation of membership; if a paradigmatic particular, then the relation of similarity; and so on.³

It might be thought that this general structure is a little too simplistic, or that it
makes very different theories appear to be too similar, but it has merits as a guide or
description of what such theories purport to explain. Goddard demonstrates that more
complicated theories, such as Locke's account of real and nominal essences, also have
the form of (1)⁴, and that the right-hand side of the equivalence entails that the word
qu(φ) denotes the objects x₁, x₂,...(for the relative product of R and S directly relates
words to objects, and is thus interpreted as a denoting relation), so that (1) implies:

(2) x₁, x₂,... are φ = the word qu(F) is (or can be) used to denote x₁, x₂,...⁵

² Ibid., p. 35.
³ Ibid., p. 36.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 36-37.
⁵ Ibid., p. 32.
This is significant because it expresses the fact that whenever several different things have the same property, the same word is correctly used to designate, or denote them.

Goddard appears to accept that this is the basic fact that gives rise to the problem of universals, and that it connects the problem of the semantics of general terms with the problem of the nature of the world, or how several different things can possibly be the same. He also says that the neutrality of the general structure of traditional theories (the right-hand side of (1)) is due to the fact that this structure was deduced from a transcendental argument from meaning, so that (1) accounts for the possibility of the fact which (2) expresses. This transcendental argument yields no information concerning the nature of the objects that are postulated to explain the constancy in the meaning of general terms. Its conclusion is simply that there is some constant item, correlated with each such term, which stands in some relation to each of the things to which the term applies. It is interesting to examine what Goddard says concerning the existence of universals under this structure, for the neutrality that he suggests applies to various theories could be reinterpreted as a neutrality with regard to the ontological status of universals. Indeed, the sort of "existence" which he speaks of might better be thought of as simply a form of objecthood, and not a type of ontological characteristic. He says:

Suppose, for example, we have an agreed fact X expressed by a sentence of the form 'Some S are P', say 'Some cats are black', and we ask how this can possibly be, i.e. what accounts for it. The natural way would be to look for evidence by empirical investigation. But we might simply look for premises Y from which it could be deduced and offer: all creatures with a given genetic structure are black and some cats have the required genetic structure. We are now in a position to explain the black colour of some cats. But from a purely logical point of view the phrase 'genetic structure' has no content. And even if we introduce a word such as 'gene', which because of its etymology has apparent content, and reply 'Because there are genes', we have so far not given any empirical content in spite of its occurrence in an existential assertion. The existence which has been established by the transcendental argument is simply its existence as a theoretical concept and not yet as an identifiable item of experience. For it is postulated on the basis of a logical need

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6 Ibid., p. 37.
only, namely that of standing as a deductive link, and not an empirical one.\textsuperscript{7}

It seems that Goddard has not offered an argument for the existence of universals at all, but rather an argument that there are, neutrally, such things. If the transcendental argument establishes a certain theoretical structure which both realism and nominalism adopt, then it this structure must be neutral on the question of existence, for it can accommodate theories which assert and theories which deny ontological status to universals. In short, his phrase "existence as a theoretical concept" should be read as "logical standing as an item", and the fact that universals are postulated on the basis of a logical need rather than an empirical one is just more evidence in favour of such an interpretation. Goddard has thus provided a general transcendental argument for the \textit{neural} postulation of universals. They are needed as points of constancy, which in their relations to particular words that are assumed to have a stable meaning, explain how that meaning remains stable. The existence of universals cannot be validly inferred from the premise that (1) is true, since the quantifier can be reformulated as a neutral one, and one can accept the form of explanation that it offers while remaining a nominalist.

The final argument for universals that I will consider is similar to the first one concerning the subtlety and intricacy of things. Indeed, all three are transcendental arguments. The first began with the fact that things are characterised in terms of properties that other things also possess, and explained the possibility of this fact by postulating properties. Goddard's structure explains the possibility of the stable meaning of general terms by relating them to items that stand in some constant relation to the things that fall under such terms. The third argument begins with sentences that assert the identity of things, and explains the possibility of such sentences being true by postulating properties that may or may not be shared by the things whose identity is asserted. Now the question of identity was once regarded as a difficult issue for a theory

\textsuperscript{7} \textit{Ibid.,} pp. 37-38.
of nonexistent objects. Quine's famous diatribe about the possible fat men in his doorway was originally taken to be a decisive objection. It is now realised that identity conditions for nonentities are not that difficult to formulate, given that we may distinguish between extensional and intensional properties. Routley has replied to Quine's assertion that the concept of identity is simply inapplicable to unactualised possibles thus:

But the very same notions of identity - most importantly, extensional identity - and distinctness that apply to entities apply likewise to nonentities. Identity is, as always, reflexive, symmetric, transitive, holds given indiscernibility, and warrants qualified replacement. The criterion for identity of nonentities is, as for entities, coincidence in extensional properties. Thus, for instance, Hercules and Heracles are identical, though some people did not and do not know this... Pegasus is distinct from Thunderhead because Pegasus has the (extensional) property of being winged and Thunderhead does not. [JB, pp. 414-415].

The doctrine that there are nonexistent things naturally goes along with the doctrine that such things really do have properties, and that they can be distinguished from one another by such properties. In these respects they are just like things that exist, for their possession of such formal features are nothing more than is entailed by the fact that nonentities have a certain logical standing. In this case, a general definition of identity can be formulated which applies equally to existent and nonexistent things. Routley's version is:

\[(3) \ x = y = \text{df} (U \text{ ext } \psi)(x \ i \ \psi \equiv y \ i \ \psi) \]  

[JB, p. 249].

This definition explicitly uses higher-order quantification, and although the axioms cited in chapter One did not, they express the same idea. With regard to the problem of universals, there is at least one reason for regarding this definition as being the more basic, or as formulating the primary notion of identity. The way that we judge whether a thing is distinct from or identical with something is by considering the properties it has. This is demonstrated by the quotation above: Routley argues that Pegasus is not Thunderhead because they do not share all of the same properties. Since this is the way

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8 See W.V.O. Quine, "On What There Is", in From a Logical Point of View, 1953.
identity claims are often decided, it seems that the best way to explain the possibility of identity and distinctness judgments is by the postulation of properties which can be shared by different things. Indeed, if the definition above is a literal account of the concept of extensional identity, then we must assume that there are different types of properties, those that are extensional and those that are not. A fortiori, there must be (neutrally) such things as properties.

It has so far been argued that the very notion of a thing, or an object, is such as to necessitate the postulation of properties which objects possess. This does not involve ontological commitments of any sort, and hence might be called neutral postulation, to distinguish it from existential postulation. There are also reasons to draw important logical distinctions between different types of properties, such as those involved in the notions of extansionality and characterisation. The latter in particular (which forms the subject of chapter Three) is used in the Characterisation Postulate, and one could also argue that one condition of the possibility of the truth of HCP is that there are properties, since it uses higher-order quantifiers. The next question to be considered concerns how these neutrally postulated universals are related, if they are related at all, to the particulars whose formal features the transcendental arguments used as reasons to postulate.

3 Instantiation

We postulated universals as a result of considering a set of transcendental conditions on the notion of a particular thing. In order to draw attention to this fact, we can adopt a certain relational analysis of subject/predicate sentences. The postulation of a new type of item is made explicit when it is displayed by the use of specially designated singular terms, and in this case the notation of $\lambda$-abstraction is most appropriate. In addition, some general principle relating discourse about particulars to discourse about
universals is necessary if a theory is to explain how a particular can possess various properties. The instantiation relation may be understood from within the framework of a neutral postulation of universals as that which connects one property to the many particulars which possess that property. Instantiation is a relation that applies to universals however they are conceived, and is thus neutral with respect to different theories of universals, as well as being ontologically neutral. It is symbolised "\(i\)", and is governed by the following general principle:

\[
(4) \langle a_1, a_2, \ldots, a_n \rangle \phi^n = \langle a_1, a_2, \ldots, a_n \rangle i \lambda x_1, \ldots, x_n \phi^n x_1, \ldots, x_n
\]

This says that any relational proposition which relates an ordered \(n\)-tuple of items is equivalent to the proposition that this ordered \(n\)-tuple instantiates a certain \(n\)-placed relation. It is an expression of the idea that whenever a predication is true of something, then this something is related to a certain property by possessing, or instantiating this property.

How are we to understand this instantiation relation? There are several different ways which may be investigated. One proposal is that a particular thing \(d\) instantiates a property \(\phi\) just when it is a member of the set determined by \(\phi\):

\[
(5) \quad d \ i \ \phi \equiv d \in \{x : x \phi\}
\]

The problem with this suggestion is that it does not help very much with understanding the relation itself. The formal role that universals have is to partition the domain of items into various subsets, but this does not count as an explanation of how the partition is made, whether it is a natural division or something arbitrary, or what sort of rule is used to determine membership. The nature of the relation between a universal and its instances is not an entirely formal matter, for it is connected to the way that properties are represented in language, and then used in our thinking about the world. When we predicate a property of an item, we do not just mean to say that it is a member of a certain set. We also intend to comprehend the whole world in a certain way: it is not just divided into subdomains of items, it is legimately sorted and conceptualised in this

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way, so that if it is true that a thing instantiates the property, this makes a difference to our understanding of that thing. It does no good to explain that 'being red' just means 'belonging to the set of red things', for this does not enlarge our understanding at all. As a definition, then, (5) is defective, even if it is true that the instantiation of a universal by a particular does imply that the latter is a member of some subset of the domain.

How can we cash out the idea that the instantiation of a universal makes a difference to its instance, or at least to the way we understand that instance? Another transcendental argument might be used here, this time for the proposition that there must be some connections between properties, and that these connections are encoded in our capacities to understand and assess the application of general terms. The way that a property makes a difference to its instance is that it determines which other properties the instance can and cannot possibly possess. With respect to the ways in which we assess the nature of a thing, the instantiation of a certain property will automatically give us certain information about the thing (if we understand that it is so instantiated) in the form of rules for determining what other properties it has. If this were not true, if no property ever supplied rules in this way, then the entire world would be impenetrable to the understanding. It would be possible to divide items up into various sets, but such divisions would ultimately be meaningless without rules for deciding whether they legitimately reflect the way things are, and thus whether simple subject-predicate sentences are true or false. We may conclude that the very possibility of understanding the world in terms of items and their properties depends upon there being rules for the instantiation of properties (and thus for the application of general terms).

Some examples of how universals can provide the rules through which their instances are understood can be given, and these may also count as ways of understanding the instantiation relation itself. Consider the Plaonic model of an ideal or standard against which individuals are assessed in a certain way. If a particular thing
does not compare well enough with the ideal Horse, for example if it does not have the correct shape or it does not move in the same ways, then anyone using this ideal will not count it as a horse. In this case, the instantiation of the property depends upon the extent to which a potential instance shares common properties with the ideal other than that of being a horse. Thus the form of the Horse must be related to other universals, or have other features, if it is possible for it to be instantiated at all. Consider next Goddard's example of the explanation of why some cats are black using a theoretical postulate, genetic structure, which may not be fully understood. The process of coming to learn more about genetic structure is a process of acquiring more knowledge about the rules of combination for genes, perhaps the chemical structure of DNA, and other principles relating to which genes produce which features. In other words, the relationship between the posited theoretical object and the particulars it comprehends, is mediated by connections or rules that govern the properties associated with the theoretical object.

One final example illustrates the modal connections between properties. Let us assume that there are both essential and accidental properties. Some philosophers have argued that essentialism of a certain kind is compatible with a posteriori scientific explanations of natural kinds like gold, for there may be empirical discoveries of essential properties. In addition, S. Kripke⁹ has argued that individuals may also have essential properties, in the form of their internal structure or their origins. The details of his arguments need not concern us - let us simply assume that some properties are essential: that a particular would not be the same thing if it had different origins or a different constitution. If this is true, then the possession of these properties will effectively put a limit on the types of features, both accidental and essential, which a particular can have. Being born into a certain epoch, to certain parents, will condition the whole development of an individual, and thus permit the instantiation of only some accidental properties. Thus Socrates could not have used a ball-point pen, although

Gödel might have proven the Continuum Hypothesis. If a table was made of wood, then it cannot be turned into ice. The structure of the essential properties of an individual is a *modal* structure, and thus also an *intensional* structure: the possession of an essence determines the class of worlds in which an individual appears. Although it has not been argued that there are essential properties, the point of using this example is to demonstrate that a certain type of property must be modally connected with other properties. That there are (neutrally) essential properties is a thesis that will be defended in chapter Three, but they are understood as characterising features, and are not the same as those which Kripke had in mind.

In the light of the transcendental argument, and the examples above, a more complete account of instantiation is possible. The instantiation of a universal relates the intensional structure of the rules used to determine the application of a general term to a thing which actually obeys those rules or satisfies those conditions. Thus universal $\lambda \phi$ is instantiated by item $d$ if and only if:

1). There is a set-of rules for the application of $qu(\phi)$, and;

2). $\phi$ distinguishes $d$ from other items by $d$'s membership of a certain set: this is either the set where the rules for $qu(\phi)$ are universally true, or that wherein they are universally false.

(Thus $d \in \lambda \phi \supset d \in \{x : x \phi\}$ is a consequence of this analysis.)

The second clause is needed to distinguish properties that are merely logical operations on other properties. In such a case, it seems that $qu(\phi)$ has the same rules of application that $qu(\neg \phi)$ does, but they distinguish two different sets of items through the use of these rules. We must distinguish $\lambda \phi$ from $\lambda \neg \phi$, but we cannot do so in terms of their associated rules, so it must be through the partitions of the domain that they designate. It is true that nonexistent, impossible items can instantiate both a property and its negation,
but this is not true of entities, and thus the sets determined by these properties will have
different members. For similar reasons we must distinguish between the properties
\( \lambda x(x \phi \lor x \psi) \) and \( \lambda x(x \phi \land x \psi) \), even though the same general terms are used in these
constructions, and thus the same rules of application will be invoked.

One final transcendental argument is of interest in the context of an
understanding of the instantiation relation. It may be admitted that it is possible to
understand the world without using a distinction between universals and particulars. The
world may be a single unit, amalgamating its particularity with its generality in some sort
of dialectical synthesis. Or, on the other hand, it might be that "universal" and
"particular" are both derived categories. This would be the case if a theory of tropes
proved to be correct. Nevertheless, in so far as the understanding is caught up in the
scheme of "things and their properties", it must also be caught up in the scheme of
instantiation. What makes it possible for the understanding to utilise ordinary categories,
to think in a language with predicative judgments, is the ability to take any such
judgment and separate its components into a structure which reveals how the judgment
can be objectively grounded. The instantiation scheme (4) can then be interpreted as "a
predication is true if and only if a certain item (a universal) serves as the ground for
applying the predicate". Instantiation can then be understood as a grounding relation,
and the statement that a thing instantiates a property is simply the statement that the thing
is anchored, by rules, to the operations of the understanding.

If this is so, then the relation of instantiation is itself instantiated, and
necessarily so. One of the consequences of (4) is that, since the right hand side of the
biconditional is a relational statement itself, it is equivalent to another relational statement
that asserts the instantiation of the ordered pair of the ordered n-tuple of particulars and
the relation \( \lambda x_1, \ldots, x_n \phi^n x_1, \ldots, x_n \) by the relation of instantiation. This is a rather
complicated statement of what appears to be a confused or unpalatable thought. Put into
simpler terms, the relation that grounds the universal/particular scheme of understanding is itself necessarily grounded within that scheme. Any world that can be understood by seeing things as instances of properties is a world which contains at least one instance of the instantiation relation itself, for if this were not the case, then such an understanding would not be possible. In fact, even error, at least in the case of predicative judgment, would be impossible in a world where there was no instance of instantiation. We may conclude that it is necessarily true that instantiation is instantiated. The only qualification to this is that the necessity is true only within conceptual schemes that make use of the metaphysical categories of "universal" and "particular".

4 The Regress Argument

The symbolic expression of the above conclusion is as follows, where "\( \lambda xy \langle xy \rangle \) means "the relation between \( x \) and \( y \) such that \( x \) instantiates \( y \)":

\[
(6) \Box (P < x, \phi > \ i \ \lambda xy \langle xy \rangle)
\]

This proposition, that necessarily some object (individual) and some property are such that their ordered pair together instantiate the relation of instantiation, is not to be taken to have existential import, or to imply that any item actually exists. In a sense, all that it says is that there are states of affairs, or at least distinguishable patterns of objects. It may be accused of being trivial, or circular, since it is itself a state of affairs (and, indeed, a discernible object), but it is not thereby uninformative, nor need it be taken as unexplanatory.

One of the standard objections used against a variety of theories of universals is the Regress Argument, which hinges on the idea that the explanatory power of a theory is reduced if the explanation that it offers is of the same form as what it explains.\(^{10}\) The Regress Argument attempts to establish that a theory is either circular,

\(^{10}\) See Passmore's analysis of the problem in *Philosophical Reasoning*, 1961, p. 33.
or leads to an infinite regress, and it is assumed that neither alternative is satisfactory.

Armstrong presents the argument in a number of different forms, in an attempt to
demolish all but immanent theories of universals. With regard to the theory of
transcendent Forms, and the relation of instantiation, his version of the argument is as
follows. The instantiation relation is itself a type having indefinitely many tokens.
However, "...this is the very sort of situation which the theory of Forms finds
unintelligible and insists on explaining by means of a Form." [NR, p. 70]. He thus
concludes that there must be a Form of instantiation, or in Platonic terminology,
participation, for ordered pairs consisting of a particular and a first-order Form to
participate in, if the theory is to be consistent. If this "second-order" Form of
participation is not the same as first-order participation, then it must be analysed by a
third-order Form, and if it is of the same nature, then the analysis that the theory offers
is circular. To avoid circularity, the third-order Form must be postulated, and this then
leads to an infinite regress of explanations.

The question that this argument prompts, given that (6) is accepted as true, is
whether the necessary instantiation of instantiation is an analysis in the sense that would
make Armstrong's criticism effective. That is, whether the relation between the ordered
pair in (6) is of the same order, and effectively identical with the relation named as the
second relatum of that proposition. There is also the question of exactly what sort of
explanation is actually being used here. A necessary truth can only explain a contingent
fact by making it necessary, and thus we ought not to understand (6) as the explanation
of any contingent proposition. Rather, given the transcendental reasoning that has so far
been adopted, it is much more reasonable to see it as an explanation of the very
possibility of making predicational judgments. A particular contingent judgment may be
true or false, and its truth or falsity can be explained using other contingent truths,
perhaps the laws of nature or psychology or whatever. But Armstrong's objection
focuses on the notion of an analysis, and in this respect, (6) may be problematic. If an
analysis of instantiation results in an infinite regress, or a circularity, then it is defective. The question is whether or not the analysis of instantiation given in the previous section falls prey to a regress, and not whether it properly explains contingent truths. On the level of transcendental explanation, where (6) is supposed to operate, a new understanding of the phenomenon of predicative judgment is proposed, and this understanding will be defective if a regress ensues.

Consider the two possibilities for interpreting (6): one is that the relation that is named, using the singular term "\(\lambda xy \, x \equiv y\)" is the same as the relation that is asserted. The other is that it is not the same relation at all, but a different, first-order version of instantiation. In the second case, the relation that is asserted to hold in (6) is second-order instantiation, and presumably has a different analysis from the first-order relation. Armstrong's objection can be formulated thus: if the first possibility is true, then the analysis is circular and therefore uninformative, and if the second is true, then it is incomplete, and will need to be supplemented by another analysis involving a third-order instantiation, which will then lead to an infinite regress. One reply to this objection is that for each of these possibilities, my analysis of instantiation remains informative and nonregressive. We can interpret (6) in the first way, and nevertheless claim that if it is a circular explanation, it is not uninformative. Recall that a thing instantiates a property when there is a rule for the associated general term, and this rule effectively partitions the domain of items. In the case of the instantiation of instantiation, it follows that the rule is simply "when confronted by ordered pairs of particulars and properties, apply rules for general terms and divide the domain accordingly". The circularity is harmless, for it is simply a case of an informative analysis that is being applied to itself, and it does not in that case cease to be informative.

In the second case, where (6) is interpreted as using a second-order instantiation, is much less plausible. For one thing, (4), if it is interpreted as a logical
truth and applied to itself, entails (6), as a simple argument using the rule of
necessitation and the rule of particular generalisation shows. But in (4) only first-order
instantiation is used, and thus it is difficult to see how a different, second-order relation
emerges. However, there seems to be no reason for excluding the possibility of
analysing the second-order version of instantiation in the same way as was done above.
The rule that this version uses is, once again, that of taking ordered pairs of particulars
and properties and applying rules of usage for associated predicates to divide up the
domain of items. If this were done, then the regress will be halted at the second level,
for there is then no reason to postulate a third-order relation to complete the analysis. It
is complete as it is, and remains informative, in the sense that it provides information
about the nature of predicative judgments. Of course, this is only true from within the
perspective of an understanding that uses the universal/particular distinction, and the
necessity operator used in (6) must be understood as necessity within this domain.

Another reply to Armstrong's objection is to claim that, since (6) is a necessary
truth, it does not require any explanation. If analyses provide explanations, then that
which lead to the postulation of (6) has satisfied the conditions for providing a full
explanation of the phenomenon of predication, or instantiation. It does not try to explain
anything contingently true, but works at a level that transcends the contingent and
empirical. If we start with the fact that we make predicational judgments, and explain
how this is possible by neutrally postulating universals, we may discover something
essential to our conceptual scheme, and thus necessarily true within it. In this case, we
have not explained contingent details by a necessary truth, but have simply shown why
it is that contingent truths have the form that they do. In short, if a regress of
explanations is what Armstrong's objection threatens, then it can be stopped at the
second stage by the fact that the postulation of a necessary truth eliminates the need for
any further explanation. If we enter the conceptual scheme of things and properties at
all, then we are necessarily committed to the instantiation of instantiation itself. The
ground of our judgments is in the adoption of the scheme.

5 Other objections and different theories

I have argued so far that the necessity of the instantiation of the instantiation
relation, or the grounding of the world of particulars and their properties, vindicates a
relational theory of universals, and provides a point at which the Regress Argument
fumbles. Only a little has been said about the nature of universals, and how they manage
to perform the task of providing objective principles and rules for differentiating various
sorts of objects. I shall now reply to two of the other general objections that Armstrong
has to a relational theory in the course of expanding on these themes.

The famous Third Man argument has a long history, and is generally
recognised as a valid criticism of a theory of transcendent Forms on the Platonic model,
where Forms are treated as "celestial paradigms" which their instances participate in or
imitate to some degree. If we think of the set of items that are instances of a certain
property, as well as that property itself, then a collection has been constructed which
apparently needs to be explained by the postulation of a certain Form, for it is a
multitude of things which have something in common. It is clear that this argument only
works given the Self-predication assumption, that the Form of $\phi$ is a $\phi$, in all cases,
which is a consequence of the Platonic theory, but need not be a part of the general
relational theory of universals [NR, p. 71]. Plato held that the Form of the Horse is
itself a horse, since it is on the basis of properties that are shared by this Form and
particular horses that the particulars instantiate the Form at all. This theory uses only one
of the relations, that of copying, cited above as illustrations of the problem of
universals. A relational theory need not be committed to the the exclusive use of this
particular relation. Armstrong, however, presents a restricted version of the Third Man
argument, where he considers the Form of Formhood itself, and correctly asserts that this Form, at least, satisfies the Self-predication assumption. He then argues as follows:

Consider the collection of first-order Forms plus the Form of Formhood. The members of this expanded collection have something in common. The different tokens are all of the same type. In consistency, therefore, they must all be said to participate in a third-order Form of Formhood. The regress then continues. It is either vicious, or, at best, uneconomical. [NR, p. 73]

One way of applying this objection to the theory presented so far is to construe it as an attempted refutation of the analysis of what it is to be a property or universal. Surely one may only construct an informative theory about a class of objects if that class may be distinguished from other classes. This appears to entail that there must be a class of objects that fail to be universals, and of necessity. That is, given the standard definition of the term "particular" as something incapable of being instantiated, it is necessarily true that there are particulars, as is stated in (6). This will subsequently entail that the universal "being a universal" will genuinely distinguish between things that are universals, and things which cannot be "predicated of things", or instantiated. That is all that is required to yield the result that there is such a thing as the universal of universality, or in Platonic terms, the Form of Formhood. This Form must provide some principle that distinguishes universals from particulars, since it is in the essence of universals to perform this task, and the most obvious principle for this Form to supply is precisely that essential feature of universals. That is, instantiable items may be distinguished from non-instantiable items (particulars) by their being essentially the suppliers of rules that distinguish items from each other within some domain. (A theory of Resemblance Nominalism, in which particulars provide principles of classification by being similar to each other and to some paradigm(s) which determines the meaning of a term, does not necessarily imply that the paradigm particular chosen is essentially the provider of a rule. The distinction between particulars and universals is thus preserved in this account, but it is then a theory which either says nothing about universals at all, or demonstrates that a particular may sometimes be used as though it were a universal.)
It should be clear that Armstrong's "restricted" third man argument is quite a different case from that of the Regress Argument. The Form of Formhood is a Form because of the same analysis which renders any item a Form: namely, it serves to differentiate its instances from other items; in this case, the first-order items; particulars. However, the fact that the same analysis is used to establish its Formhood provides adequate reason to conclude that the Form of Formhood instantiates itself, which is a direct circularity, but prevents the construction of a regress through rejecting what Armstrong calls the Non-Identity assumption [NR, p. 73]. Routley, also, argues for this conclusion, and he uses \( \lambda p \) to symbolise the property of being a property:

Now consider (with Armstrong (p. 73)) the collection of all first-order properties plus \( \lambda p \). They have something in common all right, but not what Armstrong suggests, a third order property of propertyhood, but simply \( \lambda p \) itself; that is, there is no regress. [JB, p. 638]

He also notes that Armstrong's case for the Non-Identity assumption is spurious, as it involves an argument that there are no reflexive relations, which if sound would make the notion of identity unintelligible and most of mathematical science impossible.

The relational theory defended so far has the flavour of a "transcendent" theory, and although nothing has been said as yet about ontological status, it will be argued that universals do not have existence. Forms or properties may be represented in logic as propositional functions, and the propositions which they map on to truth values represent predicational judgments. They are essentially abstract objects, and serve to objectively differentiate items of the world. There are a variety of ways that a Form may "supply" a principle. Quite often, items are given features in the context of a "background" set of features - for example, the property of being to the left of Susan contains or presupposes in its application the adoption of some frame of reference. In these cases, one property is essentially related to other properties by making reference to their instances in the rules that they supply. This may be reflected in the intensions of the terms representing these properties (thus, for example, part of the intension of "square"
may be specified thus: \((Ux)(x\text{Square} \supset x\text{-Round})\). In other cases, properties cannot be individuated by the intensions of corresponding terms, for they are too close in their applications. The property of being coloured, for example, has the same intension as the property of being extended, but they are not the same. B.C. Van Fraassen\(^{11}\) uses facts about adverbial modifiers to establish this - a thing may be brightly coloured, but it cannot possibly be brightly extended.

The intension of a general term is generally thought of as what it means, as opposed to what it applies to. Van Fraassen represents the intension of a term as the set of possible instances of its corresponding property, but this is just for certain formal purposes. As the determinant of meaning, an intension could also be thought of as a rule of differentiation. This rule may be nothing more than a statement that a thing is "F" just in case it is "G" and also "H", etc., so that this notion of intension is quite close to the old idea that the intension of a concept "...consists of the qualities or properties which go to make up the concept...".\(^{12}\) But note that a property has an intension (as a result of being representable by a general term), and that it need not be identified with its intension. Such an identification appears to be the essence of Goddard's suggestion that we take the relation \(R\) of (1) to be "...the relation between a word and the rules governing its use and as the set of rules for the use of the word."\(^{13}\) There are some important objections to this idea if it is taken to be a general theory of universals. Firstly, the rules for the use of a word may not be able to determine a property in all cases, for some properties are ill-understood by users of language. Secondly, even if there were no rules for word usage, objects would still have features, and indeed they had many features long before there were words. These two points count against a general identification of properties with rules of language use. There is, thirdly, the Armstrongian objection that the causal powers of particulars are determined by the

\(^{12}\) D.D. Runes, Dictionary of Philosophy - see the entry on "intension", pp. 147-148.
properties of these objects, and it is difficult to see how the rules for words could
determine causal relations.

It is interesting to note how the theory of transcendent Forms might deal with
this last objection, which is also one that Armstrong attempts to use against the whole
field of non-immanent theories. Some sentences asserting that a causal relation obtains
appear to relate property-instances, or "tropes" - for example "The stove's heat caused
the water's boiling", and may also be construed as stating that a relation holds between
events that objects such as pots of water undergo. Others, such as "Smoking causes
heart disease" are more general, and appear to relate properties themselves. The
appearance is deceptive, though, for causal relations can only hold between instances of
properties, and generally hold between full-blown particulars like events. Nevertheless,
whenever a causal relation does hold, it may be inferred that some of the objects
involved have changed their features in some way. This much is entailed by the very
notion of a causal relation, for if the concept is applicable at all, such relations must
serve as the explanations of changes in nature.

One way that a Form can provide a principle that differentiates its instances
from its noninstances is by being related to other Forms in such a way that its
instantiation will necessitate a proportional instantiation of these other Forms. That is, a
change in the quantitative distribution of the instantiated property will necessitate some
change in the properties of other objects, the exact nature of which is determined by the
nature of the property and the principle(s) it supplies. The best examples of causal
properties that work in this way are ones that have already been analysed in their
applications to a variety of different situations, such as temperature. A difference in
temperature will always bring about a difference in the mean kinetic energy of some
material or set of materials, which will then result in various other chemical or physical
changes, depending upon the nature of the materials concerned.
The objection that Armstrong raises against transcendent universals is that it is natural to say that the causal powers of a particular are determined both by its properties and by its own self, yet the theory of transcendent universals implies that a thing's properties are determined by its relations to Forms beyond itself [NR, p. 75]. Now if the above account of causal properties is correct, then objects are distinguished from other objects by causal properties when the relevantly affected things change in accordance with the proportional instantiation of the property. As the other objects are also distinguished by their causal properties, and thus by their effect on the environment, we must use the notion of a causal network or web in our understanding of physical objects. These things are differentiated from others in the network by their causal relations. The system as a whole is an interrelated network of particulars only because the causal properties that individuals in the system have are analysed in terms of each other.

Armstrong's objection, therefore, is hardly cogent in this context. A particular has causal powers as a result of its position in the causal network, and these powers are thus determined by its own self. The fact that the properties of a particular are also involved in the determination of its causal powers is accounted for in this theory as well, in its analysis of what it is to be in a causal system. Instantiation relations are not causal properties, and do not "determine" the causal powers of individuals. All that can be inferred from the holding of an instantiation relation is that some rule or principle serves to differentiate the object instantiated from others. It need not be a causal principle, but even if it were, Armstrong's objection would not work.

6 The Question of Existence: Paradigms as nonentities

A universal may provide a principle which divides the set of objects into the subset of its instances and the subset of its noninstances by being systematically related
to other universals, which themselves provide principles of differentiation in the same way, thus forming a "weblike" connection between these items (the reified version of a conceptual scheme). This is not the only way in which a principle of differentiation may be given to a comprehending mind, but it appears to be the most direct method. If we think of universals as essentially suppliers of rules and principles, then they act as nodes in a connected structure of universals, and are defined by their place within the system. This may explain what many philosophers have said about conceptual dependencies and systems, so long as universals are taken to be reified concepts. However, there are other methods whereby principles are comprehended which arise from different theories of the nature of universals. One that appears in many of the traditional accounts is that of treating universals as paradigms which are similar in detectable ways to their instances, so that a rule is given when the right type of similarity is understood.

Resemblance Nominalism is a good example of this sort of theory, but it is susceptible to a number of criticisms concerning the non-abstract character of the paradigms. It can be modified, though, and made useful as a theory of predicates whose application is determined by patterns of similarity relations. A theory such as Price's, which holds that a set of paradigms, such as (for example) a particular tomato, a particular brick, and a particular British post box, may determine the class of red objects, through the rule that "...a red object is any object which resembles A, B, and C as closely as they resemble one another."14 is open to objections based on the fact that concrete particulars are used. For one thing, their determination in space and time, within the causal nexus, is not only unnecessary, but actually works against the theory. Presumably, when the tomato is eaten, the post box destroyed, and the brick used as a part of a wall, the class of red objects is still determined by some set of paradigms, though they will be different ones. Why, then, should the first set be considered necessary to the theory at all? There seems no reason, except that nominalist theories are

traditionally constructed so that they involve no reference to non-particulars. Different individuals must use different paradigms to determine the class of red objects in any case, which introduces an appropriate element of subjectivity, or an "error margin" that may account for borderline cases. If there remains an objective basis for the application of the predicate "red", however, it is in the constancy of the rule of similarity.

This rule, of course, only makes sense if there are paradigms which are appropriately similar to each other. As paradigm concrete particulars need not be used, or rather since any particular with the right properties may be used, the theory may be adjusted to admit ideal post-boxes, or average tomatoes, as paradigms, while retaining the same rule of similarity. These items are neither real nor concrete, and it is debatable whether they are particulars, though they are "abstracted" from particulars, while not technically being features or properties of things. The advantage gained here is that it is not necessary that particulars be used to determine a class, for they will perish or change their features, and thus fail at certain times or situations to do so. The original theory of Resemblance Nominalism appears to entail that certain particulars always and necessarily determine a class. Switching to averages or ideals avoids this problem while permitting the theory to account for the applications of certain types of predicates. Typically these predicates are those whose extension is determined by examining degrees of similarity. For example, Woozley discusses the case of some people at a picnic who decide to use a rock as a table. The answer to the question "Is this a table?" is not something which is discovered, but rather something that is decided, since "...we are not really unsure whether a certain universal is there or not. If we are unsure about anything at all, it is about degrees of likeness or unlikeness....".15 One can see how it is that The Average Table is the appropriate measure, to which these similarity relations are ascribed in such a debate. Real particular tables are so divergent in their qualities that they will not do the job.

15 A.D. Woozley, Theory of Knowledge, 1949, p. 81.
There is an even stronger argument, though, which introduces one of the reasons for taking paradigms, and abstract objects generally, as nonexistent objects which may determine properties, or fix the meaning of predicates. Resemblance Nominalism is supposed to be an Empiricist solution to the problem of universals, which not only avoids ontic commitment to abstract objects, but remains committed only to empirically discernible items, or items that are perceptually available. As Armstrong says: "The whole point about paradigms in the Resemblance analysis is that they should be actual objects which can work upon a classifier's mind and so enable him to compare other things with the paradigm." [NR, p. 51]. One of the objections to this theory, first stated by Duncan-Jones,16 directly attacks this conception of paradigms, by insisting on the logical possibility of only one instance of a property existing. Should there be only one existent white thing, then its whiteness cannot be analysed in terms of its relations of resemblance to other entities. It is clear that there is a great advantage in admitting paradigms as nonexistent objects, for this objection is entirely avoided if they are taken as nonexistent ideals or averages upon which comparisons are made. Such an admission entails, of course, a radical modification of the theory, as paradigms will no longer be conceived of as perceptual objects, although they may still have resemblances, in many respects, to entities.

The mind of a classifier may still be "worked upon", not only by perceived objects, since they are understood as instances of universals, but by paradigms, which direct the mind, through objective similarity relations, to judge in the way it does. Armstrong presents an objection to the Duncan-Jones argument based on the fact that normal white objects have parts which must also be considered white objects, and thus there will be some similarity between these parts. Although he accepts this objection as cogent, it seems to me that this situation is simply one in which there exist a multitude of white things, and thus is not the sort of logical possibility where only one white thing

exists, making the nonexistence of the "white" paradigm the important point in the argument. Armstrong's convoluted reply to this objection is thus unnecessary, as it fails to provide a counterexample in the first place. Besides this, of course, it completely fails against examples of predicates such as "horse" or "book", since for example parts of books are not themselves books.

6.1 Routley's Noneist Theory of Universals

There are other reasons for accepting a theory of universals which admits abstract objects as proper subjects of discourse, as things with features of their own, and yet denies that such objects exist. Such a denial is not merely a terminological twist which soothes our "robust sense of reality", for the existence of universals is still a live philosophical issue (just as is the existence of God), and its resolution must make an important difference to our understanding of the world. Routley has argued for what he calls a "noneist" theory of universals, which is part of the overall metaphysical project of noneism. Apparently, noneism is the thesis that none of the more controversial oddities, or the bizarre items in Meinong's Jungle, have actual existence.

Routley offers what might be called a diagnosis of the traditional problem of universals in which he claims that the origin of the difficulty is the Ontological Assumption. A sort of intellectual game has been played by philosophers from different sides of the debate, the basic rule being that what does not exist cannot be truly spoken about. The Ontological Assumption may then be used as a criterion for truth or existence, and the basic positions then emerge naturally as one considers any discourse which uses general terms, and thus any truth-valued discourse at all. The way to resolve the debate, according to Routley, is to dispense with the main rule of the game, and reject the Ontological Assumption. If this is done, it can be argued that the content of the
different positions, realism and nominalism, is dependent upon a false assumption, and that these positions are themselves false. As he says:

If the nominalist regards what exists as settled and takes the Ontological Assumption as a criterion of what can truly be said, the platonist takes what can truly be said as settled and applies the Ontological Assumption as a criterion of existence. [JB, p. 630]

The two basic positions, then, differ only in that they use the same erroneous assumption in different ways. The nominalist must deny that there are true statements about universals (and indeed intensional matters), and thus either embark on some reduction program or deny evident truths. The platonist, on the other hand, because he accepts the Ontological Assumption, can only admit truths about universals by accepting that they exist. This, Routley argues, involves an unwarranted manipulation of the concept of existence [JB, p. 630], which reveals a failure to take existence seriously [JB, p. 631], and ultimately leads to the view that there is no stable sense in the concept at all [JB, p. 634].

This last claim demands attention, for it is the crucial point that differentiates a noneist position from the traditional realist. The noneist must establish that there is a stable sense of the word "exists" which (analytically) entails, or provides grounds for asserting the nonexistence of abstract objects, or his position reduces to some sort of platonism. Routley appears to use an "interaction" criterion for existence, which is made explicit in chapter nine of the Jungle Book, but is partially explained in the section on universals as well:

If something is said to exist, it is reasonable to expect to be able to investigate it, to differentiate it from other items of the same kind, and to be able to stand in certain relations to it, relations one could not expect to have to a nonentity. If a swimming pool is claimed to exist, we can expect (in principle at least) to be able to swim in it, but we should not expect to swim in a nonexistent swimming pool. [JB, p. 634].

The idea (later formulated as "RE: xE iff xRp", where p is a paradigm existent and R a suitable relation) is that existent objects interact with other existent objects in certain ways - through causal or spatiotemporal relations, say - and that this is a matter of
definition, part of what it means to exist. Such a criterion entails the nonexistence of universals only if they are necessarily abstract objects, in the sense that they cannot be spatiotemporally related to any item. Routley could also use a "determinateness" criterion, which is discussed in the Jungle Book, but this may turn out to be unsatisfactory. The ideal Triangle is neither scalene, isosceles or equilateral, as he mentions, and thus in a sense it is necessarily indeterminate: \( \Box (Pf)(\neg \text{The Triangle } f & \neg \text{The Triangle } \neg f) \), but other mathematical items possess a very precise, determinate definition.

There is a rather complex problem concerning the use of the word "exist" in different contexts, since it may have a stable sense in certain fields of study which is contrary to the sense that Routley wants it to have. Mathematicians regularly ask such questions as "Does a solution to this equation exist?" or "Does the largest prime number exist?", and sometimes these questions are answered positively. Routley does not explicitly respond to this way of using the word "exists", but the general impression given in the Jungle Book is that mathematicians are simply wrong. One of his examples of sentences that cannot be adequately formalised in classical logic is: "Some mathematicians mistakenly believe that every consistent item exists" [JB, p. 9], and this is also an indication of his attitude. He appears to believe that mathematicians are not simply using a certain word incorrectly, or differently from others, but rather that they are factually mistaken. It would be a relatively simple matter to translate the existence questions of mathematics as questions about whether there are neutrally solutions to certain equations, or whether it is consistent to assume that there is neutrally a largest prime, but this is not his (explicit) strategy. The claim of ontological neutrality for mathematical items is too weak, for Routley believes that they do not exist at all [JB, p. 793], and thus their ontological status is not an open question, as it would be if the neutrality claim were true. Instead of neutral quantifiers, the use of explicitly
nonexistential quantification would be the most appropriate way to formalise mathematical theories, although this is also not explicitly stated in the Jungle Book.

Routley's main argument for the nonexistence of universals, and in particular mathematical universals, is that they are abstract items, but the only reason given for thinking that abstract items cannot exist is that the meaning of "existence" implies that only concrete, spatiotemporal items can exist. The fact that mathematicians do not appear to use the same meaning stipulation can be treated as evidence against Routley's definition, instead of some enormous metaphysical error. A stronger argument is needed than that of merely stipulating a definition, for just because the platonists used the OA as a criterion of existence does not imply that they were in error to attribute this property to universals. It is as unconvincing to define universals into nonexistence as it is to define them into existence.

6.2 The Nonexistence of Universals

I have argued that even the most plausible version of nominalism, which uses a resemblance analysis, needs to be reconstrued so as to make its paradigms abstract or ideal objects. Even the nominalist, then, ought to make use of abstractions, and those predicates that can be analysed by a resemblance theory can still be counted as rule-governed. Instead of using a definition, or some other stipulation that will secure the nonexistence of abstractions, I will next consider the implications of both the transcendental reasoning that lead to the neutral postulation of universals, and the fact that words have a history. This discussion will do nothing more than lend strong support to the thesis that abstract items do not exist - a proof of the thesis, which would require a stipulative definition of existence, is not attempted. Nevertheless, the reasons for believing it are conclusive. If mathematicians and others apply the word "exist" to such items, then it may be that they incorrectly believe in the existence of abstractions.
On the other hand, it may be because they have been bullied into pronouncing "Is there a \( \Phi \)?" as "Does there exist a \( \Phi \)?" by classical logicians, and haven't actually thought the matter out very clearly.

Meinong's theory of objects can be understood as a minimal theory of intentionality, that property of mental acts whereby they are directed at things. Consciousness has content, and as such it reveals objects beyond itself, in many cases objects which fail to exist. Transcendental arguments for the neutral postulation of universals also help to reveal that consciousness, or understanding, can only be directed upon objects if it fills out some of the details of these objects, or apprehends their properties. Even so, we may state exactly what it is to be an object without using the idea of consciousness at all: \( x \) is an object if and only if either \( x \) has at least one property, or there is at least one true proposition about \( x \), or both. In defining objecthood, then, we have invoked two further types of object, properties and propositions, for they also satisfy the conditions for objecthood. We might then construct an infinite number of properties of properties, and propositions about propositions, all of which are abstract items, and all of which are based upon the category of first-level objects, particulars. Notice that in such a construction (which does not lead to a vicious regress, since there is no explanation or analysis being offered), we may be doing nothing more than applying the conditions for objecthood, having started with a particular thing. I know that my cat has the property of being ginger, and therefore the property of being ginger has the property of being considered by me, and so also the property of being considered by me has the property of being considered by me, and so on. These properties are "extracted", or brought forth to my understanding, from my original awareness of a particular cat, by a process of elucidating what was then presented, and then becoming aware of what has been elucidated, and so on.
A very similar process is involved in the transcendental postulation of universals in general. We begin with certain items of which we are aware, and then proceed to become aware of their properties, as a result of bringing our original awareness under scrutiny. We then conclude that our original awareness was only possible because the items possessed at least some properties, (even if they are not the ones we thought them to be) for otherwise we could not have brought them to mind at all. A transcendental argument can be used as an explanation of how certain forms of awareness are possible, which is primarily what Kant tried to do, or as an explanation of the possibility of certain contingent truths. In either case, the explanations begin with commonalities in the vast and complex jungle of our experiences and judgments. No proposition is true all by itself, without its implications also being true, and no consciousness is alone in the world, without any other thing of which it can be aware.

Consider what is involved in the discovery of a commonality. Someone learns a rule, or discovers that the word "cat" is applicable to items in a regular way. With this discovery, such a person participates in a communal practice, and incorporates the community's categories into her own understanding. Wittgenstein was fascinated by rule-following and its communal aspect, but seemed to despair of giving any ultimate justification for either the practice itself, or the way in which a rule is understood in one way rather than another. In the end, our explanations reach a bedrock, and we just appeal to what is done. His position can be summed up in the following quote:

> It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which someone obeyed a rule. It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which a report was made, an order given or understood; and so on.- To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are customs (uses, institutions). To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique.\(^{17}\)

According to Wittgenstein, commonalities, rules and universals can only be understood with respect to their place in the practices of language users, within a lived experience of

social community. Such a position seems to lead to a version of nominalism, whereby words and their practical uses in different communities are the only real universals. Wittgenstein himself repudiated nominalism, which he thought of as making the mistake "...of interpreting all words as names, and so of not really describing their use, but only, so to speak, giving a paper draft on such a description".\textsuperscript{18} His concentration on the use of words is part of a general approach to semantics which recognises meaningful discourse primarily in situations where signs and symbols actually have a significant role in human activities. In other cases, he claims that language has gone on holiday, and is deprived of its real meaning. Indeed, many of his remarks can be taken to imply that words themselves have a certain life, but only when they act in the lives of others. For example: "Every sign by itself seems dead. What gives it life? - In use it is alive. Is life breathed into it there? - Or is the use its life?".\textsuperscript{19}

I think that what he is trying to convey in this remark is the thought we have that a sign, if it is characterised as a purely physical mark or sound, is deprived of any meaning. A sense of the emptiness of words without living use can be experienced if one takes one word and says it out loud several hundred times. If this is done in the company of someone else as a sort of thought experiment, the idea arises that a symbol which would normally serve a certain function in communication has no such function, even though the situation is one in which communication is possible. In this case the word has been isolated, taken by itself, and it does indeed seem dead. It is only when the word is taken together with other words, and in the context of a practical situation, that it becomes a tool, and thus acquires meaning and life. Wittgenstein rejects the idea that word meanings have some sort of "fit" with either the sense of other words and sentences, or reality, and explicitly states that this follows from the equation of meaning

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 118.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 128.
Meanings are grasped "in a flash", in their immediate living activity. He seems to adopt a similar attitude to thought:

"This queer thing, thought" - but it does not strike us as queer when we are thinking. Thought does not strike us as mysterious while we are thinking, but only when we say, as it were retrospectively: "How was that possible?" How was it possible for thought to deal with the object itself? We feel as if by means of it we had caught reality in our net.

It is only after the lived experience of thinking something that we come to muse over whether it touches reality. If words are meaningful only in their use, then they need never "touch" a nonlinguistic reality, for they are already participants in the living process of being real.

Wittgenstein's arguments, if that is what they are, seem to lead to a semantical theory which is starkly antithetical to the conclusions of the transcendental arguments. But in fact they deal with a different subject, in a sense, as they are accounts of the feelings and actions of a language user. The meanings of words will naturally be transparent and immediate to the subject using them. Transcendental reasoning establishes only what makes predicative judgment possible, not how such judgments will appear in the world of the real living agent. Consider Wittgenstein's remarks on rule-following. It seems that the rule for the application of a term comes from nowhere. There is no way of telling whether a particular numerical series should be continued in one way rather than another. The rule for the series is just apprehended in a flash: it is never made explicit in the presentation of the problem, and it can only be revealed in a certain activity. This is exactly what one would predict in the case of the actual, existing performance, where a rule is just grasped and then applied. But the very possibility of using rules can only be explained if a "rule-giving item" is postulated, beyond the reach of real living and thinking entities. Indeed, the idea that a rule comes from nowhere is made intelligible if the universal which grounds the rule is something which fails to exist. For in this case, we must grasp something which can only reveal itself as a pattern.

20 ibid., p. 53.
21 ibid., p. 127.
across the domains of possible worlds, an "empty" or nonexistent item that can only be filled out by following the rule in some activity (i.e., by understanding the pattern, and acting in accordance with it).

Words have different meanings at different times. They have histories, they evolve as immanent entities out of social practices, and take part in more complex interactions as a society develops. The fact that the meanings they possess are formulated in or constructed by the concrete practices of individuals does not, however, preclude the possibility of a transcendental standpoint. The determination of which meaning is appropriate in a situation (that is, how to understand a certain use) is a matter of context and contingency. But the content of the meaning of a word is given by a rule, and it transcends each particular situation by being applicable to a variety of possible situations. We can sometimes ask for the meaning of a word simpliciter: not what it means to a certain group, or how it has been used so far, or how it connects with some living practice. We can take a word, or a concept, already embedded in the contingencies of actual practice, and just ask for its meaning, or its rule of application. Such a question admits of an answer if we are prepared to postulate universals with an objective logical standing and an essential nature. We then have a point of reference, an understanding of the overall pattern into which particular uses and particular situations fit, however imperfectly.

We can postulate universals even if it is granted that awareness and understanding are themselves interactive faculties, enmeshed in the world of contingent processes and practices. As was stated above, the form of a transcendental argument actually requires that we begin with some such premise, for it must start from agreed truths or recognised commonalities. A transcendental argument for the neutral postulation of universals will yield an explanation for the very possibility of predicational judgment, or "objecthood" as it appears to a consciousness. The
explanation only works, however, if the items postulated are in some sense transcendental themselves: they must ground the flux of historically conditioned practices in an abstract object expressing a principle or rule.

It should be clear that there is a certain tension in any theory which both admits that symbols and their meanings are contingent, historical, and ultimately artificial constructs of human practices (a view made into a methodology by some thinkers: eg. M. Foucault, T. Kuhn, etc), and also explains the meaning of general terms by postulating necessary, ahistorical universals, with absolute rules of application. This tension is entirely resolved by a theory of objects. Both the transcendental arguments and the rule-following considerations of Wittgenstein can be accepted, and are equally convincing. Together they demonstrate that universals must be things that are somehow external to concrete living practices, and are only accidentally connected with the historical evolution of general terms. But this need not be disturbing at all, if one is prepared to countenance objects which fail to exist, and thus fail to take any active part in real historical processes.

Nonexistent items are external to concrete living practices, in the sense that they do not themselves participate in social relations between entities. Nonexistent items will also possess accidental connections with the evolution of words that are used to denote them. In short, it is much more plausible to maintain that universals do not exist than to assert their reality. This will preserve the explanatory power of both transcendental reasoning and the social evolution of language. Note that the nonexistence of universals is not the consequence of a definition, but of the reconciliation of two different semantical theories. Wittgenstein's conception of meaning as use leads us away from the idea that we must postulate meanings as things, and then somehow connect them to concrete situations where they are applied. Connections between concrete situations and word meanings are already present in the life of
symbols themselves, a life breathed into them by use. This is how it appears to the
players of language games, and it is the defining characteristic of meaningful discourse.
But this theory of meaning leaves us without any explanation of how language games
are possible in the first place. For such an explanation, we must go beyond what is
displayed in the concrete practices of living beings, and postulate an objective ground
for the rules of the games. Meaning is use, and is thus conditioned by concrete
existence. But meaning is also abstract objectivity, and thus involves that which does
not exist.
Hence, if anyone loves a paradox, he can really say, and say with strict truth if he will allow for the ambiguity, that the element which makes up the life of phenomenology as of all eidetic science is "fiction", that fiction is the source whence the knowledge of "eternal truths" draws its sustenance.

E. Husserl, Ideas §70.

1 The Distinction Between Characterising and Noncharacterising Properties

It has been argued that the function of universals is that of providing the grounds for distinguishing and identifying the contents of the world - i.e. various objects - and that universals do not exist. There are, however, different types of properties and different sorts of distinctions. The theory of objects maintains that existence is a nongrouping property, and this classification is used in the Characterisation Postulate. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the significance of the distinction, and to state the conditions under which a property is characterising. The next chapter will concern several popular and well-motivated theories of existence, and set out objections to each of them. The following chapter will attempt to provide a better account of this property, and establish a basic ontology.
I will argue that characterising features supply principles of differentiation which yield information concerning what objects are like. To characterise an item is to say what it is like, but the exact analysis of what this entails is a somewhat difficult matter. Characterising predicates are those that are suitable for use in a definition, and in fact the notion of a definition is rather close to that of a characterisation, in that both select the necessary or essential features of things. Although the idea of saying what objects are like is fairly clear, for it amounts to some specification of similarities, complexities arise when certain problems are encountered with a simple "resemblance" account of characterisation. In particular, relations and higher-order properties appear to be excluded from the category of characterising features, and this is unsatisfactory. A more complex account, in terms of the structure of both comparison and contrast, yields a stronger theory which can solve some of the difficulties with object theory that were mentioned in chapter One.

2 The Distinction According To Routley and Parsons

The neo-Meinongians who have utilized the idea of a characterising or nuclear property have not actually provided definitions of this notion, even though their theories rely upon it. Routley provides a quasi-inductive list of characterising and noncharacterising predicates, as well as a sort of principle which partially justifies the taxonomy. He appeals to the traditional notion of an essential property, as was noted in chapter One, and lists descriptive predicates, like "round", "heavy", "dry" and "red" as essence-specifying, since these are used to describe or classify things. He also has a list of non-characterising predicates, and these are again usually considered to be nonessential characteristics (if they are treated as properties in the first place). However, the ground for the distinction is never entirely spelt out, and if someone were to ask why, for example, existence is noncharacterising, Routley simply has no response. While it is certainly true that the theory of objects is false if it is not the case, this in itself
is no reason for simply assuming that existence does not characterise things. Sometimes, Routley gives an indication that there is an underlying ground for the distinction, and this occasionally emerges in his examples. Regarding intensional predicates, such as “is much sought after”, or “is observed” he claims that they are never used in genuinely characterising an object because “...observing the cheese is not a part of the nature of the cheese and makes no difference to how it is.” [JB, p. 266].

In fact, Routley also makes use of a very different idea than that of being involved in the nature of a thing. We tend to think that observation relations are nonessential because the observer is usually an entirely separate item, both spatially and causally, from the thing observed. We are thus not truly involved in the nature or the constitution of the items we observe, believe, or intend, precisely because we are differently constituted. However, Routley makes use of a different idea from that of essence or constitution when he attempts to justify the restrictions placed on FCP. He then says the following on noncharacterising predicates:

...such predicates are (in a good sense) consequential, ie. depend for their determination on the prior determination of lower order ones. Hence if we allowed a description to determine such predicates, we could obtain by description determination of predicates which might already be otherwise determined. Thus we obtain inconsistency. For example, consider “the existing golden mountain”, “the possible round square”, “the item such that its being red logically entails its being two feet long.”. Such features as those presented cannot be determined by mere description, because they hold only as a result or consequence of the items’ possessing certain other appropriate properties and not possessing others. [JB, p. 261].

In speaking of the “prior determination” of lower order predicates, or the holding of a feature as a result of the possession of other features, he does not mean to imply any sort of temporal order. It is not that we must fix the lower order, characterising properties of a thing before it comes to possess existence, or possibility. Neither does he mean that the type of consequence in question is some type of logical consequence. If this were implied, then he would have to say that the existence of an
item might follow logically from its characterisation, and this is unacceptable. Much later in the Jungle Book, Routley states that we must distinguish between what is included in the characterisation of an object from what follows from its characterisation [JB, p. 857]. He then claims that nonexistence, while not a part of the characterisation of the round square, nevertheless follows from it. This, however, seems relevant only to noncharacterising properties that are given specific definitions, and need not apply at all to intensional properties, for example (where strict definitions are difficult to formulate). It seems, then, that some sort of dependence, either logical or metaphysical, is being attributed here, but nothing specific is said concerning the way in which noncharacterising predicates are “determined” by characterising predicates.

Parsons uses a different terminology for essentially the same distinction. He also classifies existence, possibility, simplicity, determinateness, and intensional properties as extranuclear, while taking ordinary descriptive properties as nuclear. The terminology reflects the nature of the distinction, at least under a particular interpretation, for it suggests that each object has a central core of properties, its "nucleus", and that the formal structure of the core determines its extranuclear properties and relations. Once again, however, Parsons says very little about the grounds for making the distinction in the first place. In fact, he says that we are to think of extranuclear properties as the historically controversial ones [NO, p. 24], but this is hardly enough.

Even though Routley and Parsons provide almost nothing in the way of theoretical background for their distinction between properties, they have supplied smooth-running, consistent, and largely plausible formal systems that account for the logic of nonexistential objects. We may conclude, therefore, that the distinction is a valuable one, and that it deserves investigation. Indeed, we may adopt their classifications as the data which a properly developed theory of characterisation ought to

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1 This is very similar to Castañeda's exposition of C-properties, and to his notion of "guise cores".
explain. We may thus formulate criteria of adequacy for such a theory on this basis. In order to ensure that the theory is sufficiently general, we may also include in the adequacy criteria that it make possible some decision as to the status of other important higher-order properties and relations. I shall therefore adopt the following criteria for the assessment of the adequacy of any theory which attempts to explain what it is to be a characterising property (or predicate):

1) It must provide an account of either the notion of “essence-specifying” or the idea of “prior determination”, so that there is some intuitive ground for taking “the/an f-er is f, where ch(f)” as a necessary truth.

2) It must demonstrate that existence, under at least some provisional definition of the notion, is noncharacterising. As well as this, it must also demonstrate the (noncharacterising) status of more easily defined properties used by Routley and Parsons, such as: possibility and impossibility, determinateness and indeterminateness, simplicity and complexity, identity and similarity, and at least some intensional relations in at least some of their argument places.

3) It must provide a way of deciding whether second-order properties such as “being a characterising property”, “being a particular”, and relations such as instantiation are characterising features or not.

4) It must determine generally which relations are characterising. This is an important matter, for there are some troublesome cases to decide (eg: “the ocean in the centre of Australia”; “the husband of Joan of Arc”, etc.).
5) It ought to either accept or reject, and at least interpret Routley's claim that we must distinguish between what is included in the characterisation of an object from what follows from its characterisation.

The theory that I will outline below satisfies all of these criteria. In doing so, it effectively demonstrates that the object theories of Routley and Parsons are based upon a sound and reasonably precise distinction. I also claim that, as it satisfies criteria 3) and 4), it provides useful extensions and clarifications of their ideas. The object of this chapter is not merely that of fixing up gaps in the Routley-Parsons story - it is also to answer the objection that the theory of objects rests upon faulty foundations. In demonstrating that existence does not characterise any item, it also provides a complete reply to Russell's original objection to Meinong, regarding "the existent round square".

3 What Objects are Like

To characterise an item is (roughly) to say what sort of a thing it is, or to give it a character. In effect, this involves the provision of a means of identification, or a way of picking out the item in question from others. The fact that items resemble each other in various ways is the ground or basis for our ability to characterise, classify, and describe them. Thus a characterising property is one that tells us what objects are like. This is quite different from saying that objects are alike. To say that Susan resembles Alice, or that copper is similar to zinc, is not enough to count as a characterisation, and thus similarity itself is noncharacterising, just as is identity. Such claims, moreover, always require a context, or at least a specification of some respect in which the items concerned are similar, or they remain groundless.

A general theory of characterisation can be based on the theory of universals presented in chapter Two. It was assumed that the defining difference between
particulars and universals is that particulars cannot be instantiated, whereas universals can be. An analysis of instantiation was presented, in terms of providing rules or principles of differentiation, and thereby objective grounds for classification. We can therefore individuate and characterise properties according to the principles they provide. This seems to be a more appropriate starting point than one which concentrates on predicates, or linguistic classifications. A predicate may be used in different ways in different contexts, and thus may have several meanings. Properties, on the other hand, are identical with precisely the meanings (in the sense of denotations) of predicates, and thus do not vary in the same way across contexts.

The most simple way to formulate a criterion for characterising properties on this basis is to say that they are those properties which supply principles that are based upon similarities among items; this is the sense in which they tell us what things are like. Where a resemblance analysis, such as that used by Price, can be used to specify the meaning of a term, we may conclude that the property specified is instantiated by things just when they resemble certain paradigms. It follows that such properties function to indicate what items are like, since their instances are similar to certain paradigms. What's more, it is clear that some properties, such as existence, do not utilize resemblances at all. Even the anti-Meinongians admit this much. For example, M. Munitz makes the following claim:

Normal descriptive terms function both to classify an individual with others with which it has strong enough resemblances, and they set that individual apart (along with others of the class to which it belongs) from all those individuals that do not belong to a particular resemblance class. But the predicate “exists” and the quasi-sortal nominative “existent” do not perform this function at all.\(^2\)

Munitz, however, uses this fact as a part of his argument that “exists” acts as a semantic index, indicating that certain names have extralinguistic references, or that particular items are part of the world. The theory of objects must provide grounds for the claim that noncharacterising properties perform a special function as genuine features. It must

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therefore rest upon a more substantial theory of characterisation. What's more, there are complexities which a simple resemblance criterion fails to account for, particularly with regard to relations, and also characterising properties of properties themselves.

In the case of properties of properties, it is difficult to see how exactly a resemblance criterion would work at all. Although it is true that different abstract objects are sometimes similar to each other in form or function, this does not appear to have anything to do with the way they are characterised or defined. What's more, at one level it seems that all properties have the same intrinsic nature, as the instantiable items, and the only way of comparing them is through theory-laden taxonomies. That is, their similarities do not appear to be transparently accessible.

In the case of relations, the principle involved must differentiate between ordered n-tuples of items, for the order of the relation is often part of its nature. There is an immediate problem for a theory of characterisation in this case, however, for it can be argued that relational statements tell us nothing about what items are like, and thus that relations cannot ever be characterising. To say that something is a hundred miles west of Sydney, or that someone is married, or that an item is sitting on a chair or has read “War and Peace” does not give any sort of essential characteristic of the item. It tells you nothing concerning what sort of a thing it is, nor does it provide any character or category for the item. Indeed, this fact has been explicitly linked to the fact that existence is noncharacterising. R. Campbell has argued that Kant’s doctrine that “exists” is not a determining predicate is due to his analysis of the notion in purely relational terms:

...what Kant is saying...is that ‘exists’ cannot function as a defining or determining predicate precisely because it is a relational predicate. Its function is to locate the thing thought of in the context of experience as a whole...In being thus a purely relational predicate, ‘exists’ is similar to many other ‘locating’ predicates. In saying that a certain town is twenty miles away, I am using a relational predicate to locate it, though there is no characteristic of that town in virtue of which it is twenty miles away...But in thus ‘adding’ to the concept of the subject...(location
judgements)...do not 'enlarge' it. We do not determine more closely what a thing is when we cite its location.3

These two cases are probably the most difficult for any general theory of characterising attributes. As Routley has argued [JB, p. 268], if relations were counted as non-characterising, then much of the theory of items would be effectively ruled out: the CP could not determine that the present King of France was a king of France, nor could it provide the basis for the difference between him and the present King of China (also a nonentity). Similarly, if it were not the case that abstract objects had characterising features, then obvious methods of differentiating them would fail, and they could not be categorised according to their functions. For example, to say of a certain property that it is defined in a certain way - i.e. that it is a function of certain variables - is to characterise that property, at least in the sense of specifying what it is. Also, it seems that one may characterise blueness as a colour property, or perception as a cognitive property. The fact that these types of characterising features do not appear to admit of a resemblance-style analysis, however, only counts against that rather simple version of the theory that to characterise is to specify likenesses. The case of relational properties, on the other hand, appears to be a counterexample to any theory which holds that characterising features tell us what things are like.

4 Categories and Essences

Rather than give up on the notion of resemblance altogether, it may be more helpful to examine its role in relation to the notion of essence. Similarities are standardly thought of as contingent or accidental; there is generally nothing intrinsically binding about a similarity relation. This is why resemblance nominalism forms a central part of traditional Empiricism, which has always maintained that there are no real necessities. The essence of a thing, however, is the collection of its necessary features: those which

it must retain in order to be the thing it is, or those that it retains throughout all possible situations or worlds. It might be thought that the two notions are opposed to each other, and indeed it could be argued that if characterising features are akin to essences, then they cannot be considered as built up from, or identified through the purely accidental similarities that hold between particulars. The empiricist attack upon essences, which rests largely upon the arbitrariness and interest dependence of attributions of essential properties, is most coherent when combined with a resemblance nominalism. This is because predicates whose meaning is determined by contingent relations between entities cannot be thought to be correlated with essential attributes.

The problem with this argument is that there are no good reasons to construct a theory of essence, or even an appropriate category theory, on the basis of contingent similarities. Still less is there motivation for starting with existent objects. Indeed, there are compelling reasons for purging existence assumptions altogether from such theories, one being that one of the central questions of ontology, "What types (categories) of things exist?", will be prejudiced to the point of being entirely facile if all categories are determined by what exists in the first place. If we need not begin with contingency, then, relations of similarity may find their way into a theory of essence as a priori or internal relations. We may then reconcile a notion of resemblance with the idea that what a thing is like is its essence, which is comprised of the totality of its characterising features.

Some categories are artificially constructed, and are used for very specific purposes without serving to explain or reflect the nature of things. The category of "objects in Malcolm's living room" is an example; nothing that falls under this category is characterised by the property of being in Malcolm's living room. It is not an essential category or property, and we cannot use it in an explanation of the affinities or natural

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capacities of any thing. It is merely accidental that a thing ends up in Malcolm's living room. It seems that the category ought to be viewed as noncharacterising, and yet it is not modal, ontological, intensional or theoretical. The minimal theory of characterisation that Routley and Parsons provide does not entail that this property as noncharacterising, unless a strict notion of "essence-specifying property" is wrought out of the little that is said in the Jungle Book. If we were given a characterisation of "Malcolm", then the category might be reasonably considered as sort of "plugged-up" characterising relation, just as "being the present King of France" is considered characterising because of our understanding of the meaning of "France". Even though this latter is not a natural kind, it seems to be a more natural category that provides information about distinguishing characteristics. This might be explained by the fact that some proper names are included in the English language as terms that possess sense or connotation. If there is only a fuzzy, ill-defined distinction between definite descriptions and names, as Routley has argued, then one can allow that some names have a sense, and can enter into the relational characterisation of other things.

4.1 Contrast and A priori Resemblance

To characterise something is an activity that makes use of natural language. It is like telling a story about a thing, but standardly the story is so short that its only purpose is to designate or locate the item in question. Characterisation is a contextualised activity: a description that may serve well in one situation need not do so in others. A description such as "the tall man with the black hair and the green tie" will help to locate someone at a crowded party, but it will not supply all of the characterising features that he has. The activity is also normative: characterisation is governed by tacitly understood rules and norms relating the terms of a description. Thus in "the cook, the thief, his wife and her lover", there is a multiple ambiguity, due to the fact that the rules for relating these terms do not uniquely determine their connections. Sometimes, the rules will
specify that two terms must be taken together in a description, and in other cases predicates are separable. Thus we allow that "The golden mountain is a mountain" is true by characterisation (FCP), but we do not allow "The head chef is a head" as true, because "head chef" is not normally separable into distinct predicates - it comes as a single unit.

This is an indication that FCP will not deliver, on its own, truths expressible in ordinary speech. It must be augmented by an understanding of the rules of a language, and thus by the lived experience of a subject or community. "Head" is a count-noun, just like "mountain", and it will have different meanings as we talk of "heads of departments" and "heads of horses", but when amalgamated with "chef", we will not speak of "heads of chefs". The use of a principle like FCP must be governed by an antecedent understanding of how predicates are distinguished and used; that is, a theory of characterisation informed by linguistic practice. Characterising an item is an activity that gives sense to the item: makes it available to the understanding, or otherwise establishes a constant meaning for its name or description. As such, it is language-relative and generally theory-relative. It is also an activity that uses descriptive devices with determinate meanings. Thus we might consider a theory of characterisation which explains how this activity succeeds or fails, with respect to some way of determining the sense of a predicate. To be specific: we may say that a predicate which can be used to characterise something always relies upon a contrast or opposition of some kind as an essential element in the determination of its sense.

Sense, unlike reference, is determined by the internal possibilities of a language, and not with respect to its actual applications. The sense of a term is therefore only mutable in the way that a whole language is mutable. It changes only insofar as the structure of oppositions embedded in a language can change. Thus for example, if the opposition between the words "male" and "female" were omitted from our language, in
the sense that they are no longer understood in terms of their essential relation to each other, then they would no longer have the senses that they have. The contrast between the meaning of the two terms is an essential element in our activities of characterising living creatures as male or female. This is made manifest in the way that such terms are learned. A child who fails to understand that these terms are related as opposed determinations of some "higher", determinable category has not yet learned their use, or their sense. The child need not understand the words "sex" or "gender" in order to appreciate that there is some way in which the two symbols are gathered under a single category, and related essentially to each other in this way. An understanding of the concept under which the opposed terms are subsumed is gradually given through experience, but it is not necessary for a basic appreciation of their inherent opposition or contrast, and this is enough for a grasp of sense.

The role of the category of "gender" (or "sex") in this example is important. Since it is the category which underlies and completes our understanding of "male" and "female", there is an a priori resemblance between them. That is, these terms resemble each other in the respect of signifying different forms of gender, even if the category "gender" is postulated on the basis of a logical need rather than an empirical one, as was the case in Goddard's example of "gene". Gender is a somewhat complex notion, and must be learned, but it is a priori in the sense that an understanding of gender relations will inform any and all judgments concerning males and females. Both terms "male" and "female" are necessarily understood as forms of gender, whatever that might turn out to mean. They are opposed to each other, but they are also essentially united as determinations of a particular determinable. This a priori similarity in respect of determinable category will enter into the sense of any description that uses the terms "male", "female", "man" or "woman". The presence of an a priori resemblance between terms, moreover, explains how a characterisation says what a thing is like: the sense of
the terms used depends upon, or signifies a certain similarity or likeness. Such an explanation deserves a more careful investigation.

4.2 The Ground for the Distinction

Natural language supplies a multitude of words whose sense is connected with that of other words, usually by being different members of a specifiable family. Thus we have sets of opposing concepts: up and down; good and evil; inside and outside; pain and pleasure; tragedy and comedy; peak and valley; on and off, etc. These are not mere juxtapositions. They are concepts that are always understood in relation to each other, and conceived as modes or poles of some more synthetic notion. In this respect, their similarities are more important than their differences, and the fact that they are in opposition is only appreciated when it is understood that there is some determinable under which they both fall. There are often more than two categories or concepts that fall under a determinable: examples of these include colours, animal species, and other natural kinds. In many cases of oppositions that are related by some \textit{a priori} resemblance under a determinable, there is a potentially infinite sequence of categories that could be contrasted. The postulation of an \textit{a priori} resemblance, and a corresponding \textit{a priori} category does not imply that all or most of these concepts are known prior to experience, but merely that the respect in which opposed concepts are similar determines the sense of the oppositions. We possess \textit{a priori} knowledge \textit{that} some category subsumes the opposed terms, but we do not necessarily have any \textit{a priori} understanding of this category.

The nature of characterisation as a linguistic activity helps to provide an appropriate justification for drawing the distinction between characterising and noncharacterising properties. The arbitrary and "inessential" categories that we use, such as "things in Malcolm's living room", do not fall under any determinable category, and
are not in essential opposition to other categories (not even "things in Malcolm's kitchen") because they are too specific and contextually determined. Some categories might seem to be arbitrary in this way, such as "long-legged blue bananas", but there is nevertheless a characterising (categorial) property of being a long-legged blue banana. This is because it is constructed from other characterising properties. Descriptive terms such as "banana" or "legged", from which the category is built up, are understood as opposed to other terms, and may thus be seen to represent characterising properties. The category is only arbitrary in the context of the role it plays in thinking about reality, since items such as blue bananas with legs do not exist. We can therefore propose the following hypothesis: any property that is essentially opposed to or contrasted with some other property, as a different form or mode of a determinable category, is a characterising property. Furthermore, any property constructed from such properties is also a characterising property. All other properties are noncharacterising.

The initial argument for this hypothesis is drawn from the idea that characterising or nuclear properties tell us what things are like. Since the structure of contrast and a priori resemblance is part of what determines the sense of some predicates, they can be used to characterise items by specifying both what they are like and what they are contrasted with. The position of a thing in the world with respect to other items is described by its characterising predicates, and thus they reflect the affinities and contrasts employed in our understanding of descriptive devices. This argument makes use of the notion of sense, the philosophical concept introduced by Frege to explain how identity statements can be informative. Although "the morning star" and "the evening star" designate the same thing, the planet Venus, they differ in sense. We are genuinely informed of something substantial when we learn that they are the same thing, since the identity was not contained in the senses of the terms as we understood them. I have assumed that descriptive terms (paradigmatically, predicates) do have senses, and argued that when the sense of such a term is understood through an
understanding of appropriate contrasts with other terms, as subsumed under an a priori category, then that term can be used to characterise an item, or specify the essence of a thing. The distinction between characterising and noncharacterising predicates and properties is then grounded in a theory of how the senses of some terms are understood. It can also be explained as the distinction between properties that are essentially connected to other properties and relations, and those which are disconnected or external. Examples of characterising properties may help to clarify the distinction.

4.3 Examples of Characterising Properties

By far the simplest and most obvious examples of characterising properties are colours. Indeed, colour features have for several centuries served as the paradigm for simple, descriptive properties in the writings of numerous philosophers, despite having been labeled as "secondary" qualities by the Empiricists. It is evident that the structure and content of colours is given by their inherent oppositions. Being green is contrasted with being yellow, which is in turn contrasted with being red, and so on. Each of the potentially infinite series of features is a characteristic quality in its own right, and cannot be reduced to some enormous negative-conjunctive property. Redness is not simply "not-green-and-not-purple-and-not-pink...", for it has its own distinctive character. Therefore, the contrasts involved in colour features are not formal, or merely negation-oppositions. Even so, each colour completely excludes the others, which is why no possible item can be two different colours over the whole of its surface (unless one of these colours is a determinate form of the other, as scarlet is a type of red). The distinctive content of each colour, moreover, is determined by the contrast it makes with the others.

There are many other examples of sets of features that are brought together by non-negation contrasts. Shapes are clearly thus, for being triangular, circular (round),
rectangular, etc., are each contrasted with each other, while none of them is simply the
negation of another, and there is logical space for an infinite variety of shape features.
Similarly with other phenomenological features such as tastes, sounds, and textures, as
well as more theory-laden categories such as species of plants and animals, chemical
substances and so on. There may be a variety of objections to these latter claims, with
respect to the reductionist aims of many scientists and philosophers. In particular, it
might be thought that the category of chemical substances is simply an emergent or
supervenient one, all of whose features derive from the laws of Quantum Mechanics. It
will then be urged that the intrinsic oppositions between types of stuff - eg. the fact that
nothing that is gold can also be oxygen - are all irrelevant to the real essence of such
things. In reply, it can only be emphasized again that one must not look to contingent
facts in determining the status of a property as either essence-specifying or
characterising. There may only be a finite number of colours realised in the actual world,
just as there are only a finite number of chemical elements, but there is nevertheless an
infinity of conceptual oppositions that are logically possible. Similarly, which particular
paradigms are chosen for predicates like “red” or “iron” on the resemblance analysis is
an entirely contingent matter, as is the choice of a particular stick by which the
assessment of “metre” is made. These choices only affect the extension of the term, and
not its meaning, making them irrelevant to the issue of essence.

One of the difficulties with a definition of characterising properties that relies
upon a notion of a category is that it is hard to say what counts as a real or natural
category, as opposed to an artificial one. The problem can be solved if we can find
examples of discursive practices which rely upon determinate and natural categories, for
then an understanding of such discourse reveals an understanding of its categories. In
his fascinating book on the philosophy of Meinong, D. Lindenfeld charts the course of
thinking that lead from Brentano’s conception of logic to Gegenstandstheorie (ie. the
theory of objects). He cites examples that Meinong used to illustrate the notion of
Sosein, or so-being, which corresponds to the notion of a characterising property. Traditional logic recognised two forms of judgment, the categorial (A is B) and the existential (A is). Brentano sought to reduce the categorial to the existential, but Meinong wished to maintain the doctrine in the form of his distinction between Sein and Sosein judgments. He maintained that a Sein judgment, which involves the ontological status of a thing, states that a thing either can or cannot be located at a particular time and place. A Sosein judgment, on the other hand, involves characteristics of items that are independent of location properties. When Meinong developed his theory of Objectives, or propositions, in the course of his phenomenological investigations, he argued that we should only talk about being or nonbeing in the context of objectives. Items such as the golden mountain or Hamlet are "indifferent to being": in discussing their properties we do not commit ourselves to their existence or nonexistence. As Lindenfeld says:

"... Meinong proceeds to the notion that is at the heart of the theory of objects: the proper context for such objects are the objectives of so-being. We can and do describe Hamlet in terms of quite definite characteristics, and point to evidence as to why he is irresolute - just as we would about existing persons. This discourse is constituted by categorial judgments and their objectives of so-being. Meinong formulates this principle as the "independence of so-being from being"."  

The idea that there are whole realms of discourse which are constituted by categorial judgments and their corresponding characterisations was developed a great deal in Meinong's theory of objects. He thought of Gegenstandstheorie as a new science that charted the relationships between the rational and the empirical. Mathematics was cited as an example of a science of so-being, involving purely categorial judgments that have the status of a priori truths or falsehoods. But he also believed that so-being was not necessarily quantifiable, and thus a more general theory of the rational was needed. He found examples of so-being in such things as colour qualities, perception, and descriptions used in ordinary language and fiction. Thus "red" is what Meinong called a "homeless object", because "...we can talk with utter precision about the systematic

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7 Ibid., pp. 154-155.
properties (the so-being) of colours, such as the laws of complementarity and mixing, without ever once considering whether these colours exist as light-waves, nerve processes, or ideas.\(^8\) What is true of colour is true of a whole range of other categories that find a use in understanding our experiences, and thus in the presentations of items. Meinong held that in perception, a number of \textit{a priori} judgments are made concerning the application of concepts to what is presented by the senses. Every perception contains an objective of so-being, as it involves not just a judgment that, for example, the meadow is green, but also a judgment that the meadow is so constituted to be like that which one normally calls "green".

As I argued earlier, there are overwhelming reasons to ignore existing items when attempting to construct either a category theory or a theory of essence. Since this is the case, a theory resulting from an examination of general category-structures will allow for nonexistent objects, but it need not entail that there are any. It might be that we operate with all sorts of categories that we recognise as intelligible, such as the bizarre "blind rubber transparent fish", even though there are no items that fall under these categories. According to the theory of objects, each characterising property has at least one instance; but this is a substantial thesis, which has an independent justification. A summary statement of the hypothesis I have argued for is appropriate at this point; it may be expressed in the following thesis:

\begin{itemize}
\item[1.] \textit{\lambda} \phi \text{ is a characterising property if and only if either:}
\begin{itemize}
\item[1.] \text{\lambda} \phi \text{ is a categorial property (ie. its instances fall into a category) and;}
\item[2.] \text{\lambda} \phi \text{ is substantially contrasted with at least one other categorial property, so that these others are not simply formal variants, such as \text{\lambda} \neg \phi, and;}
\item[3.] \text{There is a determinable property for which \lambda \phi is a determinate form, and this is understood a priori, as part of understanding the meaning of qu(\phi),}
\end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\[^8\text{Ibid., p. 155.}\]
properties (the so-being) of colours, such as the laws of complementarity and mixing, without ever once considering whether these colours exist as light-waves, nerve processes, or ideas.". What is true of colour is true of a whole range of other categories that find a use in understanding our experiences, and thus in the presentations of items. Meinong held that in perception, a number of a priori judgments are made concerning the application of concepts to what is presented by the senses. Every perception contains an objective of so-being, as it involves not just a judgment that, for example, the meadow is green, but also a judgment that the meadow is so constituted to be like that which one normally calls "green".

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(D): $\lambda \phi$ is a characterising property if and only if either:

1. $\lambda \phi$ is a categorial property (i.e. its instances fall into a category) and;

2. $\lambda \phi$ is substantially contrasted with at least one other categorial property, where this contrast involves more than just a formal variation such as predicate negation, and;

3. There is a determinable property for which $\lambda \phi$ is a determinate form, and this is understood a priori, as part of

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B Ibid., p. 156.
understanding the meaning of \( qu(\phi) \). This determinable property must itself be substantially contrasted with other properties.

or \( \lambda \phi \) is a compound constructed from characterising predicates, their negations, conjunctions or disjunctions, or from first-order non-vaccuous quantification, or a combination of these. (This ensures that the CP does not lead to triviality.)

Such a theory faces a number of problematic cases for which it must account. I have already mentioned problems with relations and characterising properties of properties. There are further difficult cases lurking in intentional properties, instantiation, and the very property of being a characterising property. Before discussing these, I would like to cite one of its virtues. I believe that it can solve what would otherwise be a very difficult problem for the theory of objects.

5 Category Transgressions and Other Problems

There are many similarities between the theory presented above, and other theories of categories. In particular, there is a connection with Routley's work on significance theory. The overall methodology of this work, it seems, is decidedly non-empiricist, for the sort of categories that are used in determining the significance-ranges of predicates (and then ultimately the significance of sentences) are drawn from natural language rather than empirical science. However, the aims of significance theories and logics are more general than those of a theory of characterising properties, and the resulting structure of predicates and "superpredicates" encompasses both characterising and noncharacterising predicates.

In Routley's paper "On a Significance Theory" (OST), he describes a heuristic procedure for determining the significance or nonsignificance of English sentences, using the notion of the significance-range (s-range) of a predicate. For example, "Julius Caesar = 7" is counted as nonsignificant because the predicate "... = 7" has a class (its s-
or $\lambda \phi$ is a compound constructed from characterising properties only.

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5 Category Transgressions and Other Problems

There are many similarities between the theory presented above, and other theories of categories. In particular, elements of the Aristotelian scheme of species and genus classification can be recovered, as well as conceptions of categories drawn from Hegel. I believe that the theory stands on its own ground, independent of these systems, although I must acknowledge them as influences. There is also a connection with Routley's work on significance theory. The overall methodology of this work, it seems, is decidedly non-empiricist, for the sort of categories that are used in determining the significance-ranges of predicates (and then ultimately the significance of sentences) are drawn from natural language rather than empirical science. However, the aims of significance theories and logics are more general than those of a theory of characterising properties, and the resulting structure of predicates and "superpredicates" encompasses both characterising and noncharacterising predicates.

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range) of significant argument expressions which are specified by its superpredicate, which in this case is "is a number", and "Julius Caesar" does not belong to this class [OST, p. 204]. Of particular interest here is the predicate/superpredicate relationship, which is explicitly compared to the relation between species and genus and that between determinate and determinable [OST, p. 187]. These relations are also comparable to that which holds between the members of a series of opposing characterising properties, and the a priori category determined by the respect in which they are similar. The notion of an a priori similarity is quite important, for the contrasts between different properties in any series must not be arbitrary. It is not enough to contrast "being a book" with "being a plant", and then with "being a window", unless there is some rule of similarity connecting these features. A priori categories perform roughly the same role as superpredicates perform in Routley's theory, in that they "complete" the sense of characterising predicates, by subsuming them under another category. Superpredicates, to be precise, specify s-ranges for their subordinate predicates, and the s-range is logically connected to the sense of an expression: "...if two predicates differ in s-ranges then they differ in sense." [OST, p. 196].

There are important differences between Routley's superpredicates and a priori categories, however, which demonstrate that significance theory is more general than my theory of characterisation. Firstly, the principle that it is significant that an item x falls under a predicate if and only if it is true that x falls under its superpredicate, does not appear to have an analogue in my theory, but it is crucial for assessing the significance of sentences [OST, p. 195]. Secondly, the structure of s-ranges (and thus also monadic predicates) is represented as a tree whose apex is the ultimate s-range, ie. in \{x : I(x)\}; and I = I^\wedge. [OST, p.194].
While this structure is similar to what one would expect of the relative structure of a priori categories, it is far too general to represent the structure of characterising properties. One can expect that some nodes on the tree of monadic a priori categories will themselves correspond to characterising properties: for example, being coloured, being an animal, and so on, but not all of them will. For one thing, the property of being a particular item is noncharacterising. Routley does not distinguish between features which characterise and those which do not in his significance theory, whereas in my theory superpredicates can only represent characterising properties when they are substantially contrasted with others in a particular series.

Nevertheless, the structure of s-ranges and that of characterising properties is similar enough to expect that, unless a sentence uses predicates known to be noncharacterising, the methods used in assessing whether it is significant or not will also determine the way that its singular terms are represented in a Characterisation Postulate. For example, the restricted version of Meinong's principle "The f-er is f' has the sentence "The Hegelian purple absolute idea is purple" as one of its consequences, since "purple" is a characterising predicate. Now if, like Routley, one takes the singular term used here as a nonsignificant piece of language, then since a true statement cannot imply an absurd one, either the CP is false, or it must be modified to meet cases of nonsignificance. Rather than add further conditions on the structure of admissible predicates, one might simply incorporate the restrictions of significance into those already in place with regard to characterising predicates, which seems more economical (it reduces the complications of the theory). If this were done, then it would turn out that nonsignificant or absurd combinations of predicates could not represent characterising properties, and purple absolute ideas would be ruled out of the domain of objects.

This sort of restriction goes against the spirit of a Meinongian theory of objects, however, and there are methodological reasons for rejecting it. The traditional,
Occamist method in metaphysics is to eschew quantification over things unless they cannot be avoided: that is, objects are not multiplied beyond necessity. The Meinongian methodology is to try to accept all objects (ie. accept that all singular terms denote), and to reject them only when there is overwhelming reason to do so. Nonsignificance could be counted as an overwhelming reason to claim that a term has no denotation, but there are problems in holding to this restriction. For example, "the lemon golf-club" is an absurd description, as long as its terms have their normal meanings, because "...is a lemon" has an s-range, specified by its superpredicate "...is a fruit", to which anything denoted by "the golf-club" does not belong. But both of these predicates are characterising, and thus according to thesis (D), the compound predicate "...is a lemon golf-club" must also be characterising.

On the other hand, one might wish to deny that "The Hegelian purple absolute idea is purple" is nonsignificant. Indeed, it could be argued that, as a consequence of a necessary truth, it must also be true. This option amounts to admitting a category of "absurd" items, and allowing that the CP holds of each characterising predicate (property) in a descriptive matrix, even if the whole description is noncharacterising or nonsignificant. In fact, this is how Routley and Parsons deal with items such as the existent round square, which is round and square but fails to exist. There is still a category of absurd sentences on this view, which are not true, but they are not instances of the CP; for example "Saturday is in bed", and so on. Admitting this bizarre category of items into the domain of object theory seems perfectly consistent with the underlying theoretical motivations involved, and the logic of such items, which is just that of all items, under a general Characterisation Postulate, seems unproblematic. The category is explicitly delineated, it seems, by the sort of property and superproperty structure which is assumed to hold in the appropriate context, and thus in terms of those rules which determine whether a property is characterising or not.
It so happens that I prefer the second option, for there are a number of absurd objects of which I am quite fond, but a more general advantage accrues to my theory of characterisation no matter what one's preferences are. On either option, a structure of overlapping and non-overlapping superpredicates or \textit{a priori} categories is used, for example, in the case of "The lemon toad fishmonger straitjacket planet golf-club meat-pie company wisdom finger" to determine whether the whole thing is an absurd description. This structure may also determine which combinations of predicates in the whole complex description can be construed as significant. The way that these predicates are used to characterise objects, and which properties they represent, varies with context, so that "meat-pie company" is one significant combination, and denotes a certain company. But the terms have slightly different meanings when used in "lemon meat-pie", which is also significant, and denotes a particular pie (presumably an inedible one). We may conclude, then, that the application of this theory of characterisation will yield analytic principles governing the species/genus-like structure of properties by fitting characterising properties into their appropriate series. If this is true, then a rather difficult problem for the theory of objects may be resolved as a consequence of a natural assignment of characterising properties under appropriate \textit{a priori} categories.

The problem is this: the theory of objects must be able to account for the properties of both possible and impossible objects. Yet in the case of impossibilia, it must import principles from other theories in order to allow that substantively opposing properties hold of impossible things. To use a popular example, the definition of the predicate "is impossible", which is: \[x\sim \Diamond = \text{df} (\text{Pf})(xf \& x\sim f)\] will not, by itself or in conjunction with a CP, suffice to prove that the round square is impossible. Something else, taken from some other theory (geometry perhaps?) or added to object theory as a "meaning postulate" is needed to yield this result. This was the problem that Routley had with premiss suppression mentioned in chapter One. Consider the following proof of impossibility (\(R = \text{round, and } S = \text{square}\):
Premiss number 3 is the problematic one, for it seems that the theory of objects does not imply its truth. However, if the theory of characterisation is counted as a part of object theory, as indeed it ought to be, then proposition 3 is no longer ad hoc. On the account I have given, squareness intrinsically contrasts with roundness, as a matter of a priori necessity, as these properties are understood as determinations of the determinable "shape", and a thing can have only one shape at a time. The content of both of these properties, therefore, is the ground for the truth of proposition 3. Note that this may not be true of all series of contrasting features - in this case such principles result from the exclusiveness of each member of the series with respect to the a priori category involved. Nevertheless, in many paradigm cases of characterising properties, results like this are obtainable. We will usually be able to draw upon an understanding of the formal features of a priori categories, even if this understanding is something acquired by experience.

5.1 Relations

There are a number of possible responses to the objection that relations never provide information about what items are like, and therefore cannot be characterising features. One is simply to refute the claim by providing counterexamples. For instance,
to say that a couple are married is to categorise them at least as persons, and also as (potential) sexual partners. That is, some relations standardly hold only of particular types of thing (excluding metaphorical usage), and thus they may characterise items by way of the presupposed type. Although this reply may fit in well with the structure of a significance theory, it concedes too much to the objector. It is an admission that relations only characterise items because they can relate things that have already been characterised in some different way. The doctrine of J. Locke, that relations are always comparisons between objects which have other, monadic properties irrespective of how they stand to other things,9 is the main motivation for holding that relations never specify what things are like, and it is left untouched by this reply.

Another response, more clearly based on my account of characterising properties, is that relations may sometimes characterise things because they distinguish their instances by having a certain sort of content. This content must be partly determined by non-formal contrasts with other relations under a particular a priori category. Thus we might consider categories like emotions, where ...loves___; ...hopes that___; ...cares for___; ...seeks vengeance on___, and so on, are the substantially contrasting relations. Or, on a more material plane, action relations provide further examples. Consider: x pulls y; x falls through y; x spins around y; x breaks y into five parts, and so on. All of these physical examples, and many other mechanical and dynamic relations, yield an infinite series, all of which derive from the various complex spatial and temporal configurations used in different sorts of machines and in nature. They not only provide good, paradigm examples of characterising relations, but it may also be said that in each case (for dyadic relations), the two objects are characterised together, so that, for instance, x is given an essential nature in terms of how it stands with y, and vice versa for y.

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The ability to account for sets of things that are characterised with respect to each other is a desirable feature in a theory of nonexistent objects. For one thing, it allows the theory to explain system-relative objects, whose various features emerge consequent to their position in a relational structure, rather like an algebra. Large classes of nonexistent things are system-relative in this sense, including many objects considered by pure mathematics, physics, fantasy and music. What's more, it has been argued that many fictional characters are also characterised with respect to each other.

Kit Fine has criticised Parson's theory on the basis that it cannot prove, for example:

...that there is a nuclear relation R and objects x and y such that [Ry] (the version of R that has been "plugged up" by y) is the sole nuclear property to be possessed by x and [xR] is the sole nuclear property to be possessed by y; and this example is but one of many.10

The "plugging-up" operation simply takes an n-place relation and turns it into an n-1-place relation by filling in one of the places with a singular term [NO, pp. 75-77]. The way that Fine attempts to rectify this discrepancy involves some complex adjustments to Parson's axiom OBJ, for "object abstraction". This axiom is exactly equivalent, except for the use of the terminology "nuclear" instead of "characterising", to Routley's HCP. Neither of these axioms, however, make room for relations, and thus Fine's adjustment is needed in order to complete their theories. His revised and expanded version of object abstraction reads thus:

Any class C of n-ary quasi-nuclear relations is the abstract nuclear content of some objects a1,...an.11

A quasi-nuclear relation is one which, when the objects a1,...an are plugged in to it, forms a proposition of the form RNa1...an (where R is nuclear), which involves at least one of the "a"s as subjects. A class C of such relations forms the abstract nuclear content of distinct objects a1,...an when none of the class involves any of the "a"s and the nuclear content (the set of propositions involving only nuclear relations in which at

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11 Ibid., p. 112.
least one of the objects is a subject) of these objects is obtained by plugging them in to the relations of C. Fine gives an example of the way that his new axiom works:

Let C consist of the following quasi-nuclear relations: \( \lambda x_1 x_2 M x_1 \), \( \lambda x_1 x_2 D x_2 \), and \( \lambda x_1 x_2 (x_1[K x_2]) \). Then the new axiom gives us distinct objects \( a_1 \) and \( a_2 \) for which \( \{ #M a_1, #D a_2, #a_1[K a_2] \} \) is their nuclear content. Or again, the axiom will give us distinct objects, call them the Small and the Large, such that the sole nuclear proposition true of them is that the Small is smaller than the Large.\(^{13}\)

The idea that a particular set of abstract objects, the class C, constitutes a system which yields a different set of objects precisely by being the characterising relations for those objects, is what Fine wishes to incorporate into object theory. He illustrates its usefulness for formalising fictional discourse by choosing properties, such as "being a medical doctor", "being a detective", and "kicking a2", which apply to Watson and Holmes, in an "artificially short story". These properties are represented as the quasi-nuclear relations in the class C used in the example. Note that this example depends upon the relations in the class C being defined for both of the objects in question. This feature of Fine's revision, nicely exemplified in the case of the Small and the Large, illustrates the sense in which these relations can characterise all of their relata, within a given system.

It has been argued that some relations may be put into various contrasting groups under certain a priori categories, and thus be considered to be characterising relations. Also, some of these relations - those that involve action or other physical and spatiotemporal determinations - can be said to be characterising features in all of their places (as in Fine's examples). This will evidently not hold for all of the features that can be set into a contrasting series, for it is not true that one may characterise an item by saying that it is the thing loved by me, even if "loving" may be a characterising feature of me. Or, in Routley's example, observing the cheese cannot provide it with any (real)

\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 112.
\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 113.
character, even if "being an observer" is a characterising feature of some subject. Intensional relations cannot be pure characterising features, for each of their relata, in the way that mechanical features can be, and the theory of characterisation must reflect this fact.

One way of dealing with this problem is to distinguish a class of one-place predicates which specify certain intensional capacities, and are contrasted appropriately with other capacities under a priori categories like "propositional attitude", "emotion", "perceptual capacity", and so on. These one-place predicates will then denote characterising properties, such as \( \lambda x(x \text{ is an observer}) \) and \( \lambda x(x \text{ is a believer}) \). A creature characterised by the possession of these capacities is not characterised in explicitly relational terms, but it will stand in certain noncharacterising relations as a result of using its intensional capacities. We may then say that describing someone in terms of their epistemic or emotional characteristics is a specification of what they are like, but that such descriptions do not specify characteristics of the things to which they relate in knowing, desiring or observing. In dealing with intensional relations, we can often distinguish one of the places of such a relation as the place of the subject. When this is possible, the relation will be able to characterise only items that can be significantly counted as subjects, and then only when the relation is "grounded" in a characterising intensional capacity. In effect, these relations do not describe items qua relational characterisation, but only in virtue of their connection with some capacity. Thus they can only be counted as characterising properties in one of their argument places. For example, saying that Malcolm believes that God exists may be a characterisation of Malcolm, and it specifies what he is like, but it is not a characterisation of the proposition that God exists.

There are other cases of relational characterisation that are problematic for the theory of objects. Items such as the ocean in the centre of Australia, the husband of Joan
of Arc, and even the present King of France are characterised in terms of their relation to an existent object. The unfortunate feature of these cases is that the entity in question does not have certain properties which the relational characterisation entails that it does have. As Routley points out [JB, p. 267], if the normal passive conversion from "d R-ed b" to "b was R-ed to by d" holds in such cases, one will be able to establish that Australia contains an ocean, that Joan of Arc was married, and that France is presently ruled by a King, all of which are false. Three options for dealing with this problem are investigated in the Jungle Book: one might deny that these relations are characterising features, or deny that the passive conversion works, or deny that the transitive-intransitive inference works. Routley prefers the option of denying the passive conversion, because the other two are unpleasant for various reasons.

There are other options, however, which he does not discuss. One might conclude that for any case of relational characterisation which entails that Joan of Arc is married, the name "Joan of Arc" does not designate an existent object. This is similar to the strategy of dealing with the fact that Sherlock Holmes lived in London by claiming that it was a "surrogate" London, or the "London of the Holmes stories", but in either case something different from the real London. Alternatively, one could use Parsons' plugging-up axioms [NO, p. 76-77] and conclude that Holmes has the property of living-in-London, but London does not have the property of being-lived-in-by-Holmes, although in this case it is not due to the failure of passive conversion.

Whatever one says about these cases, it is clear that the relations involved are characterising features. Relations such as "lived in" and "being in the centre of" fall under the a priori category of spatiotemporal relations, and thus substantially contrasted with other such features; "being married to" is also characterising, for it contrasts with other features such as "being the brother of" and "being the daughter of", under the category of family relations. An application of thesis (D) therefore rules out one of the
options for dealing with troublesome relational characterisations, that of denying that
classification is going on at all. The difficulty with these cases arises only because an
term is characterised explicitly in terms of a relation to an existent object. There thus
appears to be a case of what Routley called "double determination", for the entity is
determined in a different way from the term, and this leads to inconsistency with
contingent facts.

If all relational characterisation is governed by Fine's axiom, then there is no
problem at all. For we cannot devise a class C whose members are the quasi-nuclear
relations: \( \lambda xy(x \text{ is married to } y) \); \( \lambda xy(x \text{ is a husband}) \); and \( \lambda xy(y = \text{Joan of Arc}) \), for the
simple reason that identity is not a nuclear relation, and thus a fortiori is not quasi-
nuclear. Identity is not a categorial property, and there is no other relation with which it
is substantially contrasted. Yet without the use of identity, it is difficult to see how Fine's
axiom can yield the proposition that there is an object which is the husband of Joan of
Arc. An object which is the husband of a famous French martyr will not do the trick.

The use of Fine's axiom does not dissolve the problem with relational
classification. For it is still true that in the Conan Doyle stories, Holmes lives in
London, and this is a characterising feature that he possesses. Nevertheless, we do not
need to claim that passive conversion fails in this context, for presumably in the Conan
Doyle stories, London is such that Holmes lived there. The point is that passive
conversion fails when we wish to move from what is true in a story to what is true
simpliciter. For then, as we change contexts, we change the truth value of various
propositions. The problem for relational characterisation might be solved by placing
restrictions on the Link Hypothesis, so that passive conversion is not allowable in cases
of context transfer. But then it is not specifically a problem about whether relations can
be characterising features or not, but a problem about how truth in fiction relates to
simple truth.
5.2 Higher-order Objects

The second problem for a similarity analysis of characterising properties was that of accounting for the similarities between higher-order objects, such as properties themselves. In the theory I have constructed, similarity emerges out of specific forms of difference, and is understood as a similarity with respect to some a priori category. The original objection, therefore, does not apply. What is more, thesis (D) can be applied to cases of higher-order items to determine which of their properties are characterising. Some properties of properties fall under determinable a priori categories, and are substantially contrasted with other categorial properties. For example, one might say that there are various "regions" of discourse, recognised to be distinct fields within which specific meanings apply. The significance of each region is largely a function of its contrasts with other fields and different sorts of meaning. Thus evaluative properties are contrasted with descriptive properties, because they are applicable using different, but related rules. Similarly, internal mental qualities are different from physical or perceptual qualities, and the predicates which represent them function in slightly different ways.

Consider whether the following statements count as characterisations of properties:

a) Blueness is a colour property.

b) Triangularity is a type of shape.

c) Goodness is a moral property.

d) Obsession and paranoia are features of a neurotic personality.

e) Force and acceleration are quantitative, mechanical properties.

f) Intelligence is one of the qualities of a great general.

g) Possibility is a modal feature.

h) Existence is a location property.
There is evidently room for doubt as to whether all of them are really characterisations, in the sense of being true attributions of characterising features. There is also some room for differing interpretations about the very meaning of the question. I have italicised those parts of the sentences which seem to represent higher-order properties, and even this is a matter of my personal intuitions. Even so, it is worthwhile just to emphasize that, for example, being a type of shape is not the same property as having shape itself: a bicycle has a shape, but is not a type of shape.

While it would be nice to be able to show that each of the italicised items above are characterising features or not on the basis of thesis (D), I do not think this can be done very easily. For example, some may think that "being a quality of a great general" is noncharacterising, since it does not seem to say what something is like. On the other hand, most of these sentences do state something which in some way adds to our understanding of its subject. I do claim that where this is clearly the case, the reason is that the statement provides information about "what to look for" to more completely know a certain higher-order item. If you know it is a colour property, or a modal feature, you know that it will have connections with other items in a certain field. In many cases, the relationship between these different items is some form of contrast, and (D) is satisfied. This may not always be true, however, and to a large extent these issues are too contextual to be sure of one's ground. There is nevertheless no particularly strong argument against (D) lurking in any of these cases, whether or not all of them are proper characterisations.

6 A Digression on Husserl and Meinong

One objection to my theory might be that the concepts and categories I have deemed to call "a priori" do not fit in any way into the traditional use of this term. If I am to say that "animal" and even "machine" are a priori concepts then I appear to be either
misusing this terminology, or saying something very radical. My reply to this is that
there is a perfectly good sense of the term “a priori”, as a prefix to either “knowledge” or
to “concepts”, which makes it quite reasonable to say that one can understand something
using these concepts and this knowledge without having had the relevant experiences of
particulars. As such, merely knowing that cats contrast with dogs, which contrast with
horses, and so on, as well as knowing that these are all forms of animal, count as
instances of a priori knowledge. You do not need to have actually seen or touched any
real creatures to possess this knowledge.

There are interesting parallels between the method used by E. Husserl to
investigate the structure of essences, and that adopted here. The recognition of the need
to bracket the problems of existence and factuality is a prominent feature of his
phenomenology, and is, arguably, the key to “eidetic seeing”, for the apprehension of
essence follows from the subtraction of contingency. Essence is whatever is left after the
brackets have been attached to existing things (this is to put it somewhat crudely). The
structure of Husserl’s investigation is also similar to mine, except that he concentrates on
the division of essences into “regional eidetic sciences”.14 From the beginning of the
Ideas, however, he makes it clear that although individual existence is contingent, “...it
belongs to the meaning of everything contingent that it should have an essential being
and therewith an Eidos to be apprehended in all its purity...”.15 Also, each thing must
have a specific character, and therefore also a set of essential features which it must
possess if secondary, “relative determinations”16 can belong to it.

Husserl goes on to describe eidetic seeing, which involves the apprehension of
the multitudes of determinations that physical properties yield, and also states that the
Eidos, or pure essence, may be exemplified in the “mere data of fancy”.17 The notion

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14 E. Husserl, Ideas, p. 57.
15 Ibid., p. 47.
16 Ibid., p. 47.
17 Ibid., p. 50.
that the structure of essence is one in which certain features depend upon others is expanded, then, when he comes to consider the various regions within which the various determinations, or features of things, find their place. He appears to believe, though he does not make this explicit, that each essence is properly characterised or defined by its position in a particular region - for example, the material region defines various physical properties. Husserl concentrates on how various essences are defined for some cognitive practice, rather than in general. In this, he follows Meinong’s theory of *Sosein* properties, which are always understood in the context of some discursive, or cognitive practice. Husserl also arrives at a species-genus style of classification:

> Every essence, whether it has content or is empty (and therefore purely logical) has its proper place in a graded series of essences, in a graded series of *generality* and *specificity*. The series necessarily possesses two limits that never coalesce. Moving downward we reach the *lowest specific differences* or, as we also say, the *eidetic singularities*; and we move upwards through the essences of genus and species to a *highest genus*.18

Although Husserl certainly appears to endorse a version of the Independence Thesis, for he says: "...the positing of the essence, with the intuitive apprehension that immediately accompanies it, *does not imply any positing of individual existence whatsoever*..."19 he does not make mention of anything analogous to a Characterisation Postulate. This naturally means that he had no way of using his theory of essences to determine the necessary properties of different sorts of objects. My theory, on the other hand, is intended to be applied in conjunction with a CP, and indeed it must be so interpreted if the proof of the impossibility of the round square (and others) is to work without the importation of principles external to object theory.

There is an interesting result of the combination of my theory of characterisation with what certain modern readers of Meinong, such as Jacquette20 and

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Routley [JB, p. 530 and p. 864] suggest as an improvement on his response to Russell’s objection in “On Denoting”. In the face of the instance of an unrestricted CP which reads “The existent round square exists”, Meinong responded by claiming that the Sosein of the existent round square contains only a watered-down nuclear version of the extranuclear property of existence. He then asserted that the difference between the two versions of existence is that the former lacks what he calls the modal moment, which deprives it of “full strength factuality”. The problem with this response, as Jacquette and Findlay point out, is that one may simply reformulate the objection using “the existent-cum-modal-moment round square” as the item in question. In response to this, it seems that Meinong was prepared to restrict his principle of the Unlimited Freedom of Assumptions so that one cannot attribute the modal moment to an objective (in modern terminology, a proposition) or a property which doesn’t possess it.

Now the Freedom of Assumptions principle, which states that one is free to assume or consider any proposition and any object at all, no matter how absurd or self-contradictory, is really a sort of psychological thesis. It is similar to the idea that one is free to imagine or conceive anything whatever. It is really quite independent of a CP, which specifies the necessary properties of things. It has therefore been suggested by Jacquette and Routley that Russell’s objection can be disposed of much more simply by invoking a rigidly enforced distinction between nuclear (characterising) and extranuclear properties. This means that the CP must be restricted appropriately, while the assumptions principle can remain unrestricted, which is more naturally in agreement with psychological experience. The point was made in Chapter One as well, with regard to UCP, but it is worth emphasizing that this solution to the problem makes no use of the notion of a “modal moment”, or the operation of “watering down”, in the Meinongian sense. The existent round square does not exist, but this is not something that is included its characterisation, for “x does not exist”, being a noncharacterising

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21 Ibid., p. 429.
property, cannot be included in its characterisation (it may, on the other hand, be something that follows from its characterisation, given the right definitions). We may think of it as existent, of course, which is what the Unlimited Freedom of Assumption principle says, but then the way it is thought of, and the way we represent it are also not in its characterisation. Parson’s watering-down operator, or Routley’s presentation operator, may be retained in the theory of objects if it is thought that it is necessary to account for the presentational features of a description: perhaps in order to distinguish the existent round square from the round square. It is not needed to answer Russell’s objection.

7 The Adequacy of the Theory

Five criteria of adequacy for a theory of characterisation were listed in section 2 above. I will go over each of these in some detail, and in the process of showing how each of the criteria are met, I will attempt to elucidate the theoretical significance of noncharacterising properties.

1). The Characterisation Postulate, in the form "the/an f-er is f, where ch(f)" states that objects always possess the properties in terms of which they are characterised. In the form of HCP, it states that all characterising properties have at least one instance. The reason that these principles are necessary truths is simply that if a property does characterise a thing, then it will specify the essence of the thing, and as such that thing will necessarily possess this property. A property may characterise a thing, according to my theory, when it is a categorial, determinate property λϕ, such that the sense of the predicate qu(ϕ) is at least partially determined by substantial contrasts with other predicates. This is because properties which meet these conditions specify what things are like: they resemble other properties in falling under the same a priori category. They also specify what things are contrasted with: they are opposed to other determinate
properties under a determinable property. Characterising properties are essence-specifying because they must figure in the way a thing is described and picked out. It is thus a logically necessity that they be instantiated by the items they describe.

There is an important difference between the two possible forms of FCP: "\( \Box A(\xi x A(x)) \), where \( A(x) \) is a wff (containing just \( x \) free) constructed in an allowable way from characterising predicates" [JB, p. 260] and "\( A(t x A(x)) \) with \( A(x) \) as before." [JB, p. 262]. Significantly, the \( \xi \)-form can be derived from HCP, as Routley demonstrates, but this is not true of the \( t \)-form. The derivation is as follows: let \( C \) be "...any wff satisfying the weak restriction, ie. any conjunction \( x f_1 & \ldots & x f_n \) where \( f_1, \ldots, f_n \) are either ch predicates or the predicate negations of ch predicates..." [JB, p. 264]. Then we can show that HCP \( \supset \) FCP:

1. \((Px)(chf)(xf \equiv A)\), with \( x \) not free in \( A \).  
2. \((Px)(chf)(xf \equiv (f = f_1 v \ldots v f = f_n))\)  
3. \((Px)((xf_1 \equiv (f_1 = f_1 v \ldots v f_1 = f_n)) & \ldots & xf_n \equiv (f_n = f_1 v \ldots v f_n = f_n))\)  
4. \((Px)(xf_1 & \ldots & xf_n)\)  
5. \((Px)C\)  
6. \(C(\xi x C(x))\)  
7. \(\Box C(\xi x C(x))\)  
8. HCP \( \supset \) FCP

A similar result is not available for the \( t \)-form of FCP, because the definition of "\((Px)B\)" in terms of the indefinite article "\( \xi x \)" read as "an \( x \)" has no parallel for the definite article. Indeed, Routley claims that an additional theorem is needed to derive the \( t \)-form from the \( \xi \)-form, viz: \( A(\xi x B) \supset A(t x B) \) [JB, p. 262]. He also says that this theorem can be proven from his theory of definite descriptions, but it is difficult to see...
how this could be true. In this theory, a distinction is drawn between pure objects which are completely specified, such as the round square that has no other properties, and impure objects, such as the round square that is also blue and quite small. This difference can be spelt out explicitly in a definition of the notion of "purity". The pure round square can be defined as follows:

$$\text{tx}(x \in R \& x \in S)^{\text{Pure}} = \text{df} \xi x(x \in R \& x \in S \& (z)(z \in R \& x \in S \& (U \text{ ext } f)(zf \supset f = R \lor f = S) \supset z = x))$$

In logical English, this says that the pure round square is an arbitrarily chosen round square such that anything round and square all of whose extensional properties are identical with either roundness or squareness is identical with it. A generalisation of this definition will furnish an account of what it is to be a pure object. Routley also makes allowance for "contextually determined uniqueness", to account for definite descriptions such as "the red-headed man" which are used in contexts where there is more than one red-headed man, or where there are none included by the context at all [JB, p. 286]. He thus defines the (impure) definite descriptor as follows:

$$\text{Dt}^C. \text{tx}A = \text{df} \xi x(A \& (z)(A^C \supset z = x)) \text{ where the full condition, } (Px)(A \& (z)(A^C \supset z = x)) \text{ is met;} \text{ and } \xi xA \text{ otherwise. [JB, p. 287] }$$

where $A^C$ symbolises the extra condition on $A$ that $z$ belongs to the indicated context. In logical English, this definition would read: "the $x$ such that $A$" means "an arbitrarily selected object $x$ satisfying $A$ which is unique in the specified context, if there is a unique $A$ in that context, and any arbitrarily selected object $x$ satisfying $A$ otherwise."

It is not difficult to prove that $A(\xi xB \supset A(txB))$ is not a theorem of this theory of descriptions. A counterexample can be constructed if it can be established that there is a case where $\xi xB$ has a property which $txB$ does not. So, take an arbitrarily selected square: ie. $\xi xS$. Suppose that this is not the pure square, and is not even contextually unique. In fact, this arbitrarily selected item happens to be a round square. It follows that $R(\xi xS)$. Suppose also that "txS" denotes the pure square. In this case, it is not true that
the square is round: \( \neg R(1xS) \). Then we have an instance of the conditional where the antecedent is true, but the consequent is not. Hence it is not a theorem. This means that the \( t \)-form of FCP does not follow from the \( \xi \)-form. If the former is accepted as a principle of object theory, the motivation for this could be that an adequate theory of characterisation will entail that an object characterised as "the \( \phi \)" must actually have the property \( \lambda \phi \).

Another postulate may also be included to deal with the properties that pure items do not possess, in order to show that pure items with different characterising properties are not identical with each other. This is a specifically negative CP:

\[
\text{NCP: } \neg A(1xB\text{Pure}), \text{ where ch}(A) \text{ and ch}(B), \text{ and } \neg( B \supset A )
\]

It is possible to use this principle to prove the nonidentity of the round square with the green round square. The proof is as follows, where: \( a = 1x(xR & xS) \), and \( b = 1x(xR & xS & xG) \):

1. \( a = b \)  
   Assumption (for reductio)
2. \( (U \text{ ext } f)(af \equiv bf) \)  
   1, Identity axiom [JB, p. 249]
3. \( aG \equiv bG \)  
   2, Universal Instantiation
4. \( bG \)  
   FCP, characterisation of \( b \)
5. \( aG \)  
   3, 4, Modus Ponens
6. \( \neg aG \)  
   NCP, characterisation of \( a \)
7. \( aG \& \neg aG \)  
   5, 6, Conjunction
8. \( \neg(a = b) \)  
   1-7, Reductio ad absurdum.

It can be argued that NCP is not really needed. The definition of purity might be enough to establish results such as this. Even if this is true, it is difficult to see how this sort of result can be obtained without first deriving something like NCP. A specifically negative principle will only apply to pure objects, for it is only in this domain that the characterisation of a thing is complete, in the sense that all of its characterising properties are specified.
2). The status of existence is one of the most important issues for the theory of objects. The term "exists" functions as a one-place predicate in ordinary language, and it is treated as something that is applicable only to individuals, at least in Routley's theory of objects. But it is an strange property. To say that a thing exists is not to describe it, or to contrast it with other things in some determinate conceptual scheme. It is to claim that the thing has a particular status. There is no specific contrast involved in the meaning of this ontological status, other than the contrast with nonexistence, and this is not enough to make it a characterising property. There is no a priori category into which items must fall before they could be considered as candidates for the possession of existence. Any individual taken from any category you please is a potential entity, and it can be on either logical or empirical grounds that a decision is made against the existence of items. A circular triangle cannot exist, as a matter of definition and logic, but it is only a contingent fact that the ether is unreal.

Because the property of existence is not categorial, and is not essentially contrasted with other categorial properties, it is noncharacterising. Thesis (D) will thus serve to justify treating existence as noncharacterising, given an appropriate definition or explication of ontological status. The content of ontological status can be partially explicated by examining its relationship with other noncharacterising properties. Indeed, existence can be defined in terms of the properties of possibility and completeness. Such a definition will not constitute a satisfactory theory of existence, but it can serve as a tentative hypothesis in a systematic ontology. A complete ontological theory would show whether this definition is adequate or not, and in what sense it approximates the meaning of the existence predicate.

There is type of apprehension, or understanding, that is directed upon the nature of a thing, and follows the connections which that thing has to others. We may examine an organism or an artifact, seeking to know how it is constituted, nourished, or
coloured. We may wonder how it emerged out of other items, and in what respects it contrasts with other species of flora and fauna. The knowledge gained by this type of examination fixes the nature and characterisation of the thing: what it is like, and how it differs from others of a similar kind. But the question of the very possibility of the item, and its ontological status, is left unanswered by such investigations. To determine such matters, the higher-order properties of a thing must be known. This involves a different type of understanding, which seeks knowledge of the external, logical structure of an object, as opposed to its internal categorial structure. Properties and predicates that are defined using higher-order quantification are always noncharacterising features, for they do not fit into any series of oppositions or fall under some *a priori* category. For example, an item is possible only if all of its features are internally consistent. There is thus a noncharacterising property of being possible, defined as follows:

\[ x\Diamond = \text{df} \neg (\text{Pf})(xf \& x\neg f) \]

Items which possess this feature are often called "possibilia": they may be entities, but they may be mere possibilities or potential beings.

The class of entities is a subclass of the class of possibilia. If we ask why it is that a particular item exists, we are asking why it is that it has been selected out of all the items that can have existence; i.e. out of the class of possibilia. It follows that ontological status is itself a type of modal feature, for existence implies possibility. The additional constraint of determinateness, or item completeness, is also a part of the meaning of existence. This is also defined in terms of higher-order quantification, as follows:

Completeness: \[ xC = \text{df} \ (\text{Uf})(xf \lor x\neg f) \]

If we were to investigate the properties of an item, and discover that it was incomplete in some respect; for example, it failed to have a mole on its back and also failed not to have a mole on its back (as is the case with Sherlock Holmes), then we would have to conclude that it did not exist.
Conjoining possibility with completeness therefore provides a neat but inadequate definition of existence:

\[ xE =df x^0 \& xC \]

This is deficient for a number of reasons. Firstly, mathematical items such as numbers are both complete and possible, yet they do not exist. Secondly, it is conceivable that a complete and possible item just contingently fails to exist: for example, a dragon might be a complete item in some possible world, yet dragons are unreal in the actual one. Thirdly, because this is a purely formal definition, it fails to delineate the material properties that entities possess, such as being located in space and time, having causal powers, and enduring in a manifold of perceptual experience. At best, this definition is a beginning, and needs to be augmented by a larger theoretical account of existence. Nevertheless, it satisfies the desideratum that existence be a noncharacterising property of individuals, and has at least one other virtue, in that it makes certain proofs of nonexistence possible.

If one defines existence in terms of possibility and completeness, it is then quite simple to prove that all pure objects fail to exist. This is a desirable result, for pure objects are good candidates for the status of nonexistence. The proof uses NCP (although in this context it should be expressed as \(-(txB)A, to allow for the distinction between sentential negation and predicate negation), from which it can be derived that all pure items are incomplete, and hence do not exist. If we assume that A(x) and B(x) are both allowable constructions from characterising predicates, and that B does not materially imply either A or \(\neg A\), then we may use the following proof, where \((txB)\) represents any pure object you please:

1. \(\neg(txB)A\)  
2. \(\neg(txB)\neg A\)  
3. \((Pf)(\neg(txB)A \& \neg(txB)\neg A)\)  
4. \((Pf)\neg((txB)A \lor (txB)\neg A)\)  

NCP  
NCP  
1, 2, Conj. Intro. and Generalisation  
3, De Morgan Laws
5. \(~(Uf)((txB)A \lor (txB)\neg A)\)  
6. \(~(txB)C\)  
7. \(~(txB)E\)  
4, Quantifier Negation  
5, definition of "C"  
6, definition of "E"

Since "txB" was an arbitrarily chosen pure item, we may generalise the conclusion of this argument to all pure items, and thus we have the result that no pure item exists.

Other noncharacterising features include identity and distinctness, since they are defined in terms of higher-order quantification, as was illustrated for the case of extensional identity in the previous chapters. As Routley points out, in the case of nonentities, the affirmation of a negative feature differs from the denial of a positive feature, and thus distinctness is a different property from nonidentity. That is, a proposition of the form \(a \neq b\) must be distinguished from a proposition of the form \(~(a = b)\). He also states that "Existence is sufficient for distinctness to merge with nonidentity, ie. \(xE \rightarrow (x \neq y) \equiv \neg(x = y)\)" [JB, p. 251]. There are three distinctness properties defined in the Jungle Book, and they correspond with the three versions of identity that he takes to be important. Extensional distinctness is defined as:

\[ x \neq y =_{df} (P \cdot ext f)(xf \land yf) \]

and it is the most significant for objects in general, just as extensional identity is the most significant version of identity. Another important and related noncharacterising feature is item similarity:

\[ x \text{ is similar to } y =_{df} (P \cdot ext f)(xf \land yf) \]

This is quite different from an equivalence relation, such as \(\lambda xy(x \text{ has the same taste as } y)\), since it is not specific as to the nature of the sameness that holds between the items \(x\) and \(y\), and is defined using higher-order quantifiers. Equivalence relations are usually characterising features, not just because they clearly specify what items are like, but because they fit into a series of contrasting oppositions under an \textit{a priori} category, which contributes to the sense of the relevant relational predicates. Thus having the same
colour, having the same powers, having the same shape, and so on are all determinate forms of the category: "being the same in some respect".

One final group of noncharacterising properties deals with the number of features an item has included in its characterisation. Meinong argued that the simplicity of an item must be one of its external or noncharacterising properties, because if it were not, then a contradiction would result. For example, if a thing has only one feature included in its characterisation, such as blueness, then it is natural to say that it is a simple. But this means that simplicity is one of its features, so that it will have both blueness and simplicity. Then, because it has more than one property, it will not be a simple. It is therefore both simple and not simple. The solution to this problem is to define simplicity as the possession of just one characterising property, rather than the possession of just one property. This definition also employs higher-order quantifiers:

\[
x \text{ simple } = \text{df } (P \text{ ch } f)(xf \& (Ug)(xg \supset g = f))
\]

The class of simples is a subset of the class of pure items. There are also the noncharacterising properties of having just two characterising properties, having just three characterising properties, and so on. Furthermore, Routley has defined itemhood as the possession of at least one feature:

\[
x \text{ item } = \text{df } (Pf)(xf)
\]

and this is also noncharacterising, as it fails entirely to have any contrasts.

3). Thesis (D) is an account of what it is to be a characterising feature. As such, we can determine whether the higher-order feature "being a characterising property" is a characterising property by applying (D) to itself. We then find that it is not a categorical property, and fails to contrast with any other features except its negation, and so turns out to be noncharacterising. This is what one would expect in any case, for a feature such as "redness" is not actually characterised as a characterising property, even though it is one. Likewise, if it is thought that existence is defined in terms of
determinateness and possibility, then it is not defined as a noncharacterising feature. Some higher-order properties, such as the instantiation relation, are also noncharacterising if thesis (D) is correct, for they are not determinable, categorial properties that fall under an a priori category. This is also what one would expect, since although the flying pig is characterised by the property of "instantiating \( \lambda x (x \text{ flies}) \), the ordered pair \(<\text{the flying pig}, \lambda x (x \text{ flies})>\) is not characterised by instantiation. Furthermore, the higher-order properties of "being a property" and "being a particular" are also noncharacterising, for they are defined in terms of the notion of instantiation.

4). The theory provides a way of determining which relations are characterising features, as I have already shown. Spatiotemporal and contiguous action relations are characterising in all of their places, and may be considered as determinate properties falling under determinables, or a priori categories drawn from different branches of science. Intensional relations can only be characterising in only one of their argument places, since they can characterise only a subject which possesses an intensional capacity. Logical relations are always noncharacterising, for they are not categorical.

Relations are generally quite slippery, for they have greater complexity than monadic properties. It is tempting to classify all relations as noncharacterising, and deal with something like the present King of France by insisting that it has only a monadic property, which is contrasted with "being the present King of China", "being the present King of Russia", and so on. This would have been the natural course to take if it were not for the fact that it is sometimes desirable to be able to say that things may be characterised in terms of their relations to other things. Fine's amended version of the Characterisation Postulate, which deals with such items, entails that whole clusters of objects possess essential relations to each other. This will yield objects whose sole characterising features are relations to other items which also have only relational
characterising features, even if they are strange ones like $\lambda x y (xM)$. One problem with relational characterisation has been discussed by Parsons, who has an argument that comparatives are extranuclear relations:

Here is the evidence. If 'taller than' were a nuclear predicate, then I could not be taller than Hercule Poirot. For Hercule Poirot does not exist, and so I would not have the property being-taller-than-Poirot. And since I do not occur in any of the Agatha Christie novels, Poirot would not have the property being-such-that-Parsons-is-taller-than-him. So on both counts, Poirot and I would not be related by the taller-than relation - if 'taller than' were nuclear, anyway. But Poirot is very short, and I am at least of average tallness, so doesn't this establish that I am taller than him?

Maybe not. It seems to me that I can truly be compared with certain fictional characters. I'm taller than Poirot, less clever than Holmes, more agile than Nero Wolfe, and so on. But perhaps these are only loose ways of speaking, or appearances to be dispelled. I'm not sure. But if not, then I do stand in these relations, and then...these comparatives must be extranuclear. [NO, pp. 168-169]

Parsons goes on to suggest that because all extranuclear relations have watered-down nuclear versions, it might be the case that he stands in the extranuclear relation of 'taller than' to Poirot, but that the watered-down version gives rise to the intuition that comparatives are nuclear.

If comparatives are extranuclear, then Fine's axiom cannot yield objects such as the Small and the Large, such that the sole nuclear proposition true of them is that the Small is smaller than the Large. This could be accepted as a consequence of Parsons' conclusion, and it might be that Fine just picked a bad example. But it is also a problem for my theory of characterisation, for there is an a priori category of comparatives, under which "smaller than", "higher than", "stronger than" and other relations fall. This means that comparatives should be characterising features, and Parsons' argument then presents a counterexample to thesis (D).

Once again, the problem concerns relations between entities and nonentities. In this case, it is not a matter of characterising something in terms of its relation to an entity, but of comparing two things already characterised in some way. But in what sense do existent items have a characterisation? They evidently possess characterising
features, but they are not "exhausted" by any one description, in the way that pure items, and most fictional characters are. One might think (as I suppose Parsons does) that if "taller than" is nuclear, then an entity cannot be taller than a nonentity because "being taller than Poirot", say, is not included in the characterisation of the entity. But this is false, for there is no single, absolute characterisation or defining description of an existent object. There is therefore no reason why the property of being taller than Poirot cannot be a characterising property of Parsons. The first step of his argument is thus invalid. Of course, the second step is valid, since "being-such-that-Parsons-is-taller-than" is not included in the characterisation of Poirot. But this is not enough to show that comparatives must be extranuclear. If Parsons' argument were valid, it would apply not only to comparatives, but to equivalence properties as well, since having the same colour, for example, presupposes a comparison of some sort. However, there is no real reason to exclude comparatives from the class of nuclear, or characterising properties.

5). Routley's claim that we must distinguish what is included in the characterisation of a thing from what follows from its characterisation is accepted by the theory I have adopted. It is, in fact, essential for any theory which makes room for the possibility of proving that certain objects have noncharacterising properties like identity and distinctness, incompleteness and nonexistence. The properties that are included in a characterisation are those that are explicitly represented in the description it supplies (normally by characterising predicates). There may be a large number of other properties, of differing sorts, that follow from the description, and these will depend largely upon which properties are substantially contrasted with those that are included in the characterisation. Of course, noncharacterising properties with specific formal definitions will also sometimes follow from a characterising description, but the argument which shows that, for example, the round square does not exist because it is impossible, depends upon the contrast between roundness and squareness.
To characterise an object is to supply its characterising features, and this is almost always accomplished using some sort of description. It is also possible to characterise a thing in a portrait or a sculpture, and perhaps there are other ways of revealing what the thing is like, but linguistic descriptions are clearly one of the most important forms of representation. The sense of a descriptive term is largely determined by some sort of categorical structure, which sets terms in contrasting opposition while subsuming them under *a priori* categories. An understanding of these categories is essential for an understanding of what things are like, and thus for an understanding of their characterising properties. This has been the main argument for the theory of characterisation presented. It is ripe for extension and development in all sorts of ways. For example, the question of exactly what categories are has not been addressed in detail. I have suggested that we might discover the basic categories we use by investigating the presuppositions of our discursive practices. In this regard, Meinong's theory of *Sosein* properties that are used in perception, mathematical reasoning, and natural language deserves more careful scrutiny than it has so far been given.

Another avenue that future research might take is the continuation of Meinong's project of charting the relationship between the rational and the empirical. In a sense the following chapters may be counted as an excursion into this region, for they deal with the notion of existence, which combines the empirical and the rational. A number of theories of existence will be examined and rejected. However, with the exception of the orthodox account that employs the Ontological Assumption, these theories are instructive in gathering up the various strands of our conception of what it is to exist. What are these strands? I shall argue that to have existence or Being is to be an enduring item of experience, locatable in space and time, harmoniously related to, or integrated with, other whole objects in a particular system, and to have a complete,
consistent and contingently determined class of extensional and characterising properties.

The problem with most of these strands in the notion of ontological status is that purely fictional items may also possess the features cited, yet they do not exist. Fictional creatures can do and be anything whatsoever, and thus they can be enduring, spatiotemporal, and unified beings. If anything distinguishes fiction from reality it seems to be the fact that characters are necessarily bound to certain specific stories, and are thus incomplete items. Entities are not so restricted, and consequently have a certain "counterfactual mobility". Nevertheless, the distinction between unreal characters and real individuals is a complex affair, as some of the former seem to possess the essential aspects of the latter. It will be argued in the final chapter that real people can understand their metaphysical situation in terms of an affinity with fictional stories. Indeed, storytelling can itself be seen as a way of obtaining cosmological and ontological knowledge.
CHAPTER FOUR: THEORIES OF EXISTENCE

Such indeed is the ordinary aspect in which the existent world originally appears to reflection - an indefinite crowd of things existent, which being simultaneously reflected on themselves and on one another are related reciprocally as ground and consequence. In this motley play of the world, if we may so call the sum of existents, there is nowhere a firm footing to be found: everything bears an aspect of relativity, conditioned by and conditioning something else.


1 Ontological Frames

If there are nonexistent objects, and we can know what they are like by postulating them, a large collection of philosophical problems can be neatly resolved. The problem of universals is one, as was argued in chapter Two. The intensional paradoxes involved in thinking about nonentities are also resolvable, in addition to questions about ideal objects in science and mathematics, and the spurious "problem of negative existentials". In general, the theory of objects offers an answer to ontological problems about whether certain regions of discourse, and the object domains that they presuppose, are in order as they are, or whether they must be reformulated or abandoned. If the only reason for thinking that a certain discourse is untenable is that it involves reference to things that do not exist, then object theory will offer a way of retaining the talk without the supposed ontological commitments. It also offers a way of
understanding the domain of objects as a whole, by providing a new vision of the way that language connects with items, and a different frame for our picture of reality. Our discourse is mostly based upon the non-referential use of language, and only selected contexts utilise reference to entities. We are thus surrounded by nonexistent items, and somewhere in the Jungle of objects we find ourselves in a real world.

There is an intuition, on the other hand, that it simply makes no sense to say that some things do not exist. One cannot take this as a terribly serious objection, for given that the objectual semantics for Routley’s neutral logic is very similar to standard formal semantics, and given also Parsons’ relative consistency proof for his own theory [NO, pp. 88-91], there must be some sense in the claim. The whole thing comes down to some new, quite different way of using the term “exists”, or so at first it seems. But the notion of existence is something that is generally treated quite traditionally by the neo-Meinongians. Indeed, it seems that Routley deliberately intends his theory of existence to be as close as possible to the orthodox, commonsense view, and he assumes that he doesn’t have to explain it in any great detail. His point, then, is that classical logic, and its associated ideology, has quite radically diverged from commonsense, and that the use of nonclassical logics will bring philosophy closer to the views of the more reasonable majority.

It seems that the best theoretical frame which allows that existence is a genuine concept is the Meinongian one. This frame is the only one that allows the notion of existence to be an interesting one, in the sense that it gives ontological status a certain conceptual space, rather than taking it as universally realised. In my opinion, the attempt to make the notion an ideologically neutral one, which any theorist may use as a base for metaphysical construction, is fundamentally misguided. What exists is not a neutral issue, and it is not a matter for different regions of discourse to handle in their own way.
When Routley complains about the treatment of existence as a football, he is speaking of
the bifurcation of ontology into different theories or types of discourse:

The referential doctrines encapsulated in nondeviant modern logic, in
particular the Ontological Assumption (according to which what does not
exist has no properties, true discourse is never about what does not exist), have converted existence into a sort of logical football to be kicked
around with choice of bound variables and their associated entity
domains; that is, existence is not treated as a stable independently
characterisable notion, but rather as something to be pushed hither and
thither to meet the requirement of rendering in some fashion all true
discourse (or at least minimally indispensible discourse, eg. so-called
scientific discourse) as about entities, ie. things that exist. For...given
the tensions of that unhappy menage a trois between, one, what can truly
be said, two, what exists in the ordinary sense, and, three, the
Ontological Assumption, something has to give and it is usually the
account of existence. [JB, pp. 697-698]

We thus hear philosophers speak of the ontology of physics, or the ontology of possible
worlds, or otherwise compare the ontology of events with that of things. Perhaps the
most bizarre incarnation of this trend is the idea of an ontology of fiction.¹ The problem
with being so neutral as to include any type of designating term as a potential branch of
ontology is that you lose all of the stability and the history of the term, so that the
relative importance of existing or not existing is entirely dissolved.

The ideological content of the ordinary concept of existence emerges in the
meaning we give to assertions of both being and nonbeing. There is a complex issue of
access which involves such things as characterising the world that is, measuring that
against the world that exists, and then placing oneself and certain other relatively
important items in the appropriate places in both of these worlds, to determine the sort of
access (ie. through dreams, physical contact, speculation, etc.) that one has to them. Not
everyone can do this successfully, and if we are to trust the reports of schizophrenics,
the issue of existence can become very confusing. The point is, though, that there is
both a personal and a political significance to what is taken to exist.

¹ This branch of ontology was opened by Peter van Inwagen in “Creatures of Fiction”, in American
Rather than dwell on these matters, I will concentrate on the examination of a variety of theories of existence, each of which is deficient in a certain way. The first, which is really no more than the embodiment of the Ontological Assumption, is included as much to make a methodological point as to reply to the general ontological frame that is dominant in analytical philosophy. It will then be suggested that a different methodology may lead to better results. An adequate frame for the ontological picture involves the provision of a substantial characterisation of Being, but it will be argued that almost all such characterisations fall prey to counterexamples from pure fiction. Thus many theories of existence that use constraints such as spatiotemporal location, causal power, and perception are not wholly adequate in themselves. On the other hand, definitions that use the formal constraints of contingency, consistency and determinateness yield certain pleasant results (for example, the proof that pure items fail to exist), but they are not substantial characterisations of what it is to exist. They cannot capture the phenomenology of Being, the idea that to exist is to be in a concrete situation, with the right sort of relations to other beings.

2 The Orthodox Analytical Theory of Existence

The Orthodox theory was first formally elucidated by Frege, although it has precursors going back as far as Parmenides. So much has been written on this theory, and it forms the basis of so much analytical philosophy, that it is difficult to know where to start in an exposition of its basic tenets. C.J.F. Williams, who has done some work on the original Fregean doctrine, defends Frege’s view that the concept of existence is expressed by the second-level predicate "Something__", which is an phrase containing an unsaturated ‘gap’ that can only be saturated with a first-level predicate. This is one way of explaining the function of a quantifier, and thus Williams goes on to announce a central thesis of the Orthodox theory:

OT: Existence is expressed by the existential quantifier.3

Interpreted in one way, this is analytically true, and even the Meinongian must admit that one can use an existence-restricted quantifier. But this thesis is based on the Fregean doctrine that "...existence is analogous to number. Affirmation of existence is in fact nothing but denial of the number nought."4 so that we must interpret this quantifier in an unrestricted way. Much of the argument for the thesis, as it is expounded by Williams, derives from doctrines popularised by D. Hume and I. Kant. The main theme of these doctrines is the vacuous nature of the existence predicate. Indeed, they are usually summed up by the slogan "existence is not a predicate", although, as Williams notes, it should really be "existence is not a property". The idea is that nothing is really added to, say, the concept of a horse, or that of a hundred thalers, by saying that these things exist. Our understanding is not truly enlarged when we ascribe existence to something, and so it appears that it cannot be a genuine property. In fact, a closer reading of Kant reveals that he had a slightly more complex doctrine, that "exists" is a logical predicate but not a determining one.5 This is of no real consequence to the argument, except that it might be argued that the entire Orthodox account of existence rests upon a misinterpretation of Kant.6

The conclusion of these negative arguments is that existence must be represented as a quantifier, which, when saturated with a predicate expression, yields a proposition of the form "Something \( \phi \)'s". This doesn't exactly follow from the

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3 Ibid., p. 213.
6 In fact, Kant would not be terribly distressed by nonexistent things: he held that existence was a category of modality, among which he also classified possibility and impossibility. There are also certain Meinongian themes (to speak anachronistically) that occur in the argument of the first Critique, particularly the independence of Sein and Sosein. For example, consider the following remarks: "In the mere concept of a thing no mark of its existence is to be found. For though it may be so complete that nothing which is required for thinking the thing with all its inner determinations is lacking to it, yet existence has nothing to do with all this, but only with the question whether such a thing be so given us that the perception of it can, if need be, precede the concept." See Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, trans. N. Kemp Smith, 1982, p. 113 and p. 243.
(pseudo)Kantian doctrine, which might allow for non-determining first-level predicates, but it was presented by Frege both as an account of what is wrong with the ontological argument and an analysis of existence. I will focus on the proposed analysis, for it seems to be the most important issue (his assessment of the Anselmian argument rests upon this analysis in any case). The theory has undergone a number of modifications while retaining its basic form. Russell appears to be saying the same thing as Frege when he argues that existence is only a property of propositional functions, in his lectures on Logical Atomism, and of course the all too familiar Quinean doctrine that "to be is to be the value of a variable" is just another version of the thesis. The question that should be addressed, of course, is not how prevalent it is, but whether or not it is true.

I think that the best way to interpret the orthodox theory is to recognise two quite different claims that are captured in a single theoretical framework. The first is a semantical thesis, essentially OT above: that all and only existential statements are or ought to be expressed using the classical existential quantifier. This eventually translates into an enormous program of analysis or reduction, the goal of which is to fit natural language into a single canonical language. The second main claim is more directly related to the world rather than language. Routley has called it the Ontological Assumption, and it is just the claim that everything exists — i.e. that existence is redundant. In fact, there are a number of theses which Routley labels as different versions of the OA, including "...the thesis that a non-denoting expression cannot be the proper subject of a true statement..."; that "...nonentities are featureless, only what exists can truly have properties."; and "...all statements about items which do not exist are false; only about existent items can true statements be made." [All from JB, p. 22].

Given either a linguistic or ontological characterisation of the doctrine, the orthodox theory of existence implies that everything noneliminable about which we can truthfully speak, exists. It therefore suffices to demonstrate that there are some sentences, accepted as true, which involve quantification over nonexistent objects, or just some phrase which denotes nonentities, in order to provide counterexamples to the thesis. Here are just a few:

1. There is at least one prime number.
2. Ponce de Leon was looking for something, for the fountain of youth. [JB, p. 9]
3. The car we need doesn't exist. [from Williams, p. 37]
4. Sherlock Holmes is more famous than any real detective. [NO, p. 32]
5. The golden mountain is certainly a mountain.
6. The round square is an impossible thing.
7. Bertrand Russell is dead, therefore someone is dead.
8. There are several opinions concerning this matter, but no consensus.
9. Today's lecture is cancelled.8

Examples can be multiplied of cases where we make true claims by using quantification over items that we would not truly believe to exist. The orthodox theory of existence cannot account for the way that most non-philosophical people use quantification, proper names, and definite descriptions. In short, it is incompatible with the way that we understand the notion of existence. There appear to be two main ways of replying to these counterexamples: one might "bite the bullet", and claim that all such sentences are simply false; or one might attempt a reconstruction of the truths admitted within natural ways of speaking. The first option is partially endorsed by Russell in his theory of descriptions: it is claimed that "The present King of France is bald" is false, due to the fact that "There is a present King of France" is false. The second option

usually results in attempts to paraphrase or translate sentences into a canonical language where they remain true, but take on a different logical form (an example is the Quine-Davidson account of intensional discourse). Both of these positions entail that the great majority of people speak falsely for most of their lives, either because they have false beliefs (Russell), or because they express true beliefs using sentences which have the wrong logical form (Quine-Davidson).

There are many reasons, other than a quite justifiable repugnance for elitism, for rejecting the orthodox theory of existence. All of the advantages that come with formal languages, such as clarity and precision, can be retained in a logic that admits a genuine existence property. Furthermore, all of the disadvantages of maintaining that ordinary discourse systematically abuses logical form, such as extreme implausibility, can be eliminated. Also, the foundations of the orthodox theory do not stand up to rigorous scrutiny. One of the main reasons for claiming that existence is not a predicate, one which is most prominent in Williams' book, is what is known as “Plato's Beard”, or otherwise “the problem of negative existentials”. It is claimed that if “E” represented a genuine property, then all positive existential statements would be tautologies, and all negative existentials would be self-contradictory.9 As Routley shows, this claim is based upon the OA [JB, p. 181], and is therefore a petitio principii. What reason does one have for thinking “¬aE” to be self contradictory, other than the question-begging assumption that singular terms can only denote existent items? It cannot be faulted for being a formal contradiction, for it is not of the form p & ¬p. Just as object theorists may show that (Px)¬xE is a perfectly consistent formula, using an elementary modelling, they can also show that there is no problem of negative existentials - the conclusion that something is problematic here is based upon a false premise.

Things are not quite as simple as all this, however. It is reasonably straightforward that there is no formal contradiction in saying that a thing, say Pegasus, does not exist, and representing this as a subject-predicate sentence. This is something which should be quite obvious to anyone with a knowledge of first year logic. We must come up with some explanation, then, for why so many analytical thinkers, who have a much greater knowledge of logic, can fail to see this. The question is connected to other apparent failures of reasoning that occur in the literature on fundamental ontology, whenever the problem of nonentities arises. For example, when G. Nakhnikian and W. Salmon attempt to reply to the argument that “Everything exists” is false because lots of things, like unicorns, do not, the best they can come up with is this:

Our answer to this kind of objection is basically that such considerations do not tend to show that there are things which do not exist because there are no such things as unicorns and Pegasus.10

If this is intended as an argument, then it is difficult to see how it could be interpreted other than as a circular one. They appear to be arguing against nonentities by asserting that there are none, thereby attempting to show that a proposition is true by first assuming it to be true, and proceeding on this basis. Similar assertions, where philosophers say that there are no nonexistent things, without providing reasons (and indeed apparently without really knowing why they believe this) appear in abundance throughout the literature on fundamental ontology.11 On some occasions, there are genuine avowals of a failure to understand the Meinongian position. For example, after reviewing the essential points of a Meinongian semantics, J.J.C. Smart considers interpreting the logic in terms of an arithmetical model, and then says:

11 If examples are needed to substantiate this claim, see: Kent Bach, "Failed Reference and Feigned Reference: Much Ado About Nothing" in Grazer Philosophische Studien, Vol. 25/26; Gareth Evans, Varieties of Reference, 1982, p. 365; K. Donnellan, "Speaking of Nothing", Philosophical Review 83 (1974), pp. 3-31, and just about any other orthodox text on the question of existence. Parsons' claim that the Ontological Assumption represents what Kuhn calls "normal science" is quite reasonable in the light of the large numbers of thinkers on the side of orthodoxy.
What I can't understand is the idea of an interpretation or a model which contains among its elements non-entities themselves. I want to say that non-entities would have to exist in order to be constituents of the model.\textsuperscript{12}

Exactly why he wants to say this is left as a mystery.

Given the surprising lack of justification for the orthodox theory of existence, it is easy to understand why Routley has called the fundamental tenet of this theory (i.e. the OA) an assumption. The explanation that I prefer for the startling loss of logical ability when it comes to the problem of negative existentials is that the whole problematic of existence is an ideological one, and if one has settled on an ideology, then it is difficult to see how a real alternative could work. The ideology associated with the orthodox theory is a complex affair. It seems to me that unwillingness to formalise "Pegasus does not exist" as "\(-pE\)" probably results from a "scientistic" suspicion of ordinary language, and a view of logical notation as a hi-tech replacement for the surface distortions of normal discourse. The neo-Meinongian view, by contrast, accepts that a predicate of natural language ought to be treated as a predicate in logical notation. Attempts at understanding the differences between the two sides have been made, and it is not impossible to arrive at some relatively neutral version of what the problem is (which is at least a start).

D. Lewis' paper "Noneism or Allism?" is an example of such an attempt, and he seems to arrive at a reasonable account of the main issue. He argues that the interpretation of quantifiers is not the real problem. Rather, it is that Routley has a different conception of existence, which he incorporates into his "loaded quantifiers". Using the word "we" to designate the orthodoxy, he says:

...when Routley 'loads' his quantifiers, he restricts them to the entities which, he says, "exist". And then we do not understand, because we ourselves make no such distinction among the entities. If 'existence' is what he thinks it is - a distinction among the items we are committed to - then we dispense with existence. Our main complaint against Routley is that he sees a distinction that isn't really there....the issue is squarely

joined. He says we’re blind, we say he’s hallucinating. The meaning of quantification per se doesn’t enter into it.13

This text can be read as an extraordinary admission of failure. The orthodox (North American) view “dispenses” with existence. They have no account of the notion. Indeed, it is not even recognised as a notion, for there is no distinction to be made between the existent and the nonexistent. Lewis finishes his paper by saying that if there is any sense of ‘existence’ which makes it a substantive thesis that some things exist, or even that everything exists, then the orthodoxy will have none of it. This entails that the orthodoxy must even reject the OA, as an expression of their theory of existence. Indeed, the very idea of a such a theory is discarded. But then, paradoxically, Lewis says that “...we do not dispense with the word ‘exist’ as one of our pronunciations for the quantifier.”14 How are we to interpret this? It seems that Lewis wants to get out of the business of theorising about existence, while also having his quantifier pronounced as ‘existential’. He is trying to have his cake and eat it too.

If the orthodoxy wish to retain “existential” quantifiers, then they must have provided some analysis of the notion of existence. This is generally taken to be encapsulated in OT above, and implies the OA, in the form: (\(\forall x\))xE. There are good formal arguments for rejecting this proposition, and N. Rescher has made the point quite well, with two significant proofs. Firstly, there are a number of true statements which assert only the possible existence of certain items. Though it is true that unicorns do not exist, it is certainly logically possible that they might. Now, it would be insane, according to Rescher, to assert that all objective possibilities exist, since some will exclude others. Thus he argues15 that we ought to reject:

(1). \((x)(\Diamond x \vDash xE)\)

In denying this, we must assert:

(2). \(\neg (x)(\Diamond x \vDash xE)\)

14 Ibid., p. 31.
Which is equivalent to:

(3). \((Px)(\Diamond xE \& \neg xE)\)

and this entails:

(4). \((Px)\neg xE\)

and therefore:

(5). \(\neg (Ux)xE\)

(I have used Routley's notation for neutral quantification).

The second of Rescher's arguments also involves modality, in particular counterfactual statements involving existential claims. In a statement \(S\), such as "If Hamlet had actually existed, he could not have been a more complex personality than the protagonist of Shakespeare's play," which has an antecedent of the form "aE", he claims that the very nature of counterfactuals guarantees that:

(6). \(S \supset \neg aE\)

This then entails:

(7). \(aE \supset \neg S\)

By Universal Instantiation we have:

(8). \((Ux)xE \supset aE\)

So that by Modus Ponens, it follows that:

(9). \((Ux)xE \supset \neg S\)

Rescher thus concludes that the truth of \((Ux)xE\) implies that all counterfactual existential statements are automatically false, without qualification. This, however, is enough to warrant its rejection.

The orthodox theory of existence, based upon the OA, is flawed for a number of different reasons. Perhaps the only virtue it possesses is that it does, in fact, imply that something exists. Unfortunately, the cost of this implication is that any real, substantial content is stripped from the notion.
3 Phenomenological Alternatives

If orthodox analytical philosophy is committed to the untenable Ontological Assumption, an adequate theory of existence must be sought elsewhere. One possibility is the investigation of unorthodox theories within the broader analytical tradition, and this is the task of the next two sections. Another alternative is the phenomenological tradition, which has not been completely silent on the questions of ontology. However, the more recent products of phenomenological research seem to have concentrated attention on problems of human existence and social existence, without treating ontology in general. As was noted in the previous chapter, Husserl came close to Meinong in his methodology, but because he wanted to "bracket" questions about the existence of the world, in order to concentrate upon its forms and essences, he did not have a developed theory or a definition of ontological status. Other phenomenologists, such as M. Heidegger and M. Merleau-Ponty, have not attempted to define Being at all, although they use the notion of Dasein and other "existential" concepts in interesting ways. Their central insights, in so far as they are relevant to a theory of existence, challenge the idea that one can formulate a definition of Being in the first place. Their understanding of what it is to exist is derived from their conception of what it is to live in a concrete situation, and this is not something that can be expressed in an abstract definition.

Even if an explicit, abstract definition is not possible for a phenomenological philosophy of Being, it is still possible to say something about the living process that is the manifestation of existence. Heidegger, for example, characterised Dasein (a term that might be translated as "being-there", were it not for the fact that it is used in a specific, technical sense to apply to the way of existing which can question Being, the starting point for his general ontological inquiry) in relational terms. Dasein has the structure of being-in-the-world, which is that of a self in a series of inseparable and essential relations with non-selves. These "non-self" items are not characterised independently of
Dasein, but are akin to tools that are necessarily connected with projects and concerns. Heidegger stressed that reality is just the world as it is given to Dasein, already fitted with interpretations and caught up in the activities and practices of a living being. As such, it is not something that can be conceptualised by providing a definition, or even by making reference to some category, such as "matter". Reality can only be known in the process of acting and being in the world; it must be directly and immediately lived through, or it is not truly real.

In a sense, Heidegger and other existentialist-phenomenologists do not make use of a concept of Being at all. They make use of a form of expression which enables them to point at Being, but does not "capture" an idea. As such, their project is similar to that of some forms of poetry, or perhaps "ontological autobiography". However, although it is clear that their overall methodology is radically different from that of the analytic movement, their specific position on the question of existence can be seen as but a few steps removed from the Frege-Russell-Quine account. In the case of the latter, the notion is trivial and contentless, since absolutely everything exists. One can make use of a definition of the notion, but it must be equivalent to some way of explaining the meaning of the existential quantifier. For the phenomenologists, we are too close to Being to arrive at anything like a definition that will specify its total meaning. In both cases, existence has at best a marginal content; it is either a merely formal notion that we can employ to assess the ontological commitments of theories, or it is beyond description altogether, and must be understood through the relational condition of being "thrown" into the world.

A phenomenological investigation into the character of existence is superior to the orthodox analytical doctrine in at least one respect: it will allow Being a certain amount of conceptual space, even if this must emerge in the process of living out a particular way of existing. The theory of objects is not inconsistent with
phenomenology, but it is clearly inconsistent with the Ontological Assumption. Indeed, Meinong was himself a phenomenologist of some sort, but his theory contained some rules or stipulations concerning the content of existence: for example, that entities are at least determinate and concrete items. It may be true that this is not enough to count as a complete theory of Being, but it is at least a start, and it allows space for other phenomenological accounts to be integrated into a more developed ontology.

One alternative conception of existence that falls within the broad phenomenological tradition is that expounded by Hegel in *The Science of Logic*. Taken as a whole, this work is a description of a dynamic system of categories that are dialectically related to each other at various stages of explanation. At the start of his dialectical progressions he considers the contrast between Being and Nothing, and argues that this is a merely intended contrast between notions that are supposed to be opposites but in fact slip over into each other. He uses the term "Being" here without intending any real existential loading, for his subject is the concept of an item without a substantial characterisation. Later on, the category of Existence is examined, and in this case Hegel elucidates a conception of being which is based upon the notion of connections between grounds, or interdependency. He says:

Existence is the immediate unity of reflection-into-self and reflection-into-another. It follows from this that existence is the indefinite multitude of existents as reflected-into-themselves, which at the same time equally throw light upon one another - which, in short, are co-relative, and form a world of reciprocal dependence and of infinite interconnection between grounds and consequents.16

We might paraphrase this by saying that the meaning of "existence" is "involvement in connections of mutual dependence, with an indefinite number of other items". It is not specific enough to determine which categories entities must fall under, but it is clear that spatiotemporal particulars, for example, exhibit this form of connection among themselves.

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Hegel's system of categories, or pure thoughts, all of which are expressions of the absolute Idea, cannot itself participate in relations of interactive dependence, for it is absolutely self-determining, and thus there is nothing for it to depend upon. But particular items can participate in such relations, and this includes individual subjects. There is a tension in the Hegelian system here, for under one interpretation of his phenomenology, the self, or the "I" is conceived in the same way as is the Idea. He appears to adopt the Kantian doctrine that the categories or pure concepts actually constitute the I in their operation, so that subject and object are simultaneously realised in the activity of thought. This is one of the distinctive theses of Absolute Idealism. But if both the self and the Idea are seen as networks of interrelated pure thoughts, how can it be true that one can enter into dependency relations while this is impossible for the other? The answer to this question is that while they may be conceived and constituted in the same way, they are not identical. W.A. DeVries interprets Hegel's phenomenology in such a way that the important difference between the I and the Idea is that the former exists while the latter does not. He argues thus:

The world-whole, or the pure Idea, cannot be said to participate in relations of mutual dependence - there is, after all, nothing else it can depend upon. The I, however, does participate in such relations, for each person is an I necessarily related to other I's and to nonthinking beings as well. Thus, although the content of the Idea and the I are the same, their forms are significantly different.¹⁷

The I takes on the form of existence, while the Idea does not, although they both have the content of an abstract categorical structure. DeVries notes that although the only form that is fully adequate to this content is the world-whole itself, since in the pure Idea scheme and content are united, the abstract structure of the categories is partially realised within the world that exists. This is because there exist subjects with a sufficient degree of internal conceptual complexity to be considered as microscopic versions of the macrocosm that is the Idea.

An interesting consequence of the Hegelian conception of existence is that even though the subjective I is caught up in a concrete situation, it has the capacity for thinking the whole of the conceptual structure of quantity and quality, cause and effect, essence and accident, mechanism and teleology. As such, it can be intentionally directed at nonexistent things, including the Idea, and may come to understand itself in the process of realising the structure of the Idea. It is therefore capable of forming a conception of the nature and limitations of its own position as a thing embedded in a concrete situation. There is then a way of understanding the idea of ontological status deriving from a place within Being, or from an entity reflecting upon itself as determined by others rather than as self-determining. It is important to realise that in Hegel's system an individual subject may come to understand its internal content as a holistic, self-determined thinking process, but this is quite separate from the conception of its ontic status, since internal content is different from external manifestation. As a phenomenological subject, I am the content of the self-determining Idea (Spirit) realising itself in the form of an externally determined individual.

4 Relational Theories of Existence

Hegel's phenomenology of Universal Spirit may offer a way of understanding existence from within the structure of mutually interdependent beings, but he does not supply an account of ontological status beyond saying that it involves relations of mutual dependence. There are a number of ways in which this idea can be explicated, and many draw upon ideas that analytical philosophers have developed. In considering theories which characterise existence as a sort of connectedness, we need not presuppose a phenomenological standpoint at all. Some metaphysical systems make no essential use of the relations holding between the self and its world of projects and dependencies, but still maintain that the existence of a thing is its form of connection within a system of items. Nevertheless, such a characterisation of Being, as involvement in the right sort of
system, is compatible with a general phenomenological approach, just as it is compatible with the theory of objects.

Relational theories of existence are capable of explaining the significance of ontological questions and assertions, but they also face a number of problems. It is important to specify the class of relations which connect only the entities. Intentional relations, for example, are inadmissible, because the relations that define Being must relate only existent items. A real person might be related to mythological creatures by having a dream about flying horses, but this will not suffice to bring them into existence. Furthermore, the connections between real items must be those that bring out the whole nature of a thing, by influencing or determining what it is and how it is placed in the world. This does not imply that existence must turn out to be a characterising property, but only that it be defined by a class of dependency relations.

Some extensional relations are irrelevant because they are not determinative in the right way. For example, comparatives such as "having the same weight" have no ontological significance at all: it might be the case that the Eiffel Tower weighs the same as King Kong. In saying that the right sort of relations "bring out" the whole nature of a thing, I am trying to express an intuition that is difficult to capture, and there are probably many more of the same kind. A better account of the idea is possible, as one could cite instances of the right-kinds to bring out what is intended. Causal relations are good examples of appropriate ontological connections, as are relations that involve creation, or mutual giving and receiving, or maintain the whole nature of a thing (e.g. sexual relations, nurturing relations). However, the intuition cannot be completely spelt out by using examples, and it may have to remain a little vague.

Another difficulty with relational theories is the fact that the quite substantial content that is attributed to the notion of existence is such as to make it easy to find
counterexamples from fiction. If it is maintained that all purely fictional objects fail to exist, then any theory which states that an object exists if and only if it is related to other items in some way, is false. This is because it is always possible to write a fictional story about a character that fails to exist, and yet has the relational properties that the theory specifies. Anything whatsoever can be written into a fiction, and thus a fictitious character may be related to other objects in all of the ways that real items are related to each other. There are at least two ways of responding to this criticism. One is to maintain that this is not really a problem at all, for a fictional being which satisfies the conditions under which a thing is said to exist does in fact exist, but this is only true in the story in which that being is characterised. Of course, what is true in a story is not always true simpliciter, and this is certainly the case for noncharacterising properties such as existence. The problem with this response is that it appears that an account of existence has been devised, but it has turned out to be a relativised notion, rather than an absolute. This may or may not be tolerable: it depends upon one's intuitions and preferences.

Another response is to specify that the relations that define what it is to exist must not only be of a particular sort, but must also be relations to a particular privileged, or "paradigm" object (or objects). If this is made part of the theory, then the privileged item(s) must also be specified by the theory. The problem is then solved because fictional characters will not be related in the right ways with the paradigm, even if they do possess the relational properties that define existence. A discussion of this sort of solution will be a part of the following presentation of three quite plausible relational theories. Each one captures some intuition concerning what it is to possess Being, and even explains various forms of existential assertions. However, taken in isolation, no one of them satisfies all of our intuitions, and perhaps the best way to understand them is to see them all as somehow working together.
4.1 Power

One of the most popular metaphysical notions is that only the powerful has existence. The number of forms this theory takes is quite remarkable: elements of the doctrine can be found in Schopenhauer’s world-as-will-and-representation, the activity of Spinoza’s God, Nietzsche’s will-to-power, and even in Plato’s philosophy. In modern times, it has emerged as the very specific notion of causal power, and is invoked in arguments against the existence of such things as ghosts and transcendent universals. Although it may seem like a peculiar idea, in fact it usually boils down to an interaction criterion of some sort. Thus Plato proposed as “...a sufficient mark of real things the presence...of the power of being acted upon or of acting in relation to however insignificant a thing...”. Also, C.S. Peirce maintained that “...whatever exists ex-sists, that is, really acts on other existents...and is definitely individual.”

There is some evidence that an idea of power must be associated in some way with existence. The way that we use ontological language seems to presuppose that some type of capacity to act or to work is inherent in all entities. If I ask someone whether the Surf Life Saving Association still exists, I am asking whether it still has capacities of a certain sort; whether it can still perform as it once did; whether it has the power it once had. If it is denied that God exists, this is not necessarily a denial that there is no meaningful name "God", or that it has no place in language, but rather (at least) a denial that God has any power, creative or otherwise. When physicists announce that a certain type of particle exists, this is generally because they have discovered one of its effects - that is, they are asserting that the particle has an effective power to act on others. The connection between ontological status and the concept of an active and interactive capacity is probably quite strong, but merely pointing out that there is a

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18 For example, by Armstrong in RN.
connection does not constitute a theory of existence. A clear definition and exposition of the connection is needed.

One philosopher who at least appears to endorse a distinction between existent and nonexistent things, quite explicitly defines Being in terms of power. This is P. Butchvarov, who writes:

We may say that existence is power in the general sense that what exists, even if it has finite duration and belongs to the past, is permanently facing us, if not physically or in perception, then in thought; always to be reckoned with, never subject to our whim. And the precise sense in which we should understand this is that the existent, the real, is the indefinitely identifiable. It is that which we may be forced to confront physically or in our perception or thought on indefinitely many occasions.21

This theory incorporates elements from logic and phenomenology in its attempt to avoid Russell’s objection to Meinong while remaining true to a conception of being that is based upon the coherence of experience and intentionality. Since Butchvarov distinguishes between individuating properties, the possession of which is a necessary condition of an object’s formal identity, and nonindividuating properties, attributed only in virtue of an object’s material identity22 (and with the presupposition of identifiability through space and time), there is an analog of a theory of characterisation. The notion of “object” that he uses is that of a “thing that can be singled out”, and thus he argues that objects as such can have any properties in terms of which they are singled out. This is how he derives the notion of an individuating property. Butchvarov then claims that existence, as it is defined above, is clearly a nonindividuating property, for indefinite identifiability cannot be used to single out any sort of object.

It seems to me that this claim is only justified if a experiential interpretation of “identifiability” is given here. Someone entirely fictional, like Hamlet, might be identifiable throughout an indefinite series of plays, novels, dreams, and works of

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21 P. Butchvarov, Being Qua Being, 1979, p. 109.
22 Ibid., pp. 106-107.
literary criticism, because of certain essential features the thing has, but this need not imply that the thing exists, according to Butchvarov. This type of identifiability is not connected to concrete experience in the right sort of way. The books may be discarded and the dream interrupted, just as easily as one may get up and leave the theatre during Act Three. This, I take it, is enough for such things to fail to be indefinitely identifiable. Butchvarov’s insistence that we are forced to confront that which exists is clearly intended to rule out such cases. In this case his notion of existence truly cannot be used to “single out” or characterise things, for singling out is an act of the intellect which requires the freedom to assume to think of anything - and this freedom is ruled out by his definition of existence as that which we are forced to confront.

While there is something intuitively appealing about this account, the fact that an experiential sense of identifiability is used makes it susceptible to counterexamples. For although part of meaning of existence may be captured by the attempt to specify the difference between what I must re-identify when I wake from my dream, and what I have experienced beforehand, it is clear that fictional characters must do the same thing in their awakenings. This means that the simple formula of indefinite identifiability is not enough to specify completely the difference between the fictional things within the “permanent purview” of hobbits, demons, and creatures of fantasy, and the real things identifiable by existent people. This is a much more radical objection to Butchvarov’s thesis than those concerning the novelist who identifies a murderer with a chief detective, for it reveals the inadequacy of his experiential approach to existence. It fails to specify the “we” or the “I” whose coherent experience of consistent, recurring identity matches up to real being. In the end, Butchvarov’s response to the novelist-style objection is to deny that nonexistent items have any criterion of identity, and this, I think, further reveals the inadequacy of his theory. It is difficult to see how he can consistently maintain that there are nonentities if he is also willing to endorse this thesis.

23 Ibid., p. 113.
24 Ibid., p. 114.
The more general causal theory of existence, of course, is independent of this phenomenology of identification, but it has the same sort of problem. To say that a thing exists if and only if it has the causal power to act on other existent things does not isolate the set of entities unless we have already identified at least one of them, and thus it is only a partial account. To say that to exist is to possess causal power is simply false, for there are obvious counterexamples. Routley notes, for example, that James Bond caused many explosions [JB, p. 716], and yet fails to exist.

The main reason that power is so popular as a criterion for existence is that it is thought to involve a sufficiently close relationship to capture all and only items with the requisite communality. It thus appears to form the right sort of system. Causation is also popular, it seems, because it is a powerful explanatory device in natural science. The idea that what exists is so related to other things that it passes on some of its properties, or at least partly determines the character of others, automatically involves the idea of a system. What's more, such a system is close to our immediate experience of influences, alterations and origins, and cannot be rejected without a massive change in our ordinary conceptual scheme, and a great loss of explanatory power. Nevertheless, whether the idea of such an interactive, interdetermining system is correctly analysed using the notion of material causation, or even physical law, is quite a different matter.

4.2 Space and Time

The idea that existence is a type of entanglement with entities may be expressed in a number of different ways, and the causal criterion is therefore sometimes replaced by a spatiotemporal one. This states that to exist is to be located in space at some time [JB, p. 707]. While this is more general than the former, it is susceptible once again to

25 This, of course, is controversial, and it may be that causal notions play a larger part in ordinary thinking about events than in the more complicated constructions of science. But then, science is almost certainly part of the same project as language, so the boundaries become blurred.
counterexamples from fictional variation. Fictional characters are very often spatiotemporally located: for example, Sherlock Holmes lived in Baker St., London. This type of example, which must be admitted as legitimate as long as fictional objects are included within the domain of a theory, is precisely the sort of thing which upsets anti-Meinongians. They feel that if fictions are admitted into the picture, our normal characterisation of being, which uses spacetime or causation, is radically distorted, for we must then account for the spatial relationship between Holmes and London. There are, of course, ways of avoiding these problems. For example, Parsons introduces two axioms for “plugging up” relations, specifically to deal with relations between nonentities and entities. When an n-place relation is plugged up with an individual, it becomes an n-1-place relation. Parsons uses “x[Ry]” to symbolise “x has the property that you get by plugging up the second place of R with y” [NO, p. 59]. Instead of assuming that x[Ry] iff [xR]y, which is true for real objects, Parsons takes counterexamples like the fact that Holmes lived in London, but London has never contained Holmes, quite seriously, and proposes an entirely different assumption. His axiom PLUG(N) has the following instance, for “r” a 2-place relation:

$$\text{E}!a \supset (x[Ry] \& x!b \equiv a[rb])$$ [NO, p. 75].

This ensures that for existent items, the order of plugging up relations is irrelevant. For nonentities, it may be the case that x[Ry] and ~[xR]y, and in these cases he appears to assume that the simple statement xRy is just false, though it may be true in a story [NO, p. 60].

Routley has a very different way of dealing with the problem. Instead of adding new axioms, he attempts to make the characterisation of existence a little sharper, and utilises the notion of an entire relation in doing so. An entire relation is one that satisfies all of the “classically accepted logical relations and inferences”. His example, “due South of”, is, he claims, entire if it is transitive, asymmetric and irreflexive, permits passive conversions and replacements with extensional identicals [JB, p. 268].
The advantage gained by making the distinction between entire and reduced relations, which only satisfy some of these requirements, is that Routley can still hold “Holmes lived in London” true, without having “London was lived in by Holmes” as true, and he doesn’t have to use Parsons’ plugging-up device. This might be significant, since, as he points out, Parsons doesn’t really explain what his new predicate “[xR]” means, as it doesn’t mean “xR” [JB, p. 585]. When it comes to giving an account of existence, Routley makes use of the notion of “entirely true” statements, which also satisfy the classical expectations. After arguing that a causal account of existence leads back to a space-time criterion, he attempts to show how the two converge, and this leads to the following definition:

\[
\text{BTPS. } x \text{ exists iff (it is entirely true that) some spatial neighbourhood (now) includes both } x \text{ and some paradigm entity.}
\]

[JB, p. 718]

Note that this definition is circular, since “paradigm entity” must be interpreted as “paradigm existent item”. Routley is aware of this, of course, and it fits into his general scheme for existence criteria, which is that a thing exists when it is appropriately related to a paradigm. This is quite an effective procedure, since it means that he can maintain that his criteria are analytically true, for they are definitions, but that all of existence is nevertheless contingent (which is what Meinong’s theorem says), due to the contingency of the paradigms [JB, p. 731]. All he needs is a way of determining which items are paradigms, and his theory will be complete, for the circularity of BTPS will be dissolved when a specification of a paradigm is added. Routley has given a few hints as to how to select these entities, but they are less than satisfactory.

Many of the theories that Routley investigates in his attempt to integrate or unify criteria for existence have a relational structure. When he first states what the general form of these theories is, he also mentions a variety of ways of characterising or selecting a paradigm entity:
RE. $x \mathcal{E} \iff x \mathcal{R} p$,

where $p$ is some paradigm existent, such as Reality, the World, Space on realist accounts, and as the subject, the perceiver, oneself, on more idealist accounts, and $R$ is a specific relation or type of relation. The existents are then the things suitably related to a (or some) paradigm existents. [JB, p. 713]

It could be argued that this is a misrepresentation of the differences between realism and idealism, for what actually exists can turn out to be exactly the same whether you pick a subjective or an objective paradigm. It seems that the specified relation involved is one that somehow transfers ontological status to other objects, so in effect it does not matter where you start, so long as you begin with an existent object. The indifferent attitude that Routley has towards the nature of paradigms illustrates how the relational theories he considers all involve internal relations, in the sense that they just relate entities to other entities. This means that so long as one follows the course of these relationships, whether they be causal, spatiotemporal, perceptual, or "generic", one will safely remain within the domain of existing things. However, one problem concerning the selection of paradigms is that of how one enters this domain in the first place. For if a fictitious item is selected as a paradigm, then the ontological guarantee that the internal relations provided will no longer apply.

This seems to be a general problem with any theory of existence that relies exclusively upon internal relations (ie. those that will not relate entities to nonentities). Either there is some paradigm which is guaranteed to exist, in which case it seems that there must be a necessary being of some kind, or the characterisation of a paradigm will apply to some fictional items. After all, it is possible that "the perceiver" or "the subject", or even "the World" sometimes denote fictions (for example in fictional contexts), and it is at least questionable that these things must necessarily exist. One could maintain that the second option is acceptable, since the notion of existence ought to apply to some fictions at least: they might exist according to their story. This would mean, however, that a relational theory could only explain "existence-in-a-story", and
there would then be no room for a concept of "absolute" existence. In any case, it is clear that Routley does not allow for any necessary beings:

The paradigms for existence are not invariants which necessarily have their paradigm-making feature: they are local objects, and, since nothing necessarily exists, they have their key features contingently. As paradigms there is thus a clear choice, namely ostensively-indicable local entities. To exist is to occur in their neighbourhood, in the spatial network they generate, or, more briefly, to be spatially related to them. [JB, p. 714]

The doctrine that paradigms are contingent and local thus leads naturally into the spatiotemporal criterion that Routley has called BTPS. But a couple of points are worth making as regards this doctrine. Firstly, the concept of being "local" is an indexical one, and is also relative to subjects: what is local to one is not local to another. Thus it seems that an "idealistic", or at least a "subjectivist" account is favoured. Secondly, it is possible for a fictional character to ostensively indicate local items for him or herself. This way of choosing paradigms does not guarantee a way into the real world. In short, Routley's way of choosing paradigms does not solve the problem of fictional counterexamples.

In addition to the difficulty of selecting a paradigm entity, there is another problem with the space-time criterion. It is unclear from the text whether BTPS is really an attempt to make causal and spatiotemporal criteria converge in a single statement, for it is presented as an improvement on a criterion which used only "physical" relations, together with the claim that these are spatially grounded [JB, p. 718]. Routley appears to believe that at least some "contiguous action" relations, like kicking, are to be classed as physical, and thereby intends some sort of unification of a causal criterion and a purely topological one. BTPS, however, is much wider than an ordinary causal theory, for it takes in all sorts of anomalous filled spaces which cannot possibly enter into causal relations. As an example, consider the filled space - that is, the actual matter contained within the space - which is just a continuously connected cylinder extending across an existent room, going through parts of a coffee table and parts of a radio.
According to the general principles of object theory, this anomalous piece of matter, which may only last for a few minutes due to the movement of more conventional objects through the space, is certainly an object. By BTPS, this object exists. Yet, because it is just an oddly-cut slice of a world which takes in bits of other, more naturally unified things, it really cannot be a causal agent of any kind. While it is true that its parts undergo causal processes, the object itself cannot be kicked, burnt, or moved. In short, given the popularity of the criterion of power, this thing has a somewhat dubious ontological status. Since BTPS admits anomalies like these, and even disconnected filled spaces such as "the item which is half of Argentina and the moon", it also inherits a certain implausibility.

4.3 Harmony

One of the main problems with both the theory of power and that of space-time is that they assume that it doesn't really matter what a thing is like, for this has no bearing on its existence. They therefore stipulate that the way a thing is connected to other things, rather than the way it is in itself, is the only relevant information in the determination of its ontic status. There is a strong motivation behind this, even in the minds of anti-Meinongian authors, since it is generally understood that existence is not a characterising or essential property, and thus it seems best to avoid using characterising features in its definition. However, as was argued in the previous chapter, there are no good a priori reasons for excluding relations from the class of characterising features. Therefore, simply using relations is not going to solve the problem, and it may be that even causal and topological relations are characterising. In fact, it is not really a problem at all. A relational theory need not entail that existence is a characterising feature, for the paradigm does not have to have a fixed characterisation - indeed, as Routley suggests, there may be several paradigms, selected according to convenience.
The problem of the anomalous filled spaces arises precisely because BTPS takes no account of the essential features of things like chairs and rooms, people and animals, which bind them into a unified, or at least partially connected whole. This wholeness does appear to be part of the characterisation of entities, and it is simply excluded by criteria which specify only ways that entities are connected to each other, or put into a position in the world. We might then prefer a theory of existence which specifies the way in which the internal, or essential features of a thing are related to its other, external connections. This may be seen as a way of capturing the wholeness of entities, for internal organization is the defining feature of a whole that truly connects its parts. Also, the intuition that each entity is a thing which must stand out against a background, or is otherwise dependent for its existence on certain connections with an environment, may be captured by making use of the distinction between essential and conditional features. It seems, in fact, that a purely spatiotemporal criterion succeeds only in determining the background environment for beings, and this is not really enough. Objects generally, and therefore entities also, have a characterisation which is conceptually independent of their environmental conditions.

Some recent metaphysical work, inspired by process philosophy, has recognised this need for a specification of the relation between the distinguishable item and the background within which it is distinguished. In particular, R.C. Neville's essay "Sketch of a System" offers an approach to understanding Being which reconciles its contingency with the fact that existent objects also have essences. He begins by conceiving an entity as a harmony of essential and conditional features. This does not entail that entities are simply collections of properties, for a harmony is, in this context, simply the togetherness of features, and it is not seen as a further feature to be harmonised. Conditional features are all relational, and specify the situation of a thing with respect to others. Essential features are unique to their individuals, and organise

conditional features so that their instances possess a determinate identity with respect to other entities in a system. Neville suggests that his theory provides a way of "...defining things relationally without exhausting them in relations that themselves then collapse", since essential features, which are presumably simple monadic properties, are always harmonised with relations, so that collapse is impossible without the destruction of the entity in question. No existence is possible without harmonized essence. He goes on to explain how this works as follows:

In facing another person, or thing, the sheer fact of difference suggests a deeper unity than that composed of all the mutual conditionings. The theoretical structure is this. If A has essential features of its own and conditional features with respect to B, and B has conditional features with respect to A and also its own essential features, how are the essential features of A related to the essential features of B? The essential features of A are not determinate except as harmonized with A's conditional features, and the conditional features are impossible except through B, which itself is a harmony of its own conditional and essential features.

In Neville's system, the background against which entities are discerned is simply the connected set of entities which constitutes the world. The point of his harmonies are to provide a way in which things are distinguished within a connected whole. Every entity is a whole itself: it has an essence. Because that essence possesses a particular form in virtue of the fact that it is in harmony with various non-essential relationships to other entities, it may serve as a way of picking out a unique individual. Think of a conscious individual with a position in space and time. Its position is presumably accidental or conditioned by events outside of itself, but its consciousness is essential to its being the thing it is. This consciousness is given form by the external, spatiotemporal world, with which it must either harmonise or die. Such an item may serve as an example of what Neville has in mind, although not all harmonised items have consciousness. If I have interpreted him correctly, his system entirely avoids the problem with anomalous filled spaces, since it explicitly stipulates that entities are

27 Ibid., p. 256.
28 Ibid., p. 258.
29 Ibid., p. 258.
unified things, rather than arbitrary cuts of a continuous substance. There may be other ways of achieving the same effect, but the main point is that such a result is desirable, and it becomes all the more so if one is able to define the appropriate unities so that it is possible to see them as naturally occurring essences, and not merely conventional constructions.

Of course, Neville's system inherits the same flaw that I have already discussed with respect to other theories: the problem of fictional counterexamples. There is no good reason why fictitious things could be harmonised items of the sort that he describes. For example, Sherlock Holmes possesses the essential property of being a man, and this is harmonised with various conditional properties relating him to Watson, his pipe, the city of London and so on. The system is therefore incomplete without a way of selecting the right wholes, or a specific paradigm entity. Conjoined with a way of selecting of a paradigm, the theory would be capable of explaining what it is to exist by precisely delineating all and only the entities. Although a vague hint of a selection procedure is given in his comments on harmony as an achievement of value, Neville's theory shares the same general problem with all the other theories of Being as a type of system.

5 Formal Definitions

It was noted in the previous chapter that properties which may be defined using higher-order quantifiers are always noncharacterising, since can not be organised into a contrasting series of properties, and are thus external to the characterisation of an item. While this is certainly a helpful result, it is doubtful that the concept of existence can be completely analysed with such a definition. In this section I shall examine a number of formal definitions and argue that each excludes an important part of the content of existence. Most of them incorporate the notions of predicate completeness,
consistency, and contingency, or use some combination of these. The motivation behind this trend is (apparently) the belief that these features exclude fictional things from the realm of Being, and thus the counterexamples of the previous section are avoided. This belief, however, does not always appear in the arguments used to establish the correctness of the definitions used. It is, nevertheless, a substantial thesis that must be argued for in any case, as it might appear to be a rather arbitrary stipulation.

Routley has urged at several places in the Jungle Book that the authors of fictional works cannot determine everything about the objects they introduce - in particular, ontic status cannot be settled by an author's say-so. Equally, such things as completeness and consistency are not a part of fictional characterisation, since they are external to the work itself. What evidence do we have, then, that purely fictional things could not possess these properties? An extremely long fictional story might concern objects which, for all we are able to say, were complete and consistent with respect to all characterising properties. The problem is that such a story would have to be infinitely long, and thus we could never check any written version to see whether the items specified were indeed entities. Even so, if stories are understood to be sets of propositions, there is no reason to expect that all stories will be written down, or recorded at all, so that it remains a possibility that some purely fictional things may exist. This is unacceptable.

Of course, this argument does not deal with contingency, but it does show that it cannot simply be assumed that such properties as combined completeness and consistency are exclusive to entities. Further argument is needed. A more general criticism of purely formal definitions of existence is that they are never quite complete. If they are seen to be specifications of the properties that entities must have (and thus as internal characterisations), then they nearly always leave out the essential connections that entities have with each other. This can be seen rather clearly in many cases, since
the definitions involved do not make any room for relational characteristics at all. Of course, it is always possible to claim that relations between entities are not essential to entities, and thus the criticism does not apply. However, there is an immediate reply to this which must be acceptable to anyone who admits that it is possible to be genuinely related to objects by intentional states.

While some relations, like thinking, may hold between entities and nonentities, others, like kicking or riding, cannot. Thus if I exist, I can imagine what Pegasus looks like, but I cannot actually leap on to his back and fly off into the distance. This is not merely accidental, for it is one of the strongest reasons for thinking that there are nonexistent things, and thus for drawing the distinction in the first place. It follows that some relations must be included in the very definition of existence itself. Merely limiting the connections that entities have with each other to extensional ones, as opposed to intensional ones, is one way of allowing for this fact, but it must be accompanied by some criterion of intensionality. Many of the definitions I will consider do not make room for any relations, and are thus defective in any case.

5.1 Contingency

Historically, the first formal definition (ie. one that uses only concepts formalised by a system of logic) of a genuinely contentful and interesting existence predicate is that of H. Leonard, in his paper “The Logic of Existence”. It is the simplest possible way of making existence a contingent feature, for it simply says that what exists is what contingently instantiates some property. That is, using Routley's notation:

\[ \text{D1. } xE = \text{df } (Pf)(xf \& \neg xf)^{30} \]

Leonard immediately confronts a problem with this definition, for he shows how to prove that anything whatever exists, given the premise that \( \neg xG \& \neg \neg xG \), where \( G \) is

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some predicate constant. I will not discuss this problem, except to say that his solution, which involves putting a restriction on which properties possess what he calls singular existence, is not available to the noneist, and in any case seems _ad hoc._

The question of whether D1 has counterexamples from fiction is quite a complex issue, one in which intuitions appear to pull in different directions. There is certainly a case for saying that, at least _within the story_, Sherlock Holmes was a detective and that it is logically possible that he was not a detective. From his perspective, so to speak, it is entirely contingent that he is what he is. If D1 is accepted, this would mean that Holmes exists, which is unacceptable. There are, on the other hand, at least two reasons for thinking that D1 does not entail the existence of fictional characters. Firstly, modal properties are noncharacterising, and cannot be determined from within the story which characterises a fictional object. It may be replied that Leonard's definition utilises a propositional modal operator and not a predicate of individuals. Even so, the semantical analysis of statements which use this operator are assessed by considering possible worlds other than the base world: in this case, the story-world in which Holmes is characterised. This means that his characterisation is not enough to determine the truth-value of the statement that he might not have been a detective, or whatever. Secondly, according to the theories of both Parsons and Routley, any fictional object is identical with an item described by a particular definite description, and thus if "being a detective" is a characterising feature of Holmes, then FCP entails that Holmes is _necessarily_, and not contingently, a detective.

This second point, in fact, is much more complex than it appears at first. It is not strictly accurate to report Routley's view in this way. Indeed, it seems that he is caught sometimes between two intuitions concerning the contingency of Holmes' nature. His theory of fiction makes use of the notion of a source book, which is "...the source for characterising details of...(an) object..." [JB, p. 353]. The source book for
an item is analogous to Parson's notion of the story to which an item is native, and it is composed of statements about the item which may or may not attribute noncharacterising properties. It thus determines a particular world at which these statements are true, although "...which features it in fact has, has in T, as opposed to in the source book world, depend upon its characterising features, and these features it does have (in T) as Characterisation Postulates assure." [JB, p. 354]. The difficulty with this idea is that source books, even though they are "ideal extrapolations from actual books" and do not exist themselves, are only contingently sources for the fictional items that are named within them. This results in an apparent conflict with the doctrine that a CP is necessarily true. Routley tries to resolve this conflict in the following passage:

Sherlock Holmes might have been a negro born in the U.S.A., in which case the source book would be rather different. So it is contingent that Sherlock Holmes has even the characterising features ascribed to him by the source book. But how is this compatible with the necessary truth supplied by a CP that the man who did all the characterising things SH did (necessarily) did all these characterising things? The identity of SH with the man who did all the things Holmes did...is extensional, and replacement of extensional identicals does not preserve modality; so what the identity will yield at best is that what is true is that SH in fact did all these characterising things. [JB, p. 356]

We might sum up his conclusion as follows: the statement "Sherlock Holmes is a detective" is contingent, because the source book for Holmes is contingent. However, if we use a complete description of Holmes instead of his name, the statement "The man who smoked a pipe, lived in Baker St.,...etc is a detective." turns out to be necessarily true, since it will be an instance of FCP. One can see why Routley is drawn to both of these apparently conflicting assessments of the modal status of fictional statements, for there are fairly good reasons behind each. However, if the difference between these two statements is only that one uses a name and the other a definite description, then he is (apparently) in conflict with what he says much earlier in the Jungle Book, that "...there is no sharp line to be drawn between ordinary proper names and descriptions." [JB, p. 163]. This inconsistency can be overcome, for he acknowledges that there are some important differences between the two types of
singular term, but some reason for maintaining an important difference in the case of fictional things has yet to be spelt out.

Returning to the question of Leonard’s definition, we may conclude that a neat, noncontroversial fictional counterexample cannot be found, essentially for the reasons just given: the issue becomes complex and even leads into problems concerning proper names. This does not vindicate the proposal, though, for there remain defects in the simple characterisation of existence as property-contingency. It cannot deal with relations, for one thing, and thus, as was noted above, it fails to specify which relations are characteristic of beings. What’s more, if it were modified to cover relations, perhaps by letting “f” designate plugged-up versions of predicates as well as monadic ones, then there are fairly easy counterexamples from fiction. I am thinking of Charles the Bunyip, and it is possibly not the case that I am thinking of Charles the Bunyip. Even so, Charles does not exist. Therefore, Leonard’s definition is unsatisfactory.

N. Rescher has also devised a formal definition of existence, which unfortunately has quite simple defects, including simple fictional counterexamples. I say “unfortunately” because it is set in the context of an otherwise brilliant paper, and he is careful to demonstrate that his definition does not imply that everything exists. His account is based upon the curious thesis that “...if a thing does not exist, then its only qualitative properties are those which characterize all objects.”31 Even though he proves that this does not imply the Ontological Assumption, his thesis is nevertheless a type of redundancy theory of nonentities. Qualitative properties, Rescher explains, are those denoted by primitive predicates of the language, or predicates constructed from these using only alternation and conjunction. His theory therefore appears to imply that nonentities do not possess nontrivial primitive (whether this means “extensional” is not clear) properties. It is not difficult to find counterexamples to his definition, which is

expressed as follows, where “φ” is used instead of “f” to indicate the restriction to qualitative properties:

\[ D2. \quad xE = \text{df} \quad (\exists \phi)(x\phi \& (\forall y)(\neg y\phi))^{32} \]

Consider the red circular triangle. It is red, and at least one other thing is not red. However, the red circular triangle fails to exist, for it is an impossible item. It is therefore a counterexample to Rescher’s definition, as long as redness is a qualitative property. This is true so long as it is represented by a primitive predicate, and “red” is certainly primitive in at least the English language. Rescher’s theory also has problems with relations, as expected, and it suffers from failing to use any modal notions.

Existence is standardly thought to involve modal properties, for there are certain principles, such as “Existence entails possibility” which a full account of the notion should justify. In effect, D2 is not a definition of existence in terms of the notion of contingency at all. It seems to rest upon the intuition that the logical structure of a thing’s qualitative (or perhaps nuclear) properties determines its ontological status. While this intuition is a part of other accounts of existence, it seems that an adequate theory must incorporate modal features as well as qualitative ones.

5.2 Completeness and Consistency

The account of existence which originates with Meinong, and is adopted by Parsons, Routley, and Castañeda, is simply that entities are those items which are complete and consistent with respect to all of their properties. Only Routley and Castañeda set out explicit definitions, however, and each uses their own peculiar

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32 Ibid., p. 166. Once again, Routley’s notation is used, so that subject terms come before predicates.
33 At least according to Findlay, in Meinong’s Theory of Objects and Values, 1963, chapter four.
34 The history of this idea can, in fact, be traced back much further than Meinong. Although it does not appear as an explicit doctrine, one can certainly find elements of the notion in Leibniz and Spinoza, and perhaps even Plato and Parmenides.
notation. A criticism that can be made of both of them is that they do not provide very
good reasons for thinking firstly, that all entities are, in fact, complete and consistent,
and secondly, that these features are together *definitive* of existence as a property.
Nevertheless, it appears that counterexamples are difficult to find, although Routley
himself has noted that "fuzzy" objects, such as clouds, might exist without satisfying
determinacy criteria [JB, p. 721].

Instead of exploring this point, I will argue that the definitions offered do not
go far enough in their characterisation of existence. In effect, they do not state enough
about what it is to instantiate existence to determine whether an item that we believe to be
a candidate entity is in fact one. Also, a definition leaves open the question of whether
anything actually exists. While this is undoubtedly what is wanted from a definition, a
complete theory of existence must supplement such a definition with a specification of
some the details of the actual nature of entities. Otherwise, using quantification over
properties means that they entities could possess all sorts of features which nothing in
reality does. For example, it is left open that dragons exist.

The first definition that Routley proposed uses his notion of predicate
negation, which was argued in chapter One to be essential to the theory of nonexistent
objects. It is stated as:

\[ D3. \quad xE =df (f)(x-f \equiv \neg xf) \] [JB, p. 244].

The justification considered for D3 is that the universal equivalence of predicate and
sentence negation is an expression, in Routley's notation, of a *Russellian* notion of
existence, for negation scope differences in his theory of descriptions disappear when
the described object exists. Although he also cites Meinong (or at least Findlay's
Meinong) as another source for D3, it is clear that he is attempting to remain reasonably
orthodox in the matter of existence. The original definition is modified, however, since
scope matters in intensional contexts, and since it is desirable to secure certain modal properties. He then comes up with:

$$D4. \ xE = df (U \ ext \ f \Omega (x-f \supset \neg xf) \ & \ VT(\neg xf \supset x-f))$$ [JB, p. 244].

The scope of the necessity operator extends only to the first conjunct. The symbol used in the second conjunct represents contingency, so that 'VT' means 'contingently true'. The modalisation of the definition is needed to secure the theorem that existence entails possibility, and what Routley calls "Meinong's Theorem", which is that no item necessarily exists\(^{35}\) [JB, p. 247].

The argument of the Jungle Book is complex, enormous, and interconnected, somewhat like a real jungle. One of the joys of reading the work as a whole is that one can often find connections concerning which one is never quite sure if they are intentional or not. The logico-metaphysical picture that emerges is one consciously developed in opposition to classical predicate calculus together with its most pervasive philosophical interpretations. The overall strategy is to demonstrate that the classical picture is too small, and that it needs to be put into a larger picture with a larger, and perhaps boundless\(^{36}\) frame. Routley is not necessarily opposed to classical logic as such, but rather wishes to fit it into a certain design, and show that claims for its universality are misguided. He states several times that the logic of Russell is fine as long as one is concerned only with existent things, but is inadequate when it comes to incomplete nonentities and intensional phenomena. It is thus a part of his weblike argument to justify his definitions of "existence" both by reference to a Russellian connection, and by invoking a distinction which classical logic collapses. He says:

...only entities are really complete; one can always turn up aspects of nonentities in which they are incomplete. So for entities, and only for entities, predicate and sentence negation coincide. The arguments given in favour of the distinction between sentence and predicate negation help clinch this point: for they all turned upon consideration of features of

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\(^{35}\) This is assumed to be a desirable result, but it could be argued that it is not something which ought to follow from the definition of "Exists". It is a contentious issue, not capable of being settled by a stipulation.

\(^{36}\) See JB, p. 738 for a proof of the proposition that most objects do not exist.
nonentities. In the case of entities this distinction is not needed; hence its failure to put in an appearance in standard logic texts....Classical logic has got things (more or less) right as regards the extensional logical behaviour of entities...[JB, pp. 244-245]

This gives the impression that the distinction between entities and nonentities can be explicated by that between sentence and predicate negation. It implies that there is a meaningful connection between the orthodoxy’s assertion that everything exists, and their commitment to the laws of excluded middle and noncontradiction, for if it were recognised that there are nonexistent things, it would also be recognised that these laws do not hold for predicate negation. However, if Routley’s only argument for his definition (D4) of existence as completeness, consistency and contingency is that it conforms to certain classical expectations, and yields the “right” modal results, then it must be added that he has provided no reasons for thinking that these classical expectations are correct. Even if the distinction between negations was argued for on the basis of examples of nonentities, this does not establish that entities could not also be used in this way.

What is more, although it is indeed plausible that all entities are fully determinate (which means: neither indeterminate nor overdeterminate) with respect to their extensional features, no reason has been given for thinking this essential to their being entities (and therefore part of the definition of “exists”). The classical connections do not establish this unless, again, the orthodoxy are really correct in their logic of existence, and this is simply asserted by Routley, not argued. There are reasons for this lack, however, for it is a part of the structure of the Jungle Book. The widening of logical horizons37 takes place under the assumption that the referential world, rather like a tree stump, is too short and unnaturally cut up to be able to serve the whole tree of actual world discourse. When further, nonactual and even nonpossible worlds are considered, and more of the jungle becomes visible, the classical restrictions are seen to

37 See JB, p. 288 for the meaning of this expression.
be even more untenable. The exploration into nonentities, however, is premised upon the idea that standard logic was constructed to deal with entities only.38

Even if we forgive the lack of argument for these definitions, and put it down to a structural, strategic move on Routley’s part, there is another problem, which emerges when he attempts a more comprehensive statement of the meaning of existence. Although he does not explicitly state this, it becomes clear in chapter Nine of the Jungle Book that purely formal definitions are quite inadequate by themselves. They do not supply information about the substantial properties of entities, but only the way that properties are structured with respect to each other. Thus there is no possibility of using a definition to ground substantial ontological claims like “Physical objects exist”. In effect, no reason can be given why any particular category of things includes entities, as long as a purely formal definition is the only guide to the sense of the term ‘exist’. Perhaps this is to be expected from a definition, and since what exists is contingent, ontological claims should not be based upon a priori considerations. On the other hand, there is an intuition that our ordinary notion of existence is quite specific as to the sort of categories that may be applied to entities. If this is true, then any definition ought to be supplemented by a systematic ontology of some sort. Without a developed theory, we cannot expect to have completely elucidated the meaning of existence.

Routley does not use any of these reasons, although he does eventually reject D4. After a long discussion of determinacy criteria, which concerned itself mostly with the indeterminacy of existent things, he argues that in the case of nonentities, there are usually questions of detail that cannot, in principle, be answered. Such things as: “What were the songs of the sirens?”; “How many turnips did Sherlock Holmes consume?” [JB, p. 727] are thought to be absolutely indeterminate, but this is only a subclass of the

38 This is the overall impression that the book gives, but there are places where Routley criticises the classical treatment of entities, and where he offers slightly different reasons for a determinacy criterion [JB, p. 723 and p. 727]. However, what he then comes up with is very different from D4.
features that nonentities may possess. In order to specify which subclass this is, Routley goes on to say that there are two ways in which nonexistent objects may acquire their properties - through characterisation or "intensional determination" - but for entities there is another way:

Entities can be ascribed properties in virtue of Sosein, but they can also, unlike nonentities, acquire properties from Sein, (i.e. referential) properties... Because for nonentities there are no corresponding referents in the real world, they are totally indeterminate with respect to their class of referentially acquired properties, i.e. properties which they would have if there were corresponding referents. [JB, p. 728]

This doesn't say a great deal without a nontrivial explanation of what "referentially acquired properties" are. At this point Routley falls back on such things as verification methods, perceptual tests and spatial location criteria for whether a property is referentially acquired. He recognises that the account is circular, though, for it requires the assumption of "entities who can track an entity's origin" [JB, p. 729], and thus to some extent goes back to the method of selecting a paradigm entity to determine the sense of 'exist'.

The point that I wish to emphasise is one that Routley would have to admit. A formal definition, by itself, cannot capture the whole sense of the existence predicate. Something else is required, either in conjunction with a determinacy criterion, or in conjunction with some specification of properties like spatial location. Like all of the other theories that have been considered, that which utilises only completeness and consistency, defined in terms of predicate negation, is deficient. For the same reasons, Castañeda's theory is also in need of supplementation. His theory is complicated somewhat by the fact that he treats existential statements as relational, so that to say that a thing exists is to say that it is self-consubstantiated. Consubstantiation is defined through a number of laws, the effect of which is to make it an equivalence relation "within the realm of existents", such that completeness and consistency restrictions are imposed upon the properties that determine "actualizable concrete individuals". A

number of other formal laws are listed for the relation, which govern the properties that "chains of mutually consubstantiated individuals" can possess with respect to each other. Nevertheless, the same problems arise for Castañeda as arose for Routley - the underdetermination of categories of beings, the indeterminacy of some entities, and the lack of specificity with regard to which self-consubstantiated items, together with their chains, really exist.

6 Conclusion

Perhaps what distinguishes the ontological method that I have adopted is the way that fiction becomes important. A simple relational analysis will not, in itself, show how existing is different from not existing because it will characterise the former in a way that does not exclude fictional items from the domain of reality. Prima facie, a fictional character is an obvious case of something which entirely fails to exist. It is merely "invented" by an author, but somehow settles down into a nice objective suburb of ordinary language and commonsense understanding. Thus any substantial characterisation of existence must be able to deal with the nature of fiction. In the case of logico-linguistic definitions, it seems that more theoretical details are needed in any case, because existence is both a noncharacterising (if the intuition that existence may be partially characterised as completeness and consistency is correct) and a substantial property, in that it is close to notions of space and time, power, connectedness and causality.

Each of the theories that I have investigated, with the exception of the orthodox position, is capable of being consistently developed in such a way as to overcome the main objection that I have put forward, regarding fictional counterexamples. I have not provided compelling reasons for completely rejecting either the relational accounts or the formal definitions. What I have tried to do is show why a general ontology is needed:
firstly, to mark out what is distinctive about reality - ie. what makes it non-fiction - and secondly, to complete the formal account of the notion of existence as contingent, full determinateness. The next chapter is partly devoted to finding an appropriate way of distinguishing fiction from reality so that all of these theories have a chance of being revitalised. I believe that there is an element of truth to each of them, and that an acceptable general ontology is a system of thought which unifies these conceptions of Being.
CHAPTER FIVE : HOLISTIC ONTOLOGY

By whatever and by however many predicates we may think a thing - even if we completely determine it - we do not make the least addition to the thing when we further declare that this thing is. Otherwise, it would not be exactly the same thing that exists, but something more than we had thought in the concept; and we could not, therefore, say that the exact object of my concept exists.

I. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A 600; B 628.

1 The Unity of Existence

In so far as an intelligible world is available to understanding, to experience and thought, it is a world of objects which possess descriptive, characterising features. These features serve to ground the identity and distinctness of objects, and make it possible for the mind to apprehend and digest the world through its employment of categories. It will therefore seem natural sometimes to view the world in a pseudo-atomistic way, as if it is composed of separate items connected in patterns to form further items. The separateness of these items is an important feature of an "atomist" metaphysic. The fact that things are entirely distinct from each other, and that their natures are independently constituted, makes categorisation possible, and thus also the realisation of intelligible forms. Our knowledge of
the world can then be seen as a sorting of things into the correct categories. Whether or not one believes that there are some set of basic objects to which all the others can be reduced, or upon which others supervene, the separability and independence of a thing are often taken to be necessary conditions of its being intelligible.

One of the main tenets of the theory of objects is, quite straightforwardly, that the logic of objects in general is that of neutral quantification theory. Here we make use of a domain of objects which are distinct from one another, and are constituted by specific features. If one includes identity axioms and characterisation postulates, the theory can express distinctness and identity, and state the basic features that things in the domain must have. Thus the rudiments of a substantial theory of the domain of objects, as they appear in thinking and experience, and an account of correct reasoning within this world, are contained in neutral quantificational logic.

The question that we must now address, in formulating the meaning of existence and the basis of a systematic ontology, is that of the applicability of this logic to the domain of reality. This is not the question of whether there is a different logic (e.g. classical quantification theory) which is better suited, but rather whether reality is such as to come in separate, independently constituted packages or particles (as is implied by the use of either the classical or the neutral versions of logic). And, what is more, whether these particles are truly existent, or merely represent some phase or aspect of a more complex reality. It is the question of whether and how existents are objects of thought, and obey the rules of thought.

One could not claim that there is no application at all for the general logic of items in the domain of reality, without also calling both science and commonsense into question. We are constantly distinguishing entities, reasoning through various hypotheses about them, and
manipulating them on the basis of information used in our thoughts. Our conscious lives are at least sometimes directed upon realities, even if we are often confronted by fictions and illusions. None of this can be seriously questioned. Nevertheless, as the previous chapter has partially illustrated, there are serious problems in defining the difference between the experience of a real item and that of a fictitious one. In addition, there are a number of philosophers who have argued that the atomistic treatment of reality as a whole is untenable. It is possible that when we apply the general logic of "objects of thought" to the real world, however that is conceived, we must fragment this world in such a way that it cannot be distinguished from a fictional world. The fragments may be characterised within the context of a story, and it is in understanding this story that we come to contemplate the items it contains.

The theory that entities are wholly independent of each other, and are constituted in specific non-relational ways, is perhaps the simplest explanation for the applicability of quantificational logic within reality. Perhaps it should not be discarded too quickly, but it is clear that we do not always think of entities as simple, finitely constituted particles. Some of the most interesting and important parts of our scientific thought and our everyday understanding involve the apprehension of deep unity behind the surface diversity. A similar thought is explored in a different way by J.N. Findlay:

How can we form a valid conception of the structure of all space and time from the small specimens given to us? How can we extrapolate the character and behaviour of an individual from the small segment known to us? How can we generalise from the character and behaviour of one individual to the character and behaviour of a whole infinite class of individuals, wherever it may be distributed in the infinite reaches of space and time? Why, finally, do we think experienced things will have that affinity with our minds and our concepts that will enable us to plumb their secrets? It is well known that, on a metaphysic of radical independence and atomism, all these questions admit of no satisfactory answer. Whereas, on a mystical basis, the profound fit and mutual accommodation of alienated, peripheral things is precisely what is to

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1 I am thinking of Wittgenstein and Heidegger in particular.
be expected: it is the alienated expression of a mystical unity which, however much strained to breaking point, never ceases to be real and effective.\(^2\)

If the individual entities of our common way of thinking are all alienated expressions of a mystical unity, then the normal logic of quantifiers is still applicable to the world, but this time it works on the shades and illusory diversities which emerge from the dismemberment of that unity. The general atomist hypothesis is therefore not the only one that is consistent with the predicate calculus. In this chapter, I will develop an alternative to atomism which shares some of the features of Findlay's "mystical union" idea, but rejects the notion of necessary existence. I will defend three propositions concerning the structure of ontology and the meaning of existence. Together, they will illustrate the sense in which I think it is true to say that existent objects must be treated as fragments of a larger, coherent whole which cannot be entirely characterised, or completely presented to a finite mind. Only if they are so treated will the ordinary logic of items be applicable, although of course it will not be able to capture our reasonings concerning the whole out of which entities are fragmented. One might express this doctrine as the thesis that an independent existent object is the imperfect translation of some meaningful part of the text of reality as a whole. This is not entirely metaphorical, and I will attempt to show that the form of coherence that unifies reality is that of a story or connected, temporally structured narrative.

Firstly, I will argue that entities are complete and consistent with respect to all of their characterising properties. This is not an analysis of the property of existence itself, and it draws upon Findlay's exposition of Meinong's thesis of the "embedding" of incomplete items within concreta. This theory says that we can only know about the nature of existent objects through a consciousness of certain nonexistent things which share a finite subset of their properties: they are thus embedded in the structure of reality. An existent is capable of

being separated from its connections to other entities and independently characterised only to a limited degree. A complete characterisation would involve a specification of an infinite number of properties, and so it must always have a sort of "representative" in the form of an incomplete object. Now this theory presupposes that existents are complete, and is weaker because of this. It is not weakened to the point of being completely wrong, however. I think that an examination of the epistemic situation that it relies upon can supply evidence for both the completeness and consistency of entities. The theory of embedding can thus be given a more rigorous justification. It then entails the first part of the overall doctrine: an entity is an imperfect translation of a completed, infinitely complex unity.

Secondly, I will try to show that the overall structure of reality is coherent in the same way, and for the same reasons, as a fictional story. The reason for this is that some fiction is experientially indistinguishable from reality. This, in fact, is the source of the problems with fictional counterexamples that plagued other relational theories of existence. In giving a precise formulation of the difference between fiction and reality, the way to avoid these problems is revealed. The longest and most detailed part of my argument is therefore devoted to discussing the exact form of this difference, which is expressible in metaphysical but not in experiential terms. All of the theories considered in the previous chapter can be reformulated so as to avoid fictional counterexamples, as long as they are recast in such a way as to allow for the distinction between essential and accidental properties of an enduring object.

Because the distinction between fiction and reality is not grounded in empirical facts or in experience, it is not possible to feel the difference between a realistic fiction and reality itself - it is ultimately beyond whatever internal characteristics things have. As such, given that reality is coherent as a whole, and that it is not experientially distinguishable from
realistic fiction, we can explain its coherence in terms of the unity of a story. There is a connected narrative which describes the real world, and this, above anything else, is the source of our capacity to extrapolate beyond immediate experience, and our sense of the completeness and connectedness of Being. Combined with the first proposition, this entails that an individual or "independent" entity is a fragment of a more comprehensive story, an incomplete translation of a grander and more connected narrative which cannot be entirely revealed in experience.

Finally, I will formulate a holistic criterion for existence which will express the form of interaction between part and whole which has been elucidated in the previous two propositions. This criterion is an account of the significance of ontological status (being, existence, etc.) in more than one sense. For it not only provides a way of determining what is real, but it may also express a form of involvement with the whole universe. The involvement or dwelling in the world of Being is always present in each entity, but it is not presented to experience.

2 The Theory of Embedding

It has been noted that there are certain advantages in defining existence as predicate completeness and consistency. For example, such a definition can be used to prove that incomplete, pure objects do not exist, and that impossibililia fail to exist, and so on. However, there is nothing beyond the intuition that such things do not exist to actually justify the definition itself, and thus it seems to be nothing more than an exact expression of a presumption. Furthermore, it is difficult to believe that this formal account of existence really captures the primary meaning of the term. (Why is so much of western philosophy preoccupied with Being, if this is all that it comes to?) It seems more plausible to take the
notion of "concrete situatedness" as the principal way of elucidating existence, and to show how completeness and consistency emerge as necessary formal features of entities. There is, in fact, an epistemological argument, regarding how it is that we apprehend the existence of a thing (as opposed to apprehending its characterising properties), for the proposition that entities are always complete and consistent. Perhaps the best place to start explaining this argument is with an exposition of chapter Six of Findlay's book on Meinong's theory of objects and values, which is entitled "The Theory of Incomplete Objects".

It must be remembered that incompleteness is a logical or formal property of items, holding of things which, with respect to at least one property, neither possess that property nor possess its negation. As such, it can apply to higher-order objects such as universals as well as first-order items. Findlay makes this quite clear in his exposition of Meinong's views. With regard to the notion of embedding, he examines the argument, drawn mostly from Uber Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit, that "...nearly all knowledge of concrete existents is by means of incomplete objects. In this lies the imperfection and vagueness of our knowledge of concreta; practically all of them are known, not by 'acquaintance' but by 'description'."\(^3\) Unfortunately, the soundness of this argument depends upon the truth of the premiss that existent objects are complete rather than incomplete. This premiss implies that the law of excluded middle applies to the properties they possess. It follows that entities possess an infinite number of properties, and therefore that they are infinitely complex. However, because we mostly know concreta by descriptions, we can only apprehend them by first apprehending the incomplete objects that are embedded in the structure of their properties.

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Because this argument depends upon the premiss that existents are complete, it obviously cannot be used to establish this as a conclusion. Nevertheless, the embedding relation is an interesting one, and the fact that it can be used for other philosophical purposes makes Meinong's theory of incomplete objects quite interesting. One such purpose is that of solving an epistemological problem in granting that there are nonexistent objects, or even Fregean senses that could act as their representatives. According to W. Bechtel, this is a problem that Frege himself appreciated:

Although it might seem as though Frege's senses might serve as intentional objects, Frege recognised that if we took senses to be the objects of thought when discussing nonexistent objects, then we would be committed to doing the same when discussing actual objects. The reason is that nothing in the mental state itself distinguishes cases in which we are thinking about actual objects from those in which we are thinking about nonexistent objects. This leads to the unwanted consequence that all of our discourse is about senses or intentional objects and not about objects in the world.  

Of course this is an overstatement of the situation. The fact that there is nothing in a mental state to distinguish cases of thinking about entities from cases of thinking about nonentities does not lead to the conclusion that we never talk about "objects in the world" (by which he means entities). The problem for epistemology is that we apparently cannot know, by direct inspection of our mental states, whether the object of our thought is real or not. This is importantly connected to the problem of how reference to existent things is possible at all, given that any finite definite description will denote an incomplete, or pure object, which we are inclined to think does not exist.

In order to explain the solution to this problem that Findlay presents as Meinong's "theory of incomplete objects", it is necessary to explain the nature of the embedding relation. The word "embedding" is Findlay's translation of Meinong's term *implektiert*, and denotes the relationship between an incomplete object and a complete object which

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obtains when the former shares some, but not all of the properties of the latter, and has no properties which the latter lacks. It is important to remember that we are now discussing first-order items and not universals, for otherwise it is possible to confuse notions of sharing. Findlay introduces incomplete objects as a class of particulars, and furthermore as things that are distinct and independent of entities in which they may be embedded. They are necessarily incomplete: an item like "the tall man" or "the dog" has a certain finite number of characterising properties, namely just those that are included in the sense of their descriptions, and no more (this finite number may include a few not explicitly mentioned by the description). While we might say that the item "...allows of completion in an infinite number of ways...", nevertheless "...to complete it would be to pass on to the apprehension of other objects in which it is embedded."6

According to Findlay, Meinong considered the idea that incomplete objects might have some form of being or existence, but concludes that they cannot, since being can only apply to items that have a fully determined so-being:

Incompletely determined objects, or, more precisely, objects incompletely determined in so-being, are, we may say, indeterminate in respect of being, except in so far as their particular nature excludes being. The disjunction demanded by the law of excluded middle "Either A is or A is not", like the disjunction which concerns so-being, presupposes that A is determinate in respect of being.7

Meinong would not countenance the idea that an incomplete item could literally be a part of a complete item, for the reason that it would then no longer be indeterminate. Nevertheless, one role for incomplete things in our apprehension and thinking is to make it possible to know and refer to complete objects. He then has a response to Frege's problem, given that there are complete objects into which others can be embedded. Reference to concrete and complete objects is possible because we may encounter, in our thought and experience,

6 Ibid., p. 164
7 From A. Meinong, Uber Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit, 1972, quoted in Ibid., p. 167.
things that are embedded in them. This is because the embedding relation is a particularly "close" one, which allows for some epistemic access. As Findlay puts it:

It is always possible for us, by ignoring a determination of a complete object, to replace it by one of the incomplete objects which are embedded in it. And the 'embedding' is such an intimate relation that we constantly use the incomplete object and the complete object as substitutes for one another.  

A close examination of the epistemological situation is needed to clarify the problem that is being addressed. Findlay asserts that two things are clear about this situation. Firstly, that a normal person, in normal circumstances (i.e. non-philosophically-puzzling circumstances), will say such things as "I met somebody on the street" or "I see something that is brown", and will be talking about existent items, which are completely determined in their nature. Secondly, "...it is hard to believe that complete objects are given to his thought, since he has the vaguest conception of the nature of the things he is referring to." The problem that Findlay then considers is that of how we refer to complete objects in a language that is limited to finite descriptions. But he does this under the assumption that existent objects are complete, and thus he equates the problem of understanding reference to the real with that of reference to the complete. This assumption is in need of a justification. Although he does not seem to realise it, the very fact that complete objects are not plausibly given to a normal person's thought, because of the "vagueness" of his conceptions, is evidence that some existent items may be incomplete. For if it is clear that we refer to existents, and it is also clear that what we are talking and thinking about is finitely characterised for us, in our understanding, then this might be because it has a finite number of properties. Neither Findlay nor Meinong provide any compelling reasons for thinking that this might not be the case.

9 Ibid., pp. 170-171.
Perhaps a plausible line of reasoning can be developed for the completeness of Being. Let us suppose that the objects of ordinary life, such as the men and women in the street to which we often refer, are not all known to exist, and are normally not presumed to possess complete and consistent properties. For all that we know, normal references might often involve talking about illusions. Nevertheless, we will tell each other stories about the things that fill our daily lives, and these stories appear in the form of patterned sequences of events. It's not just that I saw a man on the street, but it happened while I was going to the chemist, and he was leaving the car park...and so on. Let us then suppose that, if there are any existent objects in our normal field of casual reference, they must be connected to each other. Because the primary meaning of "exists" is that of having a connection to other existents in a concrete situation, the postulation of one entity must entail the postulation of others, and some concrete connections between them. We need not suppose that the connections are of any particular type. They may be causal, spatiotemporal, or complex chaotic streams of events, or even involve intentional relations. But if entities are all interacting elements within the fields of experience and thought, then it must be possible, in principle, to attach all of the stories that surround our references into a unified narrative. This is the presumption that we utilise in existential or referential discourse: the conceptual possibility of linking all of our stories together.

Under this assumption, the laws of predicate excluded middle (PLEM) and predicate noncontradiction (PLNC) can be given a rational justification, at least for the domain of reality. If these laws were not true within some domain, then there would be no possibility of truly connecting the objects of our different stories. Therefore, since the minimal notion of existence is that of "concrete situatedness", objects that exist must obey PLEM and PLNC in order to be connectible within a concrete situation. The reason that connectibility presupposes these two laws is that relational properties would not always have relata if they
Perhaps a plausible line of reasoning can be developed for the completeness of Being. Let us suppose that the objects of ordinary life, such as the men and women in the street to which we often refer, are not all known to exist, and are normally not presumed to possess complete and consistent properties. For all that we know, normal references might often involve talking about illusions. Nevertheless, we will tell each other stories about the things that fill our daily lives, and these stories appear in the form of patterned sequences of events. It's not just that I saw a man on the street, but it happened while I was going to the chemist, and he was leaving the car park...and so on. Let us then suppose that, if there are any existent objects in our normal field of casual reference, they must be connected to each other. The connections will be of different types: causal, spatiotemporal, and intentional relations such as perception. Since we are dealing with ordinary discourse and "everyday" stories, intentional relations must be counted as appropriate connections. Such discourse essentially uses relations such as observing, imagining, calculating, and so on - indeed, it could even be said to presuppose intentionality and consciousness in its very operation. Nevertheless, this is problematic, since intentional relations involve nonexistents.

I have argued that the primary meaning of "exists" is that of having a connection with other existents in a concrete situation. If there are references to existent objects contained in the stories of ordinary life (whether we know about it or not) then there is reason to believe that they are "mixed up" with talk about nonentities, because of the presence of intentionality. This makes it almost impossible to select a special class of intentional relations as "ontological" connections, for it is as easy to think of a unicorn as it is a bicycle. Yet from a perspective within the web of ordinary language, it appears that intentional relations are on a par with causal relations, for which both relata exist if one does. One way to deal with this anomaly is to stipulate that the laws of predicate excluded middle and predicate noncontradiction hold within the domain of reality (ie. that Being is
complete and consistent). We can then say that intentional relations are real ontological connections, with respect to the stories of ordinary life (in other contexts this may not be the case), except in cases where their objects are impossible or incomplete. Of course, this is not entirely conclusive, but it is a plausible way to argue. The reason that we think intentional relations are not always ontological connections is that they relate things that are incomplete or impossible - at least, this is an important reason. There is also a common intuition that fictional objects cannot exist, because they are incomplete, and often impossible (this will be discussed later). It may therefore be concluded that there is a general presupposition of the completeness and consistency of reality.

Summing up the argument so far: the epistemological situation which Findlay describes is that in which ordinary people employ finite descriptions in their factual discourse, and yet intend to talk about things with a much greater complexity than is contained in these descriptions. While he presumes that they mean to describe existent objects, and presumes that these must be complete, neither of these assumptions need be granted. Nevertheless, the situation presents a problem concerning the possibility of referring to entities by description, which is that we cannot know by introspection or by experience when our descriptions actually refer (Frege’s problem). Findlay’s proposal, presented as an exposition of Meinong’s theory, is that we sometimes apprehend incomplete items that are embedded in complete ones. In fact, this does not quite work, but it is on the right track. It does not explain how we know which incomplete items are actually embedded in entities. I have followed a slightly different line of argument, which emerges from the same situation. Perhaps we never quite know that we are referring to existent things. Even so, the fact that we tell each other stories about things in ordinary life, and relate them by cross-reference, is significant. If existence is some form of connectedness in a concrete situation, then there is a justification for assuming that PLEM and PLNC hold for existing
did not hold. If "the man in the street" is incomplete with respect to, say, the property of being a father, then it will not be possible to connect this man to existing children. An incomplete object is necessarily incomplete, and thus if it is indeterminate with respect to a relation, then it is impossible to "add it on". If, on the other hand, the man is inconsistent with respect to the property of sitting at the bus stop, then it will be possible to locate him at a particular place and at a different place, (not the same as the bus stop) at the same time. But each connection effectively rules out the other. When this occurs, we can only conclude that at least one of the stories about this person is false, or that both are fictional.

Summing up the argument so far: the epistemological situation which Findlay describes is that in which ordinary people employ finite descriptions in their factual discourse, and yet intend to talk about things with a much greater complexity than is contained in these descriptions. While he presumes that they mean to describe existent objects, and presumes that these must be complete, neither of these assumptions need be granted. Nevertheless, the situation presents a problem concerning the very possibility of referring to entities, which is that we cannot know by introspection or by experience when our descriptions actually refer (Frege's problem). Findlay's proposal, presented as an exposition of Meinong's theory, is that we sometimes apprehend incomplete items that are embedded in complete ones. In fact, this does not quite work, but it is on the right track. It does not explain how we know which incomplete items are actually embedded in entities. I have followed a slightly different line of argument, which emerges from the same situation. Perhaps we never quite know that we are referring to existent things. Even so, the fact that we tell each other stories about things in ordinary life, and relate them by cross-reference, is significant. If existence is some form of connectedness in a concrete situation, then there is a justification for presuming that PLEM and PLNC hold for existing things. They are presupposed in our attempts to compile coherent narratives out of the stories of ordinary life.
Of course, this does not completely resolve Frege's problem, but then neither does Meinong's theory of embedded incomplete objects, on its own. If it is at all useful, it shows that there is a reasonable defence of PLEM and PLNC for existing items, and this is the premise upon which the Meinong-Findlay account rests. Given that entities are complete, then, it is plausible to suppose that ordinary discourse is often directed upon embedded objects. This may help to solve the problem of how existentially loaded reference is possible in the first place, for an embedded item shares at least some of the properties of an existent. But how can we tell that we are actually talking about the entity, rather than the embedded, nonexistent object? This, I think, is the epistemological problem.

According to Findlay, the solution that Meinong devised was the simple strategy of adding "complete determination" to items in their very description - which is something that is normally a tacit presupposition. Instead of describing the object as "the brown chair", one clarifies the intention to refer to an existent item by modifying the description to "the determinate (or existent) brown chair". In fact, as Findlay explains, this modification allows the embedded item to serve as a surrogate for the real thing:

We have therefore discovered what is before a man's mind when he sees 'someone' in the street, or knocks into 'a hard thing'. It is not an incomplete object that he has seen or knocked into, nor, on the other hand, are complete objects fully present to his thought. But what are present are incomplete objects modified by the deliberate addition to them of the property 'complete determination'; thus modified they can act as surrogates or deputies for the corresponding complete objects...

He also notes that this "modification" does not mean that one is speaking of a different object from that given in the description. Because completeness and existence are noncharacterising features, they are not part of the internal nature of things, and therefore do not affect truths about an object's identity.

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10 We can presume that Findlay presents an accurate account of Meinong's doctrine, and agrees with him in the formulation and defence of the theory of embedding.

There is an obvious objection to this, which Findlay recognises but does not deal with very well. Surely there is an objective fact of the matter as to whether or not a thing is complete, or exists. Merely adding these properties to our description of a thing does not change its ontological status. To suppose that it does is as ridiculous as supposing that we can conjure things into being by inventing a name for them. The reply that Findlay offers to this objection is quite astonishing. He admits that the procedure is contradictory, and even "involves a fiction". He then claims that we are forced to employ incomplete objects in apprehending complete ones, for the infinite complexity of their natures makes them otherwise inaccessible. Only when our knowledge deepens, and we "fill in" the details of our incomplete representation of things, is it possible to realise that the "...sketch becomes more and more like its original, till at last it loses itself in the original." It is difficult to see how this really solves the problem. Since it is recognised that complete knowledge of an entity is unattainable, we can never actually come to see the sketch losing itself in the original. How it is that we ever know that we are talking about existent things is left unresolved.

Because I shall argue that the whole of existence appears to us in the form of a narrative, and is in this respect indistinguishable from fiction, I will not propose a resolution of this problem. In fact, I do not believe that anyone ever knows for certain whether or when they are talking about existent items. All I can say is that many people probably do talk about them, and probably do so quite often. This is not some type of scepticism about reality, for we do know a great deal about entities without even considering their ontological status, in that we can know what some of their characterising properties are. Furthermore, we can understand what it means to exist without necessarily knowing that any thing presented to consciousness - for example, the computer that I am now using - does exist.

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12 Ibid., pp. 179-180.
The mainstream tradition in European metaphysics is largely sympathetic to the theme of the "completeness of Being". It was first developed by Parmenides, and has been enlarged upon by many others. There is less sympathy for the idea that our acquaintance with reality, and in particular the presumption of its completeness, is largely derived from story-telling. Of course, there is a sense in which our everyday "reportings" and communications are more than just stories. They are usually immersed in the stream of practical activities: goals, decisions, plans for the future, and interpretations of life. This makes them more than mere fictions, but it does not deprive them of their narrative form. It may be possible to isolate a particular set of stories, appropriately cross-referenced and at least partly trans-cultural, which concern only existent objects. Even so, within these stories, the entities can only be characterised with a finite number of predicates. In addition, not all of the connections that obtain between them will be specified: normally stories do not go into excessive detail, and given that they are finite bodies of information, they will not be able to say everything. At some point, we have to stop talking.

When existent objects appear to us in a form that allows of comprehension and description, and thus as they are characterised in discourse, they can only be imperfect translations of an infinitely complex, connected structure. Given that this structure is partially revealed in the stories and truths which belong to the "natural attitude" (Husserl's term for our normal approach to physical existence), it is likely that a revelation of the whole structure would also take the form of a connected story. Entities are not separate and independent things, but must be rendered as such by finite descriptions in a language that is meaningful from a multitude of perspectives. It is nevertheless possible to form an idea of what the whole of reality is like. Because it is the "completion" of the web of cross-referenced, intertwining tales of our physical, intellectual and experiential adventures, it will
also appear as a story. The problem which then confronts us is that of specifying in what way this story differs from fiction, even while it may appear as fictional.

3 Fictional Objects

Reality as a whole is presented to consciousness in the guise of a fictional narrative. This is not an expression of the baroque post-structuralist thesis that "there is nothing outside the text", and neither is it the proposition that there is no reality. Nor is it the trivial claim that we can define "fiction" to mean a set of any propositions you please, whether it be a consistent one or not, about anything whatsoever, and that therefore reality is necessarily included in the set of all fictions. Rather it is the simpler and more plausible thesis that fiction is often used as a way of understanding reality, and that the reason this is appropriate is because the overall structure of reality is that of a story, connecting a pattern of objects and events by narrative. Fictional and mythological characters are incomplete, and are therefore unreal, but they and their lives are taken as ways of approaching and interpreting items that do exist. Indeed, in the case of mythology, the pattern of meanings that is elucidated can form the basis for a way of living, and often does so when the myth becomes part of a religion. Myth and narrative connections bring existing things together, giving ontology coherence and unity.

There is a simple but effective argument for this proposition, which goes as follows. Experience will not distinguish reality from fiction. My possession of consciousness will not establish my existence, for some fictional characters are also conscious in the same way, so that the premise: "Everything that is conscious in this way (as I am) exists" is not available to me. As far as I can know from my experience, everything of which I am potentially conscious, including myself and everything which exists, might be part of a
fictional story about unreal characters. It follows that the structure of reality is experientially indistinguishable from that of fictional narrative, but both are still intelligible, and can be understood as unities. The best explanation for this is that both fiction and reality are experientially coherent in the same way; they are both connected by coherent narratives. Fictional characters may then illuminate the nature of existence, not because they are embedded in it, but because they share a similar narrative structure, and become intelligible in the same way that the whole of reality does.

This is not an entirely convincing argument on its own, for it seems to open up an unsolvable sceptical problem. If I cannot distinguish fiction and reality through experience, how is it that I know that I exist? Of course, this is an interesting epistemological problem in its own right, and although it is generally assumed that R. Descartes provided the correct answer, there are other as yet uninvestigated approaches to the issue. The very presence of the problem in the context of a theory of fictional characters, and the assumption that only a Cartesian answer is acceptable, has given rise to an interesting argument against the theory that fictional names designate nonexistent objects. G. Currie has presented it as follows:

Holmes, that nonexistent person, presumably thinks he exists. A Holmes who did not would be no candidate for the Holmes of the stories, for it is undoubtedly true in the stories that Holmes thinks he exists. And nothing this Holmes could discover about himself would convince him that he did not exist, for a Holmes capable of being shown that he did not exist would once again not be the Holmes of Doyle's invention. How, then, do we know that we exist, since our epistemic situation is just like that of Holmes? What could we ever do to establish that we exist? Nothing, according to those who think that some things are real and some things not. For we would not be able to say, with Descartes, that we know immediately that we exist from the fact of our consciousness; some nonexistent things - Holmes for one - are conscious. This radically extended skepticism might make entertaining fiction in the style of Pirandello, but it is surely not a serious philosophical option. A metaphysics that gives credence to it must be rejected.\textsuperscript{14}

There are several ways of responding to this objection. One might deny that we cannot know of our existence from the fact of our consciousness. Of course, Holmes can use the

cogito argument as well, and it is as valid for him as it is for us. However, this argument only succeeds in demonstrating one's existence in some world, context or story, and not absolutely. It can be expressed as "I am thinking, therefore I exist", but only if "exist" is understood to be a relativised notion. A more accurate statement of the content of the argument might be: "I am thinking in this world, therefore I exist in this world".

Not everyone will be happy with a relativised or an indexical notion of existence (although some are content with the indexical theory of actuality). Another way of responding to Currie's argument is to recognise that while there is no experiential difference between being a fictional character and being a real person, there is a theoretical or metaphysical difference, and this makes it possible to know whether or not one is fictional. In fact, some fictional characters actually know that they are fictional, since it is written into their story, or their characterisation ("definition") that they believe themselves to be so, and it also happens to be true. Although such characters do not necessarily have a reasonable justification for this belief, they might simply intuit their status through self-examination. Perhaps something similar happens to real people who know that they are nonfictional. Or perhaps it is a presumption that is not usually made explicit. In any case, Currie's question of how it is that we know that we exist can be answered without abandoning object theory and without insisting that existence is a relativised property. What is required, of course, is a reasonable theoretical account of the nature of fiction, which is of use in self-knowledge and in the explanation of ontological status. This is partly the subject of the next two sections.

There is also a response to Currie's objection that perhaps many philosophers would either fail to understand or fail to allow. That is to reject his claim that the Pirandello-style scepticism he speaks of cannot be a serious philosophical option. After all, Currie does not supply any reason for thinking that we do know that we exist other than the cogito
argument, and it may be that this argument is questionable precisely because there are fictional characters. There are at least two interpretations of Descartes' soliloquy, and while I do not wish to get bogged down in the complexities of the performative version or the role of the first person pronoun, it seems that the argument works in a way that is similar to a reductio ad absurdum. Descartes asks whether he can doubt that he exists (presumably he is asking himself this question, since everyone else has been thrown into doubt). He concludes that it is self-refuting to claim "I do not exist", for anyone to whom the claim was addressed would know that it was false. Since this claim is self-refuting, its negation must be true. This is one way of reading the cogito, rather similar to J. Hintikka's.15 It is a little more plausible than the standard reading which takes it to be a sort of enthymemetic syllogism that goes: "I am thinking; Everything that thinks exists; Therefore, I exist". The second premise of this syllogism is not present in the text and appears to require some extra justification.16

In any case, on either interpretation the reasoning is flawed. If a fictional character knew that he was a fiction, as some apparently do, then it would not be self-refuting for this individual to claim "I do not exist". In fact, it could be very illuminating and important to know that one is a fictional person, and fails to exist. It might provide a clue to one's destiny, as would seem to be the case for Tom Stoppard's characters in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead. As for the syllogistic interpretation, it is just not true that everything that thinks exists: some characters think without existing. Descartes' argument is therefore invalid. There may or may not be hope for reformulating it in a different way, but it seems to me that it will always depend upon first elucidating the notion of existence. Currie's dismissal of Pirandello-style scepticism, where one simply doesn't know whether one exists or not, is too hasty if he relies upon the authority of the Cartesian argument. It may be that

16 For an extended discussion of this interpretation, see A. Kenny, Descartes: A Study of His Philosophy, 1968.
we don't really know our ontological status, and that we could as easily be fictional as not. Perhaps it does not even matter. I would imagine that it is possible to live a reasonably happy life entirely oblivious of whether one is a fictional character or not. The world in which one lives has the same overall appearance in any case, so it can hardly make that much difference. Is this position untenable? Why could it not be a serious philosophical option? It might even be argued that it is simply commonsense.¹⁷

Knowing who and what I am is not generally something that requires much observation, hypothesis testing, or complex reasoning. It is largely a matter of being self-aware (which can equally mean being other-aware). But to know whether or not I exist, and whether the world with which I am involved is fictional, I must use a criterion for fiction. This is necessary even for the extreme Pirandello-style sceptic's response to Currie's argument, for if I do not know whether or not I am fictional, then I must at least understand what "fiction" means, and thus what distinguishes it from reality. In the present context it is important to arrive at an account of this distinction, for if fictional objects help to reveal the structure of reality, the distinguishing characteristic of fictionality has an ontological significance.

3.1 The Pretence Theory of Fiction

The question of what separates fictional discourse from factual discourse is quite different from that of what distinguishes fictional objects (principally characters, but also

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¹⁷ Imagine conducting a survey in which one of the questions was "Do you exist?" and there were three possible answers:
A) Yes
B) No
C) I don't know and it doesn't matter.
I suspect a large group of people would answer C. Whether this would show that Pirandello-style scepticism is "commonsense", or just that surveys of this sort are quite silly, is an interesting but completely tangential issue.
places, artifacts and other items) from entities, but they are related issues. Fictional discourse is just the use of language in fictional contexts, and this possesses a certain freedom which factual discourse does not. Fictional objects, on the other hand, are entirely unfree, because of the way they are related to discourse. They are given a certain set of characteristics by a specific story, and cannot lose any of them. They are wholly defined by the story in which they are characterised, and their definition is set in terms of characterising features only. Of course there are examples of characters, such as Faust, who seem to reappear in different stories, but this is nothing more significant than the phenomenon of different people possessing the same names. If an author's intention is to use the same character in a different story, this need not make a difference. All that counts is the integrity of the story. This is what I shall argue, and hence I endorse the following statement by Currie, without endorsing his entire theory of fiction:

>Fictional characters begin their lives in fictional stories. They may have antecedents in real life or in mistaken accounts of real life, but we can properly say that we have a fictional character only when we have a fictional story, however, imprecise, that enfolds the character....even if one thinks of fictional characters as thoroughly promiscuous in their relations to fictional works, it is hard to believe that we can learn anything about them by casting aside the stories in which they appear and searching for the characters themselves.\(^\text{18}\)

I shall also defend the view that existent items do not have a story in which they are characterised, and this is what distinguishes reality from fiction. Entities do have stories, many of them, and the structure of reality is ultimately revealed and elucidated by fiction. The point is that stories do not characterise or define items which exist.

One of the most popular philosophical theories of fiction is the pretence or "make-believe" analysis.\(^\text{19}\) The difference between fiction and reality is just one of the issues

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addressed by this theory, but it appears to be the most important. It is sometimes thought that fictional discourse differs from nonfictional discourse in that the utterance or inscription of a sentence in the latter mode involves assertion, whereas the utterance or inscription of a sentence in the former involves pretending to assert. The pretence theory has to be made a little more complex than this, for fiction must be distinguished from mere deception, and also from cases of imitation or parody, where one adopts the manner of somebody in order to satirise them.\textsuperscript{20} But even given such a modification, it seems that the theory maintains that fiction is some type of "legalised" lying. What is pretended to be the case is always different from what is the case, for otherwise there would be no point in pretending. Thus fictional truths are always factual falsehoods. The make-believe analysis sometimes makes use of a propositional operator: "It is make-believably the case that..." which has a similar function to the operator "It is true in the story that...". But because a Link Hypothesis\textsuperscript{21} is not part of the theory, it makes no allowance for the possibility that what is true in the story is also sometimes true simpliciter.

Currie has constructed a rather complex account of fiction that makes use of the notion of make-believe, which differs from the simpler pretence theory in its use of the author's intention. According to his account, set out in the form of a Gricean analysis, the author of a fiction intends the reader to adopt a certain attitude towards the content of the story. This is the attitude of make-believe, otherwise described as "imaginative involvement", and characterised as another propositional attitude of the same kind as normal belief or desire.\textsuperscript{22} It is the author's intention to get the audience to make-believe that something is true which makes his utterance a fictive one, as opposed to a normal assertion (which presumably involves the intention to get the audience to believe something). The

\textsuperscript{20} This point was made clear by Currie, \textit{Op. Cit.}, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{21} See chapter One.
focus of Currie's analysis is on the communicative intentions that an author has, the relations between speaker/writer and audience. It might be objected that an author could write a fictional work without ever intending to communicate with anyone, just for their own personal satisfaction. Currie would probably respond to this in the same way that he responds to the claim that *Robinson Crusoe* was written with the intention of actually asserting something, namely that the work would then fall into the category of "pseudofiction", being a work that is not fiction, but is best read as if it were.\(^{23}\) He claims that anything can be read as if it were fiction, even the shapes on the face of a rock, but this does not make them really fictional. Such a reply, as he acknowledges, sounds very much like begging the question.

There are other, more radical objections to the make-believe analysis, which call into question the whole project of a truth-conditional, or representation-dependent theory of fiction. The whole notion that fiction is a case where empty singular terms are knowingly used to convey the content of some representation of the world, rather than to state how things stand in the world,\(^{24}\) makes it parasitic upon "literal truth" or reality. It destroys the integrity of a fictional story to have its status depend upon the propositional attitudes that real people take towards it. To understand a fictional work as a faulty representation of reality that people enjoy for its aesthetic merits is entirely misplaced. Fiction need not be representational at all, and it certainly need not be a representation of reality. As C. Falck has argued, the make-believe or pretence theories cannot explain fictions that do not make any statement at all. These include some modern literature in the form of diaries, as well as nonsense poetry, and other works that are literally significant but simply present no

statement - for example, a poem that lacks a main verb.\textsuperscript{25} Such theories also fail to account for the identity of a work of literature, or the parameters within which it is appropriately interpreted. Falck argues out that Lewis' suggestion that the proper background for filling in the details of the fictional world of any work "...consists of the beliefs that generally prevailed in the community where the fiction originated; the beliefs of the author and his intended audience" is just too naive to be taken seriously; it would make the identity of a literary fiction "...entirely hostage to its creator or to the ideas of the time."\textsuperscript{26}

Even if the pretence/make-believe theory is restricted to narrative fiction, there are reasons to suspect that it cannot properly distinguish this genre from factual discourse, and that it completely fails to distinguish fictional objects from entities. The notion of make-believe is fuzzy; it is not terribly clear what sort of attitude I adopt towards the content of an utterance when I make-believe that it is true. Perhaps it is no more complex than just assuming it to be true for the purpose of seeing what happens, or being entertained. In that case it is remarkably similar to the attitude that one takes to a proposition that is used at the start of a mathematical proof, and even to Meinong's concept of an assumption. It is clear that mathematics is part of factual discourse, however, and thus it becomes a little more difficult to see how this attitude is necessarily distinctive of fiction.

\textsuperscript{25} A large quantity of poetry is, if not absolutely impossible to explain with a pretence theory, greatly resistant to such an analysis. For example, most of Gerard Manley Hopkins' work. What is it that we are supposed to "make-believe" in the following stanza?

\begin{verbatim}
O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small
Durance deal with that steep or deep. Here! creep,
Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind: all
Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.
\end{verbatim}


On the other hand, make-believe is perhaps better seen as a species of imagination, one that is directed towards propositional content rather than image content. Once again, it is difficult to see why the specific intention of an author to invite his audience to use their imagination on his work marks it off as a work of fiction. It is surely possible that an author intend his readers to imagine the content of an utterance because of their recognition of the author's intentions, and yet also be speaking factually. One might actually say "Imagine this:...", relate some tale, and then say "Well, guess what, it's (f)actually true!". This is not necessarily a deception. It could simply be a peculiar, but perhaps effective way of getting someone to understand a certain fact.

The pretence/make-believe analysis of fiction is incapable on its own of explaining the difference between the objects characterised in fiction and existent objects. In fact, the approach that Lewis takes in his paper "Truth in Fiction" makes it impossible for there to be a difference. This is not only because he refuses to allow the validity of any inference from "In fiction f, P" to "P", and thus fails to recognise that fictional objects are a class of things to be dealt with, which possess some properties without being qualified by a "story-truth" operator. He also characterises reasoning in and about fictions as being very similar to counterfactual reasoning. This means that although we sometimes "depart from actuality" in thinking about fiction, the presuppositions that guide our thinking about real objects are still retained as relevant information. But if that is the case, then there is no substantial difference between fiction and reality.

According to Lewis' account of fictional discourse, there is a background against which we interpret a text, using factual premises. Thus he states that it is true in the story that Holmes did not have a third nostril, never chased a purple gnome, and lived nearer to

Paddington Station than to Waterloo Station. None of these "truths" are explicitly stated in the Conan Doyle stories, but are deducible from what is said using a number of factual premises, and Lewis' first definition of truth in fiction. In arriving at these conclusions, he claims that we proceed in a manner similar to that in which we proceed when dealing with counterfactuals:

We depart from actuality as far as we must to reach a possible world where the counterfactual supposition comes true (and that might be quite far if the supposition is a fantastic one). But we do not make gratuitous changes. We hold fixed the features of actuality that do not have to be changed as part of the least disruptive way of making the supposition true. We can safely reason from the part of our factual background that is thus held fixed.\(^{28}\)

There are cases where this seems to be an accurate description of how reasoning about fiction takes place, and he cites an example where a little-known contingent fact about a viper could be used to show that Holmes was actually wrong in his judgment as to the solution of a murder mystery. But this approach leaves no room for a proper distinction between fictional objects and real ones, and is therefore inadequate as a theory of either existence or fictional truth. If contingent truths can radically change fictional truth, and affect the way that stories are to be interpreted, then the objects of fiction must themselves have contingent, accidental properties. How, then, could they differ from real objects?

Of course, Lewis admits that there is something suspicious about arguing that Holmes was actually wrong \textit{in the story}, and also about the practice of psychoanalysing fictional characters, and this is why he constructs two definitions of truth in fiction. Nevertheless, his criticism of the Meinongian approach to fiction shows that the problems which his theory is designed to solve may be avoided from the beginning if the distinction between objects of fiction and real objects is drawn properly. For example, the problem of the size of the chorus\(^{29}\) is that of determining the size of a certain fictional chorus, which is

\(^{28}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 42.
\(^{29}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 37.
not specified in the story. It is not difficult to solve if it is realised that fictional things are incomplete. This includes things such as groups, and the fact that we cannot say anything exact about the size of a certain gathering may be an indication that it is fictitious.

One is tempted to say that if this is correct, then Lewis' assertions concerning such things as the number of nostrils that Holmes possessed, and even how close he was to Paddington Station, are just false. If these matters are capable of being settled, it would seem that Holmes would have to be understood as a logically complete item. But in that case, it would be less plausible to see him as a fictional character. In addition, Lewis' treatment of inconsistent fictions would involve interpreting a nineteenth century romance as a fantasy story about high-speed travel, just because the author made an innocent mistake, and wrote that one of his characters was in a place that, given the technology of the time, was not possible. This interpretation makes his theory highly implausible. If it were recognised from the beginning that inconsistency is a also mark of fictional status, then such bizarre results would have been avoided.

3.2 Toward A Theory of Fictional Characters

The pretence theory is not only too simple-minded as an account of fictive discourse, it is incapable of distinguishing fictional characters in an appropriate manner. However, it can be transcended by adopting an object-oriented approach. This means characterising fictional discourse in terms of the distinctive objects that it presents. In this section I shall argue that the important distinguishing characteristic of fictional objects is their resistance to any possible alteration in internal (characterising) features. There are other proposals which

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can be called object-oriented approaches to fiction, and I shall briefly examine two that seem deficient.

In Fine's theory of fiction, the difference between fictional objects and real ones is expressed in the main postulates. Every fictional object is native to at most one story, but existent objects are native to no stories at all.\(^{31}\) Now the notion of nativity is not discussed in great detail, either by Parsons (who originally devised it) or Fine, but it is evidently connected to the notion of the introduction of an item within a discourse. Parsons marks out the distinction between native and immigrant objects as follows: "The distinction is, roughly, whether the story totally 'creates' the object in question, or whether the object is an already familiar one imported into the story. The word 'create' here is meant in the sense in which an author is commonly said to create a character. It does not mean 'bring into existence'..." [NO, p. 51]. The story to which an object is native is that which gives it the distinctive characterising features that it has - or at least some core set of features that may vary in different stories. The creationist conception of fictional items, which is evidently at work here, appears to make them dependent upon their 'creators', who endow them with characteristics. Although Parsons says that he does not intend this as an ontological notion, Fine cannot resist talking of creation as if it were a type of 'bringing into being'. Thus he says:

My own view is the extreme empirical one that stories and their objects are created not discovered....They do not exist or have being independently of the appropriate activity of the author. Rather, they come into being as a result of that activity, in much the same way as a table comes into being as the result of the activity of a carpenter.\(^{32}\)

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\(^{31}\) K. Fine, "The Problem of Non-Existsents" in *Topoi* 1 (1982), p. 106. Fine slides between the terms "story" and "context", indicating that he means the same by both.

\(^{32}\) Ibid., p. 130.
Given this 'empirical' view of fiction, it is difficult to see exactly how Fine's theory really distinguishes existent things from nonentities. The postulate that entities are not native to any story appears to do some work, but this is evidently inadequate, as there are counterexamples which Fine himself introduces. If he prepared to say that fictional items have a context as a source, and that "...the objects derive their being from that context."\(^{33}\) then it seems that this may be true of existent items as well. Why isn't the activity of a carpenter, who creates an existent table, a context, in precisely the sense of a source of the object's being? Fine is apparently prepared to see the parallel, but does not notice that this invalidates his postulate concerning entities. What is more, if a slightly different notion of a native story is used, whereby such a story just supplies the core characterising features of a thing, then there are still counterexamples. A creator is always required for a fictional character's possession of core properties, but this may also be true of nonfictional characters. My parents, for example, gave me some of my core properties. Of course, this may involve a different type of creation, but the sense in which an author creates a character is not made clear enough by Fine to distinguish between the two cases. Indeed, he seems to deliberately conflate them.

Another, quite different suggestion as to the way to characterise fictions with respect to existing things can be gleaned from a paper by S. Clark. He appears to endorse the view that fictional items, and nonentities generally, are essentially unreal. This is spelt out in a suggestion that fictions are ideals in some sense - truly fictional designation does not pick out particular items, but aims at characterising *types* (not categories), in the sense of symbolic or figural types. He writes:

> A really existing ghost would only be an extra pest, and not a ghost at all. An existent unicorn would be another beast in natural history books. If there really was (some-where) a person called 'Lady Catherine', truly describable by Austen's words, would *that* have been whom she was describing? Surely

not...If there were such a being, she undoubtedly be more (and less) than Austen said. She could, after all, read Austen and repent. Blake's comment on Chaucer's Pilgrims: 'they are the physiogomies or line-aments of universal human life...visions of eternal attributes, or divine names.' Great story-tellers are not gossip columnists, even of a strangely metaphysical kind.34

The point that even if something existent happens, by accident, to fit a description contained in a work of fiction, this does not mean that it is or becomes the denotation of the description, is entirely true. It does not entail, however, that there must be some reference to a universal aspect of reality contained in every work of fiction, or even in all of the best. There is undoubtedly a sense in which fictional characters stand outside of the specificities of the world, and act as emblems or symbols for various real or imaginary things. Indeed, this can form part of the enduring appeal of the story. However, two things ought to be made clear about such situations. Firstly, in order to stand for things symbolically, a character such as King Arthur or Lady Catherine must also possess various non-symbolic features. Symbolic meaning relies upon a number of culturally formulated connections, and a thing only acts as a symbol when it has a variety of features that can be translated, through the medium of culture, into symbolic significance. This means that if there is such a thing as 'symbolic reference', then it presupposes a more mundane type of linguistic denotation, so that we can have knowledge of the fictional characters who are to be understood symbolically. Secondly, it is possible, and occurs quite often, that a real individual, human or otherwise, comes to serve as a symbol for something that may or may not exist. President Kennedy was a symbol of American idealism, for example, just as Winston Churchill was a symbol for British resistance to Nazism. Examples such as these show that Clark has not hit upon an essential feature of fiction.

There is nonetheless an element of truth to the claim that fictional characters are somehow "frozen" outside of the world. Every detail of a character is recorded in a particular story. Nothing new is possible regarding a fictional item; its whole nature is fixed by the story in which it is characterised, and it cannot change. This is the sense in which the properties of a character are "supervenient" upon the decisions of its author, and it is one fairly strong intuition about the distinctive nature of fiction. There is another intuition, however, that is equally deserving of attention, which seems to be in conflict with the notion of a fixed essence determined by an external author. This is the idea that fictional characters do change, at least within the context of their story, and may often change in ways radically different from any allowable in the realm of entities. Zeus adopts hundreds of different forms in his exploits, and vampires may change into bats at will. Alice in Wonderland becomes both extremely small and then enormous after eating different substances, and wizards will often transform themselves and others into frogs, dragons, and other beasts. If we believe that such transformations are impossible, or even inconceivable for existent objects, it is because of an assumption that entities are governed by laws of coherence. That is, entities must fit into the structure of space and time, or obey consistent laws of nature, or otherwise must be constituted by essential properties that are coherently linked with external relations. Relational theories of existence are partly grounded in our ideas of how fiction and myth may violate the coherence of the real world (but do not have to).

One possible objection to the thesis that the properties of a fictional item are fixed and unalterable (outside its story) is that there are stories which could have several different endings, or different plot lines, while retaining the same characters. In this case, there is some sense to the idea that a character could have had different features. But now consider an example of this sort of case. In the film "Clue", the typical murder mystery scenario is set up. There is a murder, a bizarre collection of suspects, and a series of clues that emerge as
the plot thickens. However, by the end of the story there are a number of possible solutions
to the crime, and three different endings to the story are presented. Each ending was
importantly different, in that the murderer turns out to be a different person, and this affects
the way that previous events must be interpreted. In particular, the characters themselves
must be seen as entirely different people, depending upon which ending is chosen. Their
motives, their histories, and their activities throughout the rest of the film must be interpreted
differently according to the different solutions. In effect, it is not difficult to see that the
structure of this story determines the nature and identity of its characters. This is revealed in
the fact that these characters are not even completely determined until the end of the story.
Up until that point, they are not entirely characterised, and thus open to revision; they are as
internally unresolved as the plot itself.

It can be replied that very subtle changes in a story need not destroy the identity of its
characters. If a detail is altered - say, one of the characters wears a hat - but nothing else is
changed, and this detail has no real bearing on the plot, then it cannot be true that the
resulting story involves a different character. At least according to the standard notion of a
story, however, it is reasonable to stipulate that if the alteration is too small and
inconsequential, then the story itself has not changed. If the difference makes no difference
to the plot and its interpretation, or the point and relevance of the events that a story relates,
then it is exactly the same. This is how we individuate stories: by their overall structure,
purpose, and meaning. This must apply even to cases like that of Menard, who wrote
exactly the same words as Cervantes, but did not write the same story, for the purpose in his
telling it was different,35 and thus its meaning was also different.

35 This bizarre case is often mentioned in philosophical papers on the nature of fiction. Menard himself is a
fictional character, an invention of J. Borges.
Another possible objection to the story-dependence of characters is that the same character can appear in different stories which are not just variations on some central plot; the classic example is the series of Holmes stories, in which the same characters reappear again and again. There are also examples of myths and legends that get told in different ways, but these seem to come into a different category. "Faust" denotes a different character in each of the various works which relates the tale of the legendary doctor; both the details and the significance of these stories differ, and they are therefore about different situations and different people. The same is true of the various Arthurian stories, each of which is meant for a different audience, and consequently has a distinctive meaning. But the case of a series of stories with the same hero, all written by the same author and surely intended to be consistent with each other, seems to pose a problem for the thesis of story dependence. All of them will have different purposes and different plots, so how is it that they involve the same characters? An answer can be found in the fact that all of the stories are supposed to be consistent, for in order to be so they will all have to fit into a single time line (even if the stories involve time travel). That is, it is to be assumed that, if the various Holmes stories are actually about the same person, then they can be put into a temporal ordering (it doesn't matter if there are several possible orderings, as long as there is at least one time), for an individual can only live one life. If this is granted, then different stories may involve the same character by charting different episodes of that character's life. If they can be put into a meaningful temporal order, then there is a sense in which they constitute "chapters" of a larger story.

Even this stipulation can be called into question. After all, A. Conan Doyle is not the only writer to deal with Sherlock Holmes, and if it is thought that each of the other stories concerning this character have to be temporally ordered, it becomes massively implausible that all of them are about the same person. For one thing, no realistic character could
possibly live quite so long: Holmes stories might continue as a genre for hundreds of years! I think that the appropriate response here is to conclude that in fact not all of these stories can be about the same person. At a certain point, sub-genres begin to develop with a genre, and the original character is no longer the subject of the series of stories. This is what has happened with Holmes, and with many others from modern fiction (e.g. Tarzan, Count Dracula, etc.). For example, it is quite clear, even to the authors, that the Superman of the 1930s is a totally different character to the Superman of the 1980s. When such a departure occurs, the item attached to the name (the common-or-garden-variety "Superman") is no longer a part of literature, since the character has spawned an "ideal" image of itself. This is a figure or type that can be exemplified in different stories, but lies entirely outside any single or consistent temporal continuum. There are then a number of characters, all of whom take on the role of the "reincarnation" of the original in a new context with a different significance, but remain distinct from one another.

The idea that there is an "original" temporal sequence which is important to the identity of a fictional object is also helpful in determining more exactly the distinction between entities and fictions. It has often been thought that the existence of an individual entails its possession of some accidental properties, in the sense that the individual could fail to possess such a property and yet still exist. This intuition is connected with the notion that entities regularly change their properties over time. On the other hand, there is also the idea that at least some of the properties that entities have could not be lost without their ceasing to exist. At least with many objects, it is inconceivable that they remain existing after losing certain essential features. Thus if an existent mouse ceases to possess the property of being an animal, it must then have ceased to exist. This is set against our intuition that fictional items may metamorphose in all sorts of ways and yet remain the same individuals. Similarly in dreams, things may undergo changes that would destroy them if they were real.
In her paper "Existence, Presupposition and Anaphoric Space", A. Bonomi has attempted to give a precise account of these intuitions. She has proposed the following principles as necessary conditions on existence-at-a-time (where $T$ is a period of time; an ordered, nonempty set of instants):

C2. $a \in E_T \Rightarrow (\forall t \in T) (a \in a(t) \& \neg \text{Conc} \neg a(t))$

C3. $a \in E_T \Rightarrow (\forall t \in T) (a \in a(t) \& \text{Conc} \neg a(t))$

The operator "Conc" stands for "it is conceivable that". While C2 is an expression of the essentialist thesis - that entities have some properties which they cannot lose without ceasing to exist, C3 is the "accidentalist" thesis - that entities also have properties which they can lose while remaining existent. These principles help to discriminate fictional from existing individuals. She notes that if, for every instant of an interval $T$, all of the properties of an individual $a$, are essential, in the sense of C2 - that is:

\[ (*) \Rightarrow (\forall t \in T) (a \in a(t) \Rightarrow \neg \text{Conc} \neg a(t)) \]

then, by C3, $a$ does not exist at $T$. She then argues that fictional items possess all of their properties essentially. This, and the fact that what would be essential for entities is not so for characters, is what makes an item fictional. It is tied to and defined by its story.

Bonomi argues that we could discover, for example, that Aristotle never actually taught Alexander the Great without concluding that we must be dealing with a different individual, whereas in the case of Robinson Crusoe, we cannot learn such things. It does not make any sense, and is thus inconceivable in some way, for a fictional character to fail to possess, at any instant $t_0$ of her story, those properties which she does possess at $t_0$, even if she goes on to lose some of these properties at $t_1$.

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37 Ibid., p. 257.
For I think it is quite proper to ask: what would have occurred to Aristotle if he had not been the teacher of Alexander the Great? But it is at least doubtful that we can suitably ask: what would have occurred to Robinson if he had not met Friday (or if he had not met him exactly as in the novel)? In the latter case there would not be, as in the case of Aristotle, a different story of the same individual, but a different story with a different individual (although very similar to the original one): counterfactuals are unknown to fictitious entities.38

Bonomi draws some interesting consequences from her theory of fiction. One is that fictional items are essentially incomplete.38 She says that this follows from the Kantian thesis that "...existence is not traceable back to a mere constitution by means of concepts...but...to the way the object...is inserted in the whole filling of intuitive experience...".40 She also claims that fictional objects do not possess an infinite number of properties. It seems to me that this finiteness is the real source of the incompleteness of fictions. For if Bonomi is correct in saying that fictional items are defined by their stories, or even by their authors, then this will entail that they are finitely constituted by their definitions, and therefore must be essentially incomplete.

It is important to regard the incompleteness of fictional items as a consequence of the truth of the following propositions: 1) Fiction is distinguished as discourse about items that possess what would normally be "accidental" features (e.g. meeting Friday, having a beard, etc.) essentially, there being no significant counterfactuals concerning such things; 2) Fictional items are also capable of internal transformations which are impossible for entities; 3) Both 1) and 2) are true because a fictional item is defined or characterised by a story, and this story must assign properties to things within a certain temporal ordering. The fact that a fictional character is defined means that the only characterising properties it has are those included in the story, which entails 1). Given that stories necessarily use finite characterisations, object incompleteness then follows. The fact that a story can characterise

38 Ibid., pp. 258-259.
39 Ibid., p. 261.
40 Ibid., p. 261.
items in any way whatsoever, so long as the minimal constraint of temporal ordering is met, entails 2), for many stories will violate the internal coherence that entities possess.

With these three propositions, a theory of fictional characters has been elucidated which at the very least provides a ground for the ontological distinction. It also supplies reasons for believing that incompleteness and inconsistency are two of the characteristic marks of fiction. To some degree, the theory is motivated by intuitions, but they are ones that a number of thinkers share. For example, B. Miller has argued that it is impossible for a fictional character to be real (or in his words, actual) because it has the capacity for incompleteness and inconsistency. In so far as his argument is compelling, he relies upon the intuition that existing things do not and can not possess these features.

3.3 Experience and Fiction

One objection to the notion that fictional objects are defined by their stories, and are therefore essentially incomplete, is that this does not square with our intuition that, at least in some cases, it is proper to use factual information as a background for interpreting a story. Perhaps the best examples of this sort of case are detective stories, which appear to rely upon factual, or "ontological" background assumptions in order for the reader to work out the solution. The problem also arises for realistic fiction in general. In this section, I shall reply to this objection with a thesis that is linked to the elucidation of ontological status. I shall argue that any experience of reality - of existent objects - has the same form as that of a fictional character's experience of their world, in at least some cases. If this is true, then perhaps the reason that so much literature seems to involve the use of a "factual background" is that, in reading or otherwise digesting a story, one sometimes imagines oneself as a

items in any way whatsoever, so long as the minimal constraint of temporal ordering is met, entails 2), for many stories will violate the internal coherence that entities possess.

With these three propositions, a theory of fictional characters has been elucidated which at the very least provides a ground for the ontological distinction. It also supplies reasons for believing that incompleteness and inconsistency are two of the characteristic marks of fiction. To some degree, the theory is motivated by intuitions, but they are ones that a number of thinkers share. For example, B. Miller has argued that it is impossible for a fictional character to be real (or in his words, actual) because it has the capacity for incompleteness and inconsistency.\(^{41}\) In so far as his argument is compelling, he relies upon the intuition that existing things do not and can not possess these features.

It is not difficult to see how this theory of fiction helps to counter the objections to relational theories of existence raised in chapter four. A relatively complex fictional world can be almost exactly like the real world if it is seen “from the inside”, as one of its characters would view it. It may therefore contain objects that are related in ways exactly like those of the real world. What distinguishes it as fiction is the absence of appropriate counterfactuals for its objects, and this is not a matter of their internal relations, but of cross-world relations. Therefore, any of the theories described in chapter four may be defended on the grounds that they deal only with internal relations. Of course, this creates a different problem, that of discerning when a thing has counterfactual statements true of it. This is a complex issue, and one that I shall not deal with in detail. A suggestion that will be developed later is that the real world is a holistic item, and a sort of “dwelling”. Existent might be comprehended from this perspective as already “containing” certain counterfactual

possibilities, rather than needful of some external source. This somewhat cryptic remark ought perhaps to be explained using a concrete illustration.

A possible counterexample to the story-bound nature of fictional characters might run as follows. A new version of the text of “Hamlet” is discovered in which some fairly minor (but not insignificant) details are changed. Polonius, in this version, does not die, but does not reappear after he is stabbed, and the text is identical apart from this one scene. Surely this new version represents a counterfactual possibility for both of the characters involved. My response to this example is quite simple. In so far as the difference is trivial, it shows that the author is not constructing a different story at all, but a different version of a particular scene. What would be the point of writing out the whole play a second time if the only difference is one scene? It would be much simpler to erase part of the original and insert a different piece. But this indicates that the author has decided to retain one version and reject the other, and thus there is no “counterfactual Hamlet” – only the final version counts. In so far as the difference in the versions is not trivial, and the characters are really different people, then this is a different story altogether, and again no counterexample. This example demonstrates the way that a text - the external source of a thing’s properties - determines the essence, down to the last detail, of a fictional object. In the case of an existent object, we do not refer to a text in order to discover either its essence or its accidents. These are already presented to us by the thing itself, situated as it is in the real world.

3.3 Experience and Fiction

One objection to the notion that fictional objects are defined by their stories, and are therefore essentially incomplete, is that this does not square with our intuition that, at least in some cases, it is proper to use factual information as a background for interpreting a story.
participant (active or passive) in the world of that tale. It might then be imagined as real, and in
this context one would seem to be justified in drawing upon factual information. This is in
no way a distinctive feature of fiction, and does not always occur when reading and appreciating a fictional story. In many cases, the tale is too ridiculous or fantastic to make the reliance upon factual knowledge a plausible interpretative strategy.

A consequence of the proposition that experience of reality is indistinguishable from that of a coherent fiction is that reality itself, taken as a whole, must have the narrative unity and form of a story, even though it is not a fiction. At least with regard to the perspective of one who lives within reality, its experiential coherence is the same as that of a narrative. Other ways in which it is coherent, in its spatiotemporal or causal order, are not necessarily available to experience. One argument for this conclusion relies upon the fact that formal, noncharacterising properties are never actually presented to perception, but only in thought. Thus if I were a fictional character, I need not know that I am incomplete, and nothing I see, hear or feel would have to be presented as inconsistent, even if it was. Similarly in the real world, I do not directly experience the completeness of entities, for this would require an insight into the infinite, and I can only assume that they are consistent.

Formal properties are objective, whereas the world of experience is subjective. Therefore, at least some fiction cannot be distinguished from reality on the basis of experience alone. A story could violate the coherence of reality without this violation ever being perceived. It is important to understand that there is a distinction, as was argued in the previous section, but that the distinction is formal/objective and not perceptual/subjective. The story of reality is not captured by a definition, and its characters may enter into counterfactual situations, whereas the characters in fictional stories do have definitions and
do not admit of variation across possible worlds. Yet it is not possible to discover whether one is in a fictional story by looking around at the scenery.

Of course not all fictions are sufficiently coherent to resemble reality. Some involve magical events of such a fantastic nature that they could not possibly take place in the regular world of continuous causation, even given the most bizarre constructions of warped spacetime. In some cases we may be justified in saying that if one were to wander around in the world of this story, one would soon realise that it was unreal. There are also fictional characters in the (unfortunate?) position of knowing that they are nonexistent, just as there are cases of dreams in which one knows that one is dreaming. And there are schizophrenics who falsely believe themselves to be fictional, and in some sense live in the world of a fiction. Indeed, it seems reasonable in the light of these examples to conclude that experience of the unreal is relatively common, both for existing people and for fictional people. Only in a few cases, however, is this experience accompanied by the knowledge that the item that is perceived fails to exist. In most cases it is impossible to have such knowledge, for nothing is contained in the presentation to elicit any information about ontological status. In some cases, for example a dream that becomes too wild, it is possible to be quite confident whilst dreaming that the objects one confronts are unreal. But if the object manifests no obvious incoherence then one cannot distinguish it, at least while it is in view, as a fiction or a reality.

The proposition that reality itself takes the form of a story, at least in so far as it is constituted by objects in experience, follows from the indiscernibility thesis. Experience of any sort must manifest some coherence, at least at the most minimal level of having a certain pattern within which changes occur. This implies a temporal dimension, and this is in turn an indication that a story is related by that experience, for a story always involves a
temporally ordered pattern of events. Where there are events, there will also be enduring objects that undergo the changes such events imply. Therefore stories will always be about certain objects, which are maintained together by connections of coherence, relevance, and meaningful coincidence. Now all of this could be satisfied by a story which was nevertheless incoherent in some way that would distinguish it from reality, but some realistic stories manifest a structure that cannot be faulted from the perspective of its characters. It follows that reality as a whole, from the perspective of its parts, has a story.

Although not often considered common sense, this conclusion has been drawn before. Some illustrations of the idea as it appears in the thoughts of other philosophers may help to clarify its exact sense. Perhaps the most important thing to understand is that even though the real world is experienced as a story, this does not imply that it is fictional, or that existing simpliciter is a state that cannot be distinguished from existing in a fiction. An account of the distinction between reality and fiction has already been presented. The point now is that our experience of reality is made intelligible by its internal structure as a story. Some philosophers seem to have confused these issues. For example, F. Nietzsche has indicated that he understands the equivalence in our experience of reality and fiction, but appears to draw the conclusion that there is no conceptual distinction:

It is no more than a moral prejudice that truth is worth more than mere appearance; it is even the worst proved assumption there is in the world. Let at least this much be admitted: there would be no life at all if not on the basis of perspective estimates and appearances; and if, with the virtuous enthusiasm and clumsiness of some philosophers, one wanted to abolish the "apparent world" altogether - well, supposing you could do that, at least nothing would be left of your "truth" either. Indeed, what forces us at all to suppose that there is an essential opposition of "true" and "false"? Is it not sufficient to assume degrees of apparentness and, as it were, lighter and darker shadows and shades of appearance - different "values", to use the language of painters? Why couldn't the world that concerns us - be a fiction? And if someone asked, "but to a fiction there surely belongs an author?" - couldn't one answer simply: why? Doesn't this "belongs" perhaps belong to the fiction too?42

42 F. Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, 1967, p. 50.
Of course, one need not interpret these claims as a rejection of the conceptual distinction between fiction and reality. The subject also seems to be the difference between truth and appearance. But the sort of response he gives to the question of the author of our world (a reference to God) may indicate that Nietzsche is here considering something more radical than I have: that reality is itself a fiction, rather than something that is merely illuminated by fictional stories.

An author who appears to stick more closely to the theme that fiction can shed light on the way in which we apprehend existence is S. Clark. His paper "On Wishing There Were Unicorns" contains a number of arguments, some of them adapted from those of Meinong, for the conclusion that fiction is an essential part of living and understanding the world, and especially whatever is taken to be real. The title of his paper is a reference to one of Meinong's arguments: when we wish that there were unicorns, we do not wish that some of the things that already exist were called by the name "unicorn", or even that they had slightly different features that would justify the attribution of the name. Rather, we wish for the existence of something we know to be fantasy, and therefore consciously draw upon our experience of the fantastic. Clark appears to deduce from this that "The real being of unicorns, or Lady Catherine, rests in their very non-existence, their not being tangible or countable things 'out there in the world' ", although this may be nothing more than a suggestion. He goes on to argue that the whole institution of speaking the truth is "parasitic" upon fictional discourse, including lies and the airy nothings of terms that do not have a reference. This conclusion is a little overstated, however, for all that he uses as premises are such propositions as that bees do not have language because they cannot pretend something, so that they cannot intend truth either. It is not clear that this means that truth is parasitic.

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44 Ibid., p. 254.
In a series of examples, connected by a sort of dialectic, Clark attempts to persuade his readers that the essence of their own experience is such that it is most naturally seen as fictional, or at least given a point of origin within fictional contexts. This, of course, does not establish that there is no reality, but just that we come to a lived reality by way of immersion in fictional stories. Some of his examples include: that promising is pretending that an obligation is put on me by the use of certain words; that morality itself is a game of pretending that certain things are impossible; that the notion of self-identity is a fiction, a story kept in circulation through the use of desires, which cause people to think of themselves as being the same person they were in the past; and that entry into society is the adoption of certain mythological roles. In addition to being somewhat contentious, it is not clear that these examples actually establish that we experience much of the world in terms of fictional stories. I have already argued that pretence and game-playing are not essential to fiction, and his points seem to presume that they are.

On the other hand, his descriptions of the way that humans in civilised societies live their lives are often quite appealing. For example:

We live in a vast fiction, a story told by generations of the self-opinionated: in that fiction, bits of paper or base metal stand for all that we could buy or sell, piles of glass and concrete earn the title 'house' or 'city hall', time is measured out with coffee spoons and what is right depends on where you are standing. We live in what Aurelius long ago identified as 'a dream and a delirium', surrounded by Zeug, implements, things typed as good or bad for purposes we hardly know we have. 'Ordinary life' is no less fictional than fairy stories are...

Note that Clark's conclusions here are that we live in a fiction, and that ordinary life is fictional. This is not, strictly speaking, inconsistent with the proposition that we are in fact existing. Living need not involve an experience of the facts. We may be informed by fiction, and thus understand the pattern of our lives as a story, even while we do in fact exist. One

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46 Ibid., pp. 257-258.
of Clark's explicit conclusions is that, whatever might be the case with regard to the gradual consensus achieved by science or even story, our actual experience is maintained and interpreted by the fictions that we encounter: "It is not that we first see horses and then invent unicorns: the things we see are horses from the same stable as the unicorn. Our children do not learn to speak of 'bears' by encountering them: they learn of bears by playing bears...".\(^{47}\) All of this must somehow be reconciled with his claim that the "real being" of fictional characters lies in their nonexistence, which implies that there is a distinction between existent and nonexistent things.

Either he is arguing that we (ie. his readers) do not exist, because our lives are given significance by interpreting them as fiction, or that we do exist but experience the world as it is given in stories, some of them known to be about unreal items. I think that the latter is more plausible, and Clark makes some suggestions that support this reading: that fictional objects are "...maintained in the kind of being they have by the ceaseless narrative invention of a human community", and that "We are, or can be, almost co-creators of the world we inhabit, both by naming creatures and by inventing stories". In the final part of his paper, he suggests that God is the final Truth, and the author of the ultimate story.\(^{48}\) This Truth, however, is contained in the 'vast cloisters' of our memory, and to wish for the reality of a unicorn is both to understand the life that unicorns live independently of any human fantasist, and to invoke something from within the depths of memory.

Perhaps the best case for the indiscernibility thesis - that some fictional situations cannot be experientially distinguished from real ones - is taken from our ability to imagine ourselves in the position of an unreal creature, and extrapolate from this. We would then find that no experience in such a situation would be enough to ground our belief that we, or

anything else in the world of our experience, has ontological status. In his short paper "Fiction", R. Nozick appears to argue this point using the strategic move of posing a sort of sceptical problem about the real world. He begins by boldly stating:

I am a fictional character. However, you would be in error to smile smugly, feeling ontologically superior. For you are a fictional character too. All my readers are except one who is, properly, not reader but author.49

Clearly, he means to include the whole of the real world, at least as he and his readers understand it, in the context of a certain fiction. Within this world, of course, his paper must be seen as nonfiction, but when it is seen as simply a part of the larger story, it is also fictional. In other words, any description of the so-called "real" world is only factual for those living within it, and is otherwise, from the objective standpoint, part of a fictional story. Nozick, realising that this is the case, attempts to communicate it to "the other characters in his story" through the medium of a factual presentation of an objective ontological thesis. In doing so, he appeals to the total experience of his readers (ie. fellow characters) and in a sense asks: "Why could not all of this be fictional? Nothing we could know would disconfirm such a thesis." That is, he presents a sort of sceptical problem, where doubt is directed upon the reality of the world of daily experience.

Nozick is evidently not seeking to formulate a scientific conjecture, but to reveal a metaphysical vision. He assumes that there is an author for our fiction, as he makes reference to his (but why is it a man?) creative power, and asks why it is that a world with evil indicates that its designer is evil, when this is not usually assumed of creative writers, who very often design quite despicable worlds.50 However, just as in the case of Nietzsche, the possibility that the author is also a fictional character is addressed, although in this case, it is assumed that our author is "outside our realm". This, it seems, is part of the

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50 Ibid., p. 462.
theological twist to Nozick's paper - for he explicitly compares the Genesis story, where God began the universe with the words "Let there be...", with the act of creating a fictional story, which also uses words. At the point where the possibility that the author himself is a fictional character is considered, a bizarre set of questions emerges, and he begins to consider the problem of stories within stories:

Must there be a top-floor somewhere, a world that itself is not created in someone else's fiction? Or can the hierarchy go on infinitely? Are circles excluded, even quite narrow ones where a character of one world creates another fictional world wherein a character creates the first world? Might the circle get narrower still?\textsuperscript{51}

How, we might ask, can such a circle get even narrower? There is either a very subtle suggestion here, or Nozick is just being obtuse. If the circle were to get any smaller, then we would have to countenance some sort of self-creation. This may not be implausible, but in the context of the creation of fiction, is it anything other than a metaphor?

In fact, the notion of self-creation is quite explicitly introduced in the final stage of the paper. Here he notes that in some sense it must be true for Hamlet to say "I am Shakespeare",\textsuperscript{52} although of course the other characters in the play would see it as simply another indication of his madness. But it does seem to express some sort of ultimate metaphysical truth about Hamlet - that his words, and indeed his very soul, are the expression, within a contrived and unreal context which determines how he must behave, of his author. At some level or context, one must be able to say that Shakespeare is speaking to us "through" Hamlet-in-the-total-(concrete)-situation-of-the-play. Thus Nozick maintains that, as all of his readers - us - are also fictional characters, we too can express a truth if we say "I am the author". Again, these words are not understood by those around us in most ordinary contexts. Some, on the other hand, may come to the same sort of realisation: that the world is just as much a creation of their imaginations and artistic skill as they are one of

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p. 463.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., p. 464.
its unfortunate clowns; or that subject and object are united in the real world. Nozick not only directs his readers to their own world, and asks them what makes it less fictional than any other realistic story - in this respect, he helps to establish that we cannot "feel" what it is to exist. He also tries to show that, in so far as our worlds are like fictions, we can find a new "identity" for ourselves, as authors and expressions of a completed unity.

4 Holistic Ontology

I have so far defended the following propositions:

1. The Determinacy Thesis: The only descriptions, or identifying references to real objects that we can ever come to understand or interpret are also designations of incomplete items, which do not exist, but are embedded in some real item. Therefore the logic of quantifiers, definite descriptions and identity is only applicable to entities under the guise of their incomplete renderings or translations. If this were not the case, there would be no way of consistently connecting our descriptions of reality to form a unified field of events, as was postulated by relational theories of existence. If, for example, "the man in the street" satisfies neither predicate excluded middle nor predicate noncontradiction then there is no guarantee that, on coming to know more of his features, or "filling out" his characterisation, he will be properly connected with other entities. It follows, then, that existent objects are fully determinate, at least with respect to their extensional properties: they are neither overdeterminate (inconsistent) nor underdeterminate (incomplete).

2. The Narrative Thesis: The overall structure of reality as a whole - that is, as a whole presentation in the living colour of waking, conscious perceptual experience - is that of a story or narrative. Therefore, the only way in which we can possibly experience an entity, while at the same time attempting to understand its place within the whole of reality...
(ie. within the real world), is by translating its presentation into an appropriate place in the coherent narrative of the universe.

The first proposition concerns existent individuals and their internal connectedness, while the second concerns the nature of the whole of reality, and how it can be apprehended or experienced. In both cases, the characterisation of these items takes place within a story, or perhaps many different stories which deal with the same objects. It seems that, in so far as what exists can be described at all, it is necessarily exhibited to us in a form which is impossible to distinguish from a sophisticated fiction. If there is a way to grasp "existing" without submitting entities to description, it might avoid the problem of confusion with the fictitious, but any other solution is improbable.

4.1 The Real World

It is possible to formulate what Routley has called holistic criteria for existence, which define what it is to exist in terms of a relation to a significant whole. Such criteria sometimes have the capacity to evoke a feeling that something serious and important has been explained concerning reality, and at the same time the realisation that what has been said is utterly trivial. Of course it is true that all entities belong to the "real world", but unless something further is said by way of characterising the nature of this world, nothing has been explained. On the other hand, although logicians and philosophers now make use of a bewildering variety of merely possible unreal worlds, the feeling of a special connection between the notion of a world-whole and the concept of existence is often difficult to remove. One might try to express this connection by proposing that the real world is the one in which we first find ourselves, and serves as the basis for understanding all of the others. This might not help in determining which world is in fact the real one, but it might explain
(ie. within the real world), is by translating its presentation into an appropriate place in the coherent narrative of the universe.

The Narrative Thesis relies upon the distinction between experiential structure - the way things are presented phenomenologically, to a subject of experience - and what might be called "metaphysical" structure. The crucial aspect of the latter in this context is the presence or absence of counterfactual possibilities concerning an object. I have argued only that reality, as it is experienced, is indistinguishable from fiction. But I have distinguished it from fiction nonetheless, in terms of its metaphysical connection with counterfactual realms, which does not hold for fictional objects. The Narrative Thesis seems to concede the objections encountered in chapter four to relational theories of existence - that they do not distinguish fiction from reality. In fact, it concedes indiscernibility only within the conscious experience of an empirical subject. It states that the real world has the structure of a story. This means that it must deal with characters and their effects upon each other, and therefore has both a temporal and a causal order. It must have the "density" of a story, which means that it contains objects that are characterised at different levels: social, psychological, physical, and so on. It must also be something capable of differing interpretations, and capable of having a point - a "moral" of some sort. All of this is included in our experience of reality.

The first proposition concerns existent individuals and their internal connectedness, while the second concerns the nature of the whole of reality, and how it can be apprehended or experienced. In both cases, the characterisation of these items takes place within a story, or perhaps many different stories which deal with the same objects. It seems that, in so far as what exists can be described at all, it is necessarily exhibited to us in a form which is impossible to distinguish from a sophisticated fiction. If there is a way to grasp "existing"
how, in the natural development of thought, we first tend to conceive of a "world" as a receptacle for existent objects. One might even go further and claim that the real world can be identified as this one; the one that I find myself living in; the one that most fully realises my original concept of "world-whole".

This may appear to be a version of Lewis' indexical theory of actuality, only applied to "real" instead of "actual". It has been suggested that Lewis' modal realism is similar in some respects to the neo-Meinongian metaphysic. He has a large ontology that goes beyond whatever Russell had in mind when he employed his "robust sense of reality"; he uses a type of restricted quantification in response to Russell's objection to Meinong's theory; he makes use of a different distinction between "actual" and "existent", but his concept of actuality picks out the same objects as the ones included in Russell's robust sensings (thus making it similar to the Meinongian "existent"). One of the important differences between the two theories is the ontological methodology used. Lewis is content to argue for the existence of merely possible objects and worlds on the pragmatic grounds that they are useful tools for analysing counterfactual reasoning and other varieties of modal and intensional discourse. If the theory of objects is correct, this argument is not sufficient. This is not to controvert the notion that worlds are theoretically useful, only the conclusion that they have to exist in order to be used. I will argue that the real world is not something that exists, but this does not mean that it is in the same category as a merely possible world. Just as entities differ from fictional items in respect of the presence of counterfactuals, so the real world differs from the domain of mere possibility in that everything in the latter is a counterfactual version of the former, unless it is a purely fictional world.

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54 ibid., p. 449.
If the real world, or "the sum total of reality" can be used in any explanation of existence at all, there must be some sort of reply to the triviality objection. It ought to be recognised that there are different types of holistic criteria, and there may be different sorts of triviality. Perhaps the paradigm example of a trivial account of existence (which is not holistic) is the use of λ-abstraction, which will deliver nothing at all in terms of explanatory content. All that such a sentence does is restate the sense of an existential judgment in terms of an explicit instantiation relation to the property of existence. Since this does not involve any enlargement of the original content of the judgement, it is not possible to define existence with this sentence:

\[ x E \equiv x \lambda x x E \]
even if what this says is true.

It was argued in chapter Two that the most that the instantiation relation can express is the presence of a fixed, transcendental meaning; it will not necessarily explain or analyse that meaning. What is more, since the items that can have instances are transcendent, and thus beyond the empirical network of shifting meanings and contexts, we have reason to believe that they do not exist. This is partly because our minimal notion of existence seems to be connected to that of dwelling within a concrete situation: that is, the idea that Hegel worked with. While it can be concluded that λ-abstraction will not provide a definition, since it cannot capture any content or structure, it can also be concluded that the "abstracted" item - the universal - is transcendent, and thus nonexistent. This is also true of the world-wholes used in holistic criteria for existence.

In fact, all of the holistic criteria that Routley discusses have a similar structure to that of λ-abstraction, the difference being that different relations are used, together with a different transcendent whole.
GROUP 0. Holistic criteria. These criteria try to characterise what it is to exist, or to be an existent or entity, in terms of some whole or totality - such as the Physical World, the Universe, The One, or Reality - G. They take the form OG. xE iff xRG,

where R is a relation between x and G such as the relation of being a part of or a component of or having a place in or being in (or even partaking of or participating in). Such accounts, which perhaps go back to Parmenides, and certainly go back to Aristotle, are to be found in modern nominalism and empiricism. Thus, for example, it is a theorem of mereology...that

xE iff x < G.

...Representative of the holistic approach are the following two accounts:

01. To exist is to be any fragment, part or real constituent of the world...

02. To exist is to have a place in the domain of reality (OED; sense 1); i.e. in symbols of world semantics xE iff x ∈ d(G), which, when generalised to arbitrary models, is displayed by the pure semantical rule: I(xE, G) = 1 iff x ∈ d(G). [JB, pp.704-705]

Of course, the fact that each of these accounts has a particular relational structure does not by itself show that these wholes must be nonexistent items. The nature of their relations is also relevant, and in particular the fact that the totalities concerned are transcendent items, in that they are not themselves part of the real world or the Universe, or whatever. Nothing can properly be a part or a component of itself, and it is difficult to imagine what it is for a thing to have a place in itself. If it has a place at all, it must be with respect to an external frame of reference. Likewise nothing can be a fragment of itself, and although it is possible for a set to be a member of itself, this is not the case for d(G). Since this object is a set (which has entities as members), it is an abstract mathematical object, and therefore transcendent and nonexistent. At least according to Routley's noneist philosophy of mathematics, the domain of reality does not exist.

Any holistic criterion of existence will entail the nonexistence of the whole within which entities find their appropriate place, since this whole will not itself satisfy the holistic criterion. For convenience, I will use "the real world" to denote the privileged whole or the One. It can be expressed in conceptions of the Universe of physics, the actual world of modal logic, and possibly such things as Spinoza's God or Bradley's Absolute. But this
does not entail that it is identical with any of these items: they are simply possible frameworks for understanding its attributes. There is no reason to believe that these differing conceptions of the real world are necessarily inconsistent. In fact, they might be used together, to determine the differing stories or patterns of narrative that make up its internal structure. Whereas the actual world of modal logic is assumed to have only the formal properties of sentential completeness and consistency, the physical Universe has a much more complex structure, which includes an "origin point" for the overall story - namely, the Big Bang. In so far as it has an evolutionary development, the Universe appears in the form of a cosmic story, and we may tell this story, in different languages and through different theories, to find ourselves and investigate our deepest values.

B. Swimme has expanded on the notion of a cosmic story in the contexts of both physical science and the acquisition of values and meaning. He takes the notion of a story to be linked to the comprehension of temporal order:

By cosmic creation story I also mean to indicate those accounts of the universe we told each other around the evening fires for most of the last 50,000 years. These cosmic stories were the way the first humans chose to initiate and install their young into the universe. The rituals, the traditions, the taboos, the ethics, the techniques, the customs, and the values all had as their core a cosmic story. The story provided the central cohesion for each society. Story in this sense is "world-interpretation" - a likely account of the development and nature and value of things in this world.

Why story? Why should "story" be fundamental? Because without storytelling, we lose contact with our basic realities in this world. We lose contact because only through story can we fully recognise our existence in time.....To be human is to be in a story. To forget one's story is to go insane.55

The transcendence and nonexistence of the real world does not entail its unknowability. Indeed, there is a sense in which it can be integrated into a healthy pluralistic view of cosmic stories. Knowledge of the real world may come in a variety of forms, it can appear in the stories of a cultural tradition as well as in science, but it will always appear as a story with

"us beings" as its characters. That is: it will include both story-tellers and audience, it will relate them to other stories of living and evaluating life, and it will take place in a unified temporal framework. The recognition that the real world cannot itself be included as a character in any of our cosmic stories, which is entailed by the use of a holistic criteria for existence, means that there is no single correct story. None of our cosmic stories is the absolute and final truth, but each tends to approximate the underlying structure of the narrative. As such, there are different value systems and different ways of entering the real world, each of which is a way of participating in the whole.

Swimme argues that modern physics has come to recognise the importance of story, not only with the realisation that the universe is expanding and evolving rather than static and "dead", but in a new conception of physical law. He claims that scientists are beginning to question whether there are any immutable laws of nature, and have reached a point where they understand that laws governing the physical universe today are themselves the results of developments over time.\textsuperscript{56} It would then follow that we cannot characterise the real world with a single equation, or a list of fundamental properties of matter and spacetime. Rather, there are simply events - in the words of J.A. Wheeler: "Events beyond law. Events so numerous and so uncoordinated that, flaunting their freedom from formula, they yet fabricate firm form."\textsuperscript{57} The physical universe may turn out to be storylike at its very heart - the whole structure of causation may be naught but unfolding narrative, with the same freedom that a novelist has. Swimme further offers a conjecture as to what would happen if physicists began to appreciate not just repeatable events that conform to system and law, but the unrepeatable events of history. We might begin to see each new item and event as a "revelation" in itself, and not just another thing that conforms to some formula. The

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p. 50.
\textsuperscript{57} Quoted in Ibid., p. 51, and also in D.W. Curtin, ed., The Aesthetic Dimension of Science, 1982, p. 54.
possibility of a deep and holistic approach to nature is opened up: a "reenchantment with the universe", and the discovery of value in ourselves and our cosmos.

4.2 Subject, Object, World

These speculations about the storylike character of the real world may help to explain why a holistic criterion can evoke a sense that something important or profound has been explained or elucidated. At some level we realise that existing is a sort of participation in a whole that is active and alive, and may be the source of our ultimate values. But there is still the opposing intuition that nothing terribly interesting has been said. The criterion must be developed to give it a substantial content if this difficulty is to be resolved. Consider first Routley's presentation of the triviality problem:

...one might almost as well say that to be red is to be part of the totality of red things, to (be) f is to be among the f things. A second problem arises... (this is) the open hospitality of such accounts: on their own they exclude nothing. Pegasus exists iff Pegasus is in the totality: no basis is given for excluding Pegasus from the totality. [JB, p. 705]

Of course, a similar criticism might also apply to the other relational criteria that Routley examines. If there is no basis for excluding Pegasus from the totality of real items, then what basis is there for saying that Pegasus is not spatiotemporally related to an appropriate paradigm? Neither the relation of being part of reality, nor that of being (say) at some distance from an existent object, is included in its characterisation. It seems that there is no other place to look for such a "basis", either. Just as paradigms are contingently selected, so too is the real world. These points are not adequate replies to the objection, but they demonstrate that other relational theories, which are not generally taken to be trivial, may have similar problems.

58 Ibid., p. 51.
In fact, this triviality may not be quite as problematic as Routley suggests. It is not of the same type as that from which the instantiation "definition" suffered, and yet this is what he appears to imply in arguing that one may just as well say that to be red is to be part of the totality of red things. It is possible to adopt a holistic criterion which says something more substantial than "to exist is to instantiate existence", or "to exist is to be part of the existing totality". Routley's suggestion is to try and characterise the real world in more detail, so as to provide more content to the definition, but he is pessimistic about the prospects of completing such a task [JB, p. 707]. His pessimism is justified if it is thought that a complete characterisation of the real world must include a complete account of all of the items in its domain, for this is an infinite task. The whole of reality cannot be fully presented to consciousness, nor can it be captured by a finite description. Nevertheless, the fact that it has a storylike structure means that it is something more specific than a mere "totality".

A more satisfactory holistic criterion can be derived from the argument of this chapter. We may argue as follows. The primary meaning of existence is participation, or dwelling in a concrete situation. The totality of concrete situations, the real world, has a narrative structure. Real events and objects appear in an unfolding story that is indistinguishable (in experience) from a sophisticated, realistic fiction. Nevertheless, entities obey laws of coherent connection, which do not necessarily apply to fictional objects, and are fully determinate. Therefore, to exist is to be included in the story of the real world, but not completely characterised by this story. This is because if there is a complete characterisation of an object, it is fictional, and thus nonexistent. Existent objects are not characterised by any of the stories in which they appear; they are incompletely described.

This criterion, that existence is inclusion in the real world without complete characterisation, applies to all entities, whether or not they possess consciousness or
subjectivity. Nevertheless, the story of the real world is intimately connected to the nature of the subject. In all other merely possible or fictional worlds, a subject is included only as another object, for it is entirely characterised within that world. In the domain of reality, subject is more than just object, for it lies with all objects at the ground of their existence, at the heart of the world. This is not something accessible to experience, because all experience is intentional, and thus involves a mediating relationship to its object. In the real world, there is no mediation between the subject and the whole domain of its objects: perception, thought, and intentional activity in general can reveal distinct entities, but only as incomplete fragments of a whole that is as much myself as it is not. The whole domain has the form of a story, but it is a story which I can never completely tell, for I am not separate from it (and it does not characterise me). Of all the stories and all the worlds that I can understand, only the real world is my necessary and natural dwelling. This is the only one that goes beyond and beneath its story, and thus becomes the only possible dwelling for a subject which is both object-oriented (ie. has intentionality) and yet not simply an object, since it is not completely characterised therein.

Holism concerning existence is not necessarily a trivial position, and if the character of the world whole is what differentiates entities from mere fictions, then there is no danger of triviality, since reality is then a unity which does not include anything whatever. The parts of reality cannot be conceived adequately using finite descriptions, and thus they are only truly real when considered as deeply connected, and in fact ultimately inseparable from each other. This, in fact, is what makes the real world special and different from any fictional world: it is indivisible and ineffable in a way that no other story can be, and its narrative never completely reveals its domain. Merely possible worlds, the counterfactual versions of reality that are nonfictional, also fail to possess the wholeness (indivisibility) of existence. They are postulated for the purpose of inferring what would happen if certain particular
concrete situations were different, but the inferences that they allow are finite, and it is quite impossible to think through the whole course that the story of reality would take under a particular counterfactual supposition. Merely possible items are separate particles rather than holistic realities.

We can also take the notion of "dwelling in a concrete situation" quite seriously, and literally comprehend the whole of reality as home. In a sense this is just the idea that the real world is my world, but it is not the simple "indexical" theory. Anything, from any story, can be admitted into my natural dwelling, but it must be accepted in an act of creation which derives from my total, holistic being. It is impossible that Pegasus and other fictional characters dwell in this place, for I know their source and their home as something distinct from my creative activity. As Clark might have put it, I can wish for their existence, and in doing so become aware that they have status as objects apart from any fantasist, and yet do not belong in the place I wish them to be. The world of my choice, where I am the author disguised as a character, is something for which I already have a feeling and an innate sense of "flow", and it is this that I use to discover local realities, and distinguish them from unrealities.

None of this may sound precise or objective enough to satisfy the demands of a systematic philosophy of Being, or an ontology, but there is at least one way of arguing for its truth. I have claimed that the logic of neutral quantification and identity, with its domain of distinct and separate individuals, is only applicable to reality because it can be applied to incomplete items which substitute for existents. This means that, given that I do in fact exist (which is not provable) I am myself separate and distinct from other entities only as a matter of convenience. To assume separateness makes thinking about myself (using a general logic of objects) a great deal easier, but at some level I am, in the words of Wordsworth, "far
more deeply interfused". Because my separateness is an essential illusion, I might best see myself as the prime actor in the world-whole, rather than an isolated subject in a bag of skin. As the Self of the World, and not as a particular object born at a certain time, I am like Nozick's character, who can proclaim "I am the Author", but will not be understood.

If this makes any sense at all, we have reached a point where the nature of existence is no longer something revealed in description, and still less in Aristotle's project for a science of Being qua Being. My connection to the real world, my very existence, is then not something that can be experienced or explained, for this will just involve more descriptions, which will only yield further stories. Indeed, with this conjecture we have reached a point where words must stop.
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