KNOWLEDGE AND REALITY

PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES SERIES

VOLUME 103

Founded by Wilfrid S. Sellars and Keith Lehrer

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KNOWLEDGE AND REALITY

Essays in Honor of Alvin Plantinga

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Springer

A C.I.P. Catalogue record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN-10 1-4020-4732-0 (HB)
ISBN-13 978-1-4020-4732-9 (HB)
ISBN-10 1-4020-4733-9 (e-book)
ISBN-13 978-1-4020-4733-6 (e-book)

Published by Springer,
P.O. Box 17, 3300 AA Dordrecht, The Netherlands.

www.springer.com

Cover art: After the Ascent, Acrylic Painting for Plantinga, Keith Lehrer, 2004

Printed on acid-free paper

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Printed in the Netherlands.

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Preface

This volume was conceived as a *Festschrift* to surprise Alvin Plantinga on his 70th birthday. That original plan was not entirely successful. For one thing, the day came and went well before the work was complete. For another, the project wasn't quite a surprise: Plantinga caught wind of it (though not of its details) before the unveiling.

The occasion was marked, however, by a presentation of a projected table of contents and an early draft of the cover painting by Keith Lehrer. Plantinga then saw the details, and was quite taken aback that the editors and a few contributors had come to South Bend from as far Virginia, Florida, and California to celebrate.

Now we are pleased to offer the essays themselves. The collection ranges widely over metaphysics and epistemology. Its wingspan testifies to the breadth both of Plantinga's own work and of the audience that has valued it. Some of the essays deal with ontology, examining actualism, presentism, antirealism, properties, and artifacts. Several essays in epistemology raise skeptical questions, work through the implications of naturalism or internalism, and engage Plantinga's own Reidian account of warrant. Other contributions consider the bearing of philosophical ideas on the Christian faith–of split brain cases on the doctrine of the Trinity, for example, and of materialism on the afterlife.

The contributors are friends, colleagues, and former students of Plantinga. The editors thank all of them for their eager participation in this project.

There is little we can add to the expressions of praise and gratitude the contributors and others have voiced. Plantinga's seminal work on modality, the problem of evil, and the rationality of religious belief has long been

celebrated for its rigor, depth, and clarity, and his more recent work in epistemology has been eagerly received as an important, stimulating contribution to the field.

Beyond that, many have had occasion to thank Plantinga for his availability and encouragement, among both his own students and others. As James Sennett has recently observed, Plantinga follows through on his expressed concern for the development of younger philosophers, and in particular members of the Christian philosophical community. The editors add their testimony that Plantinga has been consistently generous with his time and attention.

But perhaps one facet of Plantinga's work deserves greater appreciation: the scope of his vision, the big picture which animates his thought. Plantinga excels not only in analysis but also in synthesis. He aims always to place his ideas in their context, and he has encouraged his students to do the same. His work thus contributes not merely to the development of a handful of philosophical problems, but to a worldview in which all of knowledge, freedom, possibility, the character of propositions, the origins of humanity, and the nature and purposes of God twine each other and cannot be understood in isolation.

Here Plantinga owes something to his own teacher, William Harry Jellema, who conceived of philosophy's history as an arena of competing commitments which are ultimately religious. Plantinga is quick to credit Jellema as a model of historically informed, insightful, and subtle thinking that appreciates criticism without being overawed by intellectual fads–nor even by entrenched errors. Jellema is himself indebted to Abraham Kuyper's conviction that every human enterprise (not least philosophy) is claimed by the sovereignty of Christ, Kuyper in turn to John Calvin's understanding of the original goodness of creation and humans' tasks in it, and Calvin to Augustine's longing for rest in God, the human end.

At Jellema's hands Plantinga saw the vision. We hope to honor them both by applying the proceeds of sales of this book toward a chair in Jellema's name at Calvin College. We are glad to have caught the vision from you, Al.

Thomas M. Crisp
Matthew Davidson
David Vander Laan

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Keith Lehrer for commissioning the volume, as well as for the painting for the cover; Ann Hickman for her patience and hard work in typesetting the pages; and our terrific (and understanding) editors—Ingrid van Laarhoven and Floor Oosting. We are grateful to each of the contributors for the essays, and to Hilda Tomberlin and Greg Fitch for help in preparing James Tomberlin's essay.

Chapter 1

ACTUALISM AND PRESENTISM*

James E. Tomberlin
California State University, Northridge

In the metaphysics of time and tense, presentism is the view that there are no objects that do not presently exist.[1] According to the presentist, there are no philosophical problems whose solution calls for or requires an ontological commitment to non-presently existing individuals. In the metaphysics of modality, actualism is minimally the view that there are no objects that do not actually exist.[2] By the lights of actualism, there are no philosophical problems whose proper treatment demands an ontological commitment to nonactual objects. Now I harbor a deep skepticism as regards both of these ontological stances. In what follows, accordingly, I aim to extend and sharpen the skeptical concerns previously voiced in my 1993, 1996a, 1996b, forthcoming a, and Tomberlin and McGuinness 1994.

1. A DEONTIC CASE[3]

Jones, as it happens, has taken up nouvelle cuisine with its laudable emphasis on fresh and unusual ingredients. One weekend, in seclusion, he opts to prepare for himself the remarkable ragoût of wild mushrooms with veal stock and red wine concocted by Alice Waters for her renowned restaurant, *Chez Panisse*. For the preparation, Jones decides, why not utilize wild mushrooms he gathered from the nearby woods just yesterday? A splendid dish indeed, he observes upon dining. But alas, some time later, Jones, still home alone and miles from the nearest person, is rendered comatose. Several of the wild mushrooms were highly toxic and Jones, alone and physically incapable of conveying his plight, faces certain death.

T. M. Crisp, M. Davidson and D. Vander Laan (eds.), Knowledge and Reality, 1-14.
© 2006 *Springer. Printed in the Netherlands.*

In this situation, I take it, (1) and (2) are true but (3) is false:

(1) For any individual *x*, if *x* is a moral agent and *x* is available and able to come to Jones's assistance, *x* ought prima facie to provide Jones with aid.
(2) No actual moral agent is available and able to come to Jones's assistance.
(3) For any individual *x*, if *x* is a moral agent who is available and able to come to Jones's assistance, *x* ought not prima facie to provide Jones with aid.

If so, however, the actualist cannot read (1) and (3) as universally quantified material conditionals. For suppose otherwise. Since no actual individual satisfies the open sentence

x is a moral agent who is available and able to come to Jones's assistance,

every actual individual satisfies both (1a) and (3a):

(1a) (*x* is a moral agent who is available and able to come to Jones's assistance) ⊃ (*x* ought prima facie to provide Jones with aid).

(3a) (*x* is a moral agent who is available and able to come to Jones's assistance) ⊃ (*x* ought not prima facie to provide Jones with aid).

But then (1) and (3) are both true, after all.

These considerations lead directly to a serious challenge for actualism:

Challenge One. With objectual quantification,[4] provide an interpretation of (1) and (3) satisfying these conditions: (1) and (2) are true, (3) is false, and the quantifiers range over actual individuals only.

The above deontic case likewise poses a serious threat to presentism. For in the scenario around Jones it is also the case that whereas (1_1) and (2_1) are true, (3_1) is false:

(1_1) For any individual *x*, if *x* is a moral agent and *x* is available and able to come to Jones's assistance, *x* ought prima facie to provide Jones with aid.

(2_1) No presently existing moral agent is available and able to assist Jones.

(3_1) For any individual x, if x is a moral agent who is available and able to come to Jones's assistance, x ought not prima facie to aid Jones.

If so, the presentist must not read (1_1) and (3_1) as universally quantified material conditionals. For suppose otherwise. Because no presently existing individual satisfies the open sentence 'x is a moral agent who is available and able to assist Jones', every presently existing individual satisfies both (1a) and (3a):

(1a) (x is a moral agent who is available and able to assist Jones) $\supset$ (x ought prima facie to provide Jones with aid).

(3a) (x is a moral agent who is available and able to assist Jones) $\supset$ (x ought not prima facie to provide Jones with aid).

But then (1_1) and (3_1) are both true, after all.

As with actualism before, these considerations yield the following challenge for presentism:

Challenge One. With objectual quantification, provide an interpretation of (1_1) and (3_1) satisfying these conditions: (1_1) and (2_1) are true, (3_1) is false, and the quantifiers range over presently existing individuals only.

2. HOW NOT TO MEET THE CHALLENGE

The above trouble with treating (1_1) and (3_1) as universally quantified material conditionals naturally suggests that the presentist construe the notion of conditionality at work in (1_1) and (3_1) in such a way that a conditional of the sort in question does not come out true just because its antecedent is (merely) in fact not satisfied. This in turn suggests that the presentist entertain one of the following proposals.

Strict Conditionals. By this alternative, (1_1) and (3_1) are to be construed as universally quantified strict conditionals, where a strict conditional $\Box(A \supset B)$ is true (at a world w) if and only if B is true in every logically and/or metaphysically possible world (relative to w) where A is true. So understood, however, this proposal scarcely meets our challenge: since it is *logically* possible that some presently existing moral agent who is available and able to assist Jones does not have a prima facie obligation to aid Jones, (1_1) turns out false under this interpretation.

Nomic Conditionals. According to this view, (1_1) and (3_1) are to be taken as universally quantified conditionals of nomic necessity, where a conditional of nomic (= physical) necessity $\Box_P(A \supset B)$ is true (at a world w)

exactly on the condition that *B* is true in every physically possible world (relative to *w*) in which *A* is true. While more modest than the previous interpretation owing to a switch from logical to physical necessity, it should nevertheless be clear that the present alternative fails: insofar as no (actual) law of nature or statement of nomic necessity is violated under the assumption that some presently existing moral agent is not prima facie obligated to aid Jones even though he or she is available and able to provide assistance, true (1_1) won't be true, after all.

Soft (or Hedged) Laws. Under the present view, (1_1) and (3_1) are deemed seriously incomplete owing to the fact that each implicitly contains a *ceteris paribus* clause. Bringing this clause into the open, (1_1) becomes the allegedly true *soft law*: For any individual *x*, if *x* is a moral agent who is available and able to assist Jones, *all things being equal*, *x* ought prima facie to provide Jones with aid. For soft laws, we are told, the consequent holds in any physically possible situation in which the antecedent and the *ceteris paribus* condition are jointly satisfied.[5] If so, however, this interpretation likewise fails the challenge: because no law is violated under the condition that some presently existing moral agent is not prima facie obligated to aid Jones, even though this agent is available and able to provide assistance and all other things are equal, (1_1) comes out false under this interpretation. No, statements like (1_1) concerning moral obligation just do not express nomological laws, soft or otherwise.

Counterfactuals. With the current alternative, (1_1) and (3_1) become the universally quantified counterfactuals (1b) and (3b), respectively:

(1b) For any individual *x*, if it were the case that *x* is a moral agent who is available and able to come to Jones's assistance, it would be the case that *x* ought prima facie to provide Jones with aid.

(3b) For any individual *x*, if it were the case that *x* is a moral agent who is available and able to come to Jones's assistance, it would be the case that *x* ought not prima facie to provide Jones with aid.

A tempting view indeed for anyone who demands an account of the truth-conditions for our target sentences while insisting on an ontology devoid of non-presently existing individuals. Unfortunately, any such theoretical attraction notwithstanding, this counterfactual interpretation is fraught with difficulties, including each of the following prominent ones:

First, as we learned from Stalnaker (1968) and Lewis (1973), transitivity and contraposition both fail for counterfactuals. And yet, (I) and (II) seem harmlessly valid:

(I) For any individual x, if x is a moral agent who is available and able to come to Jones's assistance, x ought prima facie to provide Jones with aid. For any individual x, if x ought prima facie to provide Jones with aid, x will attempt to help Jones. Thus, for any individual x, if x is a moral agent who is available and able to come to Jones's assistance, x will attempt to help Jones.

(II) For any individual x, if x is a moral agent who is available and able to come to Jones's assistance, x ought prima facie to provide Jones with aid. Thus, for any individual x, if it is not so that x ought prima facie to provide Jones with aid, x is not a moral agent who is available and able to aid Jones.

Of course (I) and (II) would not be valid unless the embedded notion of conditionality in each case obeyed transitivity and contraposition.

Second, while there is room for genuine disagreement over the correct rule of truth for a counterfactual $A \Box\!\!\rightarrow B$, to facilitate matters I assume the one provided in Lewis 1973:

$A \Box\!\!\rightarrow B$ is true (at world w) if and only if either (i) there are no possible A-worlds (in which case $A \Box\!\!\rightarrow B$ is vacuously true) or (ii) some A-world where B holds is closer (to w) than is any A-world where B does not hold.

Next, suppose with Kripke (1980) *genetic essentialism*—any presently existing individual necessarily has the origin it in fact has. Return now to Jones and permit me to expand on his background. Rebounding from a failed and childless marriage, Jones, vowing not to contribute to a world of overpopulation, underwent a successful and irreversible vasectomy three years ago. That is, we have the truth of (4_1):

(4_1) No presently existing individual is a biological offspring of Jones.

Now surely any reason for treating (1_1) and (3_1) as (1b) and (3b), respectively, should likewise dictate that (5_1) and (6_1) are to be parsed as (7_1) and (8_1), in turn:

(5_1) For any individual x, if x is a moral agent who is available and able to assist Jones and x is a biological offspring of Jones, x ought prima facie to aid Jones.

(6_1) For any individual x, if x is a moral agent who is available and able to assist Jones and x is a biological offspring of Jones, x ought not prima facie to aid Jones.

(7_1) For any individual x, if it were to be the case that x is a moral agent who is available and able to assist Jones and x is a biological offspring of Jones, it would be the case that x ought prima facie to aid Jones.

(8_1) For any individual x, if it were to be the case that x is a moral agent who is available and able to assist Jones and x is a biological offspring of Jones, it would be the case that x ought not prima facie to aid Jones.

With all of this, however, presentism comes to grief; owing to the Lewis rule of truth for counterfactuals, genetic essentialism, and the truth of (4_1), presentism demands that (7_1) and (8_1) are both true. But in the scenario involving Jones it seems clear that whereas (5_1) is true, (6_1) is false. By parity of reasoning, the proposal that (1_1) and (3_1) are to be construed as (1b) and (3b), in order, should be rejected.

Conditional Obligations. At this juncture the presentist directs our attention to fairly recent developments in deontic logic. After van Fraassen (1972), Lewis (1974), and others, a statement of *unconditional* obligation is represented as OA, where O is the familiar monadic deontic operator of standard deontic logic. OA is adjudged true (at a world w) if and only if A is true in all of the deontically ideal worlds (relative to w). In sharp contrast, a statement of conditional obligation is represented as $O(A/B)$, with $O(/)$ a newly introduced dyadic deontic operator. $O(A/B)$—the assertion that under conditions satisfying B it is obligatory that A is satisfied—obeys a different (and weaker) rule of truth: some value realized at some B-world where A holds is better than any value realized at any B-world where A does not hold (Lewis 1974: 4). To accompany this axiological interpretation of conditional obligation, Lewis supplies the following axioms and rules of inference (Lewis 1974: 11-12):

R1. All truth-functional tautologies are theorems.
R2. If A and $A \supset B$ are theorems, so is B.
R3. If $A \equiv B$ is a theorem, so is $O(A/C) \equiv O(B/C)$.
R4. If $B \equiv C$ is a theorem, so is $O(A/B) \equiv O(A/C)$.
A1. $P(A/C) \equiv \sim O(\sim A/C)$.
A2. $O(A \,\&\, B/C) \equiv [O(A/C) \,\&\, O(B/C)]$.
A3. $O(A/C) \supset \mathrm{P}(A/C)$.
A4. $O(T/C) \supset O(C/C)$.
A5. $O(T/C) \supset O(T/B \vee C)$.
A6. $[O(A/B) \,\&\, O(A/C)] \supset O(A/B \vee C)$.
A7. $[P(\perp/C) \,\&\, O(A/B \vee C)] \supset O(A/B)$.
A8. $[P(B/B \vee C) \,\&\, O(A/B \vee C)] \supset O(A/B)$,

where $P(/)$ reads 'it is permissible that...given that...,' T stands for tautology, and $\perp$ is the negation of any tautology. In the above logic of conditional obligation, this feature is salient for our purposes here: since $A \supset OB$ does *not* imply $O(B/A)$, the latter (unlike the former) is not automatically true when A is false.

Return to (1_1) and (3_1). The challenge confronting presentism is to provide an account of (1_1) and (3_1) meeting the constraint that (1_1) is true and (3_1) is false with quantification over just presently existing individuals. According to the present suggestion, (1_1) and (3_1) become statements of universally quantified conditional obligation. Thanks to the rule of truth for $O(A/B)$, it is urged, (1_1)—so construed—is indeed true whereas (3_1)—so interpreted—is surely false, and this remains so even when the quantification involved is presentistic.

Against this intriguing proposal, I offer these objections:

First, in the various systems of conditional obligation articulated by van Fraassen (1972), Lewis (1974), and more recently Åqvist (1987) and Feldman (1986), the detachment principle $O(A/C) \supset [C \supset OA]$ is not a theorem. And yet, I submit, (III) is plainly valid:

> (III) For any individual x, if x is a moral agent who is available and able to come to Jones's assistance, x ought prima facie to aid Jones. Scott is a moral agent who is available and able to assist Jones. Thus, Scott ought prima facie to aid Jones.

If so, however, the notion of conditionality embedded in (1_1) cannot be the one embodied in the above systems of conditional obligation.

Second, as I have argued at length elsewhere,[6] each of the systems of conditional obligation in question succumb to one or more versions of the notorious paradoxes of deontic logic. Without rehearsing the details of these paradoxes, the following observations are pertinent here.[7] To generate one of the paradoxes against a particular system of deontic logic, a possible situation is described and a set of natural language sentences is produced where the sentences in question all seem true if the possible situation were to occur. Next, it is documented that under the most judicious representations of the natural language sentences within the deontic system at stake the result is a logically inconsistent set. This is of course powerful evidence that such a deontic system fails to provide a theoretically viable account of the natural language target sentences. Now sentences just like (1_1) and (3_1) loom large in some of the deontic paradoxes, most notably the Paradox of the Knower and the Contrary-to-Duty-Imperative Paradox.[8] And consequently, if the above systems of conditional obligation fall prey to one or more of these paradoxes, this is ample reason to find that (1_1) and (3_1) are not to be

treated as statements of universally quantified conditional obligation.

Conclusion as regards the deontic case. With this negative verdict of six alternative presentistic interpretations of (1_1) and (3_1), I scarcely claim to have exhausted all of the positions in logical space facing the presentist. Still, I do think I have addressed the most promising ones. If so, until and unless some other interpretation is offered that suits presentism, it appears quite appropriate to theorize that non-presently existing individuals are to be invoked for a correct account of deontic sentences like (1_1) and (3_1). Turning to actualism, in my 1996a and forthcoming a, I provide a negative verdict against seven actualistic treatments of (1) and (3). Once again, then, without some other construal of these sentences that fits actualism, it seems proper to quantify over possible but non-actual objects for an account of items like (1) and (3). But let's not end here. For there awaits another but very different problematic case for both actualism and presentism.

3. INTENTIONAL VERBS

Like Chisholm (1986), assume an actualism that includes these key ingredients: an ontology confined to actual individuals and attributes (some exemplified, others not); a relational account of believing; and, a Russellian treatment of definite descriptions. Since a position of this sort requires that no person ever has genuine *de re* beliefs toward non-actual individuals, the question becomes acute as to the proper treatment of items such as

(9) Ponce de Leon searched for the fountain of youth.

After all, if Ponce de Leon may be said to have really searched for the fountain of youth, to have hoped to find it and the like, he presumably can be said to have entertained beliefs of or about the object of his search. To deny that Ponce de Leon had any *de re* beliefs toward the fountain of youth, therefore, dictates that one who adopts the aforementioned ontological position embrace one of these alternatives: (a) deny the truth of (9); or (b) interpret (9) so that its truth does not stand Ponce de Leon in a genuine *de re* relation to the (non-actual) fountain of youth.

Chisholm, quite correctly, rejects option (a). Instead, against the background of his theoretically elegant account of believing as a relation between a believer and an attribute,[9] Chisholm proposes that the intentional verb in (9) be taken as expressing a dyadic *searched for* relation holding between Ponce de Leon and an *attribute*. That is, Chisholm would have us parse (9) as follows (Chisholm 1986: 56-57):

(10) Ponce de Leon endeavored to find the attribute of being a unique site of a unique fountain of youth.

Because there *is* such an attribute even though it fails to be exemplified, (9)—so construed—does not require that Ponce de Leon bear a genuine *de re* relation to the nonexistent fountain of youth.

A similar actualist view is advanced independently by David Kaplan in his classic essay "How to Russell a Frege-Church" (1975). To begin with, Kaplan rightly observes that Russell's own primary-secondary scope distinction for eliminating descriptions within intensional contexts fails in the case of (9), owing to the fact that the intentional verb there takes no sentential complement. In accord with Chisholm, Kaplan suggests, why not model (9) semantically (and ontologically) as the bearing of a dyadic relation between Ponce de Leon and an attribute where the resulting paraphrase of (9) turns out much like (10) above (Kaplan 1975: 729).

To my mind, there are ample reasons for rejecting the Chisholm-Kaplan model for items such as (9). And I have so argued at length, where the critique is successively refined in Tomberlin 1988, 1994, 1996a, and forthcoming a. This negative verdict of the Chisholm-Kaplan account, if correct, prompts another serious test for actualism:

Challenge Two. Tender a credible treatment of (9) meeting this constraint: (9) is true but its truth does not require Ponce de Leon to stand in a *de re* relation to some non-actual individual.

What now of presentism in the case of intentional verbs? Clearly enough, the presentist faces a parallel difficulty: take an instance of (α)—call it (β)—

(α) *x* searched for *y*

where (in β) the singular term replacing '*x*' refers to a presently existing individual, the singular term replacing '*y*' does not, and yet (β) formulates a truth. Like actualism before, (β) generates the following challenge for presentism:

Challenge Two. Supply a credible account of (β) meeting this constraint: (β) is true but its truth does not require a presently existing individual to bear a *de re* relation to a non-presently existing one.

4. HOW NOT TO MEET THE SECOND CHALLENGE

In Fitch 1996 there is a novel and intriguing actualistic treatment of (9), one promising a straightforward response to Challenge Two. His proposal roundly deserves close and careful examination.

By Fitch's lights, when confronted with troublesome (9), the actualist need only "go adverbial". Very roughly, the suggestion is that (9) becomes

(9*) Ponce de Leon searched for a-unique-fountain-of-youthly.

Here 'a-unique-fountain-of-youthly' behaves as an *adverbial modifier* of the now *monadic* predicate 'searched for'. According to this proposal, (9), so construed, does not ascribe a relation between Ponce de Leon and the non-actual fountain of youth. Quite the contrary, parsed as (9*), (9) is seen to ascribe a complex but non-relational property to the single individual Ponce de Leon. As such, we are told, the truth of (9) does not require an actual individual to stand in a *de re* relation to some non-actual object. And consequently the second challenge is supposedly conquered.

Without worrying over the missing semantics for this adverbial treatment of (9), there appear to be decisive objections to any such account. For consider:

(α) *x* searched for *y*.

Now if the singular terms replacing '*x*' and '*y*' should both refer to actual concrete individuals, let us assume, then even under the Fitch proposal the resulting instance of (α) ascribes a dyadic relation between those very individuals. (When Bob *searched for* his missing daughter last night, that is, he really did stand in the searched for relation to his daughter.) Suppose, however, that whereas the singular term replacing '*x*' picks out an actual concrete individual, the one replacing '*y*' does not, as in (9):

(9) Ponce de Leon searched for the fountain of youth.

By the Fitch model, we are to hold in effect that 'the fountain of youth', as it occurs in (9), does not function as a singular term. (After all, (9) is parsed as (9*).) With the present interpretation of the Fitch proposal, therefore, the instances of (α) come in (at least) two sorts: when '*y*' is replaced by a singular term denoting a concrete individual, the instance in question ascribes a dyadic relation between actual concrete objects. And yet, if the term that replaces '*y*' fails to pick out a concrete individual, the instance at issue ascribes a complex but non-relational property to one actual object.

This alleged shift in semantical behavior of the various instances of (α) seems incredulous on two counts: first, outside of a prior commitment to an

ontology devoid of possible but non-actual individuals, the semantical shift at stake appears impossible to independently motivate or support; second, any such view requires intolerably that *logical form* turns on matters of contingent fact—to know what sort of proposition is expressed by an instance of (α) I must already know whether the singular terms involved do or do not refer to concrete but contingent objects.

As formulated so far, our objection to the Fitch model has centered around the pivotal assumption that under this model instances of (α) ascribe a dyadic relation between actual concrete individuals when the singular terms replacing '*x*' and '*y*' both refer to concrete objects. What happens if this assumption is abandoned? Why not, that is, interpret the Fitch model in such a way *that every* instance of (α) receives the sort of treatment accorded to (9), even when the singular term replacing '*y*' refers to a concrete individual? As I see it, there is a fatal objection to any such view. For even if the *searched for* relation never holds between actual concrete individuals, this surely is not true for the *loves* relation—Bob really does bear the latter relation to his missing daughter, Jane. But then the Fitch model, under the current interpretation, cannot do justice to truths like

(11) Bob searched for Jane, his missing daughter he deeply loves.

After all, 'his missing daughter he deeply loves' incontestably ascribes the dyadic *loves* relation between Bob and Jane. It follows, therefore, that (11) won't be true unless 'Jane', as it occurs in 'Bob searched for Jane', refers to Bob's missing daughter. And this is precisely what 'Jane' fails to do according to the present interpretation of the Fitch model.

This is no way to preserve actualism (or presentism).[10,11]

ENDNOTES

[*] It is with great pleasure that I dedicate the present essay to Alvin Plantinga—a friend and teacher.

[1] See Bealer 1993, Bigelow 1996, Chisholm 1990, Hinchliff 1996, and Menzel 1991. For extensive references on presentism see the bibliography in Bigelow 1996.

[2] There are in fact *grades* of actualism. Alvin Plantinga (1985), for example, endorses actualism as the view that there neither are nor could have been objects that do not actually exist. But Nathan Salmon (1987) embraces actualism only by affirming the first half of Plantinga's characterization while explicitly rejecting the second (and modal) half. In addition, there are more technical characterizations of actualism in Menzel 1990 and Fitch 1996. As the reader may verify, the discussion here applies to all of the above. For extensive references on actualism, see the bibliographies of Tomberlin and McGuinness 1994 and Tomberlin 1996a.

[3] As set out here, the present case combines features of Case One and Case Two in Tomberlin and McGuinness 1994.

[4] As opposed to substitutional quantification. For criticisms of the latter, see Tomberlin 1990, 1993, and forthcoming b.

[5] For recent discussions of soft laws, see Antony 1995, Horgan and Tienson 1990, and Schiffer 1991.

[6] In Tomberlin 1981 and 1986, I evaluate the conditional obligation systems of van Fraassen (1972), Mott (1973), and Al-Hibri (1978) negatively against the Contrary-to-Duty Imperative Paradox and the Knower Paradox, respectively. I document that Lewis (1974) falls prey to the Knower Paradox in my 1989a. In Tomberlin 1989b, it is argued that Feldman (1986) fails against both the Knower Paradox and the Contrary-to-Duty Imperative Paradox. And I establish that Åqvist (1987) succumbs to a version of the Contrary-to-Duty Imperative Paradox in Tomberlin 1991b.

[7] For additional discussion, see Feldman 1990 and Tomberlin 1995.

[8] See, for example, Tomberlin 1989b, and 1991b.

[9] There is an extended critique of Chisholm's ingenious version of self-ascription for believing in Tomberlin 1990b and 1991a. The very different formulations of self-ascription in Brand 1983, 1984 and Lewis 1979 and 1986 are critically evaluated in Tomberlin 1987 and Tomberlin 1989c, respectively.

[10] Should the presentist seek to apply the Fitch model to items like (β), the negative critique here of Fitch on actualism carries over *mutatis mutandis*. Linsky and Zalta 1994 contains an original and important version of actualism. I critically examine their view in Tomberlin 1996a. Linsky and Zalta reply in their 1996.

[11] For rewarding correspondence and/or discussion, I am grateful to David Armstrong, George Bealer, John Biro, Roderick Chisholm, David Cowles, Michael Devitt, Kit Fine, Greg Fitch, Gilbert Harman, Terry Horgan, David Kaplan, Bernard Kobes, Bernie Linsky, Kirk Ludwig, Bill Lycan, Chris Menzel, Al Plantinga, Greg Ray, Nathan Salmon, Bob Stalnaker, Ed Zalta, and my colleagues Frank McGuinness, Jeff Sicha, and Takashi Yagisawa. I do not mean to imply, of course, any agreement on their part with what I have argued here.

Note concerning the present paper. It is perhaps fitting that Jim Tomberlin's final paper is to be published in a volume honoring the contributions of Alvin Plantinga who was greatly admired and respected by Jim. It is also fitting that Jim's last paper concerns the debate over actualism, a subject he has written extensively on in recent years. This work meant a great deal to Jim and he continued to work on this paper until the very end when he literally could not work any more. He was disappointed that he was not going to be able to continue to fight against actualism in the coming years, but he hoped that his series of papers on this topic would not be forgotten (and that I and other actualists would some day "see the light"). Philosophy was one of the three great loves of Jim's life (Hilda, his wife, and good food and wine being the other two) and he worked on philosophy until the very end of his life. Jim was a loyal and helpful friend to many in philosophy, he will be missed by all of us.

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Chapter 2

PROPERTIES

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Although this paper makes extensive and essential use of the concept "abstract object," I am not going to try to explain or give any sort of account of this concept. That would be another paper. I will use the name 'platonism' for the thesis that there are abstract objects, and 'nominalism' for the thesis that there are no abstract objects. It has been suggested (I'm thinking of John Burgess and Gideon Rosen and their book *A Subject without an Object: Strategies for the Nominalistic Interpretation of Mathematics* (1997)[1]) that although a lot of philosophical work has been devoted to the question whether real analysis (or some other substantial part of mathematics) can be interpreted or revised or reconstructed in terms acceptable to nominalists, not nearly enough work has been devoted to the question why anyone should care whether something was acceptable to nominalists. It seems to me, however, that it is perfectly evident that nominalism is to be preferred to platonism, and perfectly evident *why* nominalism is to be preferred to platonism. And if nominalism is to be preferred to platonism, it is no great mystery why a philosopher of mathematics should want to have available a nominalistically acceptable reconstruction of all of, or some essential core of, mathematics.

And why do I say that nominalism is to be preferred to platonism? Since that question is not my topic, I will simply gesture vaguely at an answer. Platonists must say that reality, what there is, is divided into two parts: one part *we* belong to, and everything in "our" part is more like us than is anything in the other part. The inhabitants of the other part are radically unlike the things in our part—any given object in the other part is vastly *more* unlike any object *x* in our part than anything in our part is unlike

T. M. Crisp, M. Davidson and D. Vander Laan (eds.), Knowledge and Reality, 15-34.
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x—and we can't really say much about what the things in the other part are like. (Compare the task of describing the properties of a pen and the properties of the number four.) It seems to me to be evident that it would be better not to believe in the other part of reality, the other category of things, if we could manage it. But we can't manage it. In the first part of this paper, I shall try to explain why we can't get along without *one* kind of abstract object: properties.

1. WE CAN'T GET ALONG WITHOUT PROPERTIES

How can the dispute between those who affirm and those who deny the existence of properties (platonists and nominalists) be resolved? The ontological method invented, or at least first made explicit, by Quine and Goodman (and illustrated with wonderful ingenuity in David and Stephanie Lewis's "Holes") suggests a way to approach this question.[2] Nominalists and platonists have different beliefs about what there is. Let us therefore ask this: How should one decide what to believe about what there is? According to Quine, the problem of deciding what to believe about what there is is a very straightforward special case of the problem of deciding what to believe. (The problem of deciding what to believe is, to be sure, no trivial problem, but it is a problem everyone is going to have somehow to come to terms with.) If we want to decide whether to believe that there are properties—Quine tells us—we should examine the beliefs we already have, the theses we have already, for whatever reason, decided to believe, and see whether they "commit us" (as Quine says) to the existence of properties. But what does this mean? Let us consider an example. Suppose we find the following proposition among our beliefs:

> Spiders share some of the anatomical features of insects.

This proposition may be expressed in what Quine calls the canonical language of quantification as follows:

> It is true of at least one thing that it is such that it is an anatomical feature and insects have it and spiders also have it.

(The canonical language of quantification does not essentially involve the symbols '∀' and '∃' and it does not essentially involve variables. There is *no* difference in meaning between 'It is true of at least one thing that it is such that it is an anatomical feature and insects have it and spiders also have it' and '∃*x* (*x* is an anatomical feature and insects have *x* and spiders also have *x*)'.)

But, obviously, if it is true of at least one thing that it is such that it is an anatomical feature and insects have it and spiders also have it, then at least one thing is an anatomical feature. And what is an anatomical feature if not a property?

Does this little argument show that anyone who believes that spiders share some of the anatomical features of insects is committed to platonism, and, more specifically, to a belief in the existence of properties? How might a nominalist respond to the argument? Suppose we present the argument to Nora, a convinced nominalist (who believes, as most people do, that spiders share some of the anatomical features of insects). Assuming that Nora is unwilling simply to have inconsistent beliefs, there would seem to be four possible ways for her to respond to it:

(1) She might become a platonist.

(2) She might abandon her allegiance to the thesis that spiders share some of the anatomical features of insects.

(3) She might attempt to show that, despite appearances, it does not follow from this thesis that there are anatomical features.

(4) She might admit that her beliefs (her nominalism and her belief that spiders share some of the anatomical features of insects) are apparently inconsistent, affirm, as an article of her nominalistic faith, that this inconsistency is apparent, not real, and confess that, although she is confident that there is some fault in our alleged demonstration that her belief about spiders and insects commits her to the existence of anatomical features, she is at present unable to discover it.

Possibility (2) is not really very attractive. It is unattractive for at least two reasons. First, it seems to be a simple fact of biology that spiders share some of the anatomical features of insects. Secondly, there are many, many sentences, sentences that seem to express "simple facts," that could have been used in place of 'Spiders share some of the anatomical features of insects' in an essentially identical argument for the conclusion that there are properties. Possibility (4) is always an option, but no philosopher is likely to embrace it except as a last resort. What Nora is likely to do is to try to avail herself of Possibility (3). If she does, she will attempt to find a *paraphrase* of 'Spiders share some of the anatomical features of insects', a sentence that (i) she could use in place of this sentence, and (ii) does not even *seem* to have 'There are anatomical features' as one of its logical consequences. If she can do this, she will be in a position to contend that the commitment to

the existence of anatomical features that is apparently "carried by" her belief about spiders and insects is only apparent. And she will be in a position to contend—no doubt further argument would be required to establish this—that the apparent existence of anatomical features is *mere* appearance (an appearance that is due to certain forms of words we use but needn't use).

Is it possible to find such a paraphrase? (And to find paraphrases of all the other apparently true statements that seem to commit those who make them to the reality of properties?) Well, yes and no. 'Yes' because it is certainly possible to find paraphrases of the spider-insect sentence that involve quantification over some other sort of abstract object than anatomical features—that is, other than properties. One might, for example, eliminate (as the jargon has it) the quantification over properties on display in the spider-insect sentence in favor of quantification over, say, concepts. No doubt any work that could be done by the property "having an exoskeleton" could be done by the concept "thing with an exoskeleton." But—here's the 'No'—a nominalist will be no more receptive to an ontology that contains concepts than to an ontology that contains properties. When I say it is not possible to get along without asserting the existence of properties, therefore, what I mean is that it is not possible to get along without asserting the existence of properties—*or* something that a nominalist is not going to like any better than properties.

Now Quine, the founder of the feast, would very likely want to break in at this point and tell us that we can find paraphrases of the spider-insect sentence that require "quantification over" (as he would say) no abstract objects but *sets*—an "ontic commitment" (as he would say) much to be preferred to an ontic commitment to properties. This is an important thesis, and Quine's arguments in support of his thesis are important arguments. I am afraid that in this paper I can do no more than acknowledge the existence of Quine's thesis and his supporting arguments.

Let us ask this. Is it possible to provide sentences like 'Spiders share some of the anatomical features of insects' with *nominalistically acceptable* paraphrases? My position is that it is not. I cannot hope to present an adequate defense of this position, for an adequate defense of this position would have to take the form of an examination of all possible candidates for nominalistically acceptable paraphrases of such sentences, and I cannot hope to do that. The question of nominalistically acceptable paraphrase will be answered, if at all, only as the outcome of an extended dialectical process, a process involving many philosophers and many years and many gallons of ink. I can do no more than look at one strand of reasoning in this complicated dialectical tapestry. My statement, "We can't get along without properties" must be regarded as a promissory note. But here is the ten-dollar co-payment on the debt I have incurred by issuing this note.