ISSUES ON THE (IM)POSSIBLE V

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

August 17-18, 2017

Bratislava (SLOVAKIA)

Dear delegate,

MODAL METAPHYSICS: Issues on the (Im)Possible V is conference organised by the Institute of Philosophy of Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovak Philosophy Association and metaphysics.sk research group.

The idea behind the conference is to put together researchers working on the problems of modality and provide thus an actual overview of the field. It is our pleasure to host contributors from all around the world and create thus an excellent, philosophically appealing and professional environment in Central Europe.

Of course, the conference would be impossible without the support of the Institute of Philosophy of Slovak Academy of Sciences. Namely, our gratitude belongs to the director of the Institute of Philosophy for generous support. We also thank to all who directly or indirectly contributed to the conference, academic and program committee, administrative staff of Slovak Academy of Sciences and last but not least to all speakers. Without them the conference would not be (im)possible.

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IS THERE A HUMEAN ACCOUNT OF QUANTITIES

Humeans have a problem with quantities. A core principle of any Humean account of modality is that fundamental entities can freely recombine. But determinate quantities, if fundamental, seem to violate this core principle: determinate quantities belonging to the same determinable necessarily exclude one another. Call this the problem of exclusion. Prominent Humeans have responded in various ways. Wittgenstein, when he resurfaced to philosophy, gave the problem of exclusion as a reason to abandon the logical atomism of the Tractatus with its free recombination of elementary propositions. Armstrong promoted a mereological solution to the problem of exclusion; but his account fails in manifold ways to provide a general solution to the problem. Lewis studiously avoided committing to any one solution, trusting simply that, since Humeanism was true, there had to be some solution. Abandonment; failure; avoidance: we Humeans need to do better. In this paper, I present what I take to be the best account of quantities, tailoring it where needed to meet Humean demands as well as my own prior commitment to quidditism, and my own comparativist inclinations. In short: determinables, not determinates, are the fundamental properties, and freely recombine; determinates arise from the instantiation of determinables in an enhanced world structure; determinate quantities may be local (in a sense to be explained), but they are not intrinsic. Is the account I end up with Humean? Not, unfortunately, as it stands: the problem of exclusion still rears its ugly head. After dismissing a failed attempt at a solution, I consider in the final section the two viable Humean options. One attributes the source of the necessary exclusions to conventional definition, the other attributes it to logic. The first is safe and familiar, but not a response I can accept given my other commitments. The second is more radical and less familiar; but I am convinced it is on the right track. I don't have space to develop it much here, but I put it out for future research.

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FICTIONALISM, MODAL FICTIONALISM AND TRUTH IN FICTION

After introducing standard fictionalism and standard modal fictionalism, I discuss three. First, I discuss Jason Stanley's objection that hermeneutic fictionalism is revolutionary fictionalism. I argue that this objection is based on the conflation of two usages of "hermeneutic vs. revolutionary." Second, I discuss Stephen Yablo's if-thenism. Yablo claims that if-thenism has the same result as fictionalism. I argue that fictionalism is incompatible with if-thenism. Third, I discuss Theodore Sider's objection that it is not clear whether some alleged truths in PW are really true in PW. I respond to it by appealing to our ordinary notion of truth in fiction.

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Francisco Suarez's Model Theory: An Actualists and Abstractionist Paradigm on Real Possible Beings

A large number of historical and modern metaphysical questions could be dealt with by using a modal frame. The topic of this paper is, however, more closely related to another form of modern modal metaphysics. It is found in the exensive discussion of the ontological nature of possible worlds that are employed in modern modal semantics. Actualist theories, that we will consider specifically, do not grand being to anything but the actual world. In this last domain, some theories postulate some non-naturalistic actual entities, such as state of affairs or proposition, by the help of which one could construct the talk about non-existent possible beings and possible worlds. In the contemporary discussion about the ontological and modal status of possible entities, translated into anlytical language in a variety of possible worlds semantics, it is not usual consider the systematization made by the historical tradition regardings some similar issues, the Chatolic jesuite debates in sixteenth and seventeenth century over divine foreknowledge of future contingents, rooted in medieval- scholastic debates. In this proposed lecture I want to explore the modal theory according to Suárez's real possible being (ens inquantum ens reale), in order to track down an early model paradigm between the synchronical alternative state of affairs and the temporal frequency model.

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I Want to Know Where Love Is: The Extended Epistemological and Ontological Status of Romantic Experiences

Love has often been considered to be based upon the lover's attitude toward the beloved. However, romantic experiences are far broader and more complex than this. From an epistemic aspect, love is not limited to the actual present; it also includes the possible realm of the past, future, and the imaginary. From an

ontological aspect, love does not reside solely in the agent's emotions; it also involves the relation between the two lovers.

The need to further emphasize this extended notion of love is related to two major, seemingly opposing, developments in modern society: (a) The greater availability of romantic options has increased the role of the possible realm in romantic love, and (b) the demand for personal flourishing has enhanced the role of actual joint activities in romantic love. These developments make the notion that love is merely based upon the lover's attitude toward the beloved more problematic.

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Modality and Ontology of the Tractatus

In the paper, I show how the crystalline logic of the Tractatus logico-philosophicus is built upon a S5 system of alethic modal logic. Firstly, there is a lot of textual evidence that exists. Wittgenstein explicitly states that there is only one kind of necessity – logical necessity (6.37) and only one kind of impossibility – logical impossibility: "Just as the only necessity that exists is logical necessity, so too the only impossibility that exists is logical impossibility." (6.375) He presupposes that other kinds of (im)possibility and necessity could somehow be reduced to logical. (See 6.3751) In an appropriate notation, distinctions between logical necessity, impossibility and contingency can only be shown:

> "The certainty, possibility, or impossibility of a situation is not expressed by a proposition, but by an expression's being a tautology, a proposition with a sense, or a contradiction."

Yet there is another textual evidence for S5 alethic modal logic in the Tractatus. Wittgenstein expresses S5 axiom of it – $\Diamond P \rightarrow \Box \Diamond P$ – in his (from the standpoint of contemporary formal logic unusual) ontologically grounded way:

> "In logic nothing is accidental: if a thing can occur in a state of affairs, the possibility of the state of affairs must be written into the thing itself." (2.012)

With other words: objects with their internal properties form possible states of affairs; and possibility a states of affair is necessary. However, because states of

affairs are logically independent, de re properties of objects reach only to the limits of states of affairs. I disagree with Raymond Bradley.

Objects – the building blocks of states of affairs – really are not without properties. Standard interpretation attributing them internal (material) properties. Bradley says that the objects have external (physical) properties, too. He believes that "it turns out that it is precisely because of their essential properties that these simple atoms are able to combine with one another so as to 'produce' all the other items in his ontology: material properties, possible states of affairs, possible situations, facts, and even possible worlds." (Bradley 1992, xviii) Bradley argues that de re modal properties of objects of the Tractatus determine de dicto modal properties of situations.

However, if only de dicto modal properties of the Tractatus expressed in that a sentence is a tautology or a contradiction or a meaningful sentence, then it is difficult to understand how these can be functions of de re modal properties of names? For internal properties of objects (their de re properties) reach, so to speak only to the border of states of affairs, grounding the possibility of the structure of the states of affairs (see Tractatus, 2-2.063). The only modal property a state of affairs or elementary proposition has – states of affairs and elementary propositions are logically independent – is its contingency.

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The Representational Deficiencies of Hybrid Modal Realism

Berto (2010) advances the impossible worlds theory, Hybrid Modal Realism (HMR), which subscribes to a Lewisian possible worlds-ontology, but, from such worlds, generates set- theoretic constructions to represent impossible worlds . In this essay I shall argue: HMR 1 fails to supply a satisfactory modal analysis. Firstly, I shall delineate the theory; and secondly, levy two objections: the conflation of discrete modal propositions, and HMR's logical restrictions on what and how it can represent.

Berto, F. 2010. Impossible Worlds and Propositions: Against the Parity Thesis. The Philosophical Quarterly 60, pp.471-486.

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The New Theory of Modal Fictionalism

The aim of this paper is to introduce a new position to the metaphysics of possible worlds, which I am going to call strong artefactualist modal fictionalism. Articles about modality mentions the possibility of this account, but only the Platonist version considered as a plausible one because of certain problems. 1 I would like to show that these problems arise from a too robust interpretation of the strong modal fictionalism, so with a narrower fictionalism we can eliminate them.

To reach this aim, in the first section I am going to introduce the main concept of modal fictionalism. In the second section I am going to differentiate the theory by timid and strong as well as the Platonist and artefactualist variations. I will mention two objections against the Platonist modal fictionalism to prepare the later discussion. After that I will examine an objection against the artefactualist version of modal fictionalism, which main point is that the artefactualist modal fictionalist makes a mistake with the assumption that the theory has a semantic role in the ordinary language. After I distinguished between the scientific and ordinary language, I will restrict the semantic role to the scientific language, so the problems can be avoided. In the third section I draw the conclusion that strong artefactualist modal fictionalism is a realist theory towards possible worlds.

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Quine and Priest and the Excluded Middle

In this paper, I argue that there are basic components of human language. These basic components might be considered deep structure or semantic rules. These components challenge Quine's view on radical translation. This paper considers whether there are any necessary components of language that all languages must have in order to be languages. If there are necessary components, it would be

reasonable to infer that they are translatable. This would be true even if there were no pre-existing comparable words in the lexicons. The functions are translatable. Therefore an utterance can have a determinate sense. The contention is that at some basic functional level, radical translation might be possible. Graham Priest claims " [Quine's] utterances have no determinate sense: whatever sense he would like us to attach to them, they do not, as such, mean that (Transcendence) . Yet clearly Quine does succeed in expressing views about meaning that do have determinate sense (Closure)."Priest explicitly claims that since he can't express this concept 'radical translation' and yet he does just that, then, in his work, he does succeed in communicating this indeterminacy. He achieves closure. This is contradictory. This supports Priest's larger project of pointing out the possibility of true contradictions. I argue that at least some truths are expressions of contradictory metaphors. This is not justification for abandoning the law of the excluded middle.

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Contingent Events

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One of the main problems of space-time ontology is to determine the relations between objects and the space-time structure in which we experience them. Space-time substantivalists account that space-time is a primary structure of our reality and that it is the manifold which all objects and events need in order to be located in our reality. On the other hand, anti-substantivalists affirm that space-time is a structure which we abstract from the reciprocal relations between objects and events and therefore that it should not be considered and a fundamental element of our ontology.

This talk will focus on the special case of David Lewis' Modal Realism - that is «the thesis that the world we are part of is but one of a plurality of worlds» (Lewis 1986, p. VII), which are the possible worlds that occupy our logical space and which are all real - and his event theory. Lewis account is of a particular interest because he strictly relates space-time with modality: each possible world is spatio-temporally isolated from the other possible worlds (ivi, pp. 70-75). That means that each different modal perspective corresponds to a different space-time, which is the element that primarily characterizes the various possible worlds. There are no doubts that Lewis is a space-time substantivalist, since he attributes an ontological

primacy to space-time and modal structures and he declares to be modal realist. Following Lewis' event theory, I will criticize his substantivalism and show how his theory of a plurality of worlds does not provide us an explanation of contingency, which is the aim it was thought for.

Lewis, D (1986), On the Plurality of Worlds, Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

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Rigidity and Triviality

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Though it is often claimed that some general terms are rigid designators, it has turned out to be difficult to give a satisfying definition that avoids making all general terms rigid, and even if a non-rigid reading is available, makes that non-rigid reading matter. Several authors have attempted to develop examples that meet the trivialization challenge, with Martí and Martínez-Fernández providing what is, perhaps, the most convincing strategy. I show that the type of example Martí and Martínez-Fernández offer nevertheless fails to meet the trivialization challenge and, accordingly, that we should still have serious doubts about whether continuing the search for a non-trivial definition of general term rigidity would be fruitful.

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Expressivity of Language without Commitment to Possible Worlds

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In the modal discourse, there are at least two languages, one of which is possible world language containing possiblist quantifier and quantifier over possible worlds, the other quantified modal language containing box, diamond and actualist quantifier. Possible world language seems to explicitly commit to existences of mere possibilia and possible worlds. Nonetheless, if some language in modal discourse, lacking such commitments, is more fundamental than possible world language, then we do not really need to make such commitments. Quantified modal language seems to be the best candidate. If we can argue that quantified modal language is

more fundamental than possible world language, then, at least in the modal discourse, we do not need to accept that there are mere possibilia and possible worlds. However, there is the problem of expressivity. Some cases, which would appear in our ordinary talk and seem meaningful, seem able to be expressed only in possible world language:

(1) There could have been some individual other than there actually are,
(2) The rich could have all been poor.

If the above two can only be expressed in possible world language, it seems that quantified modal language is by no means more fundamental than possible world language. Therefore, in order to deal with the problem of expressivity, one approach is to introduce new devices, which do not commit to existences of mere possibilia and possible worlds, into quantified modal language, such as the actuality operator, the Vlach operator3 or the pair of the indexed diamond and actuality operator. 4 Those devices can extend the expressivity of quantified modal language. Then the problem of expressivity would disappear. Because we would have a language into which every meaningful possible world language sentence can be translated. However, it is not very clear whether the approach could succeed. On the other hand, even if the approach succeed in dealing with those cased like (1) or (2), it is not convincing that the approach succeed in dealing with some other cases, which are, in some sense, different from (1) and (2). In fact, the problem of expressivity can be divided into two parts, one of which is cross-world quantification, 5 to which (1) and (2) belong, and the other cross-world predication.

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Conceivability Arguments and their use in Philosophy

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A certain kind of argument, where a theoretically important possibility is purportedly established on the basis of conceivability, exists in many areas of philosophical discourse. But are such arguments – conceivability arguments – really appropriate? This centuries old question is surely one of the most pressing of contemporary epistemology of modality, not least because of a recent breakthrough in the quest to answer it. It turns out that conceivability arguments are invertible, in the sense that the same conceivability argument used to establish one possibility can be used to establish another possibility, with which the former is incompatible. In this paper I

will utilise this argument to deliver negative conceivability arguments their long overdue coup de grâce. I will then outline how this objection also affects positive conceivability arguments.

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On the Relation between Temporal Necessity and Metaphysical Necessity

There is a widely acknowledged, though not by all metaphysicians, asymmetry between past and future. Specifically, the past is fixed in the sense that nothing can, now and forward, prevent any past event from occurring, e.g. no one can erase the 45th presidential inauguration of the United States from our history no matter how terrible she feels about it. In contrast, the future is open in the sense that the occurrence of a future event is still up to some people or/and something, e.g. the people of the United States can vote for the same person or a different one in the next election.

The foregoing ordinary locution is somewhat loose and sloppy. Now let us put it into the context of contemporary metaphysics. Recall that some philosophers explicate what divergence or branching of possible worlds is and what libertarian freedom is by appealing to the notion of "exactly alike up to a certain time t".1 Suppose that there is a possible world w1 such that the actual world w0 and w1 are exactly alike up to t. Then we can say that the fixed past of w0 before t, or in the more common terminology, the initial segment of w0 before t is nothing more than the exactly alike part of it up to t. The fixity of the past can be expressed by the idea that it is somehow "impossible" for the exactly alike part (up to t) to be different after t. Here we encounter a kind of necessity which is always relative to a certain time. Let us call it temporal necessity. 2 Although this notion has been extensively utilized by contemporary metaphysicians, very few analyses of it are available. Thus, the task of this paper is to investigate the relation between the notion of temporal necessity and the more famous notion of metaphysical necessity.

First, I examine the attempt to explain the notion of temporal necessity in terms of the notion of metaphysical necessity. The reductive account of temporal necessity proposed by the contemporary Ockhamists concerning future contingents is presented in the following section. I raise two counterexamples and indicate the

reason why the reductive account fails in the third section. Second, I explore the possibility of the explanatory order in reverse, i.e. of explaining metaphysical necessity in terms of temporal necessity, in the final section.

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Facts, Truths, and Liars

A Moderate Antirealist (MAR) approach to truth and meaning, built around the concept of knowability, will be introduced and argued for in this essay. This approach is motivated by the Church-Fitch Paradox that shows the limits of Naive Antirealism. I will argue that a distinction between being true and being factual, captured by a MAR truth operator, not only avoids the Church-Fitch paradox, but it also allows to reframe some other philosophical challenges (as e.g. the problem of hyperintensionality, and semantic paradoxes).

I will show that this approach partitions propositions into eight classes on the basis of their knowability. The question we will ask is: what content/meaning can be attributed to fully unknowable propositions? This question forces us to modify the approach that identifies propositions with the corresponding sets of possible worlds. This modified approach will then be used to analyze one particular paradox, the Liar.

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Cross-World Comparatives for Lewisians

Divers (2014) argues that a Lewisian theory of modality which includes both Counterpart Theory and Modal Realism cannot account for the truth of certain intuitively true modal comparisons. The purpose of this paper is to defend the Lewisian theory by developing a response strategy based on a degree-theoretic treatment of comparatives.

Divers, J. (2014). An Inconvenient Modal Truth. Analysis, 74(4):575–7.

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Contingent Existents

This paper defends the common sense view that existence is contingent. My defense of the contingency of existence is largely technical. There appear to be very good metaphysical grounds for thinking that existence is contingent. The primary reasons to think otherwise are technical in nature and so common sense primarily stands in need of technical machinery. In particular, it has proven to be incredibly difficult to combine an objectual, classical quantificational theory (S[tandard] Q[uantificational] L[ogic]) with a sensible modal logic. We can see this quickly by noting that ∃y(x = y) is a theorem of SQL and the R[ule of]N[ecessitation], which says that the necessitation of any theorem of a modal system is itself a theorem of that system, entails that □∃y(x = y) is a theorem of the resulting combined Q[uantified]M[odal]L[ogic]. (If one resists counting an open sentence like ∃y(x = y) as a theorem of a system, then replace ∃y(x = y) with the following sentence, which is unproblematically a theorem of SQL: ∃y(a = y). The rest of the sketched derivation goes through the same. Further, if singular terms are banned, then the resulting quantificational logic is clearly inadequate for modeling our de re reasoning, whether modal or nonmodal, as individual constants are ineliminable for that purpose.) So, the universalization of the last formula, i.e., ∀x□∃y(x = y), is also a theorem of QML and, by another application of RN, so too is □∀x□∃y(x = y). Insofar as 'x exists' is regimented as ∃y(y = x), the first is incompatible with Absentees and the second with both Absentees and Aliens. I will show how these results can be blocked in a logic without rejecting SQL and in a S5 modal system with an actuality operator by weakening RN, recognizing contingent logical truths like instances of ∃y(α = y). I show how the system also blocks other problematic results, like the Barcan Formulas, which have also proven difficult to avoid in a satisfying way. I do this without modifying SQL and so without resorting to an existentially free quantification theory, without resorting to a distinction between strong and weak necessity, and without rejecting the definability of ◇ as ¬□¬, as Arthur Prior does in his well-known system Q. (See Prior Time and Modality, [1957, Oxford University Press].) Instead, I reject an unrestricted Rule of Necessitation and replace it with a weaker necessitation rule. In effect, and putting it simplistically, I develop a logic that allows only and every theorem of a free quantificational logic to be necessitated. The

account is distinct from standard contingentist accounts that retreat to a free logic because I agree that the theorems of SQL are the class of validities — all of the theorems of SQL are logically true. I just think that the necessitation of those theorems of SQL that are not also theorems of a free logic are not theorems of an adequate QML, even a QML whose quantificational base is SQL. While this view was suggested by Robert Adams, in his classic 'Actualism and Thisness' (Synthese, 49, 3–41), and overlaps in important ways with the view developed in Christopher Menzel's 'The True Modal Logic' (Journal of Philosophical Logic, 20, 331–374), the view developed here is distinctive in preserving both classical quantificational theory and contingentism.

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Modalities between a Logical and an Empirical Account of Indeterminism

This work discusses the role played by modal notions in comparing alternative representations of indeterminism. Our contribution consists in applying some model-theoretic results concerning modal logic to the topological analysis of possible indeterministic scenarios arising in physics. In the first part we consider the thought experiment known as Norton's dome and use a tempo-modal language L to formalise some of its elementary properties; we show that if Σ is the set of formulas in L representing the intended properties of the experiment, then there is at least a model with parallel histories and at least a model with branching histories validating Σ. In the second part we consider a variation of the example of the decay of a radioactive atom and associate it with a set of formulas Σ' such that $\Sigma \subset \Sigma'$; we show that Σ' has models with parallel histories but no model with branching histories. Thus, our contribution sheds further light on the idea that the family of modalities that can be expressed in a formal language sometimes determines our choice among alternative representations of indeterminism.

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Worlds as Non-existent Objects

We shall start with a sketch of Noneism, which will allow us to point to some of important limitations of this view. For the sake of our argument we will focus on one version of Noneism. Since Graham Priest's interpretation is the one most developed as well as the most recent, we will focus on his approach. We do, however, believe that our objections are not thereby limited merely to this author, but may apply also to Routley's (Sylvan's) view as well. In the second and third parts we are going to sketch an alternative view, which is, in important respects, also based on Alexius Meinong's Theory of Object.

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Towards a Modally Harmonious Theory of Counterfactuals: Challenging an Edgingtonian Approach

In order to establish whether any approach to counterfactuals can be developed to yield an account of how they can serve two masters, we need hypotheses about what it would be for counterfactuals to serve them individually. Firstly, we need hypotheses about the actual-world value of counterfactuals. One important kind of hypothesis of this kind has it that counterfactuals play a certain inferential role in empirical enquiries that establish categorical (not modal, not counterfactual) conclusions about how the world actually is. Another important, and evidently stronger, kind of hypothesis has it that only counterfactuals can play such a role: counterfactuals are indispensable in that the role could not be played so well, or perhaps even at all, without invoking them. Secondly, we need hypotheses about the necessity-value of counterfactuals. One important kind of hypothesis of this kind has it that necessity is definable as a certain kind of generalization about counterfactuals. Another important, and potentially stronger, kind of hypothesis has it that such a definition is explanatory of some other aspect of necessity or our

dealings with it. We should not expect or require that any source of a valuable hypothesis of one kind will also be a source of a valuable hypothesis of the other kind. Indeed, our impression is that this is seldom the case, with the emphasis being on the service of one master rather than the other. So we should expect to be constructive. When we find a source of a valuable hypothesis of one kind we should be prepared to go about its development by importing from other sources valuable hypothesis of the other kind. Thus we have a research programme to which the present paper is a contribution.

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Fictionalism and the Modal Status of Fictions

Fictionalists maintain that composite objects, numbers, or possible worlds exist only according to a useful fiction. Hale, Divers and Woodward have argued that one can only be a fictionalist about Fs if one is prepared to regard the absence of Fs as a contingent state of affairs. If justified, this result would significantly limit the appeal of the fictionalist strategy, since it would render it unavailable to anyone antecedently convinced that mathematics and metaphysics concern non-contingent matters. In this paper, I try to show that the arguments for a contingent fiction can be resisted and fictionalism about Fs therefore remains an attractive position for any antirealist about Fs, regardless of the modal force behind the claim that Fs don't exist.

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The Modal Account of Essence: An Analysis of the Notion of Sparseness

The modal analysis of essence aims at providing an account of this notion in purely modal terms. Modalism intends indeed to show how each essentialist truth about an object can be rephrased as a refined necessary truth about the very same object without any loss regarding the explanatory power and understanding of its identity.

Among different modalist accounts, Nathan Wildman 's sparse modalism is the most promising proposal. It indeed avoids any commitment with the notion of essence and provides an effective and extensionally eviqualent modal analysis of essentialist truths. Wildman's proposal assumes hence necessity and sparseness as primitives and reduces essence to a derivative notion: each essentialist fact is understood as a particular necessary claim about one object's sparse property. The main theoretical virtue advocated by Wildman for his theory is the better understanding and clarity that necessity and sparseness show in respect with the mysterious and convoluted character of essence.

Nevertheless, while metaphysical necessity can be considered (at least in a certain respect) a clear and well-established notion referring to a sufficiently developed modal logic system, such as S5, sparseness needs on the other hand to be defined and developed further in order to provide that kind of clarity claimed by Wildman. Different conceptions of sparseness are indeed available and compatible with his modalism, each of one implies a different result. The fundamental role played by this notion in the reduction of essence compels therefore to analyse and inquire these possible conceptions and question which one is the most solid and effective for Wildman's aims.

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Ascription, the Regress(es) of Instantiation and the Problem of Relatedness

On the assumption that there are properties and relations besides objects, and instantiation is a genuine relation, an infinite regress naturally arises: a is F iff a instantiates F-ness iff a and F-ness instantiate instantiation iff etc. (the regress can be also framed in terms of facts: the fact that a is F comes into being iff the fact that a instantiates F-ness comes into being iff etc.). Why does the regress arise in the first place? This paper is an attempt to account for the genesis of the regress and explore a few consequences of the account.

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The Noetic Account, Understanding, and Modality

Recently, Dellsén proposed the noetic account of progress, according to which an episode in science constitutes progress when scientists achieve increased understanding of a phenomenon. Dellsén claims that the noetic account is a more adequate realist account of scientific progress than the epistemic account. But an argument has been proposed which, drawing on the incompatibility between Quantum Mechanics and General Theory of Relativity, aims at showing some deficiencies of the noetic account. This article aims at assessing whether the noetic account may resist this challenge by 'going modal'.

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Fictionalism and Mere Possibilia

In Semantical Considerations on Modal Logic (1963), Kripke mentions passingly that "intuitively, in worlds other than the real one, some actually existing individuals may be absent, while new individuals, like Pegasus, may appear" and that "Holmes does not exist, but in other states of affairs, he would have existed" (reprinted in Linsky 1971, 65). One can generalize on these remarks by saying that fictional (and mythical) objects exist in some possible worlds or in other words, fictional (and mythical) objects are possible objects or possibilia. I will call this view possibilism about fictional and mythical objects (for short, possibilism). However, by 1970, in the lectures that later became Naming and Necessity (2001), Kripke changed his mind. In N&N (157- 158), he argued that "granted that there is no Sherlock Holmes, one cannot say of any possible person that he would have been Sherlock Holmes, had he existed". He also argued that were there a person who did actually commit the exploits of Holmes, he still wouldn't have been Holmes. These were the conclusions of his metaphysical and epistemological arguments, respectively. The two arguments were presented at more length in 1973 at a conference later published as

Vacuous Names and Fictional Entities in his (2011) and in his John Locke Lectures that later became Reference and Existence (2013). Kripke's arguments are taken by most philosophers to be decisive against possibilism. The validity of the arguments for traditional fictions and myths and the Kripkean view of reference and natural kinds will be presupposed in this paper. However, I will argue that not all instances of fiction and myth face these criticisms (not unknown to Kripke). There is a special kind of fiction, fictions described by fictionalist theories, and the objects these fictions talk about can be taken as possibilia. These arguments will constitute the first part of the paper. In the second part, I will consider how possibilism about the entities of fictionalist fictions helps explain some aspects of fictionalism and, in connection, I will identify a metaphysical problem that remains to be solved.

Kripke, S. (1963). "Semantical Considerations on Modal Logic." Acta Philosophica Fennica 16: 83- 94. Reprinted in Linsky 1971: 63-72.
(2001). Naming and Necessity. Cambridge: Harvard University Press . —.
(2011). Philosophical Troubles: Collected Papers, Volume I. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
(2013). Reference and Existence: The John Locke Lectures. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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A Modal Semantics for Essence and Ground

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In this paper I introduce and argue for a unified world-semantics for grounding, essence and metaphysical modality that makes crucial use of impossible worlds. I present two plausible and widely endorsed theses about the relationships essences have to grounding and to metaphysical modality. These theses will be used as guiding principles in the construction of the proposed semantics. Its core feature is that it models essences as accessibility-relations. These accessibility-relations will be used to model both grounding and metaphysical modality.

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Backtracking Counterfactuals in Causal Reasoning

I will argue for the following two related theses:

1. Lewis's counterfactual account of causation is not sufficient for legitimizing any semantic rule against backtracking in terms of its definite contribution to overall similarity-comparison between possible worlds.
2. Certain well-formulated backtracking counterfactuals are needed for defining/analyzing a certain distinctive type of causal sequences, i.e., what I call ERN-sequences (with E standing for 'evolutionary,' given the typical or structural tendency of such sequences toward evolved properties).

I will present some outline of my argument, with the help first of a simplified sequence of bidirectional dependencies between any pair of neighboring steps in the sequence, and then in contrast with the ERN-sequences whose causal structure will be my focus.

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Inadvertently Created Fictional Characters are Nothing New

According to artifactualism about fictional characters (fictional artifactualism for short, e.g. Kripke 1973/2011, 1973/2013, van Inwagen 1977, Salmon 1998, Thomasson 1999), Prince Bolkonsky and Natasha Rostova in Tolstoy's War and Peace are abstract artifacts created by Tolstoy's activities. In earlier work, my goal was to reflect on the phenomenon of inadvertently creating fictional characters to argue that—a certain objection to the contrary—it doesn't undermine fictional artifactualism. In the present paper I revisit the phenomenon, reflecting on its implications for recent work by David Friedell (2016), in particular, his proposed principle ("rule of thumb") that he calls "Nothing New". My aim is to give a new

argument to reinforce my previous conclusion: that fictional artifactualists need not be afraid of the phenomenon of inadvertently created fictional characters. My two reasons to support this: (1) the sorts of mistakes involved in scenarios in which fictional characters are inadvertently created neatly fit into the spectrum of error affecting people who initiate ("create") social and cultural artifacts like songs, melodies, poems, words. (2) Considerations about Friedell's principle "Nothing New" highlight ways in which author's authority is best construed as far more limited than Friedell suggests.

Evans, Gareth 1973. The Causal Theory of Names. Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes 47: 187–208.

Friedell, David 2016. "Abstract Creationism and Authorial Intention." Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 74: 129–137.

Kripke, Saul 1970/1982. Naming and Necessity. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Kripke, Saul. 1973/2011. "Vacuous Names and Fictional Entities." In his Philosophical Troubles: Collected Papers, Volume 1, 52–74. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kripke, Saul. 1973/2013. Reference and Existence: The John Locke Lectures for 1973. New York: Oxford University Press.

Salmon, Nathan. 1998. "Nonexistence." Noûs 32: 277–319. Thomasson, Amie L. 1999. Fiction and Metaphysics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. van Inwagen, Peter. 1977. Creatures of Fiction. American Philosophical Quarterly 14: 299–308.

	DAY 1 (August 17, 2017)	
	5th Floor	**4th Floor**
8:00 - 9: 00	**Registration**	
9:00 - 9:15	**Opening (M. Vacek and F. Haraldsen)**	
9:15 - 10:15	**Áron Dombrovszki** (Eötvös Loránd University): "The New Theory of Modal Fictionalism" (Commentator: **Maciej Sendłak**)	**Borut Cerkovnik** (University of Ljubljana): "Modality and Ontology of the Tractatus" (Commentator: **Yujian Zheng**)
10:15 - 10:20	**Coffee Break**	
10:20 - 11:20	**Yujian Zheng** (Lingnan University): "Backtracking Counterfactuals in Causal Reasoning" (Commentator: **Shyane Siriwardena**)	**Francesco Spada** (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia): "Ascription, the Regress(es) of Instantiation and the Problem of Relatedness" (Commentator: **Bing-Cheng Huang**)
11:20 - 11:30	Coffee Break	
11:30 - 12:30	**William Bondi Knowles** (University of Edinburgh): "Conceivability Arguments and Their Use in Philosophy" (Commentator: **Peter Marton**)	**Mark Garron** (McMaster University): "Quine and Priest and the Excluded Middle"
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 - 14:15	**Tien-Chun Lo** (National Taiwan University): "On the Relation between Temporal Necessity and Metaphysical Necessity"	**Zsofia Zvolenszky** (Slovak Academy of Sciences): "Inadvertently Created Fictional Characters are Nothing New"
14:15 - 14:30	**Coffee Break**	
14:30 - 15:30	**Peter Marton** (Clark University): "Facts, Truths, and Liars" (Commenrator: **Mark Garron**)	**Jonas Werner** (University of Hamburg): "A Modal Semantics for Essence and Ground" (commentator: **Mattia Sorgon**)
15:30 - 15:40	**Coffee Break**	
15:40 - 16:40	**Bing-Cheng Huang** (National Taiwan University): "Expressivity of Language without Commitment to Possible Worlds" (Commentator: **Matteo Pascucci**)	**Fabio Sterpetti** (Campus Bio-Medico University of Rome, Sapienza University of Rome): "The Noetic Account, Understanding, and Modality"
16:40 - 16:45	Coffee Break	
16:45 - 17:45	**Matthew Collier** (University of Oxford): "The Representational Deficiencies of Hybrid Modal Realism" (Commentator: **Robert Michels**)	**Shyane Siriwardena** (University of Leeds): "Towards a Modally Harmonious Theory of Counterfactuals: Challenging an Edgingtonian Approach" (Commentator: **William Bondi Knowles**)
17:45 - 18:00	Coffee Break	
18:00 - 19:15	**PHILLIP BRICKER:** IS THERE A HUMEAN ACCOUNT OF QUANTITIES?	
20:00	**Conference Dinner**	

	DAY 2 (August 18, 2017)	
	5th Floor	**4th Floor**
9:00:9:30	**Morning Coffee**	
9:30 - 10:15	**Ilaria Acquaviva** (Fondazione Collegio San Carlo, Scuola Alti Studi): "Francisco Suarez's Model Theory: An Actualists and Abstractionist Paradigm on Real Possible Beings"	**Aaron Ben-Ze'ev** (University of Haifa): "I Want to Know Where Love Is: The Extended Epistemological and Ontological Status of Romantic Experiences"
10:15 - 10:20	Coffee Break	
10:20 - 11:20	**Mattia Sorgon** (University of Alberta): "The Modal Account of Essence: An Analysis of the Notion of Sparseness" (Commentator: **Francesco Spada**)	**Péter Susánszky** (Central European University): "Fictionalism and Mere Possibilia" (Commentator: **Áron Dombrovszki**)
11:20 - 11:30	Coffee Break	
11:30 - 12:30	**Matteo Pascucci** (University of Salzburg): "Modalities Between a Logical and an Empirical Account of Indeterminism" (Commentator: **Tien-Chun Lo**)	**Robert Michels** (Universite de Geneve): "Cross-World Comparatives for Lewisians" (Commentator: **Michael Nelson**)
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 - 14:30	**Lukas Skiba** (University of Hamburg): "Fictionalism and the Modal Status of Fictions" (Commentator: **Zsofia Zvolenszky**)	**Maciej Sendłak** (University of Warsaw): "Worlds as Non-existent Objects" (Commentator: **Sergio Genovesi**)
14:30 - 15:00	Coffee Break	
15:00 - 16:00	**Michael Nelson** (University of California-Riverside): "Contingent Existents" (Commentator: **Lukas Skiba)**	**Sergio Genovesi** (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn): "Contingent Events" (Commentator: **Matthew Collier**)
16:00 - 16:15	Coffee Break	
16:15 - 17:30	**SEAHWA KIM**: FICTIONALISM, MODAL FICTIONALISM AND TRUTH IN FICTION	
	End Of the Conference	