



METAPHYSICS.
SK



ISSUES ON THE (IM)POSSIBLE

August 2-3, 2018

The Institute of Philosophy, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava

Dear delegate,

MODAL METAPHYSICS: Issues on the (Im)Possible VI is a conference organised by the Institute of Philosophy of Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovak Philosophical Association, the Department of Logic and the Methodology of Sciences 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.

Martin Vacek

GONZALO RODRIGUEZ-PEREYRA*University of Oxford*

gonzalo.rodriguez-pereyra@oriel.ox.ac.uk

Why is There Something Rather than Nothing? A Probabilistic Answer Examined.

Peter van Inwagen has given an answer to the question 'Why is there something rather than nothing?'. His answer is: Because there being nothing is as improbable as anything can be: it has probability 0. Here I shall examine his argument for this answer and I shall argue that it does not work because no good reasons have been given for two of the argument's premises and that the conclusion of the argument does not constitute an answer to the question van Inwagen wanted to answer.

SONIA ROCA-ROYES*University of Stirling*

sonia.roca.royes@gmail.com

The Limits of Concept-Based Epistemologies of Essence

The talk will be an exploration of the prospects of rationalist, concept-based epistemologies of modality as far as essentialist and de re modal claims are concerned. I grant certain explanatory power to such epistemologies but, primarily, I identify their limitations. I first explore them in view of the (possible) existence both of general and of singular modally loaded concepts and find their explanatory scope rather limited. The paper then explores a surrogate that, if successful, could still allow us to vindicate, even if in a hybrid manner, concept-based rationalism. The problem is, again, that the scope of its potential success is rather limited. The discussion at this point invites the exploration of a different view whose scope would be wider. Here, the problem is that, even if it were to meet the explanatory demands, the view can no longer be said to be a concept-based account. These results generalize: concepts have at most a limited role to play in the epistemology of essence (and de re modality).

Riccardo Baratella

University of Padua
baratellariccardo@gmail.com

Material Objects, Events, and Property-Instancess

The theory that events are property-instances has been considered one of the most widely accepted metaphysical theories of events. On the other hand, several philosophers claim that if both events and material objects perdure, then material objects have to be identified with events. In this work, I will investigate whether these two views can be held together. In section 3, I will argue that if they can, it depends on the particular theory of instantiation one is to adopt. In particular, I will conclude that the theory of events as property-instances and the view that identifies material objects with events can be held together only if instances of eventive universals are temporal parts of material objects – namely, those temporal parts that have the universals in question.

Moritz Baron

The Universities of Stirling and St Andrews
moritz.baron@stir.ac.uk

Can Williamson's Counterfactual-based Epistemology of Modality Explain our Knowledge of Mathematical Necessity?

How do we acquire knowledge of modal propositions? That is the question of Modal Epistemology. I will be focusing only on Williamson's (2007) counterfactual-based account. This account proposes that 'metaphysically modal thinking is logically equivalent to a special case of counterfactual thinking.' (158). Williamson's account aspires to explain our knowledge of (or at least access to) modal statements in a uniform manner, via an epistemology of counterfactuals. I advance the argument that this account does not give us an accurate epistemology of modality for mathematical statements.

Daniel Berntson

Princeton University
berntson@princeton.edu

Relational Possibility

Absolute possibilities are about how things are at individual worlds. We might say that Socrates could have been a farmer or that Athens could have defeated Sparta. Relational possibilities are about how things compare or otherwise relate across worlds. We might say that Socrates could have been taller than he is or, perhaps, the Athenians could have been happier than they are. Relational possibilities, while ordinary and familiar, turn out to be surprisingly hard to express systematically. The usual solution is to express them by quantifying over things like heights or degrees of happiness. As it turns out though, this natural solution has certain unexpected implications. One of them is that science is committed to far more ontology - to a wider variety of things - than we might otherwise have thought. The basic physical world will have to include not just particles with relations between them, but things like numbers, distances, or spacetime points. I think we can do better. My aim in this paper is to convince you that we can understand relational possibilities without quantifying over things like heights. Not only does this better reflect our ordinary thinking about possibility, it also gives us a powerful strategy for doing science with minimal ontology.

Gaétan Bovey

University of Neuchâtel
gaetan.bovey@unine.ch

Can 'Intrinsicity' Save the Existential-Modal Account of Essence? A Critical Response to David Denby

Kit Fine raised critical counterexamples against the modal account of essence in his influential paper 'Essence and Modality'. Whereupon, different answers have been proposed in the literature to save the modal account of essence. Among these solutions, David Denby argues in 'Essence and Intrinsicity' that essential properties should count as intrinsic. I defend in the first section of this paper that Denby's solution provides an insufficient result that is to be dismissed. In the second section, I argue that another characterization of intrinsicity is to be

endorsed to address each of Fine's counterexamples. The final picture is a definition of essence in terms of modality and intrinsicity that avoids the concerns encountered by Denby's former characterization and respect Fine's important insights.

Matthew James Collier

University of Oxford

matthew.collier@oriel.ox.ac.uk

God Exists in all Possible Worlds: Anselmian Theism and Genuine Modal Realism

Lewis's (1986) Genuine modal realism (GMR) is the view that possible worlds are concrete entities, populated by concrete possibilia, which are alike in kind to our universe. Anselmian theism (AT) is the view that God is unitary, omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent, simple (viz., He is without proper parts), a creator and sustainer of all that exists, and necessarily existent. Several authors believe AT and GMR to be compatible: indeed, Oppy (2009; 1993), Leftow (2012), Cameron (2009) and Almeida (2017; 2011; 2008) all think that GMR has the resources to accommodate the God of AT. In this paper, I argue that the above authors are mistaken: that is, GMR and AT are incompatible. Specifically: God's necessary existence is inconsistent with GMR. The first section provides an exposition of GMR, and the second section explores the options for understanding God's necessary existence on an AT-GMR-framework. None of the options, I contend, render AT - GMR consistent. If this result carries, the ATist may have good grounds to provide a new argument against GMR and the GMRist may have good grounds to provide a new argument against AT: indeed, if there are good arguments to support AT, and AT and GMR are incompatible, then the ATist can employ these arguments to demonstrate the falsity of GMR; and, if there are good arguments to support GMR, and GMR and AT are incompatible, then the GMRist can employ these arguments to demonstrate the falsity of AT.

Michael De

University of Miami
 mikejde@gmail.com

A Presentist's Paradise?

A central tenet of modal realism (as endorsed by David Lewis) is the Principle of Plenitude:

Plenitude: absolutely every way that a world could possibly be is a way that some world is (Lewis, 1986, p. 2).

One way the world could be is the way it was in 400 BC (i.e., some particular instant therein). It follows, according to Plenitude, that there is such a world. In that world there is an individual who is indiscernible, both intrinsically and extrinsically, from the way our Socrates was, and who is therefore wise, snub-nosed and will soon die a tragic death by ingestion of hemlock. On a block universe picture, this would be true in virtue of the actual world and its 400-BC-stage. Suppose, however, that the pluriverse consists only of worlds at which present things exist—i.e., suppose presentism is necessarily true. By Plenitude, there is nonetheless a world that is just the way the actual world was in 400 BC, containing a person indiscernible from the way our Socrates was. In general, for any world w and any time t of w , there is a world $f(w, t)$ that is just the way the w was, is, or will be at t (depending on whether t is past, present or future at w). By the identity of indiscernible worlds, $f(w, t)$ is unique. Let us call such a world t -indiscernible from w . Similarly, let us call an individual x a t -clone of s when x is just the way s was, is, or will be at t (depending, again, on whether t is past, present or future at the world of s). (Let us assume that s existed, exists or will exist at t .) Let us call a t -clone of a w -inhabitant a past-clone of that thing when, at w , t is past, a future-clone when t is future, and simply a clone when it is either a past- or future-clone. If t is present, it follows that the t -clone of an object is that very object itself.

Given these definitions, I now propose the following truth conditions for tensed statements and call the resulting view modal realist presentism, or MRP for short:

- (i) 's was/is/will be ϕ ' is (presently) true iff some past-/present-/future-clone of s is ϕ ;
- (ii) 's was/is/will be ϕ at t ' is (presently) true iff the t -clone of s is ϕ .

According to MRP, then, 'Socrates was wise' is true iff some past-clone of Socrates is wise. Since there is such a past-clone, as guaranteed by Plenitude, he is wise, and so the left side of the biconditional comes out true. Indeed, for any object that existed and was ϕ , one of its past-clones has ϕ , and similarly for future-tensed attributions. It follows that MRP (assuming its ontological claims true) is extensionally adequate. Notice that (the truth conditions of) a past-tensed claim involving a presently existing individual will involve past-clones of that individual rather than the individual herself, and similarly for future-tensed claims. The clones act, in this sense, as an individual's stages do according to perdurantism. (Recall that the present-clone of an individual is the individual itself.) Note, however, that even if I have the property of being a rambunctious child in virtue of standing in a certain relation to certain of my clones, the person with the tensed property is still me, and not my clones. There is a worry concerning the existential quantifier in (i). The right side of the biconditional says that there exists a past- (future-) clone of s which means that there exists at present. . . at present where? It seems that our quantifiers need to be world-restricted, since we cannot speak as if our present time is the present time of other worlds, even if the only time that exists at each world is the present. Or so it seems. No problem; if this is a worry - though it is not clear to me that it is - the following reformulation of (i) seems to get around it:

- (i*) 's was (will be) ϕ ' is (presently) true iff, possibly, some past-clone (future-clone) of s is ϕ .

Now that the truth conditions for tensed claims have been given, let us see how well MRP fares against three central objections to presentism.

Fernando Furtado

University of Lisbon
fernandofurtado@campus.ul.pt

S5-denying Approach to Relativized Metaphysical Modality

This paper is organised as follows: firstly, I present Salmon's theory of modality (which I call 'S5-denying approach') and compare it with the standard interpretation of modality. Secondly, I explain Murray and Wilson's 'two-dimensional S5-friendly interpretation of relativised metaphysical modality' or '2D-interpretation' (I focus on only one of its implementations; the one with non-overlapping subspaces). Thirdly and most importantly, I put forward a few arguments against Murray and Wilson's attempt to provide an essentialist S5-friendly theory for relativised (metaphysical)

modality. As might be clear, this paper can be read as an indirect defence of Salmon's account of relativised metaphysical modality. If one is willing to hold an essentialist theory for relativised (metaphysical) modality, then his best option in the market right now is to stick with Salmon's proposal, which (I shall argue) is the only genuinely essentialist interpretation of relativised metaphysical modality.

Giacomo Giannini

Durham University

giacomo.giannini@durham.ac.uk

Resemblance, Representation, and Counterparts

The thesis of this paper is that David Lewis' Genuine Realism cannot provide an account for de re sentences. I first show that Counterpart Theory is relevant to de re sentences if and only if there is a connection between i) something's being true at a world and it being represented at that world, and ii) between counterparthood and representation. I argue that this second condition cannot be met, because counterparthood is a kind of resemblance, and resemblance is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for representation. I then show that the extra features of counterparthood do not bridge the gap. Finally, I examine three strategies to amend Lewis' theory: i) the adoption of a new representation relation, ii) the use of conventions and prescription-based theories of representation, such as Kendall Walton's, and iii) a weakening of the link between representation and counterparthood, and conclude that none of these succeed in salvaging Counterpart Theory. I then conclude that this flaw is fatal to Lewis' theory.

Nathan Hawkins

Cambridge University

neh37@cam.ac.uk

Paired Quantified Modal Logic

In standard quantified modal logic [QML] semantics, atomic formulae are true or false relative to a world and a set of individuals at that world. As a result it is unable to parse sentences such as 'I could have been taller than I am'. These sentences speak of a relationship between individuals relative to multiple worlds. To handle such cases, I introduce the semantics of paired QML and discuss some of its

interesting results. In §2 I outline standard QML semantics. In §3 I introduce problem sentences that cannot be parsed in standard QML. Two solutions to similar problems are also found wanting: multiple-indexing, and semantics of degree. In §4 I formalise the semantics of paired QML, and use it to parse the troublesome sentences. Finally, in §5 I discuss some other interesting results.

Bjørn Jespersen

University of Utrecht & VSB-TU Ostrava

bjornjespersen@gmail.com

The Man without Properties: Impossible Individuals as Hyperintensions

The topic of this paper is how a broadly Fregean theory of definite descriptions such as ‘the man without properties’ and grammatical proper names such as ‘Vulcan’ can provide a philosophically and logically satisfactory account of their semantics. I shall show how Tichy’s neo - Fregean Transparent Intensional Logic (TIL) is capable of providing one such account.

Luke Malik

Osaka University

lukemalikjapan@gmail.com

Metaphorical Utterances and Category Mistakes

Ofra Magidor (2009, 2014, 2017) has presented a number of arguments that purport to show that category mistakes are meaningful. Most recently, in 2017, she presented two arguments (among others) that she claims produce this conclusion. She bases her conclusions, for each of these arguments, on assumptions that posit an intimate relationship between category mistakes and metaphorical utterances. One argument is based on the non-cognitivist approach to metaphor. The second argument is based on the cognitivist approach to metaphor and it comes in three flavours based on the work of: Grice, Josef Stern, and Recanati. In this paper, I would like to deal with the first argument. It is fruitful to deal with this argument for the following reasons. First, Magidor assumes that some metaphorical utterances make category mistakes. I hope to question this assumption. Since this assumption also figures in Magidor’s cognitivist arguments for category mistakes, there should

be consequences for that argument, too. Second, we will, I hope, learn more about the nature of the relationship between category mistakes and metaphor through our concerns. Last, our inquiry suggests how Magidor's argument might be strengthened. Unfortunately, there isn't enough space to go through it thoroughly, here, though I intend to attend to it in detail at another time.

Luis Méndez-Martínez

National Research University in Moscow
slavinskii@gmail.com

Impossible authorships? Or how could Pierre Menard be the author of The Quixote

In this talk, I want to discuss the notion of impossible authorships in connection to the discussion about fictional objects. In particular, I want to start contesting the notion of a robust fictional object as is depicted by Amie Thomasson (1999) and the existential dependence that such an object (or 'artefact' as she calls it) has on the author and authorial intentions. The goal of the talk is to discuss the problem of authorship by discussing the idea of possible/impossible authorships and, by doing so, I also will emphasize some of the differences between fictional objects and impossibilia.

Sanna Mattila

University of Helsinki
sanna.mattila@helsinki.fi

Epistemology of Possibility and Reliabilism: a Challenge Considered

In my essay, I will argue that an adequate epistemology of possibility cannot not be interested only in establishing a reliable cognitive process that produces true beliefs about what is possible. Rather, due to the specific nature of possibility, one needs to supply reasons why such a process is reliable and this question will force us to engage with metaphysics of modality as well.

Cristina Nencha

University of Turin
cristina.nencha@libero.it

David Lewis and Kit Fine's Essences

In this paper, I will argue that there is a genuine problem for Lewis's general theory of interpretation. That theory emphasizes the virtue of charity of truthfulness. According to Lewis, the interpretation of a speaker on an occasion is the best for the purpose of making the speaker a truth-teller. This holds also in essentialist contexts. Thus, Lewis makes, if at all possible, essentialists speak truly in the contexts of their own speaking: whenever possible, Lewis makes essentialist claims true in the contexts of their utterances. The strategy he employs in order to achieve such a result is to say that, in the context of an utterance of an essentialist statement, we are bound to project backwards, as it were, the kind of counterparthood that must be selected in order to make that sentence true. This strategy works well in the Kripkean cases. When the Kripkeans make claims of essentiality of origins, they speak truly in the context of their own speaking. In that context, indeed, we pick out a kind of similarity relation such that all the relevant counterparts of an individual are such that they share with that individual the same origins. However, if we try to apply this very same strategy to Kit Fine's cases [see FINE 1994] it no longer works. And this is a problem for Lewis, if he aims to make essentialists truth-tellers. The source of the problem is that Fine, unlike Kripke, wishes to take essentialist predications to be more fine-grained than de re modal predication. I will suggest a tentative strategy for solving this problem for the Lewisian. My proposal requires an amendment to the standard counterpart theoretic account for truth-conditions. However, I am not offering a solution to such a problem. Rather, my aim is to suggest how the strategy for solving such a problem might work, if carefully developed.

Daniel Milne-Plückebaum

Bielefeld University
dmilne@uni-bielefeld.de

Meinongian Modal Meinongianism

Inspired by Meinong's claim that "there are objects such that it is true to say of them that there are no such objects" (1960, 83), modern Meinongians, less paradoxically, hold that some objects lack the first-order property of existence. Yet they hold further that such objects do have other properties; for otherwise, it would be hard to

see how nonexistents could be what certain of our thoughts are about - which is, arguably, the chief role they're supposed to play. Lastly, then, given this job description for nonexistents, as well as the fact that there seem to be no constraints as to the characterisations we can come up with in thought to intend specific, and distinct, objects, Meinongians adhere to the Intentionality Thesis (IT): every characterisation is satisfied by some nonexistent object; and distinct characterisations are satisfied by distinct nonexistents. But then Meinongians must be able to say, for every characterisation C, which nonexistent object satisfies C, and why. Presumably, for each characterisation C, whatever satisfies C is just as C says; and this might be unpacked in terms of instantiating every property represented by C. But then, given that existence is just a property, whatever satisfies the characterisation of being golden, mountainous and existent, say, instantiates goldenness, mountainhood and existence. Since nothing instantiates these properties, however, nothing satisfies this characterisation - against IT. It is the Meinongian's pet project to defend IT. In particular, according to Priest's (2005) Modal Meinongianism (MM), for each characterisation C, whatever satisfies C indeed instantiates each property represented by C, but only in those worlds that realise the situation about the object envisaged. So according to MM, whatever satisfies the characterisation of being golden, mountainous and existent does instantiate goldenness, mountainhood and existence all right, but only in imagination-realising worlds—among which the actual world (@) isn't to be found. Yet while this move appears to save IT, Barz (2016, 252, fn. 11) has reservations about regarding MM as a genuine kind of Meinongianism, as he holds that according to MM, nonexistents are both fully contained and just as characterised in nonactual worlds, whereas he understands Meinongianism as being committed to the claim that nonexistents are both fully contained and just as characterised in @. In this paper, I show that Barz is mistaken - both in his assessment of MM and in his characterisation of Meinongianism in general. For first, MM doesn't relocate nonexistents themselves, but only their respective so-beings. Second, while MM has it that nonexistents are just as characterised in worlds distinct from @, this doesn't amount to their being just as characterised in nonactual worlds, but to their being just as characterised in nonexistent worlds. Further, by explaining what Meinongianism, qua account of intentionality, is supposed to accomplish in the first place, I show that Barz' understanding of Meinongianism as being committed to a strong Actuality Thesis, in fact, overshoots the mark. Finally, then, I formulate an alternative Meinongian Actuality Thesis that's compatible with Meinongianism's general mission statement, and particularly with MM as built around nonexistent worlds.

David Mark Kovacs*Tel Aviv University*

david.mark.kovacs@gmail.com

Constitution, Dependence, and Mereological Hylomorphism

Constitution is the relation that holds between an object and what it's made of: statues are constituted by the lumps of matter they coincide with; flags, one may think, are constituted by colored pieces of cloth; and perhaps human persons are constituted by biological organisms. Constitution is often thought to be a dependence relation. In this paper, I will argue that given some plausible theses about ontological dependence, most definitions of constitution don't allow us to retain this popular doctrine. The best option for those who want to maintain that constitution is a dependence relation is to endorse a kind of mereological hylomorphism: constituted objects have their constituters as proper parts, along with a form, which is another proper part. The upshot is that constitution theorists who think of constitution as a dependence relation but are reluctant to endorse mereological hylomorphism ought to give up one of their commitments.

Karol Lenart*Jagiellonian University*

karol.lenart@doctoral.uj.edu.pl

Essentialism, Haecceitism and Anti-Haecceitism

In this paper I defend a thesis that essentialism entails haecceitism. First, I briefly reconstruct both theories and show why often they are interpreted as opposites. Next, I introduce anti-haecceitism, a view according to which facts about transworld identity of individuals can be fully explained by qualitative properties of individuals. In the next step, I argue that essentialism cannot be connected with anti-haecceitism, because purely qualitative description of individuals leaves matters about transworld identity vague. It is observed that such indeterminacy is unacceptable for essentialists, because essentialistic modal propositions – modalities *de re* – require facts about transworld identity to be metaphysically determined. As a result, essentialists need to accept haecceitism, a view according

to which facts about transworld identity of individuals are primitive and unanalysable in terms of qualitative descriptions.

Auste Luksaite

University of Glasgow
21456261@student.gla.ac.uk

Fitch's Paradox Needs an Update

Fitch's paradox was accused of modal fallacy. The operator K in the formalization involves quantification which considers different domains in possible worlds. This seemed to be problematic. I claim that it is helpful to investigate the paradox using de dicto/de re distinction. This reveals that only when we have de dicto reading of the paradox we arrive at a contradiction, however when we do choose de dicto reading, we make the whole argument circular. I conclude that the domain of quantification should be fixed before the modal operator in order for us to have an unflawed argument and when we fix it, we never arrive at a contradiction and thus the paradox disappears. However there are ways to readjust the reasoning of the paradox to still arrive at a contradiction. Thus Fitch's paradox needs an update.

Michael J. Raven

University of Victoria & University of Washington
mike@mikeraven.net

A Problem for Immanent Universals in States of Affairs

My aim is to raise a new problem for a pair of views about universals and states of affairs. The first view is the Aristotelian view that universals are immanent: they do not exist apart from their instantiations. The second view is that states of affairs are constructed from universals: states of affairs do not exist without the universals constructing them. The problem is that being constructed from universals makes universals prior to states of affairs, whereas the immanence of universals makes states of affairs prior to universals.

Anand Jayprakash Vaidya & Michael Wallner*San José State University & University of Graz*

anand.vaidya@sjsu.edu

michaelwallner1@gmail.com

Reductive and Non-Reductive Finean Essentialism

Roughly, Finean Essentialism (FE) is the thesis that essences ground metaphysical modality. Yet, what exactly does this mean? The paper asks whether (FE) is to be understood as a reductive or a non-reductive claim. We map out a specific distinction between Reductive Finean Essentialism (RFE) and Non-Reductive Finean Essentialism (NRFE) and investigate the respective impact of these positions on the epistemology of modality. In particular, we argue that these positions deliver different pictures of the architecture of modal knowledge. After assessing Hale's argument for (NRFE) we close with some thoughts on a possible motivation for a version of (NRFE) that is different from Hale's.

Truth in Time and Open Future

Giacomo Andreoletti

University of Tyumen
g.andreoletti@utmn.ru

Time Travel, Freedom, and Branching Time

In this paper I argue that backwards time travel is incompatible with the branching picture of time, if this picture is used to model free willed choices. Say that you and your friend agreed to have lunch together tomorrow, and you want your friend to decide the place to go. It is now closed that you and your friend will have lunch together, whereas it is open whether you will go to Marghe's or at Black Hill. Your friend will settle the issue with her free choice. This openness transfers to the necessary consequences of your friend's future decision. For instance, if it is now open whether your friend will decide to go to Marghe's, it is now open whether you and your friend will book a table at Marghe's tomorrow. This kind of free will, roughly understood as the kind of free will that requires the existence of genuine alternative future paths, can be naturally captured by a branching model of time. In short, the situation just sketched can be modeled via a branching model that features an unique past trunk and two alternatives futures. One future features your friend deciding to go to Marghe's and all the necessary consequences of that decision, and the other one features your friend deciding to go at Black Hill and all the necessary consequences of that decision. Here is the outline of how I argue for the incompatibility stated above. Say that Tim, a 20 years old guy, is determined to time travel to the past. He has built a perfectly functioning time machine and has arranged everything in order to depart tomorrow. However, he is still undecided whether to travel to 1920 or 1930. Tim will freely decide tomorrow where to go. Under the branching picture of time, and assuming the plausible transfer of openness to necessary consequences, we want to say the following things: (i) it is open whether Tim will set the dials of his time machine to the destination 1920 (ii) it is open whether Tim appeared out of thin air in 1920 (iii) it is open whether Tim will set the dials of his time machine to the destination 1930 (iv) it is open whether Tim appeared out of thin air in 1930. But this four claims cannot all be true under the view considered, i.e. branching time to model free choices and the possibility of backward time travel. For the past trunk either contains a 20 years old person that resembles Tim appearing out of thin air or it contains two such persons (one at 1920 and one at 1930). In the former case, I argue that (ii) and (iv) cannot both be true because one of the two would not be genuinely open. In the latter case, I argue (ii) and (iv) are not true, because in such scenario the facts reported would be determined and thus not open. If so, backwards time travel is incompatible with the branching picture of time, if this picture is used to model free willed choices. Ultimately, I argue how a similar argument can apply to a growing block model of time and I reply to some possible objections.

Michael De

University of Miami
mikejde@gmail.com

The Open Future and Likelihood

One view of the ontological structure of time is that it is tree-like, branching out toward the future. Grafted on this underlying framework are two popular accounts of the open future. One of them has it that the future is open because each of the branches of the tree are on equal footing, they are each ontologically real, and hence there is no fact of the matter concerning which of them will become actual. Call this view 'branching egalitarianism' (BE). An alternative story has it that the future is open in much the same way except that one of the branches is privileged as actual; nonetheless the other branches represent genuine possibilities. Call this view (as coined in [Belnap and Green, 1994]) 'the thin red line doctrine' (TRL). Both of these accounts of the open future face, in my mind, insuperable difficulties. TRL appears to undermine the very notion of indeterminism it aims to give an account of, and BE is incompatible with the notion of a future's becoming actual. The present paper gives a brief summary of objections to BE and TRL and defends in their place an alternative account of the open future given in terms of likelihood. Intuitively, a future contingent is true at a time t precisely when it holds in every possible future of t that is most likely to be actual given what has occurred up to t . The open future is then grounded in certain sentences and their negations failing to have a truth value, not because there is no fact of the matter as to whether such sentences have a truth value, but because there is a fact of the matter as to whether a future contingent lacks a truth value. This account deviates from similar approaches to the open future in that whether a sentence has a truth value or not is a determinate fact. A semantics is given for a base tense language and extended to include a novel counterfactual conditional restricted to future-tense statements. The semantics is then defended against some anticipated objections. Finally, it is shown how future tense operators of other semantics are definable within the present framework.

Vincent Grandjean

University of Neuchâtel
vincent.grandjean@unine.ch

How is the Asymmetry between the Open Future and the Fixed Past to be Characterized?

A basic intuition we have regarding the nature of time is that there is a difference between the future and the past: the former appears to be open and the latter appears to be fixed (or closed). This intuition manifests itself in various ways. First, whereas we think of the future

as partially unsettled (e.g. it is settled that I will die someday, but it is unsettled whether the first astronaut to go to Mars will be a woman), we think of the past as fully settled (e.g. it is settled that Napoleon lost in Waterloo, and that dinosaurs are extinct animals). Secondly, whereas we think that there are things we can do to affect how the future will unfold (e.g. making a significant donation to an NGO, acting in an environmentally responsible manner), we think that there are not things we can do to affect how the past did unfold (“what is done is done”). Thirdly, and perhaps more radically, whereas we may only wonder how the past did unfold (e.g. “what happened to John Kennedy?”), we may wonder whether the future will unfold (e.g. “will reality continue beyond tonight?”). The intuition of an asymmetry in openness between the future and the past is so deeply ingrained in our manifest image of the world that it seems hopeless to do without. We decide, we create, we remember, we regret. All these common attitudes – and there are many more – suggest an open future and a fixed past. For example, when it comes to forming beliefs about what we remember or regret, we explore our mental life, i.e. we consult our memory and records, since these latter attitudes are epistemically constrained by the information we may collect about what happened to us. By contrast, when we want to know what we will decide or create, i.e. when we try to predict the outcomes of such pending processes, we do not gather psychological evidence or records, since any information we might obtain will be overridden by the processes themselves. We rather let these processes run their courses; they are guaranteed to produce true beliefs. This suggests that whereas our attitudes towards the past depend on the lasting traces it left on our mental life, the future partially depends (either directly, or in an attenuated manner) on our decisions and our creations. It therefore seems that, unlike the past, the future cannot be regarded as more fixed than the processes in which we are currently engaged. However, although the intuition of an open future and a fixed past is largely shared, it is not a straightforward matter to determine the nature of the asymmetry it reflects. So, in this paper, I aim to survey the various philosophical ways of characterizing the asymmetry in openness between the future and the past, which have proven most relevant to the contemporary debate. In particular, I will discuss the question whether the asymmetry is to be characterized as alethic (the principle of bivalence applies to statements about the past but not to future contingents), epistemic (we can much know more about the past than we can know about the future), physical (the present world-state nomologically determines future world-states, but not past world-states), metaphysical (it is fully determinate how the past did turn out, but it is partially indeterminate how the future will turn out) or ontological (there being facts of the matter about what did happen, but not about what will happen). I aim thus to determine what is the most appropriate characterization of the asymmetry that philosophers need to provide in order to make sense of the different ways in which the intuition that the future is open and the past fixed may be expressed.

Tomáš Kollárik*Comenius University in Bratislava*

tomas.kollarik@uniba.sk

The Assertion Problem

The Assertion Problem consists from three basic elements: (i) so called “orthodox” theory of assertion, according to which only true propositions can be asserted correctly. (ii) Denial of principle of bivalence with respect to contingent propositions about (open) future and finally (iii) evidence that we often make assertions about (open) future. These three elements together pose following challenge: need for explaining the possibility of asserting contingent propositions about open future. Orthodox theory of assertion is at the hearth of prevalent theories of assertion, e.g. one must know proposition, or one must justifiably belief (in truth of) proposition to make a correct assertion etc. Hence denial of (i) is usually considered to be an unwelcome consequence of the open future account of time. Most of theorist who accept asymmetry between (open) future and (closed) past consider denial of principle of bivalence to be an essence of the asymmetry and they therefore insist on (ii). Sometimes the evidence according to which we often make assertions about open future (iii) is queried. In Macfarlane (2014) we can find suggestion that sentences expressing contingent propositions about open future are in fact abbreviations for expressions with non-contingent meaning. This position (the position according to which it is always incorrect to assert contingent proposition about open future) was challenged by Besson and Hattiangadi (2014). Main target of my paper is to put forward some answers to Besson’s and Hattiangadi’s challenge and doubt consequences of their arguments. Then I will focus on what is often being called or understood as “evidence” usually consisting of several examples of sentences expressing contingent propositions about open future. Authors of competitive theoretical positions often claim that assertions of these sentences are by “people unschooled in Philosophy” intuitively recognised as correct. But evidentiary status of these examples is doubtful, because it is well known fact that sentences used in assertions can have very same sentential structure as those used in another type of speech acts, e.g. promises, guesses etc. Simple demarcation criterions will be provided as tool helpful in deciding whether given example of speech act is assertion or some other kind. Nevertheless, in some cases the tool stays silent, because wider context is needed for identifying given speech act type.

Program

- 11:25 - 11:30 Opening
- 11:30 - 12:15 Michael De: The Open Future and Likelihood
- 12:15 - 14:00 LUNCH
- 14:10 - 14:55 Giacomo Andreoletti: Time Travel, Freedom, and Branching Time
- 14:55 - 15:10 Coffee Break
- 15:10 - 15:55 Vincent Grandjean: How is the Asymmetry between the Open Future and the Fixed Past to be characterized?
- 15:55 - 16:20 Coffee Break
- 16:20 - 17:05 Tomáš Kollárik: The Assertion Problem

End of the Stream

	DAY 1 (August 2, 2018)	
	5th Floor	4th Floor
9:00 - 10:00	Registration	
10:00 - 10:15	Opening	
10:15 - 11:15	Gaétan Bovey (University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland): "Can 'intrinsicity' save the existential-modal account of essence? A critical response to David Denby" (Commentator: Karol Lenart)	Michael J. Raven (University of Victoria, Canada & University of Washington, USA): "A Problem for Immanent Universals in States of Affairs" (Commentator: Riccardo Baratella)
11:15 - 11:30	Coffee Break	
11:30 - 12:15	Daniel Milne-Plückebaum (Bielefeld University, Germany): "Meinongian Modal Meinongianism"	Matthew James Collier (University of Oxford): "God Exists in all Possible Worlds: Anselmian Theism and Genuine Modal Realism"
12:15 - 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 - 15:00	Anand Jayprakash Vaidya (San José State University, USA) & Michael Wallner (University of Graz, Austria): "Reductive and Non-Reductive Finean Essentialism" (Commentator: Gaétan Bovey)	Giacomo Giannini (Durham University, UK): "Resemblance, Representation, and Counterparts" (Commentator: Sanna Mattila)
15:00 - 15:10	Coffee Break	
15:10 - 16:10	Jorge Luis Méndez-Martínez (National Research University in Moscow, Russian Federation): "Impossible authorships? Or how could Pierre Menard be the author of The Quixote" (Commentator: Matthew James Collier)	Sanna Mattila (University of Helsinki, Finland): "Epistemology of Possibility and Reliabilism: a Challenge Considered" (Commentator: David Mark Kovacs)
16:10 - 16:15	Coffee Break	
16:15 - 17:15	Michael De (University of Miami, USA): "A Presentist's Paradise?" (Commentator: Michael Wallner)	Nathan Hawkins (Cambridge University, UK): "Paired Quantified Modal Logic" (Commentator: Matteo Pascucci)
17:15 - 17:30	Coffee Break	
17:30 - 19:00	KEYNOTE: Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra: Why is There Something Rather than Nothing? A Probabilistic Answer Examined	
20:00	Conference Dinner	

DAY 2 (August 3, 2018)		
	5th Floor	4th Floor
9:00:9:30	Morning Coffee	
9:30 - 10:15	Fernando Furtado (University of Lisbon, Portugal): "S5-denying Approach to Relativised Metaphysical Modality"	Daniel Berntson (Princeton University, USA): "Relational Possibility"
10:15 - 10:20	Coffee Break	
10:20 - 11:20	David Mark Kovacs (Tel Aviv University, Israel): "Constitution, Dependence, and Mereological Hylomorphism" (Commentator: Jorge Luis Méndez-Martínez)	Riccardo Baratella (University of Padua, Italy): "Material Objects, Events, and Property-Instances" (Commentator: Giacomo Giannini)
11:20 - 11:30	Coffee Break	
11:30 - 12:30	Karol Lenart (Jagiellonian University, Poland): "Essentialism, Haecceitism and Anti-Haecceitism" (Commentator: Michael De)	Bjørn Jespersen (VSB-TU Ostrava, Czech Republic): "The Man without Properties: Impossible Individuals as Hyperintensions" (Commentators: Daniela Glavaničová, Miloš Kosterec)
12:30 - 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 - 15:00	Moritz Baron (The Universities of Stirling and St Andrews, Scotland): "Can Williamson's Counterfactual-based Epistemology of Modality Explain our Knowledge of Mathematical Necessity?" (Commentator: Michael J. Raven)	Luke Malik (Osaka University, Japan): "Metaphorical Utterances and Category Mistakes" (Commentator: Daniel Milne-Plückebaum)
15:00 - 15:30	Coffee Break	
15:30 - 16:15	Auste Luksaite (University of Glasgow, Scotland): "Fitch's Paradox Needs an Update"	Cristina Nenchia (University of Turin, Italy): "David Lewis and Kit Fine's Essences"
16:15 - 16:30	Coffee Break	
16:30 - 18:00	KEYNOTE Sonia Roca-Royes: The Limits of Concept-Based Epistemologies of Essence	
	End Of the Conference	

