

Critical Study of Michael Jubien, *Ontology, Modality, and the Fallacy of Reference* *

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Noûs 33 (1999): 284-94.

Michael Jubien's *Ontology, Modality, and the Fallacy of Reference* is an interesting and lively discussion of those three topics.

In *ontology*, Jubien defends, to a first approximation, a Quinean conception: a world of objects that may be arbitrarily sliced or summed. Slicing yields temporal parts; summing yields aggregates, or fusions. Jubien is very unQuinean in his explicit Platonism regarding properties and propositions, but concerns about abstracta are peripheral to much of the argumentation in the book.¹ His version of the doctrine that arbitrary mereological sums exist is nonstandard in that he views it as a convention (albeit a useful one) that we treat sums of objects as themselves being objects. Indeed, he views the concept of objecthood itself as being conventional. The world consists fundamentally of *stuff*, which we divide into *things* in any way that suits our purposes.

In *modality*, Jubien's views are to a first approximation Chisholmian: he holds the doctrine of mereological essentialism, according to which anything

*I would like to thank Michael Jubien for his helpful comments.

¹ An exception is his theory of modality; see note 20.

that has a part must have that part essentially.^{2 3} He also appears to hold the related but independent doctrine that if some stuff makes up some object, then, necessarily, if all of that stuff exists, then that object must exist as well (and be made up of that stuff).

The doctrine of mereological essentialism appears to conflict with ordinary modal intuitions. Jubien's diagnosis and rejection of the *fallacy of reference* is, in part, intended to show that the conflict is only apparent. He has us consider a certain house (p. 18), and a certain shingle, A, with respect to which we intuit:

- (1) A is part of the house, but is not necessarily part of the house.

This Jubien grants; what he denies is that (1) implies anything inconsistent with mereological essentialism. In particular, Jubien denies that (1) implies:

- (2) There is a thing of which A is a part, but is not necessarily a part.

To think otherwise, he says, is to succumb to the fallacy of reference, a nearly universal tendency on the part of philosophers to assume that "ordinary proper

² Jubien does not accept the component of Chisholm's (1973) version of mereological essentialism that says that if x has a part *at* some time, then x must have that part at every moment at which it exists; but the relation between the temporal and modal components of mereological essentialism should be clarified. Neither of the components seems to entail the other, because they concern different notions: the modal version concerns a two-place atemporal relation of parthood whereas the temporal component is formulated in terms of the three-place predicate ' x is part of y at t '. But the notions can be connected: the temporal parts theorist can define the three place predicate in terms of the two-place predicate; and under this definition it will be seen that mereological change is consistent with (though does not require) Jubien's modal component of mereological essentialism. The temporal parts theorist is accustomed to defining temporal property instantiation by continuants (sums of slices) in terms of the instantiation of atemporal properties by slices: an object is sitting *at a time* iff that object has a slice that exists at the time, and is sitting *simpliciter*. So, the temporal parts theorist should say that x is part of y at t iff x is part of (simpliciter) y 's temporal part at t (see my "Four Dimensionalism" for a more extensive discussion of atemporal vs. temporary parthood). On this view, even if the atemporal relation of parthood is modally invariant, it could be true that, for example, my fingernail is a part of me now (since its current time slice is part of my current time slice), but that tomorrow my fingernail is not part of me (because its time slice then is not part of my time slice then).

³ Given that Jubien regards the notion of objecthood as a conventional one, one wonders whether that notion's modal behavior might not also be a matter of convention. In that case, mereological essentialism would be an odd convention to adopt. Settling these matters would, I suspect, require a considerable sharpening of the relevant sense of 'conventional'.

names and at least some definite descriptions actually *refer to* (or *denote*, or *designate*) specific entities.” (p. 22). Those in the grips of the fallacy view (1) as saying, of a certain entity, the house, that it might have lacked a certain part that it actually has. (2) would then follow. But if we reject this fallacy, then the way is clear for Jubien’s preferred solution: (1) says that A is part of a certain entity, *x*, which *in fact* has the property of *being the house* (or even *being this house*); but it would have been possible for some entity, perhaps an entity other than *x*, to fail to have A as a part, and to have the property of *being the house* (or even *being this house*). On this reading, (2) no longer follows from (1).

Just what is this fallacy of reference? The description of the fallacy quoted above (as the belief that names and (sometimes) definite descriptions refer to things), and the fact that throughout much of the book Jubien describes the fallacy in this way⁴, might lead a careless reader to think that its rejection would be utterly incredible. But in its *official* statement Jubien describes the fallacy as the belief that sentences containing names and certain descriptions express *singular* propositions (p. 23). Thus, according to the defender of the fallacy, a sentence like (1) expresses a proposition of which the referent of ‘the house’ is a constituent; and the proposition expressed by ‘Jubien is a philosopher’ would contain Jubien himself as a constituent. Thus understood, Jubien’s rejection of the fallacy does put him at odds with the defenders of the direct reference theory of names (otherwise known as the Millian, or Kripkean view), and also those who believe in “referential” uses of definite descriptions which express singular propositions, but it would not appear to commit him to denying the seemingly obvious truth that names and descriptions refer.⁵

According to Jubien, “a myriad of major philosophical errors flow directly from [the fallacy of reference]” (p. 22). One of these errors is the belief that the

⁴ See for example p. 36, p. 38, p. 47, p. 65.

⁵ Jubien grants that names and descriptions refer “derivatively”; the idea (p. 63) is roughly that the derivative referent of a definite description would be simply the unique object to which the description applies. (Similarly for names, which for Jubien are in effect disguised indefinite descriptions — see note 10.)

Given Jubien’s official statement of the fallacy, it strikes me that his tendency to speak of names and descriptions as not referring is misleading. I would have thought that in ordinary philosophical usage, “reference” is compatible with Jubien’s notion of derivative reference, and does not require that referring terms contribute those referents to the proposition expressed. After all, it is common to describe Frege’s theory of proper names as being a theory according to which proper names have both a sense and a reference; only the sense is a constituent of the proposition (thought) expressed, but nevertheless the object determined by the sense is called the referent of the name.

argument above undermines mereological essentialism; another is the familiar argument that statues and their constituent lumps of clay are distinct coinciding material objects. In Alan Gibbard's example⁶, a statue and the lump of clay from which it is made spatially coincide at all times at which either exists, but appear to be numerically distinct in virtue of their differing modal properties: the lump might have existed without being a statue, whereas the statue is essentially a statue. In response, theorists have proposed various solutions, invoking contingent identity, counterpart theory, a constitution relation that is not identity, etc. Jubien objects to these theories, and says:

What drives these writers to extravagance is the Fallacy of Reference. They are taking the expressions 'the lump' and 'the statue' (etc.) to refer to specific things, thus generating the worrisome questions about identity. (p. 38)

He goes on to say that in Gibbard's case, there is only a single object involved: a mereological sum which contingently has the property of being a statue. And as we saw above, in his discussion of mereological essentialism Jubien suggests that the tendency to think that (1) implies (2) rests on the fallacy of reference.

I have my doubts about the role of the fallacy of reference here. (I also do not believe that the "fallacy" is fallacious, but I'll set this aside.) Let's take the case of definite descriptions first. Perhaps philosophers sometimes forget their Frege and Russell and lapse into thinking that sentences like (1) and (2) express singular propositions, but when they are careful they do not. And when they are being careful about this sort of modal argument involving definite descriptions, they should, and often do⁷, pay special attention to distinctions of scope. In the case at hand, there are two possible readings of (1), corresponding to two choices for the scope of the (second occurrence of the) description "the house"⁸, relative to the operator "it is not necessary that":

(I_{wide}) There is a thing, x , which is the house, and is such that: x has A as a part, but it is not necessary that x contains A as a part

⁶ See Gibbard (1975). Note that Gibbard does not accept the conclusion that the statue and the lump are numerically distinct.

⁷ See, for example, Lewis (1971) (p. 49 in the Lewis (1983) reprinting), and Noonan (1991, p. 188).

⁸ The description as stated isn't uniquely referring, and so must be supplemented, either explicitly or in some contextual way.

($\mathcal{I}_{\text{narrow}}$) The house has A as a part, and it is not necessary that: the house contains A as a part

The narrow scope reading of (\mathcal{I}) does not imply (2); the reason of course is that the narrow scope reading allows that something other than the actual house lacks A as a part in the relevant counterfactual circumstance. Thus, for the argument for (2) to be valid, the premise must be the wide scope reading of (\mathcal{I}), which *does* validly imply (2). And ($\mathcal{I}_{\text{wide}}$) seems to me to be true. Jubien's rejection of the fallacy of reference does nothing to undermine *this* argument, for there is no need to suppose that ($\mathcal{I}_{\text{wide}}$) expresses a singular proposition about the house. Of course, ($\mathcal{I}_{\text{wide}}$) does contain quantification into a modal context, but there is no suggestion in Jubien's book that he is a Quinean skeptic about *de re* modality. I grant that one *can* make the argument against mereological essentialism in such a way that would be undermined by rejecting the fallacy of reference: a believer in a referential use of descriptions might use the description 'the house' in (\mathcal{I}) referentially, and argue for (2) on that basis. My point is that when the argument against mereological essentialism is made the way it *should* be, it does not involve commission of the fallacy of reference. Jubien is of course aware that the wide-scope reading of (\mathcal{I}) validly implies (2); he accordingly rejects the wide-scope reading (p. 21). My point is that, first, many of the arguments of this sort in the literature are explicitly made using wide-scope readings of descriptions and are hence unaffected by the rejection of the fallacy of reference, and second, that such arguments seem to me to be intuitively sound.

Jubien's diagnosis has more appeal when the argument is made using proper names. Let us name the house George; the argument to (2) could be based on (\mathcal{I}') rather than (\mathcal{I}):

(\mathcal{I}') A is part of George, but is not necessarily part of George

Modal arguments of the kind in question are often based on proper names in this way.⁹ The rejection of the fallacy of reference would play a role here, since Jubien can object that (2) does *not* validly follow since (\mathcal{I}') doesn't express a singular proposition about the house. In the place of the Millian view, Jubien supplies a novel descriptivist theory of names, under which (\mathcal{I}') is true in virtue of the possibility of some object *other than the object which is in fact George* lacking

⁹ Given widespread anti-descriptivism, this seems to be evidence of sensitivity to the scope issue, which the use of names would circumvent if anti-descriptivism is correct.

A as a part.¹⁰ But suppose that, for the sake of argument, we simply grant Jubien his theory of how proper names ordinarily function in English. I think the argument for (2) retains its appeal if we *stipulate* that in the argument, the term ‘George’ is to be used simply as a ‘tag’ of the house. In fact, philosophers often do this very thing! A common phrase one hears is: “let such-and-such be a Kripkean name”; the idea is presumably to sidestep controversy about the behavior of proper names in English by introducing a stipulatively directly referential term. Whatever the merits of Jubien’s theory of the function of names in ordinary English, it is hard to see how he could object to the stipulative introduction of a Kripkean name of the house. Moreover, modal arguments of this sort are sometimes alternatively formulated with demonstratives, rather than names or descriptions, with references that are determined by context:

- (1'') See that house? *That* contains A as a part, but *it* might have existed without containing A as a part.

Jubien might argue that even demonstratives, and anaphoric pronouns like the occurrence of ‘it’ in (1''), are not directly referential, but it seems again that we could stipulatively introduce the needed vocabulary; and, I believe, the resulting argument would be intuitively compelling. The argument against mereological essentialism, therefore, can be made in such a way that is not undermined by rejecting the fallacy of reference.

These observations do not completely defang the diagnosis of the fallacy of reference. Jubien might respond that, even though the argument against mereological essentialism can be formulated without explicit assumption of

¹⁰ According to Jubien, names are disguised predicates; the name ‘Hesperus’, for example, expresses the property *being Hesperus*. Given his mereological essentialism, he denies that the mereological sum which is Hesperus can *itself* exist in other worlds without the same parts it actually has; in this way, the modal properties of this mereological sum differ from the modal properties we attribute to Hesperus. However, Jubien argues that our ordinary modal intuitions can be viewed as pertaining, not to the *object* Hesperus, but to the property *being Hesperus*, which is had in other worlds by objects other than the object which is in fact Hesperus. In typical cases, the property *being Hesperus* is analyzed as the property *being a celestial body that actually has that [temporal] part*, and this property in turn is given a singulary categorial analysis of the type discussed in the text. (The presence of the demonstrative reference to the temporal part is due to Jubien’s belief that when we ostensibly gesture at objects we ostend only the current temporal part, since only that temporal part is then to be ostended (pp. 52-53, 73). But surely the more natural thing is to say that we’re ostending the whole space-time worm; after all, we don’t think that we ostend merely the spatial part of whatever we’re pointing at that is most directly in our line of vision.)

the fallacy, our *thoughts* on the matter are prejudiced by extended immersion in the fallacy. Try as we might to consider a singular proposition about the house, our minds inevitably slip into thinking via English sentences containing names or descriptions of the house, and so slip into thinking the non-singular propositions that are normally expressed by these sentences. Even when we stipulate that ‘George’ in (1’) is to be a Kripkean name, we invariably slide into thinking the descriptive proposition that is conventionally expressed by (1’). Or, more cautiously, Jubien could claim that, whether or not we are incapable of thinking singular propositions, the only belief that can be reasonably called an intuition or common sense belief is the belief in the proposition conventionally expressed by (1’). But that (descriptive) proposition does not entail (2)¹¹. Therefore, the argument that mereological essentialism conflicts with a common sense modal belief is again undermined, since the common sense belief is a proposition that isn’t inconsistent with mereological essentialism. Similar means could be used to solve Gibbard’s paradox without invoking counterpart theory, coinciding objects, etc.

This strategy for reconciling modal belief with modal theory is a distinctive and important one. A worry, however, is that it is purchased at an unnecessarily high price. Essentially the same defense of mereological essentialism could be given without rejecting the “fallacy” of reference; there would be no need, then, to go in for Jubien’s theory of names; indeed, there would be no need to commit to any particular theory of names at all. Let’s return to the argument against mereological essentialism based on (1), which contains the description ‘the house’. Jubien must reject (I_{wide}), but he can claim that when (1) seems true to us, that is because we are taking it as meaning (I_{narrow}). Our feeling that mereological essentialism violates common sense modal intuitions is thus based on a confusion of scope.¹² When the argument against mereological essentialism is based on names or demonstratives rather than descriptions, the scope defense doesn’t apply as directly (unless we are descriptivists about names and demonstratives), but it can still be made to work, by simply denying that (1’) and (1’’) are true, but attributing their *appeal* to (I_{narrow})’s lurking in the background. The term ‘George’ was introduced as a name for the house; perhaps its reference was even fixed by the description ‘the house’. And the demonstrative in (5) had its reference fixed using the predicate ‘house’. We then illegitimately substitute in thought some such description for the name ‘George’

¹¹ See note .

¹² This scope defense bears some similarities to a view advocated in Della Rocca (1996).

when we think about (1') and (1''). Compare the argument that Gibbard's statue and lump are distinct. It begins "Let 'Lump₁' denote the lump; let 'Goliath' denote the statue". The argument then proceeds to appeal to differing modal intuitions with respect to the names 'Lump₁' and 'Goliath'; but one can defend against these arguments by claiming that we have illegitimately substituted in thought the reference-fixing descriptions 'the lump' and 'the statue' for 'Lump₁' and 'Goliath'.

I prefer the scope defense to Jubien's since it doesn't require his theory of names; but I'm dubious about each, simply because the modal intuitions that appear to be inconsistent with mereological essentialism seem to persist even after one clears the mind of descriptive propositions and concentrates on the object itself. For example, when I distinguish between the wide and narrow scope readings of (1), in addition to finding the narrow scope reading intuitively compelling, I find the wide scope reading compelling as well. Concerning the statue, it seems that *it* might have existed without having A as a part. So I think that mereological essentialism is at odds with ordinary modal intuition.

Of course, if there is a compelling argument *for* mereological essentialism then perhaps we should simply swallow its intuitive implausibility, and perhaps either Jubien's defense or the scope defense coats the pill. Jubien offers such an argument (pp. 18-19):

...think about things in the abstract, in isolation from everyday descriptions and associations. So first recall that an arbitrary thing is just the occupier of some arbitrary, full region of space-time. Let x be any such arbitrary thing, and let y be an arbitrary proper part of x ...there also exists a third thing — the thing that is all of x except for the part y . Let's call it z . If we agree to use '+' and '-' in the natural way for mereological sum and difference, we have $z = x - y$. Now imagine another situation, as much like this situation as possible, but in which the entire thing y simply does not exist. This certainly *seems* like a situation in which x doesn't exist either, but z does. I think it is very difficult to deny this intuition without somehow relying on prior convictions involving everyday descriptions and associations, like the belief that a certain *house* could have had (somewhat) different parts.

The crucial claim in this argument is that in a possible situation in which y does not exist but z does, x does not exist either. What is the support for this claim? Jubien asks us to forget about nearly all features of the objects in question, but he does draw our attention to the fact that x fills a certain region

of spacetime. In particular, Jubien draws our attention to the composition of x : it is the sum of y and z . But why is this particular feature of x the only feature one may consider in thinking about x 's modal properties? Let us suppose that x is, in fact, a house. *Being a house* is then just as much a feature of x as is *being composed of y and z* ; in thinking about x 's modal properties, why should we abstract away from the former, but not the latter? Consider the following thought experiment: think about x in abstraction from its material composition; just think about the fact that x is a house. Couldn't that object have existed even though one of its small parts failed to exist? The answer now seems to be *yes*. Or, more cautiously, there's no less appeal to this thought experiment as there is in Jubien's.

The problem for Jubien here is that he is committed to an unjustified asymmetry between predicates like 'is a house' on one hand, and 'is composed of y and z ' on the other. According to Jubien, the latter expresses a property that is essential to its bearers, whereas the former does not. Why this difference? Here is an object with many properties. It is a house. It is made up of certain parts. The former is just as good a candidate to give the essential nature of the object as the latter; neither is like 'the number of the planets' in wearing its accidentalness on its sleeve. Jubien's choice of the latter candidate appears arbitrary.

This is not to say I advocate the opposite choice, of viewing terms like 'house' *rather than* terms like 'is the sum of y and z ' as specifying essential properties. In a sense, I think that each specifies an essential property, and that we "trace objects modally" with each. I'm willing to grant that *both* of the following are true (as uttered in suitable contexts):

the sum of y and z is such that it essentially has y as a part

the house is such that it is essentially a house, but does not essentially have y as a part

Note that this does not on its own commit us to saying that $y + z$ and the house are two objects sharing spatial location.¹³ I join Jubien in opposing those who say "constitution is not identity". We can claim that $y + z$ and the house are identical, if we say that some equivocation involving the term 'essentially' is taking place. When viewed *as a house*, that object might have lacked y ; when

¹³ Not even if we imagine that $y + z$ and the house share locations at all times.

viewed *as a sum*, *having y as a part* is essential to it.¹⁴ If *de re* modal predication is viewed in this light, we can see the arbitrariness of beginning Jubien's thought experiment by abstracting away from all of *x*'s properties save its material composition. Such abstraction forces us to view *x* as a sum, but we could just as easily have viewed it as a house instead.

But let us set aside these doubts about Jubien's defense and the scope defense, and turn to an issue that is internal to both projects. Let us return to the fact, admitted by all, that there exists an intuition of *some* sort that a certain house has, but might have lacked, shingle A as a part. Both the scope defender and Jubien want to claim that whatever truth there is behind this intuition involves the fact that some object other than the actual house might have had the property *being the house*, but lacked A as a part. However, our modal intuition does not seem to be satisfied by considering counterfactual situations in which some *totally unrelated* house lacks A as a part. Jubien wants to grant that our modal intuition is satisfied only if, in *some sense*, it is the very same house that lacks A as a part in the counterfactual circumstance; yet he cannot grant that it is literally the very same object (because of his mereological essentialism).

It is to solve this problem that Jubien develops his account of the nature of properties like *being this house*, as being "singular categorials" (pp. 46-60). The account is quite detailed, so a crude sketch will have to suffice. Consider the house we have been discussing. Corresponding to that house, there is a property *being that house*. Despite its name, this is a property that is capable of being instantiated by things other than the entity which is in fact the house in question. For example, if a house had been built in much the same manner as the actual house, save that a shingle other than A was attached, then (in light of mereological essentialism), a house would have resulted which is numerically distinct from the house we actually built; but, according to Jubien, the new house would have had this property. By calling the property *singular* Jubien means that it's impossible for more than one object to have it (in any one possible world); by calling it *categorial* he means, roughly, that it can be expressed by a so-called "sortal predicate". Which singular categorial property is the property *being that house*? Jubien does not provide an explicit analysis, but the idea is that an object in a counterfactual circumstance has this property iff it satisfies our

¹⁴ David Lewis's counterpart theory, amended to allow multiple counterpart relations, is one theory of how this equivocation might take place (Lewis, 1968, 1971). But counterpart theory is not required; as Harold Noonan (1991, pp. 188-190) points out, any theory of *de re* modality which allows for the relevant ambiguity in predicates like 'essentially has A as a part' will do.

everyday concept of being that very house. Our everyday concept allows some variation in what parts the house might have had, and hence houses with mostly the same parts as the actual house will have the property *being that house*. Our everyday concept requires that this house must be a house in all counterfactual circumstances, and hence counterfactual objects with the property *being that house* must be houses. Perhaps similarity in origins is required as well. Of course there is no reason to fault Jubien for not giving a complete analysis here, for the project of specifying a complete analysis of singular categorials is correlative with the analogous project for the rest of us of specifying what properties are essential to a given object.

The problem above was that the modal intuition that this house might have lacked A as a part is not satisfied by just any counterfactual house lacking A. Jubien's solution is that only a house which, pretheoretically, counts as this very house will have the property *being this house*.

I find this solution congenial. What I find strange is its marketing. Jubien takes pains to distinguish his account of, e.g., Gibbard's case, from competing modal theories:

There are no mysteries or extravagances here. There is no contingent identity. There are no counterparts. There are no conventional objects. There are just things and their properties. (p. 38)

But it strikes me instead that what Jubien has offered is a version of counterpart theory.¹⁵ The most famous version of counterpart theory is, of course, David Lewis's, in which counterpart theory is coupled with his notorious modal realism, but counterpart theory is separable from Lewis's ontology of counterparts.¹⁶ There is an important difference between Jubien's theory and counterpart theory since Jubien rejects possible worlds talk (pp. 10-11). But the literal invocation of *possibilia* seems to me to be a relatively insignificant feature of counterpart theory; what's really distinctive of counterpart theory is the fact that it accounts for ordinary intuitions about *de re* possibilities for an object *x* in terms of possibilities involving objects *other than x*. One powerful reason for thinking this is that this feature of counterpart theory is the target of the most famous objection to counterpart theory: Kripke's Humphrey objection.¹⁷ What Kripke objects to is that the counterpart theorist analyzes *de re* modal

¹⁵ See Lewis (1968).

¹⁶ This point is made in Stalnaker (1986).

¹⁷ Kripke (1972, p. 45).

facts about Humphrey in terms of possibilities involving objects other than Humphrey; but this is precisely what Jubien does. More carefully, according to Jubien, *de re* possibilities for Humphrey are analyzed as *de dicto* possibilities involving properties that may be instantiated by objects other than Humphrey. Imagine Kripke's objection: when Humphrey thinks ruefully that he might have won the election, he couldn't care less that, possibly, some *other* person wins the election!

Jubien highlights certain features of his view that have exact analogs in counterpart theory. Where x is an actual house, and P is the property of *being that house*, we can introduce a relation *being the same house as*, which holds between x and counterfactual houses with property P . Jubien points out that *being the same house as* need be neither transitive nor symmetric. For example, since an object, y , will have property P depending on its similarity to x , intransitivity in the similarity relation will result in intransitivity in the *being the same house as* relation. The obvious parallel with counterpart theory (which Jubien doesn't mention) is that the counterpart relation may well be intransitive and non-symmetric. This allows Jubien to take on various of the virtues of counterpart theory, such as its ability to provide a solution to modal paradoxes like the four worlds paradox and the paradox of undetached parts.¹⁸

There are ways of expanding Jubien's account to do better the work Jubien requires of it, and if these expansions are made, remaining differences from counterpart theory become nearly insignificant. As I indicated above, Jubien's rejection of the fallacy of reference was insufficient to block the argument against mereological essentialism; the reasons were:

- i) The argument retains its plausibility when the description in (1) has wide scope, and hence does not depend on the assumption that (1) expresses a singular proposition about the house.
- ii) The argument retains its plausibility when recast in terms of demonstratives or names stipulated to be "mere tags".

But what Jubien *could* do is to argue that his singular categorial properties are involved even when phrases like 'the house', 'that house', and ordinary proper names are absent. In modal contexts, they can be used in the evaluation of demonstratives, proper names stipulated to be mere tags, and even variables under assignments. Consider for example:

¹⁸ See Salmon (1986); van Inwagen (1990).

(I_{wide}) There is a thing, x , which is the house, and is such that: x has A as a part, but it is not necessary that x contains A as a part

Where P is the property, with respect to the house in question, of *being that house*, the truth condition for the proposition we typically think of when confronted by (I_{wide}) would be given by something like the following:

There is a thing, x , which has P, and is such that: x has A as a part, but it is not necessary that whatever has P contains A as a part.

But now the parallel with counterpart theory is nearly complete, since P can just be thought of as a property had by all and only counterparts of the actual house.

Further refinements on the proposal draw Jubien's account and counterpart theory even closer. Given any object, there is no reason to suppose that there will be just one associated singularly categorial. With respect to a person, x , there are everyday modal convictions concerning what would in various counterfactual circumstances be the *same person as x*, but there are also differing convictions about what would be the *same human body as x*. It would be natural for Jubien to allow a singularly categorial P corresponding to the first set of intuitions, and another one, B, for the second set. This corresponds to the possibility for the counterpart theorist of allowing multiple counterpart relations.¹⁹

In defining his properties as *singularly* categorial, Jubien rules out the analog of an object having two counterparts in some world. But there is nothing in the way of Jubien relaxing this requirement, and thus joining the counterpart theorist in allowing for the possibility that, e.g., I might have been twins.

There is, however, one important difference between counterpart theory and Jubien's singularly categorial account. Jubien's theory, even amended in the way I've suggested, seems to treat modal statements about mereological sums differently from statements about objects picked out with ordinary predicates like 'house', 'person', etc. We might think of the difference as being between the "strictest" truth about modality and a more "loose" idiom. For him, the fundamental truth is mereological essentialism, and thus at the most basic level, a claim like (I_{wide}) is false. But later, a more colloquial understanding of various modal claims, and perhaps even (I_{wide}) itself (if Jubien accepts my proposed amendments to his theory), allows us to recover a loose sense in which

¹⁹ See Lewis 1983b.

mereological essentialism does not hold. There is no such asymmetry for the counterpart theorist. The counterpart theorist is free, if he or she so chooses, to countenance contexts in which mereological essentialism is true; such contexts would simply be ones in which the relevant counterpart relation is one under which a counterpart of x must have parts that are counterparts of x 's parts. But such contexts are no more privileged or literal than contexts in which we have a more permissive counterpart relation. I argued above that the mereological essentialist's asymmetrical attitude towards mereological contingency and other kinds of contingency is unmotivated, and hence this difference between Jubien and the counterpart theorist seems to me to favor the counterpart theorist.

I have had the opportunity to comment on only a small part of what Jubien has to say in his book. (For example, the book contains a theory of proper names to which I have only alluded (although see note 10), and an interesting theory of necessity²⁰.) Though I have been critical at various points, this should not obscure the fact that the book contributes a coherent and distinctive approach to a wide variety of metaphysical and linguistic phenomena. Many will find that approach attractive, and many others will want to incorporate some of Jubien's ideas within their own frameworks.

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²⁰ Jubien's account (pp. 111–120) grounds modality in entailment: one property entails another iff they stand in a certain intrinsic relation of entailment; and it is necessary that all Fs are Gs iff F-ness entails G-ness. Jubien's idea is that a red object is made red in virtue of the intrinsic features of the property redness; similarly, a colored object is made colored in virtue of the intrinsic features of coloredness. If the intrinsic features of coloredness and redness play this role, then it is natural, Jubien says, to appeal to some intrinsic relation between redness and coloredness to explain the fact that the former entails the latter. But there will be many intrinsic relations between redness and coloredness; which one is the entailment relation? We cannot define the entailment relation as the intrinsic relation, E , which *insures* that if $E(P,Q)$, then all Ps are Qs; that would be circular, given that the project is to ground modality in entailment. Jubien suggests that entailment is the part-whole relation: it is necessary that all red things are colored because coloredness is a part of redness. But what guarantee is there that if P is part of Q, then anything that instantiates Q must instantiate P?

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