

*(Serious) Actualism and (Serious) Presentism*

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Actualism is the thesis that necessarily, everything that there is exists. Serious actualism is the thesis that necessarily, no object has a property in a world in which it does not exist. Let's call the claim that actualism entails serious actualism the Entailment Thesis (ET). In this paper I will improve upon a previous argument of mine for (ET). I will then consider the prospects for defending a similar thesis in the temporal realm—the thesis that presentism entails serious presentism.

I begin in section I by considering Hud Hudson's reply to my recent argument for (ET).<sup>1</sup> Hudson accuses me of begging the question against the opponents of (ET). In response, I explain why the argument Hudson calls question-begging is not *my* argument. In section II, I consider a way of modifying Hudson's objection so that it *is* directed at my argument. I then show how my argument can be easily modified (drawing on no new resources) so that no modification of Hudson's objection is even directed at it. I turn, in section III, to the question of whether this modified and improved argument for (ET) can be transferred from the modal to the temporal realm. Initially this seems doubtful because the sort of actualism discussed in sections I and II is not analogous to presentism. But in the end things look more promising once we realize that *another* sort of actualism—a sort that *is* analogous to presentism—also plays a role in my argument for (ET). In the final section, I settle on definitions of presentism and serious presentism and then develop an argument from presentism to serious presentism that parallels my argument from actualism to serious actualism. One interesting consequence of the conclusion that presentism entails serious presentism is that a presentist can't solve her problem of accounting for the apparent instantiation of cross-temporal relations (like the great-great-great-grandfather relation) by conjoining presentism with the denial of serious presentism.<sup>2</sup>

### I. Hudson's Objection

In Bergmann 1996 I argued for (ET) by showing first that its denial entails the thesis that transworld property exemplification is possible:

( $\diamond$ TPE)  $\diamond(\exists x)(\exists w)(\exists p)(x \text{ exemplifies } p \text{ in } w \text{ and it is not the case that } x \text{ is in } w)$

Then I argue that ( $\diamond$ TPE) is false by showing that it entails the denial of the following obvious truth:

(OT) Necessarily, every instance of property exemplification is an instance of a property being exemplified by something.

I do this by showing that ( $\diamond$ TPE) has the following result:

(RESULT)  $(\exists w)(\exists p)(\text{It is true in } w \text{ that there is an instance of } p \text{ being exemplified, but not by anything at all})$

which contradicts (OT).

Now Hudson notes that I derive (RESULT) from ( $\diamond$ TPE) by way of:

(RESULT)\*  $(\exists w)(\exists p)(\text{It is true in } w \text{ that there is an instance of } p \text{ being exemplified but not by anything in } w)$ .

And he says that to contradict (RESULT)\* we need:

(OT)\* Necessarily, every instance of property exemplification is an instance of a property being exemplified by something (that is in the world in which the property is being exemplified).

From this he infers that my reductio argument against ( $\diamond$ TPE) requires (OT)\* as a premise. Finally, he points out that opponents of (ET) will not accept (OT)\* since it together with actualism *obviously* entails serious actualism. His conclusion: by taking (OT)\* for granted, I am begging the question against the opponents of (ET).<sup>3</sup>

I plead not guilty. The reason is that I do *not* rely on (OT)\*. Hudson takes my argument to have the following form:

- (B1) (ET) is false only if ( $\diamond$ TPE) is true.
- (B2) If ( $\diamond$ TPE) is true then (RESULT)\* is true.
- (H1) If (RESULT)\* is true then (OT)\* is false.
- (H2) Thus, if ( $\diamond$ TPE) is true then (OT)\* is false.
- (H3) But (OT)\* is true (and obviously so).

(B8) Hence, ( $\diamond$ TPE) is false.

(B9) Hence, (ET) is true.<sup>4</sup>

But that is not my argument. My argument runs like this:

(B1) (ET) is false only if ( $\diamond$ TPE) is true.

(B2) If ( $\diamond$ TPE) is true then (RESULT)\* is true.

(B3) ( $\forall w$ )(It is true in  $w$  that there is nothing except what there is in  $w$ ).<sup>5</sup>

(B4) If (RESULT)\* and (B3) are true then (RESULT) is true.

(B5) If (RESULT) is true then (OT) is false.

(B6) Thus, if ( $\diamond$ TPE) is true then (OT) is false.

(B7) But (OT) is true (and obviously so).

(B8) Hence, ( $\diamond$ TPE) is false.

(B9) Hence, (ET) is true.

Hudson replaces (B3) through (B7) of my argument with (H1) through (H3). This difference is significant. For my argument does not rely on the obviousness of (OT)\*. Instead it relies on the obviousness of (OT). Hudson says that I cannot complain about the changes he makes to my argument.<sup>6</sup> The reason he says I cannot complain is that he thinks (OT)\* and (RESULT)\* are (from my perspective) just more explicit statements of (OT) and (RESULT). But that is not true. What is true is that, given (B3), (RESULT) and (RESULT)\* are logically equivalent as are (OT) and (OT)\*. However, to concede that two propositions are logically equivalent is not to automatically concede that either is a more explicit statement of the other (it certainly isn't the case that each necessarily true proposition is a more explicit statement of every other necessarily true proposition). And since the logical equivalence of (OT) and (OT)\* is not obvious, the former can be obviously true when the latter is not. Likewise, serious actualism may be an obvious consequence of (OT)\* and actualism without being an obvious consequence of (OT) and actualism. For opponents of (ET) could, by failing to recognize the relevant implications of (B3), mistakenly assume that (OT) is compatible with ( $\diamond$ TPE) and (RESULT)\*. My argument makes it clear that that isn't true.

So I am not begging the question against the opponent of (ET)—or at least Hudson hasn't shown that I am. I take it for granted not that (OT)\* is obvious but that (OT) is obvious (and Hudson doesn't challenge me on that). And I bring to the reader's attention a necessary truth—(B3)—that is apparently being ignored by those who oppose (ET). Attending to (B3) makes clear what is not clear if we ignore it: that opponents of (ET) are committed (via their commitment to ( $\diamond$ TPE)) not just to (RESULT)\* but also to (RESULT). And as Hudson puts it, "(RESULT) is outlandish!" Its outlandishness is due to the obviousness of (OT) which it contradicts.

## II. Revising My Argument for (ET)

But perhaps Hudson's objection can be modified. We can imagine someone sympathetic to Hudson's objection conceding what I've said in the previous section

but insisting that (OT) is not obvious.<sup>7</sup> This modified objection (which *is* directed at my argument) lacks the bite Hudson's unmodified objection had with respect to *his* version of my argument. For (OT) is much harder to deny than (OT)\*; the former's claim to obviousness is much stronger than the latter's. And even the person who *is* prepared to reject (OT) could not sensibly accuse me of begging the question against the opponent of (ET). An argument isn't question-begging simply because its premises entail its conclusion. It is question-begging only if one of the premises so obviously leads to the conclusion that no one would accept that premise unless he or she already accepted the conclusion. But, as I pointed out in the previous section, (OT) does not obviously entail (ET). So this modified version of Hudson's objection, while it *is* directed at my argument, is not nearly as impressive.

But impressive or not it *is* an objection. And although I still find (OT) to be obviously true I'd like to say something helpful in response to those who do not find it obvious (rather than merely reaffirming that I *do* find it obvious). In what follows, I will restate my argument for (ET) in such a way that it does not rely on (OT).

Note first that serious actualists needn't commit themselves to the truth or falsity of (OT). For suppose that (OT) is false. That is, suppose that some instances of property exemplification involve an exemplifier and that others do not. Serious actualists needn't take a stand on whether or not (OT) is true because their thesis addresses only the sort of property exemplification that involves an exemplifier; it is silent about property exemplification without an exemplifier (even about whether there is such property exemplification). The serious actualist says that, necessarily, there is no object that exemplifies (has) a property in a world in which it does not exist. What she denies is the possibility of certain cases of property exemplification that involve exemplifiers. She says that necessarily, there is no case of *an object exemplifying a property* in a world in which that object does not exist. Were someone to point out that in some world there was a case of a property being exemplified but not *by* anything, that would not trouble the serious actualist *qua* serious actualist. For it would not be a case in which *an object exemplifies a property* in a world in which that object does not exist.

Note also that the fact that opponents of (ET) propose

(SOC) Socrates exemplifies nonexistence in a world in which he does not exist<sup>8</sup>

as a counterexample to (ET) confirms what I say in the previous paragraph. According to (SOC), *Socrates* (an exemplifier) exemplifies nonexistence in a world in which he does not exist.<sup>9</sup> Clearly the sort of property exemplification mentioned in (SOC) involves an exemplifier. For to say that *Socrates* exemplifies a property in some world in which he doesn't exist is, at best, an extremely infelicitous way of saying that a property is exemplified in that world but not by anything. If those who propose (SOC) were trying to say (thereby) that nonex-

istence is exemplified in some world but not by anything then they chose a very poor way of expressing this. Even worse, if this is what they were trying to say in asserting (SOC) then (SOC) would not be a counterexample to (ET) since it would (as I explained in the previous paragraph) be consistent with serious actualism. This strongly suggests that the opponents of (ET), in proposing (SOC) as a counterexample to it, recognize that the focus of their disagreement with serious actualists is on instances of property exemplification that involved exemplifiers.

Finally, notice that the focus of ( $\diamond$ TPE) is also (not surprisingly) the sort of property exemplification that involves an exemplifier, not the kind that does not. For ( $\diamond$ TPE) says that it is possible that *something exemplifies a property* in a world without being in that world. So the entire discussion is focused on property exemplification *with* exemplifiers; property exemplification *without* exemplifiers (even assuming there could be such a thing) is not relevant.

With this in mind, I will restate my argument against ( $\diamond$ TPE) quoting almost verbatim from the original statement of it but without relying on (OT). Suppose that ( $\diamond$ TPE) is true. Then there is some world  $w$  in which there is an instance of a property  $p$  being exemplified *by something* but not by anything in  $w$ .<sup>10</sup> Now what is true in a possible world is what would be true if that world were actual. Thus, if ( $\diamond$ TPE) then

(RESULT)\*<sub>new</sub> ( $\exists w$ )( $\exists p$ )(It is true in  $w$  that there is an instance of  $p$  being exemplified by something but not by anything in  $w$ ).

From the conjunction of (RESULT)\*<sub>new</sub> with

(B3) ( $\forall w$ )(It is true in  $w$  that there is nothing except what there is in  $w$ )<sup>11</sup>

it follows that

(RESULT)<sub>new</sub> ( $\exists w$ )( $\exists p$ )(It is true in  $w$  that there is an instance of  $p$  being exemplified by something, but not by anything at all).

But (RESULT)<sub>new</sub> entails that a contradiction is possible. And since ( $\diamond$ TPE) implies (RESULT)<sub>new</sub>, ( $\diamond$ TPE) is false.

Thus, my revised argument for (ET) runs as follows:

- (R1) (ET) is false only if ( $\diamond$ TPE) is true.
- (R2) If ( $\diamond$ TPE) is true then (RESULT)\*<sub>new</sub> is true.
- (R3) ( $\forall w$ )(It is true in  $w$  that there is nothing except what there is in  $w$ ).
- (R4) If (RESULT)\*<sub>new</sub> and (R3) are true then (RESULT)<sub>new</sub> is true.
- (R5) Thus, if ( $\diamond$ TPE) is true then (RESULT)<sub>new</sub> is true.
- (R6) But (RESULT)<sub>new</sub> entails that a contradiction is possible.
- (R7) Hence, ( $\diamond$ TPE) is false.
- (R8) Hence, (ET) is true.<sup>12</sup>

The main difference between this argument for (ET) and my original one is that here I show that ( $\Diamond$ TPE) entails (RESULT)<sub>new</sub>, which entails that a contradiction is possible, rather than (RESULT), which is merely the denial of what I take to be an obvious truth. The result is that my revised argument relies on neither (OT) nor (OT)\*. So no modification of Hudson's objection will even be directed at my revised argument for (ET).

### III. Two Kinds of Actualism

There are often interesting parallels between the modal and temporal realms—between philosophical theses about possible worlds and philosophical theses about times. It is common for those interested in this sort of parallel to think that actualism is analogous to presentism. And that suggests that there might be an argument from presentism to serious presentism that parallels my argument from actualism to serious actualism. But in fact there is no temporal analogue of the sort of actualism I've discussed in this paper (or at least nothing resembling presentism).

Let me explain. First, a definition of presentism:

*Presentism:* Necessarily, everything that exists is present (and so presently exists).

Presentism says it is impossible that in addition to the things that presently exist there also exist other things—those that did exist but do not presently exist and those that will exist but do not presently exist.<sup>13</sup> Now let me distinguish two kinds of actualism. Both are familiar theses. Let's call the sort of actualism that I've been discussing in sections I and II 'Anti-Meinongian Actualism' since it is a thesis that contradicts Meinong's views. I've defined that sort of actualism as follows:

*Anti-Meinongian Actualism:* Necessarily, everything that there is exists.

The other sort of actualism I will call 'Anti-Lewisian Actualism' since it is a thesis that contradicts the views of David Lewis.<sup>14</sup> We may define it as follows:

*Anti-Lewisian Actualism:* Necessarily, everything that exists is actual.

Once the views are defined as above, we can see that presentism is the temporal analogue of Anti-Lewisian Actualism and not of Anti-Meinongian Actualism. We can also see that there *is* no temporal analogue of Anti-Meinongian Actualism. Presentism says that everything that exists is present; Anti-Lewisian Actualism says that everything that exists is actual. The modal temporal parallels between the two are evident. But Anti-Meinongian Actualism says that everything there is exists. There is no modal talk here; so there is no temporal parallel to be drawn.<sup>15</sup>

This disanalogy between Anti-Meinongian Actualism and presentism, along with the fact that Anti-Meinongian Actualism and Anti-Lewisian Actualism are conceptually independent,<sup>16</sup> makes it appear doubtful that there is an argument from presentism to serious presentism that parallels my argument for (ET).

But there *is* a connection between Anti-Lewisian Actualism and my revised argument for (ET). The connection emerges from (R3):

(R3)  $(\forall w)(\text{It is true in } w \text{ that there is nothing except what there is in } w)$ .<sup>17</sup>

I considered an alleged counterexample to (R3) in my 1996 and explained why it wasn't a counterexample. But that explanation relied on the assumption that Anti-Lewisian Actualism is true. The putative counterexample to (R3) that I considered is:

(CE)  $(\exists w)(\text{It is true in } w \text{ that there is something (i.e., something in another world } w^*) \text{ that is not in } w)$ .<sup>18</sup>

In response, I said:

[W]hat is true in a world is what would be true if that world were actual. If the world  $w$ , mentioned in [(CE)], were actual then, although it would be the case that there *could be* something that is not in  $w$  (which is what it would mean to say there is something in  $w^*$  that is not in  $w$ ), there, in fact, *would not be* anything that is not in  $w$ .<sup>19</sup>

The second sentence in that quotation presupposes that there are (and there exist) no things that aren't actual.

So my argument for (ET) takes for granted Anti-Lewisian Actualism. Thus, it really is an argument from the conjunction of both kinds of actualism to serious actualism.<sup>20</sup> Once we see that Anti-Lewisian Actualism *does* play a role in my argument for (ET), it becomes more plausible to think that there may be a parallel argument in the temporal realm. In the next section, I will develop such an argument.

#### IV. Presentism Entails Serious Presentism

Let's begin by defining presentism and serious presentism. To do that, it will be helpful to have before us formulations of actualism and serious actualism. Anti-Meinongian Actualism can be stated like this:

(A<sub>M</sub>)  $\Box(\forall x)(x \text{ has being} \rightarrow x \text{ exists})$

and Anti-Lewisian Actualism like this:

(A<sub>L</sub>)  $\Box(\forall x)(x \text{ exists} \rightarrow x \text{ is actual})$ .

The view called ‘serious actualism’ in sections I and II is a more “serious” form of Anti-*Meinongian* Actualism. It is defined as follows:

(SA<sub>M</sub>)  $\Box(\forall x)(\forall w)(\forall p)(x \text{ exemplifies } p \text{ in } w \rightarrow x \text{ exists in } w)$ .

But this isn’t a more serious version of Anti-*Lewisian* Actualism, since it is compatible with Lewisian Nonactualism. To get a view that takes Anti-Lewisian Actualism more seriously we should define it like this:

(SA<sub>L</sub>)  $\Box(\forall x)(\forall w)(\forall p)(x \text{ exemplifies } p \text{ in } w \rightarrow x \text{ is actual in } w)$ .<sup>21</sup>

Now let’s turn to the temporal realm. Corresponding to (A<sub>L</sub>) we have the following definition of presentism:

(P)  $\Box(\forall x)[x \text{ exists} \rightarrow x \text{ is present}]$

And corresponding to (SA<sub>M</sub>) and (SA<sub>L</sub>)—our two versions of serious actualism—we have the following two versions of serious presentism:

(SP<sub>1</sub>)  $\Box(\forall x)(\forall t)(\forall p)[x \text{ exemplifies } p \text{ at } t \rightarrow x \text{ exists at } t]$   
 (SP<sub>2</sub>)  $\Box(\forall x)(\forall t)(\forall p)[x \text{ exemplifies } p \text{ at } t \rightarrow x \text{ is present at } t]$ .

There is a good reason to prefer (SP<sub>2</sub>) as a way of stating serious presentism. For given that (SP<sub>1</sub>) is compatible with the denial of presentism, it doesn’t seem to be a way of taking presentism more seriously (just as (SA<sub>M</sub>)’s being compatible with Lewisian Nonactualism makes it a poor candidate for a more serious version of Anti-Lewisian Actualism).<sup>22</sup> Thus, our focus (for the most part) will be on this question: Can we show, using a temporal analogue of my modified argument for (ET), that (P) entails (SP<sub>2</sub>)?

The simple answer is yes. But the explanation is a little complicated. First, recall from the previous section that the argument at the end of section II is really for the following *actualist* entailment thesis:

(AET<sub>1</sub>) [(A<sub>L</sub>) & (A<sub>M</sub>)] entails (SA<sub>M</sub>).

It looks like, in arguing from (A<sub>L</sub>)—the analogue of (P)—to serious actualism, I had to take (A<sub>M</sub>) for granted by including it in the antecedent of (AET<sub>1</sub>). This *suggests* that we had best take (A<sub>M</sub>) for granted in the presentist case too and aim to establish only the following *presentist* entailment thesis:

(PET) [(P) & (A<sub>M</sub>)] entails (SP<sub>2</sub>).

(It will become clear below that we *do* need to take  $(A_M)$  for granted in arguing from (P) to  $(SP_2)$ .) Second, notice that there is a disanalogy between  $(AET_1)$  and (PET):  $(SP_2)$ , the consequent of (PET), does not correspond to  $(SA_M)$ , the consequent of  $(AET_1)$ ; instead it corresponds to  $(SA_L)$ . Fortunately, there is an argument for

$(AET_2) [(A_L) \& (A_M)]$  entails  $(SA_L)$

that is parallel to my argument for  $(AET_1)$ . Once we have that before us, we can easily see how the argument for (PET), the temporal version of  $(AET_2)$ , will go.

Here's the argument for  $(AET_2)$ : We first prove that unless

$(\diamond TPE)^* \diamond (\exists x)(\exists w)(\exists p)[(x \text{ exemplifies } p \text{ in } w) \& \sim(x \text{ exists in } w)]$

is true,  $(A_L)$  entails  $(SA_L)$ . To see this, note that from the denial of  $(\diamond TPE)^*$ , i.e.,

$\Box(\forall x)(\forall w)(\forall p)(x \text{ exemplifies } p \text{ in } w \rightarrow x \text{ exists in } w)$

and

$\Box(\forall x)(\forall w)(x \text{ exists in } w \rightarrow x \text{ is actual in } w)$

(which follows immediately from  $(A_L)$ ) we get

$(SA_L) \Box(\forall x)(\forall w)(\forall p)(x \text{ exemplifies } p \text{ in } w \rightarrow x \text{ is actual in } w)$ .

This shows that if  $(\diamond TPE)^*$  is false then  $(A_L)$  entails  $(SA_L)$ .<sup>23</sup>

We can use this conclusion as the first premise in an argument that is exactly parallel to the argument described at the end of section II:

$(A_L1) [(A_L) \text{ entails } (SA_L)]$  is false only if  $(\diamond TPE)^*$  is true.

$(A_L2)$  If  $(\diamond TPE)^*$  is true then  $(RESULT-A_L)$  is true:

$(RESULT-A_L) (\exists w)(\exists p)(\text{It is true in } w \text{ that there is an instance of } p \text{ being exemplified by something but not by anything that exists in } w)$ .

$(A_L3) (\forall w)(\text{It is true in } w \text{ that there is nothing except what exists in } w)$

$(A_L4)$  If  $(RESULT-A_L)$  and  $(A_L3)$  are true then  $(RESULT)_{new}$  is true:

$(RESULT)_{new} (\exists w)(\exists p)(\text{It is true in } w \text{ that there is an instance of } p \text{ being exemplified by something, but not by anything at all})$ .

$(A_L5)$  Thus, if  $(\diamond TPE)^*$  is true then  $(RESULT)_{new}$  is true.

$(A_L6)$  But  $(RESULT)_{new}$  entails that a contradiction is possible.

$(A_L7)$  Hence,  $(\diamond TPE)^*$  is false.

$(A_L8)$  Hence,  $(A_L)$  entails  $(SA_L)$ .

But premise (A<sub>L</sub>3) takes (A<sub>M</sub>) for granted. If we discharge this assumption, we've proven that (A<sub>L</sub>) and (A<sub>M</sub>) *together* entail (SA<sub>L</sub>). In other words, we've proven (AET<sub>2</sub>).<sup>24</sup> Notice that we couldn't get from (A<sub>L</sub>) to (SA<sub>L</sub>) without using (A<sub>M</sub>)—at least not using this sort of argument.

Now we can state the argument for (PET). We start with the following principle of cross-temporal property exemplification:

$$(\diamond\text{CPE}) \diamond(\exists x)(\exists t)(\exists p)[(x \text{ exemplifies } p \text{ at } t) \ \& \ \sim(x \text{ exists at } t)].$$

And we prove that unless ( $\diamond\text{CPE}$ ) is true, (P) entails (SP<sub>2</sub>). Once again, we see that from the denial of ( $\diamond\text{CPE}$ ), i.e.,

$$\Box(\forall x)(\forall t)(\forall p)(x \text{ exemplifies } p \text{ at } t \rightarrow x \text{ exists at } t)$$

and

$$\Box(\forall x)(\forall t)(x \text{ exists at } t \rightarrow x \text{ is present at } t)$$

(which follows immediately from (P)) we get

$$(\text{SP}_2) \Box(\forall x)(\forall t)(\forall p)(x \text{ exemplifies } p \text{ at } t \rightarrow x \text{ is present at } t).$$

This shows that if ( $\diamond\text{CPE}$ ) is false then (P) entails (SP<sub>2</sub>).<sup>25</sup>

And, as above, we can use this conclusion as the first premise in an argument that is exactly parallel to the argument described at the end of section II:

(P1) [(P) entails (SP<sub>2</sub>)] is false only if ( $\diamond\text{CPE}$ ) is true.

(P2) If ( $\diamond\text{CPE}$ ) is true then (RESULT-P) is true:

(RESULT-P)  $\diamond(\exists t)(\exists p)$ (It is true at *t* that there is an instance of *p* being exemplified by something but not by anything that *exists* at *t*).

(P3)  $\Box(\forall t)$ (It is true at *t* that there is nothing except what *exists* at *t*).

(P4) If (RESULT-P) and (P3) are true then (RESULT-P)<sub>new</sub> is true:

(RESULT-P)<sub>new</sub>  $\diamond(\exists t)(\exists p)$ (It is true at *t* that there is an instance of *p* being exemplified by something, but not by anything at all).

(P5) Thus, if ( $\diamond\text{CPE}$ ) is true then (RESULT-P)<sub>new</sub> is true.

(P6) But (RESULT-P)<sub>new</sub> entails that a contradiction is possible.

(P7) Hence, ( $\diamond\text{CPE}$ ) is false.

(P8) Hence, (P) entails (SP<sub>2</sub>).

Some comments on the above argument are in order. I've assumed that just as what is true in a world is what would be true if that world were actual, so also what is true at a time is what would be true if that time were present.<sup>26</sup> And I've assumed that times, like worlds, are abstracta—states of affairs, in fact, though nothing much hangs on their being this sort of abstract object rather than some

other (e.g. propositions).<sup>27</sup> This is convenient because it allows the presentist to quantify over past and future times (just as the Anti-Lewisian Actualist can quantify over nonactual worlds).<sup>28</sup> It also makes for a more exact parallel between the argument for (AET<sub>2</sub>) and the argument for (PET). But we could dispense with this convenience. For the soundness of the above argument does not depend on there being more than one time (or on presentists saying that there is).<sup>29</sup> Another thing I've assumed in the above argument is that it would not contradict serious presentism to show that at some nonpresent time a property is exemplified but not by anything. Just as the focus of  $\diamond$ TPE and  $\diamond$ TPE\* is the sort of property exemplification that involves an exemplifier, so also the focus of  $\diamond$ CPE is the sort of property exemplification that involves an exemplifier. Finally, and most importantly, I want to draw attention to the fact that (P3) takes for granted the truth of (A<sub>M</sub>).<sup>30</sup> If we discharge this assumption, our conclusion is that (A<sub>M</sub>) and (P) together entail (SP<sub>2</sub>)—in other words, that (PET) is true.

I mentioned in the introduction that this conclusion prevents a presentist from denying serious presentism as a way of solving her problem of accounting for the apparent instantiation of cross-temporal relations. But what exactly is this problem that the presentist needs to solve? The problem is that we typically take for granted that certain cross-temporal relations (like the great-great-great-grandfather relation) are instantiated despite the fact that, according to presentism, their relata don't both exist. But it seems a relation cannot be instantiated unless both its relata exist. One tempting solution is for the presentist to say that *x* can stand in a relation to something at a time even if *x* doesn't exist at that time. But this is to deny serious presentism, which is not an option for the presentist given (PET).<sup>31</sup>

One final point. It would be nice if one could argue from presentism to serious presentism *without* relying on any sort of actualism. Well, there is a way. Suppose we define presentism as follows:

(P)\*  $\Box(\forall x)(x \text{ has being} \rightarrow x \text{ is present})$ .

(P)\* is entailed by [(P) & (A<sub>M</sub>)]; but it doesn't entail (A<sub>M</sub>). If we run the above sort of argument on (P)\* (making the appropriate modifications where necessary) it will include as a premise:

(P3)\*  $\Box(\forall t)(\text{It is true at } t \text{ that there is nothing except what there is at } t)$

which corresponds to (P3) in the argument for (PET).<sup>32</sup> But (P3)\*, unlike (P3), does not take (A<sub>M</sub>) for granted.<sup>33</sup> Thus, presentism—defined as (P)\*—entails serious presentism—defined as (SP<sub>2</sub>)—even if we don't assume (A<sub>M</sub>).<sup>34</sup>

Something similar applies in the case of Anti-Lewisian Actualism. Consider the following version of Anti-Lewisian Actualism:

(A<sub>L</sub>)\*  $\Box(\forall x)(x \text{ has being} \rightarrow x \text{ is actual})$ .

It is entailed by  $[(A_L) \& (A_M)]$ ; but, like  $(P)^*$ , it doesn't entail  $(A_M)$ . Running our argument from  $(A_L)^*$  to serious actualism we find that it includes as a premise:

$(A_L3)^* (\forall w)(\text{It is true in } w \text{ that there is nothing except what there is in } w)$

which corresponds to  $(A_L3)$  in the argument for  $(AET_2)$ .<sup>35</sup> But  $(A_L3)^*$ , unlike  $(A_L3)$ , does not take  $(A_M)$  for granted. Thus, actualism—defined as  $(A_L)^*$ —entails serious actualism—defined as  $(SA_L)$ —even if we don't assume  $(A_M)$ . However, we can't get from  $(A_L)^*$  alone to  $(SA_M)$ . To get  $(SA_M)$ , which is the focus of sections I and II of this paper, we need to start with the conjunction of  $(A_M)$  and  $(A_L)$ .<sup>36</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>See Bergmann 1996 and Hudson 1997.

<sup>2</sup>Quine discusses this problem for presentism in his 1987, pp. 197–98 as does Bigelow in his 1996. In section IV, I explain how the inadequate solution I mention is supposed to work.

<sup>3</sup>What I here, following Hudson, call  $(\diamond TPE)$ ,  $(RESULT)^*$ ,  $(RESULT)$  and  $(OT)$  are, in Bergmann 1996, called (3), (7), (9) and (10) respectively.

<sup>4</sup>'H' for Hudson and 'B' for Bergmann. Hudson omits (B2) and (H1) when he lays out my argument (see Hudson 1997, p. 522). But he recognizes (in fn. 4) that I think  $(RESULT)^*$  is a consequence of  $(\diamond TPE)$  and insists (on p. 522) that  $(OT)^*$  is needed to contradict  $(RESULT)^*$ .

<sup>5</sup>This proposition is called (8) in Bergmann 1996.

<sup>6</sup>Hudson 1997, p. 522.

<sup>7</sup>Perhaps this would be insisted upon by some trope theorists who endorse a bundle theory of substance (a theory of the sort described by Donald Williams in his 1953).

<sup>8</sup>This proposition is called (1) in Bergmann 1996 and (SOC) in Hudson 1997.

<sup>9</sup>It may be helpful to note here that (SOC) is *not* to be understood as saying such things as

(i) Socrates exemplifies the property of *possibly not existing*

or

(ii) In worlds in which Socrates does not exist it is false that Socrates exemplifies nonexistence

or

(iii)  $\bar{E}s$  is true in worlds in which Socrates does not exist (assuming  $\bar{E}$  is the complement of existence,  $s$  names Socrates but  $\bar{E}s$  does not mean  $s$  exemplifies  $\bar{E}$ ).

None of these three propositions conflicts with serious actualism since none of them says that there is an object that exemplifies a property in some world in which that object does not exist. Let's assume that 'Socrates' names some existing thing. (Those proposing (SOC) as a counterexample to (ET) do *not* take the force of their counterexample to depend on the denial of this assumption.) Then (i) says that something that exists in this world—Socrates—has a certain modal property (a property that some think God and some abstract objects lack). It does not say anything about an object having a property in a world in which it does not exist. The only property exemplification mentioned in (ii) is falsity being exemplified by a proposition in certain worlds. But clearly those proposing (SOC) were taking *Socrates*, not some proposition, to be the object exemplifying a property in some world in which it does not exist. Finally, though it is not clear what (iii) is saying, it is certainly *not* saying that Socrates exemplifies a property in a world in which he does not exist. I take the time to dismiss these

readings of (SOC) because some who have resisted (ET) seem to want to defend their position by understanding (SOC) in one of these ways.

<sup>10</sup>I've added the "by something" to emphasize that, as I noted in the previous paragraph, the sort of property exemplification mentioned in ( $\diamond$ TPE) involves an exemplifier.

<sup>11</sup>(B3) shouldn't be confused with the actualist claim that ( $\forall w$ )(It is true in  $w$  that there is nothing except what *exists* in  $w$ ).

<sup>12</sup>'R' is for revised.

<sup>13</sup>For more detailed accounts of what presentism is see Bigelow 1996, Merricks 1995 and Zimmerman 1998. I should note that even if, contrary to what I'll be assuming here, presentism (and serious presentism) are contingent claims, the argument I present in section IV from presentism to serious presentism still goes through (see note 25).

<sup>14</sup>See Lewis 1986, pp. 97-101.

<sup>15</sup>You might insist that Anti-Meinongian Actualism says *necessarily* everything that there is exists. So there is modal talk. And the temporal analogue is *it's always the case that* everything that there is exists. I agree that there is conceptual space for the latter view. But it bears no resemblance to what is commonly called presentism.

<sup>16</sup>To see their conceptual independence, consider the following. Plantinga endorses both kinds of actualism; he thinks the realms of being, existence and actuality coincide. Lewis endorses Anti-Meinongian Actualism but not Anti-Lewisian Actualism; he thinks the realms of being and existence coincide and include the realm of actuality as a proper subset (or so I understand him—see Lewis 1986, pp. 97-101). A Lewisian Meinongian will think that the realm of being includes the realm of existence as a proper subset, which in turn includes the realm of actuality as a proper subset. And an Anti-Lewisian Meinongian will agree that the realm of existence is a proper subset of the realm of being but she will deny that actuality is a proper subset of the realm of existence. (I assume that everyone agrees that the realm of being includes the realms of existence and actuality.)

<sup>17</sup>(R3) is also called (B3) earlier in this paper (since it appears in my original argument as well as the revised version) and it is called (8) in my 1996.

<sup>18</sup>(CE) is called (11) in my 1996. Note that I am not using the modifier "it is true in  $w$  that..." to restrict the quantifiers in the claim it modifies to the inhabitants of  $w$ . Rather, what is true in  $w$  is what would be true if  $w$  were actual. Parallel comments apply to the modifier "it is true at  $t$  that..."

<sup>19</sup>Bergmann 1996. p. 358.

<sup>20</sup>That means that someone could resist my argument for (ET) by rejecting Anti-Lewisian Actualism and, thereby, (R3). As far as I can tell, Lewisian Nonactualism doesn't entail Lewis' view that possible worlds are concreta. So it isn't saddled with all the implausibilities of Lewis' modal ontology. Still, it does entail what, by my lights, is exceedingly implausible: that the fact that there could be unicorns entails that unicorns exist. Given this, I am content to have my argument rely on the assumption that Anti-Lewisian Actualism is true.

<sup>21</sup>It might appear that ( $SA_L$ ), like ( $SA_M$ ), is compatible with Lewisian Nonactualism. For (one might object) the Lewisian Nonactualist agrees that if something exemplifies the world-indexed property of existence-in- $w$ , it also exemplifies the world-indexed property of being-actual-in- $w$ . But (say I in response) the Lewisian Nonactualist *also* says that it can be true in  $w$  that  $x$  exists even if it isn't true in  $w$  that  $x$  is actual. And this conflicts with ( $SA_L$ ). For  $x$  *exemplifies  $p$  in  $w$* , which appears in the antecedent of ( $SA_L$ ), entails both that  $x$  exemplifies the world-indexed property  $p$ -in- $w$  and that it is true in  $w$  that  $x$  exemplifies  $p$ . See note 18 for comments on how to read the modifier "it is true in  $w$  that..."

<sup>22</sup>If you're worried that ( $SP_2$ ), like ( $SP_1$ ), is compatible with the denial of (P), consider the temporal analogue of the points made in notes 21 and 18.

<sup>23</sup>In my 1996, I argued in this same way for the conclusion that unless ( $\diamond$ TPE) is false, ( $A_M$ ) entails ( $SA_M$ ). This is how I established premise (R1) used in the argument at the end of section II of this paper.

<sup>24</sup>Here's another way to prove (AET<sub>2</sub>). Start with (AET<sub>1</sub>) which I proved earlier. Then note that [(A<sub>L</sub>) & (SA<sub>M</sub>)] entails (SA<sub>L</sub>). This gives you (AET<sub>2</sub>). The reason I give the argument in the text for (AET<sub>2</sub>) is that it provides a nice model for the argument for (PET) which I consider next.

<sup>25</sup>If we were to drop the necessity operator from (P) and from (SP<sub>2</sub>) the above argument would yield the same result (assuming that under those circumstances (P) would, if true, be *eternally* true).

<sup>26</sup>I should draw attention here to an ambiguity in the words 'actual' and 'present'. On the one hand, 'x is actual', when applied to possible worlds, means that x obtains; likewise with 'x is present' when applied to states of affairs that are times. (Thus, in the sentence to which this note is attached, both 'were actual' and 'were present' could be replaced with 'obtained' without a change in meaning.) On the other hand, 'x is actual' can mean that x *is* (has being) in the world that obtains; and 'x is present' can mean that x *is* at the time that obtains. Given that times and worlds are both abstract objects that exist (or have being) eternally and necessarily, this means that there is a sense in which all worlds are actual (even those that aren't actual in the obtaining sense); and there is a sense in which all times are present (even those that aren't present in the obtaining sense). In this paper I do not use the words 'actual' and 'present' in their obtaining sense (the first of the two senses mentioned above) except when I explicitly apply them exclusively to worlds or times as I do in the paragraph in which this note is inserted.

<sup>27</sup>See Chisholm 1981, pp. 126-28 for an account of times as states of affairs.

<sup>28</sup>See Plantinga 1974, p. 47.

<sup>29</sup>Of course, if, according to presentism, only the present time exists, then my argument from presentism to serious presentism is stated in a needlessly complex way. But that could be remedied by dropping all mention of times (including temporal quantifiers) from the argument.

<sup>30</sup>You might insist that premise (P3) takes (P) for granted as well. But that assumption could be discharged without changing the conclusion.

<sup>31</sup>Unless the presentist rejects (A<sub>M</sub>). Fitch discusses (without endorsing) this Meinongian way for a presentist to solve the problem of cross-temporal relations in his 1994, pp. 182-83. However, this Meinongian solution won't work if presentism is defined as (P)\* (which is how it is defined in the next paragraph in the text). For discussion of another solution that applies to at least *some* apparently instantiated cross-temporal relations (in particular, causal ones) see Bigelow 1996.

<sup>32</sup>I won't bother giving the argument from (P)\* to (SP<sub>2</sub>) here. The only differences between that argument and the argument for (PET) (besides those mentioned in the text) are in (◇CPE) and (RESULT-P).

<sup>33</sup>You might insist that (P3)\* takes (P)\* for granted. But discharging that assumption doesn't affect the conclusion.

<sup>34</sup>But (P)\* by itself won't get us (SP<sub>1</sub>). It is only if we add (A<sub>M</sub>)—and take for granted that the realm of the present does not outstrip the realm of being—that we can use (P)\* to get (SP<sub>1</sub>).

<sup>35</sup>Again, I won't bother giving the argument from (A<sub>L</sub>)\* to (SA<sub>L</sub>) here. The only differences between that argument and the argument for (AET<sub>2</sub>) (besides those mentioned in the text) are in (◇TPE)\* and (RESULT-A<sub>L</sub>).

<sup>36</sup>Thanks to Ali Kazmi and Michael Kremer for helpful discussions of possible objections to my original argument for (ET) and to Jan Cover, Hud Hudson, Trenton Merricks, Alvin Plantinga and Michael Rea for comments on an earlier draft of this paper. Special thanks to Hud Hudson for recommending that I explore the possibility of there being an argument from presentism to serious presentism that parallels my argument from actualism to serious actualism.

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