Truth and Truthmaking in 17th-Century Scholasticism

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Abstract

Some propositions are true and others are false. What explains this difference? Some philosophers have recently defended the view that a proposition is true because there is an entity, its truthmaker, that makes it true. Call this the ‘truthmaker principle’. The truthmaker principle is controversial, occasioning the rise of a large contemporary debate about the nature of truthmaking and truthmakers. What has gone largely unnoticed is that scholastics of the early modern period also had the notion of a truthmaker [verificativum], and this notion is at the center of early modern scholastic disputes about the ontological status of negative entities, the past and future, and uninstantiated essences.

My project is to explain how early modern scholastics conceive of truthmaking and to show how they use the notion of a truthmaker to regiment ontological enquiry. I argue that the notion of a truthmaker is born of a certain conception of truth according to which truth is a mereological sum of a true mental sentence and its intentional object. This view entails the truthmaker principle and is responsible for some surprising metaphysical views. For example, it leads many early modern scholastics to posit irreducible negative entities as truthmakers for negative truths, giving rise to an extensive literature on the nature of negative entities. In order to find truthmakers for the so-called eternal truths, such as ‘A human being is an animal’, some philosophers claim that individual essences distinct from and independent of God necessarily have being from eternity.
Other early modern scholastics reject these extravagant views; they argue that only positive, present tense truths are made true by existing things. This view is motivated jointly by (i) a distinctive theory of truth bearers, (ii) a common sense view of the truth conditions for negative, tensed, and modal truths, and (iii) the idea that truths are about their truthmakers. I argue that this view has significant philosophical consequences and should be attractive to those who think both that truth is grounded in being and that not every truth has a truthmaker.
Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations for Aquinas’s Works

QDV  Questiones disputatae de veritate
SCG  Summa contra gentiles
ST   Summa theologiae
In I Sent.  Scriptum super libros sententiarum, in primum librum
De ente  De ente et essentia
In meta.  In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio

Abbreviations for Ockham’s Works

Expos. Praedicam.  Expositio in librum Praedicamentorum Aristotelis
Quodl.  Quodlibeta
OP   Opera philosophica

Abbreviations for Suárez’s Works

DM   Disputationes Metaphysicae, vols. 25-26 in Opera omnia
A Note on Translations

All translations are my own except in a few cases where a translation is cited. I provide the Latin in the footnotes. In reproducing the Latin, I sometimes alter the original punctuation to make the sentence structure more perspicuous.
INTRODUCTION
The notion of a truthmaker has recently gained such prominence in metaphysics that Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra has called truthmaker theory “one of the most important metaphysical topics of the late 20th-century and early 21st-century philosophy.”¹ At a first approximation, a truthmaker is something that makes a proposition true. As D. M. Armstrong and Ross Cameron explain:

The idea of a truthmaker for a particular truth, then, is just some existent, some portion of reality, in virtue of which that truth is true.²

When there is truth, there must be some thing (or things) to account for that truth: some thing(s) that couldn’t exist and the true proposition fail to be true. That is the truthmaker principle. True propositions are made true by entities in the mind-independently existing external world.³

For example, Obama is the portion of reality in virtue of which it is true that Obama exists, so Obama is the truthmaker for that proposition. There are also non-trivial examples of truthmakers. The fact that Obama is tall, for example, might be the truthmaker for the proposition that Obama is tall.⁴ Advocates tout truthmaker theory as a good way to regiment ontological inquiry—to find out what our ontological commitments are by way of what we take to be truthmakers for various sorts of truths. There are many questions we might raise about truthmaker theory, and I raise them in subsequent chapters, but for now I want to focus on the history of the notion of a truthmaker.

¹ “Truthmakers,” 186. For more on truthmaking, see Armstrong, Truth and Truthmakers; Merricks, Truth and Ontology; Beebee and Dodd, Truthmakers: The Contemporary Debate; Lowe and Rami, eds., Truth and Truth-Making; Mulligan, Simons, and Smith, “Truth-Makers.”
² Armstrong, Truth and Truthmakers, 5.
³ Cameron, “How To Be a Truthmaker Maximalist,” 410.
⁴ In the contemporary literature one may sometimes find it said that the claim that the fact that p makes it true that p is a trivial claim. In my view, no claim is trivial if it entails something controversial, and “the fact that p makes it true that p” entails the controversial claim that there are facts. At any rate, I am prepared to grant that “the fact that p makes it true that p” is trivial if you are prepared to grant that it is true. For the triviality objection, see Peter Forrest and Drew Khlentzos, “Introduction: Truth Maker and Its Varieties,” 8.
According to Armstrong’s shoestring history of truthmaking, the idea of a truthmaker can be found, first, in Aristotle, and then in Bertrand Russell. What happened between Aristotle and Russell? According to Armstrong,

Aristotle’s remarks were noted by a number of leading Scholastic philosophers, but the notion seems after this to have gone underground for some centuries, although intimations of it may be found here and there.5

This comment considerably understates the scholastic interest in truthmaking. The notion of a truthmaker made a sudden appearance on the philosophical scene of 17th-century scholasticism. 17th-century scholastics coined the term ‘verificativum’, which is the Latin equivalent of our ‘truthmaker.’6 That 17th-century scholastics conceived of verificativa along the same lines as contemporary philosophers conceive of truthmakers is clear both from the etymology of ‘verificativum’ (‘veri’ is from ‘verum’, meaning ‘true, and ‘-ficativum’ is from ‘facere’, meaning ‘make’) and from the way in which early modern scholastics use the term. Here, for example, are some sightings of ‘verificativum’ (translated as ‘truthmaker’) in the wild:

The immediate and formal truthmaker of a proposition is that by which a proposition is immediately and formally rendered true, just as the immediate and formal falsemaker is that in virtue of which a proposition is immediately and formally rendered false [...] What, in addition to the proposition itself, is required for the proposition to be true is the adequate truthmaker of the proposition. (Francisco Peinado, 1633-1696)7

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5 Armstrong, Truth and Truthmakers, 4.
6 John Doyle was the first (in print) to suggest “truthmaker” as a translation of “verificativum.” (“Another God, Chimerae, Goat-Stags, and Man-Lions,” 773, fn. 12).
7 Peinado, Disputationes in octos libros physicorum (Phys.), lib. 1, d. 7, s. 2, nn. 12-13, p. 177: “Verificativum immediatum & formale propositionis, est id a quo propositio immediate & formaliter redditur vera, sicut falsificativum immediatum & formale est id a quo propositio immediate & formaliter re[ditur falsa [...] quod, ultra propositionem, requiritur ad eius veritatem, est adaequatum verificativum ipsius.”
You have to say what it is for a proposition to be true and what is required in reality on the part of the object for the proposition to be true. The latter I call a truthmaker. (Giovannbattista Giattini, 1651)\(^8\)

In all propositions some existence, or the ultimate actual truthmaker of the proposition, is affirmed. (Silvestro Mauro, 1619-1687)\(^9\)

It seems clear from these passages (and others)\(^{10}\) that for the early modern scholastics, the notion of a truthmaker is the notion of some portion of reality that is somehow responsible for the truth of a proposition.

It is also clear that early modern scholastics used the notion of a truthmaker to “regiment metaphysical inquiry”. For example, Giovannbattista Giattini uses a truthmaker argument to establish the existence of negative entities:

> It seems like you have to say that there are negations in reality and that negations have some objective truth distinct from every real positive being. This conclusion is proven because there must be a formal truthmaker for a negative proposition—e.g., for the proposition by which I say “Light is not in the air”. But this truthmaker is not something positive. Therefore, it is a negation, distinct from everything positive.\(^{11}\)

Similarly, Maximus Mangold raises a standard truthmaking question in his discussion of future contingent truths:

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\(^8\) Giattini, *Logica*, q. 6, a. 5, p. 292: “Debet assignari quid sit, propositionem esse veram, & quid requirat ex parte objecti realiter ad hoc ut sit vera, quod appello verificativum.”

\(^9\) Mauro, *Quaestiones philosophicae libri secundus*, q. 47, p. 170 (ad 5): “In omnibus propositionibus affirmatur aliqua existentia, sive ultima actualitas verificativa propositionis”

\(^{10}\) E.g., Mayr, *Philosophia peripatetica*, lib. 1, part 1, d. 5, q. 2 a. 1, n. 838, p. 365: “Ex quo ulterius infertur quod etiam idem sint verum transcendental & verificativum propositionis; nam istud est id quod propositionem reddit, vel potest reddere, veram; hoc autem alius non est quam objectum, vel res, quae cognoscitur, sicuti est.” 

\(^{11}\) Giattini, *Logica*, q. 6, a. 2, p. 265: “Dicendum videtur negationes dari a parte rei, & habere aliquam veritatem objectivam distinctam ab omni ente reali positivo. Probatur conclusio, quia debet dari verificativum formale propositionis negativae; qua v.g. dico: *in aere non est lux*. Sed hoc verificavitum non est quid positivum, ergo est negatio distincta ab omni positivo.”
Further, it is asked in virtue of what are [future contingent propositions] true? Or, what is their truthmaker, as they say in the schools.\textsuperscript{12}

And in the following passage Nicolás Martínez reports an argument to the effect that God is the truthmaker for modal truths:

This proposition, ‘Peter is possible’ is true, and necessarily true; therefore, it is true in virtue of its necessary truthmaker. Nothing created is necessary, and whatever is necessary is God. Therefore, this proposition is true in virtue of its truthmaker, which is God.\textsuperscript{13}

In light of these passages it seems clear that early modern scholastics had the notion of a truthmaker, and that this notion plays a role in their ontological inquiry. But it is not immediately clear what the early modern scholastic account of truthmaking is, nor indeed whether there is just one account or many. While there is growing interest in early modern scholasticism, very little work has been done on early modern scholastic accounts of truthmaking.\textsuperscript{14} This dissertation explains early modern scholastic accounts of truthmaking and illuminates the role the notion of a truthmaker plays in early modern scholastic disputes about the ontological status of negative entities, the past and the future, and uninstantiated essences.

Early modern scholasticism occupies a unique place in the history of philosophy because it lies at the crossroads of late medieval and canonical early

\textsuperscript{12} Mangold, \textit{Philosophia recentior}, vol. 1, Ontology, diss. 4, a. 1, s. 3, n. 98, p. 96: “Ulterius quaeritur, \textit{per quid} verae aut falsae sint [propositiones de contingentibus absolute futuris]? Sive, quodnam sit illarum verificativum, ut loquuntur scholae.”

\textsuperscript{13} Martinez, \textit{Deus sciens}, contr. 3, d. 3, s. 1, p. 73: “Propositio haec: \textit{Petrus est possibilis}, est vera, & necessario vera, ergo per aliquod verificativum illius necessarium: nihil necessarium est creatum, & quidquid necessarium est Deus est. Ergo haec propositio vera est per verificativum illius, quod Deus est.”

\textsuperscript{14} One notable exception is Jacob Schmutz. I am especially indebted to Schmutz on account of two works: Schmutz, “Verificativum,” and “Réalistes, nihilistes et incompatibilistes.” In the first of these pieces Schmutz shows that early modern scholastics had the notion of a truthmaker. In the second, he provides a survey of some views of truthmakers for negative truths. Schmutz identifies many of the key players in the 17th-century debates, but he does not provide much in the way of philosophical analysis. My work builds on Schmutz’s work by reconstructing accounts of truthmaking and negative truths in some detail.
modern philosophy. The early modern scholastics represent the culmination of several centuries of thinking about the world from a broadly Aristotelian point of view. Accordingly, their philosophy is medieval in spirit. But they lived in a time in which the Aristotelian world-view was under attack. As is now well known, those who would lead the attack were often influenced by their scholastic contemporaries. Accordingly, Alfred Freddoso remarks, “a close study of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Scholasticism will contribute immensely to our understanding of pre-Kantian modern philosophy.”  

Freddoso’s conviction has been borne out by a number of scholars already. Roger Ariew and Jorge Secada both have book-length studies demonstrating the influence of Jesuit scholasticism on Descartes;  

Helen Hattab has shown that Jesuit philosophers were instrumental in the transition from late medieval to early modern theories of causation;  

Michael Murray has argued that Leibniz’s theory of practical reason was inspired by Jesuit theories;  

Amy Karofsky claims to find a Suárezian influence on Descartes’s theory of the eternal truths;  

and so on. Clearly, a deeper understanding of early modern scholasticism generally can lead to a deeper understanding of canonical early modern philosophy. It is partly for this reason that there has been a recent groundswell of interest in Francisco Suárez.  

But Suárez represents the beginning, not the end, of a scholastic renaissance that took place largely on the Iberian peninsula and in Italy in the 16th and 17th centuries. If we are to come to a full understanding of early modern scholasticism and its relation to Descartes, et al., we need to take a wider view of

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15 In Molina, On Divine Foreknowledge, xi.
16 Ariew, Descartes and the Late Scholastics; Secada, Cartesian Metaphysics.
17 Hattab, “Conflicting Causalities: The Jesuits, their Opponents, and Descartes on the Causality of the Efficient Cause.”
18 Murray, “Pre-Leibnizian Moral Necessity.”
19 Karofsky, “Suárez’s Influence on Descartes’s Theory of Eternal Truths.”
20 See, e.g., Sgarbi, ed., Francisco Suárez and His Legacy; Doyle, Collected Studies on Francisco Suárez, S.J. (1548-1617); Hill and Lagerlund, eds., The Philosophy of Francisco Suárez; Daniel Schwartz, ed., Interpreting Suárez: Critical Essays; Penner, “‘The Pope and Prince of All the Metaphysicians’: Some Recent Works on Suárez”; Penner, “Free and Rational: Suárez on the Will.”
early modern scholasticism, looking at influential authors such as Sebastián Izquierdo, Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza, and Rodrigo de Arriaga, among many others.

The early modern scholastic discussions of truth and truthmaking in particular are philosophically interesting. As will become clear in the course of this dissertation, close study of the early modern scholastics yields insights into contemporary philosophical concerns. I want to be clear about the philosophical aims of this project. While I provide philosophical evaluations of the views to be discussed, the purpose of this project is not primarily to argue for any given view. My aim, rather, is to explain a variety of early modern scholastic views, many of which are largely absent from the contemporary literature, and to flag where those views seem to be promising for contemporary purposes. I sometimes point out where and how the view might be further developed, but I myself will not systematically develop the views or defend them beyond the early modern scholastic discussion. What I expect to add to the contemporary debate are sketches of promising yet largely neglected views, to be developed more systematically elsewhere. Philosophers reading this dissertation with contemporary interests in mind may view it as a tour of 17th-century conceptual space around truthmaking. Some of the territory will be familiar from the contemporary literature; others parts will be novel and worth pursuing further.

**Methodology**

In order to accomplish the philosophical aim of the project, I often engage in philosophical discussion with the early modern scholastics, sometimes asking them questions that they did not explicitly ask themselves. Indeed, the project as a whole is organized around certain philosophical questions of contemporary concern rather than around a certain historical figure or historical development
in doctrine. One might worry that this practice obstructs the accomplishment of the historical aim of the project.

In response to this worry, I note that early modern scholastics were concerned with many of the problems with which contemporary philosophers are concerned. In many cases, they explicitly raised a question that is live in contemporary literature. Even where the early modern scholastics do not raise a question of special interest to contemporary philosophers, they often provide the resources to answer such questions. My strategy is to reconstruct early modern scholastic views based on (i) what they explicitly say and (ii) what they are committed to based on what they say. In short, I strive for philosophical and historical sensitivity.

The historical goal of the project is to elucidate a variety of related early modern scholastic views of truthmaking and the application of those views to specific ontological disputes. This raises a question about the authors on which I will focus. My approach to scholastic authors is governed by two views about how scholastic authors work. These assumptions are nicely captured by the following derisive remark made by Erasmus:

And then these most subtle subtleties are rendered even more subtle by the various ‘ways’ or types of scholastic theology, so that you could work your way out of a labyrinth sooner than out of the intricacies of the Realists, Nominalists, Thomists, Albertists, Occamists, Scotists—and I still haven’t mentioned all the sects, but only the main ones.21

Erasmus knew that scholasticism was marked by division. It is therefore untenable to assume that there was one scholastic view of any given topic, invented perhaps by Aquinas and repeated for good measure by Suárez. But while the scholastics tend to disagree about everything, they also tend to belong to schools, as the passage from Erasmus also indicates, and those within one school tend to agree on most things. The point I wish to stress here is that the

21 Erasmus, The Praise of Folly, 90.
scholastics are engaged in a cooperative effort to develop various views: although scholastics as a whole disagree about most things, many scholastic philosophers work together to advance a single view. Hence, one philosopher’s scattered, obscure remarks on a topic can often be illuminated by another philosopher’s more detailed remarks on the same topic. In this way scholastic philosophy is more like contemporary philosophy than it is like canonical early modern philosophy. If one wanted to understand a contemporary philosophical view—four-dimensionalism, say—then the best procedure would be to read widely on four-dimensionalism, putting the picture together from a wide variety of authors, some of whom may not even endorse four-dimensionalism. The same procedure is called for when it comes to early modern scholasticism.

On many of the questions addressed in this project, there was a staggering array of views, and for each variation there were numerous advocates. A full treatment of all the relevant sources is simply not possible. My approach will be to focus on what I take to be the most philosophically interesting and historically important views. In each case, I attempt to locate and focus on authors who appear to be representative of those views or who explain those views in illuminating ways. This means that I will sometimes focus on the view of an author in one chapter or section only.

One of my methodological assumptions is that there was substantive and widespread agreement among contemporaneous scholastic philosophers about the meanings of technical terms. This assumption is, of course, defeasible. Typically, when there is disagreement about the meaning of a technical term, the disagreement is made explicit. Where there is agreement in content, but not in mode of expression, that too is often made explicit. For instance, after explaining the difference between transcendental and categorical relations, Rodrigo Arriaga observes,
Hurtado explains this difference in nearly the same way. I said “nearly” because, although he has the same opinion about the matter, he uses terms that allow him to form a good objection, as I shall now show.\(^22\)

In short, early modern scholastics tend to explain their disagreement over the meanings of technical terms. Where no such disagreement is made explicit, I assume agreement between authors. Where such disagreement is made explicit, I discuss how it might affect one’s understanding of the relevant topic (see, e.g., the discussion of denominations in chapter three).

What’s To Come

The dissertation is divided into two parts. Part I (chapters one through four) is about the theory of truthmaking old and new. I begin, in chapter one, by providing more details about the notion of truthmaking as it appears in the contemporary literature. This discussion provides a set of questions that I bring to the early modern scholastics. Recently there have been several attempts to locate theories of truthmaking in late medieval philosophy. In chapter two I evaluate some of these attempts. This will reveal some lines of influence between late medieval and early modern scholastic debates about truth and truthmaking, but it will primarily show that the notion of a truthmaker does not play a significant philosophical role in the late medieval period. In chapter three I show that for some early modern scholastics the theory of truthmaking falls out of certain theories of truth. In chapter four I spell out the account of truthmaking entailed by two theories of truth discussed in chapter three.

In Part II (chapters five to eight) I investigate ontological disputes about truthmakers for negative, tensed, and the so-called eternal truths, which were made famous by Descartes’s idiosyncratic handling of them. Chapter five is

\(^{22}\) Arriaga, *Cursus philosophicus*, Logic, d. 12, s. 2, n. 8, p. 145: “Ita fere explicat Hurtadus hanc differentiam supra §91. Dixi fere quia licet in re idem sententiat, terminis tamen occasionem dentibus solidae impugnationi utitur, ut statim ostendam.”
about truthmakers for negative truths. I show that some early modern scholastics posited irreducible negative entities to account for negative truths. Here I focus on the theory of negative entities developed by Thomas Compton Carleton. Carleton’s theory of negative entities is sophisticated and historically unprecedented. But I argue that Carleton ultimately fails to provide truthmakers for negative existential truths. In chapter five I also evaluate a position according to which positive entities make negative truths true. In order to overcome worries about undergeneration, advocates of this view resort to divine decrees. God’s decree that Peter not exist makes it true that Peter does not exist. As I will show, in order to make this view work, advocates are forced to draw a distinction between two kinds of decrees—positive and negative decrees. I will argue that the resulting view is structurally identical to a third view according to which negative truths are not made true by anything that exists. The latter view is endorsed by Francisco Peinado. I argue that Peinado provides a good reason to think that negative truths do not have existing truthmakers.

Chapter six is about tensed truths. I show that some early modern scholastics were eternalists—they thought that everything that exists in time also exists in “the eternal present.” Many contemporary philosophers claim that truthmaking for tensed truths is trivial for eternalists. It is therefore surprising that 17th-century eternalists do not appeal to eternalism as a solution to the problem of finding truthmakers for tensed truths. I argue that this is because truthmaking is in fact not trivial for eternalists. I also evaluate the 17th-century view that tensed truths are made true by present items. Advocates of this view locate truthmakers for tensed truths in God—either in divine decrees or in divine knowledge. I do not have a knock-down argument against this claim, but I do think that Francisco Peinado again offers a better account. Peinado extends the main lines of his thought about negative truths to tensed truths in order to show that tensed truths do not have existing truthmakers. I argue that Peinado’s account of truthmaking for tensed truths receives some prima facie support from
independently held doctrines. If Peinado’s account is defensible, he provides a good reason to call off the search for bits of reality responsible for the truth of tensed truths.

Chapter seven is about the so-called eternal truths—necessary truths about contingent things. Some early modern scholastics ground eternal truths in uninstantiated essences. I explain two ways this idea was developed in the 17th-century. Others thought that eternal truths are grounded in God. The primary problem with this view is that eternal truths do not seem to be about God. In chapter seven I also explain Peinado’s treatment of modal truths of the form ‘Possibly, p’. I argue that Peinado extends his treatment of negative and tensed truths to modal truths, thereby providing a good reason to think that truths of the form ‘Possibly, p’ do not have existing truthmakers. Between chapter seven and the conclusion, I include an excursus providing a synoptic view of Peinado’s account of truthmaking for negative, tensed, and modal truths.

The dissertation shows that early modern scholastics had a concept of truthmaking that is recognizable from the contemporary perspective. The early modern scholastic conceptions of truthmaking fall out of their conceptions of truth. This approach to truthmaking is largely foreign to the contemporary discussion, which often explicitly distances the theory of truthmaking from the theory of truth. But I think the early modern scholastic approach to truthmaking is the right one. As I will argue in chapter one, the contemporary approach to truthmaking leaves us unable to provide a principled answer to the question of which truths have truthmakers and which do not. The early modern scholastic approach to truthmaking, by way of a theory of truth, affords a way to break the contemporary stalemate between those who think that every truth has a truthmaker and those who think that some truths do not have truthmakers. Further, Peinado’s distinctive account of truthmaking provides a principled reason to deny that negative, tensed, and some modal truths have existing truthmakers. This is a philosophically important upshot of the project, since the
contemporary search for truthmakers for negative, tensed, and modal truths goes on.
PART I

1

TRUTHMAKING

The primary goal of the first part of the dissertation is to introduce the notion of a truthmaker and provide a detailed account of the early modern scholastic notion of a truthmaker. Before we tackle the early modern scholastic account of truthmaking, we must ask, what is an account of truthmaking? In order to grasp what questions an account of truthmaking should answer, I will begin with a survey of the main elements of contemporary truthmaker theory. The contemporary literature on truthmaker theory is voluminous; on almost every point one may find dissenters and alternatives. I cannot discuss all the disagreements and alternatives in great detail; my aim is to give a sense of how contemporary philosophers tend to think about truthmaking and, more importantly, to end with a list of questions, answers to which constitute an account of truthmaking. I will not attempt to answer these questions here, but I will return to them when I spell out the early modern scholastic account of truthmaking in chapter four. Although I will not attempt to answer the questions raised in this chapter, my discussion will not be wholly uncritical; I provide critical commentary where such commentary is needed to show that an issue has not been settled, contrary to some opinions.

1.1 Motivation

“For many, Truthmaking is a dogma.”¹

Going forward I will call the claim that truths have truthmakers ‘the truthmaker principle’. Why endorse the truthmaker principle? It is sometimes said that the

¹ Caplan and Sanson, “Presentism and Truthmaking,” 203.
truthmaker principle is motivated by a commitment to realism. This idea is expressed by John Bigelow:

I have sometimes tried to stop believing in the Truthmaker axiom. Yet I have never really succeeded. Without some such axiom, I find I have no adequate anchor to hold me from drifting onto the shoals of some sort of pragmatism or idealism. And that is altogether uncongenial to me; I am a congenital realist about almost everything.²

And David Armstrong writes, “My hope is that philosophers of realist inclinations will be immediately attracted to the idea that a truth, any truth, should depend for its truth [on] something ‘outside’ it, in virtue of which it is true.”³ Neither Bigelow nor Armstrong tell us how we are to understand realism, but presumably in this context realism about the F’s is the thesis that the F’s exist and have the properties they have independently of being the intentional objects of human cognitive activities. Bigelow and Armstrong seem to be committed to this sort of realism about anything about which there is a true proposition, and this realism seems to motivate their commitment to the truthmaker principle.

But there are several problems with the realist motivation for the truthmaker principle. In the first place, such a motivation would only be salient for realists like Bigelow and Armstrong. The truthmaker principle would therefore remain dialectically ineffective against anti-realists. Armstrong reports his initial attraction to the truthmaker principle as a way of arguing against phenomenalists who claim that “physical objects are constituted out of sense-data or sense impressions.”⁴ Phenomenalists of the sort Armstrong has in mind account for the persistence of unobserved physical objects by appeal to counterfactuals about what sort of perceptions would have occurred if the unobserved physical objects had been perceived. Against this view, Armstrong

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³ Armstrong, Truth and Truthmakers, 7.
⁴ Armstrong, Truth and Truthmakers, 1.
poses a challenge: what are the truthmakers of these counterfactuals? Phenomenalists apparently have trouble answering this question, and Armstrong takes this to show that phenomenalism (of the relevant sort) is defective. The truthmaker principle is a premise in Armstrong’s argument against phenomenalism, and the motivation for this premise is a realist commitment that begs the question against phenomenalism. Why should the phenomenalist accept the truthmaker principle? Armstrong’s answer is that the truthmaker principle is motivated by a prior commitment to realism, a commitment that the phenomenalist does not share. So Armstrong has given no reason for the phenomenalist, or the anti-realist more generally, to accept the truthmaker principle. Moreover, as several philosophers have pointed out, the truthmaker principle is neither necessary nor sufficient for realism. A phenomenalist of the sort described above might endorse the truthmaker principle and respond to Armstrong’s objection by admitting that there are no unobserved physical objects. Thus, the truthmaker principle is not sufficient for realism. And it seems clear that the truthmaker principle is not necessary for realism, since I might be a realist about, say, physical objects, without endorsing the truthmaker principle. So it seems the realist motivation for the truthmaker principle is not very compelling.

Cheater-catching is sometimes said to be another motivation for the truthmaker principle. Cheaters are those who endorse truths while refusing the ontological resources required to account for those truths. The truthmaker principle undergirds a rule that metaphysicians must follow: if you endorse a proposition as true, you must be prepared to provide its truthmaker. Those who break the rule are cheaters.

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6 Theodore Sider, Four-Dimensionalism, 36, 40; Merricks, Truth and Ontology, 4-5; Armstrong, Truth and Truthmakers, 1; Heil, “Truth Making and Entailment,” 231.
But the cheater-catching motivation seems subject to the same objection to which the realist motivation is subject. Suppose Armstrong’s phenomenalist opponent is told she is a cheater because she endorses truths for which she cannot provide truthmakers. What prevents her from simply denying that she is a cheater on the grounds that the truthmaker principle is false? The answer we are now considering is that the phenomenalist ought to accept the truthmaker principle because it helps catch cheaters. The phenomenalist is not likely to be moved by this consideration. To illustrate the problem, consider an analogous situation in which the tables are turned on the realist. Suppose that, with phenomenalism on the rise, the phenomenalist majority proposes the following phenomenalist principle:

**Phenomenalist principle:** Every physical object is constituted by sense data.

Why accept the phenomenalist principle? Because it helps catch cheaters, cheaters being those who accept the existence of a physical object but cannot point to the sense data that constitute that object. I hope it’s clear that realists are likely to be unmoved by this motivation for the phenomenalist principle, which seems to beg the question against the realist. Similarly, alleged cheaters are likely to reject the truthmaker principle for the same reason. In other words, in order to use cheater catching as a motivation for a principle, all parties to the dispute must agree on what constitutes cheating; but where this is precisely what is at issue, cheater catching is a dialectically ineffective motivation for any principle.

Perhaps it will be replied that I have missed the real point of the cheater-catching motivation. Perhaps the idea is that the truthmaker principle is motivated by the intuition that truth depends in a non-trivial way on being, that those who flout that intuition are cheaters, and that that intuition is best articulated by way of the truthmaker principle. On this understanding of the situation, the cheater-catching motivation and the intuition that truth depends in
a substantive way on being are “two sides of the same coin.” Because the intuition that truth depends on being in a substantive way does not beg the question against alleged cheaters, the above criticism does not apply.

The idea that the truthmaker principle is motivated primarily by the intuition that truth depends on being in a substantive way can indeed be found in the contemporary literature. Trenton Merricks reports the situation as follows (calling the truthmaker principle ‘Truthmaker’):

No one gives much of an argument for Truthmaker. Instead, Truthmaker’s main support comes from something like the brute intuition that what is true depends in a non-trivial way on what there is or the world or things or being. Truthmaker’s defenders then maintain that Truthmaker is the best way to articulate that dependence. This is Truthmaker’s primary motivation.

In a similar vein, Armstrong tells us that the truthmaker principle is “fairly obvious once attention is drawn to it.” And Rodriguez-Pereyra claims that the truthmaker principle is derived from the “plausible and compelling idea” that truth is grounded in reality.

I am sympathetic to the idea that truth depends in a substantive way on being, but I think this motivation for the truthmaker principle is subject to two problems. In the first place, intuitions are defeasible, and it is still open to opponents simply to reject the intuition that truth depends on being, perhaps in light of countervailing intuitions or arguments about ontology—phenomenalist intuitions or arguments, for example.

A second problem is that the truthmaker principle seems to overshoot the intuition that truth depends on being. Especially problematic are the implications of the truthmaker principle with respect to negative existential truths such as ‘Pegasus does not exist’. Intuitively, it is true that Pegasus does not exist simply

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7 See Merricks, *Truth and Ontology*, 2-5.
because Pegasus does not exist, not because something else does exist. As Julian Dodd aptly observes: “The demand for truthmakers for such propositions seems theoretically driven rather than intuitive.” 11 If this is correct, and I think it is, the upshot is that the truthmaker principle cannot be the best way to cash out our intuitions about truth’s dependence on being, since the truthmaker principle actually runs counter to those intuitions.

In response to the problem of negative truths, some truthmaker theorists posit exotic entities, such as absences, negative facts, or higher-order totality facts, to account for negative truths. 12 Others argue that more mundane entities, such as the world, are capable of acting as truthmakers for negative truths. 13 Successful or not, these strategies remain theoretically driven rather than intuitive. The only intuitively acceptable response to the problem of negative truths seems to be restriction of the truthmaker principle: only positive truths need truthmakers.

Yet restriction of the truthmaker principle is widely rejected in the contemporary literature. George Molnar calls restriction of the truthmaker principle “the way of ontological frivolousness” and “truly desperate.” 14 Ross Cameron thinks it is unacceptably ad hoc:

Either there’s something wrong with accepting truths that don’t have an ontological grounding or there isn’t: if there is, then every truth requires a grounding; if there isn’t, then no truth requires a grounding. Truthmaker theory is a theory about what it is for a proposition to be true; it’s not the kind of theory that can apply only in a restricted domain. What possible reason could one have for thinking of some propositions that they need to be grounded in what there is that doesn’t apply to all

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12 For the postulation of absences see Martin, “How It Is: Entities, Absences, and Voids”; for negative facts see Barker and Jago, “Being Positive about Negative Facts”; for higher-order totality facts see Armstrong, Truth and Truthmakers, 53-83.
propositions? Why should it be okay for negative truths to go ungrounded and not okay for positive truths to go ungrounded?\textsuperscript{15}

And Trenton Merricks raises a slippery slope objection against restricting the truthmaker principle:

\textsl{[\ldots] the only reason to scale back Truthmaker to exempt negative existentials is that there do not seem to be truthmakers for negative existentials. Truthmaker theorists who proceed in this way have no principled objection to the cheater who, when confronted with her own apparently truthmakerless truths, scales back Truthmaker accordingly. For this cheater is simply adopting the strategy of the timid truthmaker theorist, concluding that since there do not seem to be any truthmakers for a certain kind of truth, none are required.}\textsuperscript{16}

Cameron and Merricks think that restricting the truthmaker principle takes the teeth out of truthmaker theory. Once we allow one restriction, what’s to prevent further restrictions? Perhaps tensed truths do not have truthmakers. Perhaps modal truths do not have truthmakers. Perhaps truths about unobserved physical objects do not have truthmakers. And so on.

The worries of Cameron and Merricks might seem to be justified by the following reflections. The problem of negative truths arises in light of the thought that ‘Pegasus does not exist’ is true because Pegasus does not exist. The ‘because’ here does not express partial explanation: Pegasus’s failure to exist \textit{fully} explains the truth of ‘Pegasus does not exist’. That is why, intuitively, we do not need to posit some other entity to explain the truth of ‘Pegasus does not exist’. Now the same line of thought seems to apply to tensed existentials like ‘Pegasus will exist’. Suppose it’s true that Pegasus will exist. It seems we can repeat the above line of argument. ‘Pegasus will exist’ is true because Pegasus will exist. This is a full, not a partial, explanation. Hence, there is no need to posit presently existing thing to account for the truth of ‘Pegasus will exist’. Nor do we need to

\textsuperscript{15} Cameron, “How to be a Truthmaker Maximalist,” 411-12. Cf. Mumford, “Negative Truth and Falsehood,” 49. In “Truthmakers” (§5), Cameron rescinds the claim that truthmaker theory is a theory about what it is to be true.

\textsuperscript{16} Merricks, \textit{Truth and Ontology}, 40.
posit Pegasus. The above explanation seems presentist friendly insofar as it merely requires that Pegasus will exist, not that Pegasus does exist in some eternalist fashion. Hence, tensed existentials, like negative existentials, do not require truthmakers. Perhaps the same line of argument can also be extended to modal existentials like ‘Pegasus can exist’. As it turns out, some early modern scholastics wanted to restrict the truthmaker principle for precisely these reasons.17 But the above line of thought seems to justify the worries of Cameron and Merricks: once we begin restricting the truthmaker principle, where do we stop?

Here someone might respond that tensed truth and modal truths (and truths about unobserved physical objects) are disanalogous to negative truths. We can explain the truth of negative truths by appeal to the logic of negation and the truth values of positive propositions, but no such explanation is forthcoming with respect to tensed truths, modal truths, and truths about unobserved physical objects. As we shall see, several early modern scholastics were sympathetic to this line of response to the Cameron-Merricks worry, but they thought it could extend to tensed and modal truths as well. At any rate, this line of response to the Cameron-Merricks worry helps us to see what is required of someone who wishes to restrict the truthmaker principle: she must provide a principled reason why some truths need truthmakers and others do not.

The important point to take away from this section is that there seems to be an open question in the contemporary literature on truthmaking: which truths need truthmakers, which do not, and why? In my view the distinctive early modern scholastic approach to truthmaking illuminates this question considerably.

17 The early modern scholastic view I have in mind is more nuanced than I suggest here. The nuances will be brought out in chapters five through seven.
1.2 A “Cross-Categorial” Relation

It remains to review some of the parameters for a theory of truthmaking. Truthmaker theorists often speak of ‘the truthmaker relation’, by which they mean the relation expressed by ‘…makes true___’ or ‘…makes it true that___’. What sort of relation is this? In the first place, the truthmaker relation is said to be cross-categorial in that it obtains between items of different ontological categories. For instance, one might think that truthmakers are concrete physical objects such as Obama, while truth-bearers are abstract objects such as propositions. There is of course much disagreement about the nature of truth-bearers: they might be propositions, sentences, sets, mental items, etc. Most contemporary truthmaker theorists conceive of truth-bearers as abstract propositions, while most early modern scholastics conceive of truth-bearers as mental states. For the purposes of this chapter, I do not need to take a stand on the nature of truth-bearers, although for simplicity I will speak of truth-bearers as being propositions. In any case, for most contemporary truthmaker theorists, whatever the truth-bearers turn out to be, they are or can be different in kind from truthmakers. Hence, the truthmaker relation is often said to be cross-categorial. As we shall see, the early modern scholastics are aware of the fact that truths and truthmakers often belong to different ontological categories, and they would agree that truthmaking is “cross-categorial.”

As far as I can tell, most if not all contemporary truthmaker theorists assume that there is one type of truthmaker relation. Yet it seems in principle possible that there should be several types of truthmaker relations—i.e., that there should be a variety of ways in which worldly goings on can serve as grounds for truths.

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18 See Armstrong, *Truth and Truthmakers*, Ch. 1; Rodriguez-Pereyra, “Truthmakers,” 188.
20 Of course a truth-bearer might make-true another truth-bearer. For example, the proposition that a dairy product orbits the earth makes it true that there is a proposition. Moreover, one might reject the claim that the truthmaking relation is cross-categorial if one had an identity theory of truth. Evaluation of the identity theory of truth is beyond the scope of my project. For a sample identity theory, see Dodd, *An Identity Theory of Truth*. 
Indeed, towards the end of the 17th-century some early modern scholastics begin to draw a distinction between two types of truthmaking, as I will explain in chapter four.

1.3 Necessitation

The truthmaker relation is often said to be a necessitation relation. If \( T \) is a truthmaker for ‘\( p \)’, then \( T \) is said to necessitate the truth of ‘\( p \)’.

I will call the claim that truthmakers necessitate truths “Necessitation”. There is some debate in the contemporary literature about how to formulate the idea that truthmakers necessitate truths, and in this section I will explain three of the options. There is a further debate about whether Necessitation is sufficient or even necessary for truthmaking, and I will discuss these debates below. When I say that Necessitation is sufficient for truthmaking I mean that if \( T \) necessitates the truth of ‘\( p \)’, then \( T \) is a truthmaker for ‘\( p \)’; conversely, when I say that Necessitation is necessary for truthmaking I mean that if \( T \) is the truthmaker for ‘\( p \)’, then \( T \) necessitates the truth of ‘\( p \)’. For now I want to assume that the truthmaker relation is a necessitation relation. I will subject this assumption to some criticism below. But in order for the criticism to make sense, I must spell out what exactly necessitation amounts to.

The first way to formulate Necessitation I call “Necessitation as Entailment”:

\[
\text{Necessitation as Entailment: } \ T \text{ necessitates the truth of ‘} p \text{’ } =_{df} \ ‘T \text{ exists’ entails ‘} p \text{’}. \]

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It is important to note that Necessitation as Entailment is supposed to provide an analysis of what it is for a something to necessitate a truth; it is not supposed to be an analysis of truthmaking itself. However, it is also supposed to elucidate the truthmaker relation insofar as what it is to make a proposition true is supposed to be (at least partly) a matter of necessitating the truth of ‘p’.

Some philosophers reject Necessitation as Entailment because they say it fails to elucidate the truthmaker relation. The truthmaker relation obtains between propositions and things that are not propositions, whereas the entailment relation obtains strictly between propositions. Since the truthmaker relation is not an entailment relation, neither is the relevant necessitation relation. To be sure, Necessitation as Entailment might express a formal correlate of the truthmaker relation, or it might express a necessary condition on truthmaking, but some philosophers reject it as an explanation or partial explanation of the truthmaker relation itself.\textsuperscript{23}

This leads to our next formulation:

\textbf{Absolute Necessitation}: T necessitates the truth of ‘p’ $=_{df}$ Necessarily, if T exists, then ‘p’ is true.\textsuperscript{24}

Absolute Necessitation does not have the problems of Necessitation as Entailment, but some have found other problems with it. Trenton Merricks worries that Absolute Necessitation commits one to Platonism about propositions.\textsuperscript{25} Consider a world that contains a golden sphere but no mental lives. Since the golden sphere makes it true that there is a golden sphere, the


\textsuperscript{25} Merricks, \textit{Truth and Ontology}, 5-7.
golden sphere necessitates the truth of ‘There is a golden sphere’. It follows, according to Absolute Necessitation, that, necessarily, if the golden sphere exists, then ‘There is a golden sphere’ is true. So the world with the golden sphere must contain at least one proposition, the proposition that there is a golden sphere, although it contains no mental lives. It is hard to see what that proposition could be but an abstract object. Those who are averse to such things might prefer Merricks’s own formulation of Necessitation:

**Conditional Necessitation:** $T$ necessitates the truth of ‘$p$’ $=$df Necessarily, if $T$ and ‘$p$’ exist, then ‘$p$’ is true.

Conditional Necessitation avoids the supposed pitfalls of both Absolute Necessitation and Necessitation as Entailment. Moreover, Conditional Necessitation collapses to Absolute Necessitation on the supposition that propositions are necessary objects. So Conditional Necessitation accommodates but does not require Platonism about propositions, and in that sense it is more ecumenical than Absolute Necessitation.

### 1.3.1 Alleged Problems With Necessitation

Although most truthmaker theorists endorse the claim that truthmakers necessitate truths, not all do. Jonathan Schaffer, for example, presents the following three arguments against the claim that the truthmaker relation is a necessitation relation:

[N]ecessitation is the wrong sort of relation to express the dependence of truth on being, for three reasons. First, necessitation is an intensional relation. As such, it does not distinguish any necessary truths – indeed, every proposition will

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26 Another option is to say that a world with no mental lives is impossible, since God is a necessary being, and God necessarily has a mental life.

27 Merricks, *Truth and Ontology*, 7; Smith and Brogaard endorse a similar analysis of Necessitation in “A Unified Theory of Truth and Reference,” 49.
necessitate every necessary truth. There are substantive truthmaking issues for necessary truths. For instance, there are substantive issues concerning the fundamental grounds for mathematical truths. A necessitation requirement would trivialize such issues. Secondly, necessitation is reflexive and non-asymmetric [sic], while dependence is irreflexive and asymmetric. Necessitation is a relation of modal co-variation, holding between a set of worlds and a superset. It is not a relation of ontological dependence. Thirdly, necessitation is a relation between propositions.28

In sum, Schaffer’s three complaints are: (i) necessitation is not fine-grained enough to do the work of truthmaking; (ii) necessitation, construed as a relation, does not have the formal properties desired in a truthmaking relation; and (iii) necessitation is a relation between propositions, whereas truthmaking is a relation between propositions and non-propositions.

I don’t find any of these arguments compelling. Moreover, I will argue in chapter four that the standard account of truthmaking for early modern scholastics includes commitment to the idea that truthmakers necessitate truths, where necessitation is understood as Conditional Necessitation. In order to leave conceptual space for this commitment, I will now argue that Schaffer’s objections to Necessitation are unconvincing.

As we have just seen, Schaffer’s first complaint is that the truthmaking relation is not a necessitation relation because anything whatsoever necessitates every necessary truth. To see why, suppose our definition of necessitation is given by Conditional Necessitation. Nothing hinges on this choice, and the argument can be run on the other definitions of necessitation. Consider a necessary truth ‘n’. Necessarily, if my left thumb exists and ‘n’ exists, then ‘n’ is true. According to Conditional Necessitation, then, my left thumb necessitates ‘n’. This argument can be run on any entity and any necessary truth. Hence, any entity necessitates any necessary truth. An account of truthmaking according to which anything can make any necessary proposition true would trivialize

Truthmakers

truthmaking with respect to necessary truths.

This shows that necessitation is not sufficient for truthmaking, but it does not show that necessitation is not necessary for truthmaking. Our account of truthmaking might look something like this:

\[ T \text{ makes } 'p' \text{ true } =_{df} T \text{ necessitates the truth of } 'p' \text{ and } ... \]

The second conjunct on the right hand side of the schema might then be designed to rule out trivial truthmakers for necessary truths. So Schaffer’s argument shows that the truthmaking relation is not a mere necessitation relation, but it does not show that truthmakers do not necessitate truths. Schaffer says, “there are substantive issues concerning the fundamental grounds for mathematical truths. A necessitation requirement would trivialize such issues.” But this last remark is simply false. What would trivialize the issues concerning the grounds of necessary truths would be an account of truthmaking according to which necessitation is sufficient for truthmaking, not an account on which necessitation is a requirement for truthmaking.

Schaffer complains secondly that a necessitation relation does not have the formal properties suitable for the truthmaking relation. Necessitation is reflexive and “non-asymmetric”\(^{29}\) when what we want (apparently) is a relation that is irreflexive and asymmetric. However, it is open to a truthmaker theorist to define her truthmaker relation as she chooses, and there is no reason to think that she must define it in such a way that it is reflexive and “non-asymmetric,” even if truthmakers necessitate truths. Remember that the truthmaker relation is expressed by locutions of the form ‘...makes true___’. One could build it into the definition of this relation that its second \textit{relatum} is always a proposition. In that case, truthmaking would not be reflexive, for although Fido necessitates the truth of ‘Fido exists’, Fido cannot necessitate the truth of himself. So there is no reason

\(^{29}\) I assume that a relation is non-asymmetric if and only if it is non-symmetric.
to think that the truthmaker relation must be reflexive, even granting Necessitation.

Moreover, Schaffer seems to want the truthmaker relation to be irreflexive and asymmetric. But these properties do not seem suitable for the truthmaking relation. Truthmaking should not be irreflexive because a proposition might make itself true: the proposition, ‘There is a proposition’ might make itself true. And truthmaking should not be asymmetric for similar reasons: ‘There is a proposition’ makes it true that there is a proposition about propositions, and ‘There is a proposition about propositions’ makes it true that there is a proposition. Hence, we need a truthmaker relation that is non-reflexive and non-symmetric, and an irreflexive, asymmetric relation will not do. So it seems that Schaffer’s second argument about the formal properties of the necessitation ‘relation’ is also off the mark.

Finally, Schaffer claims that necessitation is a relation between propositions. (Two sentences above this claim, Schaffer says that necessitation is a relation between sets of worlds and superset, thereby suggesting that sets of worlds and supersets are propositions.) But Schaffer offers no reason to think that necessitation is a relation strictly between propositions. I conclude that Schaffer’s arguments against Necessitation are unconvincing. This is a happy result for the early modern scholastic conception of truthmaking, for on that conception truthmakers necessitate truths. More on this in chapter four.

### 1.4 Many-many

Truthmaker theorists tend to agree that the truthmaker relation is ‘many-many’. The locution ‘many-many’ is infelicitous in this context because it brings to mind the idea of a relation that holds between pluralities: many things related to many things. But that is not what truthmaker theorists mean when they say

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that the truthmaker relation is many-many, as can be seen by considering the fact that propositions are made true individually, and they are often made true by individual things, not by pluralities. So the truthmaker relation is not many-many in the sense that its relata are pluralities. What ‘many-many’ means in this context is most easily grasped by way of example.

First, Truthmaker theorists observe that one truthmaker can make true many propositions taken individually (henceforth I drop the qualification ‘taken individually’). If T makes ‘p’ true, then T also makes ‘p ∨ q’ true. The point here is that there is no need to posit unique truthmakers for ‘p’ and ‘p ∨ q’; the truthmaker for a disjunct is the truthmaker for the disjunction.31

Second, many entities taken individually can make a single proposition true. For example, Silas, Andi, and Lucy each make it true that there is a human. In general, whatever makes it true that a is F also makes it true that something is F. As Mulligan, Simons, and Smith point out, atomic singular propositions can have many truthmakers.32 An atomic singular proposition is a proposition free of logical connectives (hence ‘atomic’) and about a concrete individual (hence ‘singular’). Some atomic singular propositions are determinable in the sense that they can be made true in a variety of ways, and sometimes they are made true in more than one way at the same time. An example from Mulligan, Simons, and Smith is the proposition ‘Sue has hepatitis’, which can be true because Sue has hepatitis A and because Sue has hepatitis B. So this is another case in which one proposition has many truthmakers.

Finally, there are some cases in which many things taken together make a proposition true. ‘There are n humans’ is made true by all the humans (all n of them) taken together; no human individually makes it true that there are n humans (for n > 1).

31 For critical discussion of this point, see Restall, “Truthmakers, Entailment, and Necessity”; Read, “Truthmakers and the Disjunction Thesis.”
To accommodate this last sort of case, in which a plurality of things are truthmakers for a single truth, we must now revise the above formulations of Necessitation, which are stated in the singular and thereby assume that necessitation does not hold between a plurality on the one hand and a single proposition on the other. It is easy to remedy this deficiency. For instance, return to Conditional Necessitation:

**Conditional Necessitation:** $T$ necessitates the truth of $'p'$ =df Necessarily, if $T$ and $'p$ exist, then $'p'$ is true.

To allow pluralities to necessitate truths, let $\Gamma$ be a collection of one or more things, and replace $T$ in Conditional Necessitation with $\Gamma$. The revised formulation reads:

$\Gamma$ necessitates the truth of $'p'$ = df Necessarily, if $\Gamma$ and $'p$ exist, then $'p'$ is true.

For simplicity, I will continue to speak of single objects necessitating the truth of single propositions. As can be seen, however, such talk can easily be translated into the appropriate number-sensitive language.

In light of the cases presented above, it is best not to say that the truthmaker relation is many-many. Perhaps it would be better to say that the truthmaker relation is of variable addicity. But the important point is that truths and truthmakers are not generally paired off one-one. Thus far we have seen that the truthmaker relation is supposed to be a cross-categorial necessitation relation of variable addicity.
1.5 Relevance

Some philosophers think that cross-categorical necessitation is not sufficient for truthmaking. If it were, anything would make true any necessary truth. Moreover, as Greg Restall has argued, given the Disjunction Thesis, anything would make true any truth, necessary or contingent.

**Disjunction Thesis:** For any truthmaker T, if T makes it true that \( p \lor q \), then T makes it true that \( p \) or T makes it true that \( q \).

Consider any disjunction \( 'p \lor \neg p' \) with one true disjunct. We suppose that a truth of the form \( 'p \lor \neg p' \) is necessarily true. Hence, every thing whatsoever necessitates the truth of \( 'p \lor \neg p' \), and if necessitation were sufficient for truthmaking, every thing would make it true that \( 'p \lor \neg p' \). By the Disjunction Thesis, for any truthmaker T, T makes \( 'p' \) true or T makes \( '\neg p' \) true. So if \( 'p' \) is true (and \( '\neg p' \) is false), then any truthmaker T makes \( 'p' \) true (likewise if \( '\neg p' \) is true and \( 'p' \) is false). Obviously enough, this is a problem for truthmaking conceived merely as Necessitation, for my left thumb does not make it true that it is raining, presumably because my left thumb is irrelevant to the truth that it is raining. Call this the ‘Relevance Problem’.

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33 Many philosophers have emphasized the insufficiency of Necessitation for truthmaking. See, e.g., Cameron, “Truthmakers”§1; Restall, “Truthmakers, Entailment, and Necessity,” 333; Forrest and Khlentzos, “Introduction: Truth Maker and Its Variants,” 9; Rodriguez-Pereyra, “Truthmaking, Entailment, and the Conjunction Thesis,” 959; and the authors noted below in this section.


35 Proof: suppose our understanding of Necessitation is Absolute Necessitation. For any T, necessarily, if T exists, then \( 'p \lor \neg p' \) is true (since \( 'p \lor \neg p' \) is necessarily true). Hence, T necessitates \( 'p \lor \neg p' \).

36 Bigelow raises the relevance problem but does not offer a solution (The Reality of Numbers, 126). See also Rodriguez-Pereyra, “Truthmakers,” 187; Cameron, “Truthmakers,” §1.
Armstrong addresses a version of the Relevance Problem. He endorses the following Entailment Principle as a valid rule of inference:

(1) T makes ‘p’ true.
(2) ‘p’ entails* ‘q’.
(3) Therefore, T makes ‘q’ true.37

Armstrong’s Entailment Principle is supposed to help capture the idea that one truthmaker is often sufficient for multiple truths. Thus if something makes ‘p’ true, then it also makes ‘p \lor q’ true, since ‘p’ entails ‘p \lor q’. However, the Entailment Principle has problems. Every proposition classically entails every necessary truth, so if the Entailment Principle features classical entailment, it follows that the truthmaker for any proposition ‘p’ is a truthmaker for every necessary truth. (Proof: T makes ‘p’ true. ‘p’ classically entails any necessary truth ‘n’. By the entailment principle, T makes ‘n’ true.) Armstrong agrees that this will not do. The reason: “I am hoping to provide relevant truthmakers for all truths.”38 In response to the Relevance Problem, Armstrong puts an asterisk after ‘entails’ in the Entailment Principle, thereby signifying that he does not mean classical entailment but something else. What sort of entailment does he mean? Armstrong is not sure, but he suggests narrowing the scope of the entailment principle to “purely contingent” propositions. A purely contingent proposition is either a contingent atomic proposition or a molecular proposition built solely out of contingent atomic propositions (and logical connectives). Armstrong’s strategy here is to endorse the entailment principle and simply stipulate that it does not apply to the troublesome propositions. Note that if this is the strategy, there is no reason to abandon classical entailment in the Entailment Principle. Simply use classical entailment and limit the scope of its application. Whatever the merits of

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Truthmakers

this strategy for fixing the Entailment Principle, it will not fix the Relevance Problem—the problem that truthmaking construed as mere necessitation allows for trivial truthmakers—since that problem is independent of the Entailment Principle. This can be seen from the fact that my left thumb necessitates ‘It is raining or it is not raining’, entailment principle or no.

Broadly speaking, there are two responses to the Relevance Problem. One response is to deny that it is a problem. David Lewis, for example, suggests that anything is a trivial truthmaker for every necessary truth.39 Another response is to beef up the account of truthmaking by saying that truths must be about their truthmakers.40 According to this view, truthmaking is a cross-categorial necessitation relation subject to some kind of relevance constraint. As Barry Smith says, “A truthmaker for a given judgment must be [that] which the judgment is about, must satisfy some relevance constraint.”41 The relevance constraint explains why my left thumb does not make it true that ‘It is raining or it is not raining’, since that proposition is not about my left thumb. In favor of this view, we may note against Lewis that as a rule it is not plausible that necessary truths generally have only trivial truthmakers. As Merricks points out, some necessary truths might have non-trivial truthmakers. Suppose God exists. Then ‘God exists’, a necessary truth, has a non-trivial truthmaker.42 Of course, this argument can be run with any necessary being, including propositions, properties, and sets, if there are such things. So it seems that the truthmaker relation should be subject to a relevance constraint. As we shall see, early modern scholastics think that truths are about their truthmakers, and they even identify truthmakers with the intentional objects of true propositions.

41 Smith, “Truthmaker Realism,” 279.
42 Merricks, Truth and Ontology, 25.
1.7 Summing Up

Our survey of contemporary truthmaker theory raises a number of questions we may bring to the early modern scholastics. Which truths require truthmakers and which do not and why? What sort of relation is the truthmaking relation? Is it a relation at all? Is truthmaking ‘many-many’? Must truthmakers be relevant to the truths they make true? In chapter three I return to these questions and spell out a prevalent early modern scholastic account of truthmaking. Before that, however, I turn in chapter two to the medieval pre-history of the concept of a truthmaker.
Medieval Background

The notion of a truthmaker—of a portion of reality in virtue of which a truth-bearer is true—is of course not new, not even to the 17th-century. As Armstrong correctly notes, “the notion of a truthmaker may be traced right back to Aristotle.” 1 Armstrong has in mind the following passage from Aristotle’s *Categories*:

> If there is a man, the statement whereby we say that there is a man is true, and reciprocally—since if the statement whereby we say that there is a man is true, there is a man. And whereas the true statement is in no way the cause of the actual thing’s existence, the actual thing does seem in some way the cause of the statement’s being true; it is because the actual thing exists or does not that the statement is called true or false. 2

Although this passage is short on detail, it clearly expresses the idea of a portion of reality in virtue of which a truth-bearer is true. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that the notion of a truthmaker may also be found in medieval philosophy. Indeed, several scholars have recently claimed to find the notion of a truthmaker and sometimes even a sophisticated theory of truthmaking in medieval philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas, Boethius of Dacia, Adam Wodeham, Gregory of Rimini, and Walter Chatton. Some of these attributions are legitimate, but others are dubious. In this chapter I briefly discuss five medieval sources purported to express the idea of a truthmaker or even a theory of truthmaking. The main purpose of doing so is to locate genuine appearances of the notion of a truthmaker in late medieval philosophy and to reveal probable lines of influence between late medieval and early modern discussions of truthmaking. This chapter will also show that the appearance of the notion of a truthmaker on the

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1 Armstrong, *Truth and Truthmakers*, 4
2 Aristotle, *Categories*, 14b22, translated by Ackrill. See also *Categories*, 4b8.
17th-century philosophical scene is more unexpected than some medieval historians might otherwise suppose.

Before proceeding I should say something about what it takes to have a theory of truthmaking. For the purposes of this project, I take a theory of truthmaking to provide answers to the questions canvassed at the end of chapter one. Roughly, a theory of truthmaking ought to say something illuminating about the truthmaking relation (or relations), it ought to tell us what truths have truthmakers and which do not, and it ought to provide a rational for the strength of its truthmaker principle. If it says that all truths have truthmakers, it ought to provide a reason for thinking so. If it says that only some truths have truthmakers, it ought to provide a reason for thinking so.

2.1 Correspondence and Aquinas

In chapters three and four I argue that the early modern scholastic account of truthmaking is entailed by a certain conception of truth that could fairly be called a correspondence theory. As is well known, however, the correspondence theory of truth is not new in the 17th-century: arguably, it can be traced back to Aristotle, and it can certainly be found in Aquinas, who is well known for propagating the slogan, truth is the “adequation of intellect and thing.” But if the correspondence theory entails an account of truthmaking, and if the correspondence theory can be found already in the middle ages, then one wonders whether an account of truthmaking cannot be found even in medieval philosophers, such as Aquinas, who endorse a correspondence theory of truth.

Perhaps encouraged by Aquinas’s correspondence theory of truth, several scholars have recently become interested in what Aquinas would have or should

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3 QDV q. 1, a. 1, resp. (XXII, 6.168); QDV q. 1, a. 3, resp. (XXII, 10.27); SCG I, ch. 59, n. 2 (XIII, 167). For more on Aquinas’s theory of truth, see Boehner, “Ockham’s Theory of Truth,” 151-156; Owens, “Judgment and Truth in Aquinas”; Wippel, “Truth in Thomas Aquinas”; Wippel, “Truth in Thomas Aquinas, Part II”.

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have said about truthmakers for this or that sort of truth. But I would urge caution here: not every correspondence theory of truth entails a commitment to a particular account of truthmaking. The label, “correspondence theory of truth” is used, broadly speaking, to denote any theory of truth according to which truth consists in a characteristic relation of correspondence between a truth-bearer and reality. The idea that truth is correspondence has been spelled out in a wide variety of ways. The label “correspondence theory of truth” is therefore best understood as applying to a family of loosely related theories of truth. It is possible to endorse a correspondence theory of truth without saying exactly which member of the family one has in mind, and it is by no means guaranteed that each member of the family harbors the notion of a truthmaker. We may illustrate these points with examples, beginning with Aquinas himself.

In addition to saying that truth is an “adequatio” between a mind and a thing, Aquinas also describes truth as ‘concordia’, ‘convenientia’, ‘commensuratio’, and ‘conformitas’. It is therefore safe to conclude that Aquinas takes himself to endorse a correspondence theory of truth. Unfortunately, Aquinas offers little in the way of explaining what it is for an intellect and a thing to be “adequated.” It is clear that Aquinas endorses a correspondence theory of truth, but it is not

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5 Here I follow David, “The Correspondence Theory of Truth”.

6 QDV q. 1, a. 1 (XXII, 3ff); q. 1, a. 5 (XXII, 15ff).

7 Aquinas makes some passing remarks about adequation and conformity in the context of discussions that are not about truth at all. In In I Sent. 19.1.2, p. 464, Aquinas explains that ‘adequari’ means to become similar to something with respect to quantity, and in In I Sent. 48.1.1, p. 1080, he says that “conformity is agreement in form, and so it is the same as similarity, which is caused by unity of quality.” In his discussion of truth, Aquinas sometimes suggests that adequation is similarity (ST I, q. 16, a. 2, resp. [IV, 208]; QDV q. 1, a. 5, ad 2 [XXII, 19.276]). But similarity with respect to quality cannot be sufficient for truth, otherwise every intellect would be trivially true based on its qualitative similarity with other intellects (which are also things). Elsewhere Aquinas suggests that adequation is explicable in terms of subsentential signification relations (ST I, q. 13, a. 12 [IV, 164]). I am indebted to Gloria Frost’s dissertation, Thomas Aquinas on Necessary Truths About Contingent Beings for the first two references in this footnote.
entirely clear how that theory goes. Consequently, it is hard to know what ontological implications his correspondence theory of truth has. The inference from ‘Aquinas endorses a correspondence theory of truth’ to ‘Aquinas has a theory of truthmaking’ is therefore a bit too quick.

To be sure, Aquinas often strongly suggests that every truth has a truthmaker. For instance, consider the following texts, all of which come from a relatively early work, Disputed Questions on Truth:

For every true understanding there must correspond some being, and vice versa.\(^8\)

Similarly also, truth that is caused in the soul by things, does not follow the judgment of the soul, but the existence of things. For from the fact that a thing is or is not, an utterance is called true or false. Similarly with the understanding.\(^9\)

A judgment is called “true” when it is adequated to that which is outside in the thing.\(^10\)

These texts suggest that for Aquinas every truth has a truthmaker. Further, Aquinas sometimes says that truth is caused by the being of a thing.\(^11\) This sort of claim lends further support to the idea that Aquinas has a theory of truthmaking. His view seems to be that truth is caused by things. Causation being a kind of making, it looks like he thinks that truths are made true by things.

Aquinas may well be committed to something like a truthmaker theory, but, in spite of the suggestive texts, it is not at all obvious that he is. Aquinas tells us very little about the conformity relation constitutive of truth, and he does not tell us what it means for something to be the cause of truth. While the above

\(^8\) *QDV* q. 1, a. 2, ad 1 (XXII, 10.133): “Cuilibet intellectui vero oportet quod respondeat aliquod ens, et e converso.”

\(^9\) *QDV* q. 1, a. 2, ad 3 (XXII, 10.141): “Similiter et veritas quae est in anima causata a rebus, non sequitur aestimationem animae, sed existentiam rerum ‘quoniam eo quod res est vel non est, dicitur oratio vera vel falsa’ similiter et intellectus.”

\(^10\) *QDV* q. 1, a. 3 (XXII, 11.41): “Sed quando adaequatur ei quod est extra in re, dicitur iudicium verum.”

\(^11\) *QDV* q. 1, a. 2, ad 3 (XXII, 10.141); *ST* I, q. 16, a. 1, ad 3 (IV, 207); In *Meta.* IX.11, 1898-9.
quotations suggest that for Aquinas every truth has a truthmaker, in nearby texts Aquinas explicitly rejects that idea. For example, he writes:

In this adequation or commensuration of understanding and thing, it is not required that each of the extremes [intellect and thing] actually exists.12

The reason Aquinas gives for the foregoing is that we can form true judgments about the future, which does not yet exist. Aquinas makes the same point with respect to truths about non-beings.13 Further, Aquinas also says that non-beings can “cause” truth.14 In light of such claims, it becomes unclear indeed how Aquinas is thinking of the relations of conformity and causation between things and truth.

The ontological implications of Aquinas’s theory of truth become even more murky when we consider his doctrine of being. In a recent book, Aquinas on Being, Anthony Kenny finds no less than 12 distinct kinds of being in the Thomistic corpus, including such shadowy kinds of being as intentional being, fictional being, possible being, and predicative being (a sort of being said to “signify the truth of a proposition”).15 If every truth corresponds to some kind of being, we are led by Aquinas’s labyrinthine doctrine of being to wonder, to what kind of being does truth correspond? There are problems lurking here. Aquinas thinks that anything about which we can form a judgment counts as a being.16 Thus even non-existents can be called beings insofar as we can form true judgment about them. This seems to be the idea behind Aquinas’s claim that

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12 QDV q. 1, a. 5 (XXII, 18.200): “In hac autem adaequatione vel commensuratione intellectus ac rei non requiritur quod utrumque extremorum sit in actu.”
13 QDV q. 1, a. 5, ad 2 (XXII, 19.301). For commentary on this passage, see Wasserman, “Thomas Aquinas on Truths About Nonbeings”.
14 QDV q. 1, a. 8, ad 7 (XXII, 29).
15 Kenny, Aquinas on Being. For a discussion on predicative being, see 56-57.
16 De ente, ch. 1 (XLIII, 370): “Sciendum est igitur quod, sicut in V Metaphysice philosophus dicit, ens per se dicitur dupliciter: uno modo quod dividitur per decem genera, alio modo quod significat propositionum veritatem. Horum autem differentia est quia secundo modo potest dici ens omne illud, de quo affirmativa propositio formari potest, etiam si illud in re nichil ponat.” See also SCG III, ch. 9 (XXIV, 22) and QDV q. 1, a. 1, ad 7 (XXII, 7.259).
non-beings can cause truth. But if the intentional object of any judgment is a being, it follows trivially that for every true judgment there corresponds some being (and, we may add, that for every false judgment there corresponds some being). Thus the ontological implications of Aquinas’s theory of truth get washed out by his doctrine of being, according to which everything we can think about is ipso facto a being.

It is a central tenet of truthmaker theory that portions of reality are explanatorily prior to truth, but in at least one passage Aquinas seems to suggest that something can be called a being because we can form a true proposition about it:

That which is past even now is [iam est] in some way. I say this insofar as it is done or past. For although the life of Caesar is not now as in the present, it is nonetheless in the past, for it is true that Caesar lived.

On a natural reading of this passage, Aquinas appears to be saying that Caesar is now a being [iam est] because it is true that Caesar lived [Verum enim est Caesarem vixisse]. Alternative readings might be available for this passage, and for my purposes I do not need to defend the claim that for Aquinas some truths are in fact explanatorily prior to some beings; my point is merely that this view is not ruled out by the above claims to the effect that for every truth there corresponds some being. Therefore, from the claim that for every truth there corresponds some being it simply does not follow that every truth has a truthmaker, or that Aquinas was committed to a theory of truthmaking.

Granting Aquinas’s claim that “For every true intellect it must be the case that there corresponds some being,” nothing about truthmaking follows because Aquinas does not specify what sort of being he has in mind, nor does he specify

17 QDV q. 1, a. 8, ad 7 (XXII, 29).
the direction of explanatory priority between beings and truths. If Aquinas has a theory of truthmaking, he does not tell us how to understand his truthmaker relation, nor does he tell us which truths have truthmakers and which do not. I am not suggesting that Aquinas’s theory of truth is ultimately opaque or that it cannot be clarified by closer examination. Rather, my point is that Aquinas’s correspondence theory of truth does not obviously signal a clear commitment to something like the notion of truthmaking, much less a detailed account of truthmaking. Furthermore, Aquinas himself seems to have been unconcerned with the ontological implications of his theory of truth. Although many scholars have recently become interested in Aquinas’s theory of truthmakers for modal truths, it is telling that Aquinas himself never explicitly addresses the problem of grounding modal truths. Unlike many early modern scholastics, Aquinas does not use truthmaking to regiment ontological inquiry.

The point that not every correspondence theory of truth implies that every truth has a truthmaker can also be made with reference to William of Ockham. Ockham endorses Aristotle’s *dictum* from the categories, “a sentence is called true because it signifies as being the case that which really is the case.” Ockham has little to say about truth as such. Still, he is a self-proclaimed follower of Aristotle when it comes to truth, and I think we could attribute to him a kind of correspondence theory.

Although Ockham has little to say about truth as such, he has much to say about truth conditions; in part II of his *Summa logicae*, Ockham offers truth conditions for a large variety of classes of propositions. For our purposes it will be useful to consider just one set of such truth conditions: truth conditions for singular atomic predications of the form ‘a is F’. According to Ockham, such propositions are true if and only if the subject and predicate terms stand for the

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20 For more on Ockham’s thought on truth, see Marilyn McCord Adams, “Ockham on Truth,”
21 *Expos. Praedicam.*, c. 9, sec. 13 (OP II, 201).
same thing. For example, ‘Socrates is white’ is true just in case ‘Socrates’ and ‘white’ stand for the same thing. According to these truth conditions, the only entity required for the truth of ‘Socrates is white’ is Socrates. (It is not accidental that this low-grade requirement fits well with Ockham’s nominalism.) But on the dominant contemporary understanding of truthmakers, Socrates is not the truthmaker for ‘Socrates is white’, for the existence of Socrates is compatible with the falsity of ‘Socrates is white’. Contemporary truthmaker theorists agree that singular atomic truths have truthmakers if anything does, but Ockham’s truth conditions for such propositions do not entail that they have truthmakers; for Ockham, truth is a function of sub-sentential semantic relations only. The fact that for Ockham truth is a function of a characteristic relation between parts of sentences and parts of reality is sufficient for him to count as a correspondence theorist. Nonetheless, Ockham’s truth conditions do not commit him to anything like a theory of truthmaking. The point here, again, is that one can endorse a correspondence theory of truth without thereby incurring commitment to a theory of truthmaking. Cases in point are Aquinas and Ockham.

2.2 The sophisma, ‘Omnis homo de necessitate est animal’

One place in which Aristotle’s remarks above are “noted by a number of leading Scholastic philosophers,”22 is in the literature on the sophisma, ‘Omnis homo de necessitate est animal’ ['Every human is of necessity an animal']. The medieval term ‘sophisma’ refers both to a medieval literary genre and to a philosophically problematic or controversial sentence.23 Sophismata literature is structured in typical medieval fashion: a philosophically problematic sentence or sophisma is proposed, questions about it are raised, arguments for and against various

22 Armstrong, Truth and Truthmakers, 4.
23 For more on sophismata as a genre, see Grabmann, Die Sophismataliteratur des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts; Rijk, Some Earlier Parisian Tracts on Distinctiones Sophismatum, ix-xi; Fabienne Pironet and Joke Spruyt, “Sophismata”.

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positions are recited, and a solution is defended. The *sophisma*, ‘Every human is of necessity an animal’ provides an occasion for disputing a wide variety of topics, including empty reference, the validity of various inference rules, the scope of modal operators, the relationship between being and essence, and, most importantly for present purposes, the relationship between truth and ontology.\(^{24}\)

Is it true that every human is of necessity an animal? When raised in the *sophismata* literature, this question centers on the relationship between truth and ontology, and it is the philosophical ancestor of the early modern debate about eternal truths, which is the topic of chapter seven. On one hand, ‘Every human is an animal’ seems like the sort of thing that should be necessarily true, since a human is an animal *by definition*.\(^ {25}\) On the other hand, it is possible that there be no human beings: God could have refrained from creating human beings, or he could destroy them (in a flood perhaps); in either case, ‘Every human is an animal’ might fail to be true either because ‘human’ fails to refer to anything, or because the sentence as a whole fails to correspond to anything. The literature on this *sophisma* is incredibly complex and difficult, and I cannot do it justice here. For our purposes it will be sufficient to briefly mention two views expressed in the *sophismata* literature that reveal commitment to something like the notion of a truthmaker.

One solution to this *sophisma* is to say that ‘Every human is an animal’ is false if no human beings exist. Boethius of Dacia defends this view for the following reason:

There are three kinds of composition—namely, composition in reality, composition in the intellect, and composition in speech. And so truth is in each kind of

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composition because of a prior composition and from the truth of the first composition, as if it were a cause of the truth. The first composition cannot make a composition in speech true unless there is a true composition in the intellect, from which the composition in speech arises; and there will not be a true composition in the intellect unless there is a similar composition in reality. For if there is division in reality and composition in the intellect, there will be a false composition in the intellect.26

Here Boethius claims that a composition in speech—i.e., an affirmative predication uttered by a speaker—is true only if it somehow corresponds to the appropriate composition in the intellect. The idea here seems to be that the utterance ‘Socrates is sitting’ is true only if there is a true mental sentence with the same content. Similarly, the mental sentence ‘Socrates is sitting’ is true only if Socrates and sitting are composed in reality. The composition in reality is “the cause of the true” of both the mental sentence and the utterance.

Clearly enough, there is a composition in reality between terms $a$ and $F$ only if $a$ and $F$ exist. Boethius argues that if no human beings exist, then there can be no composition in reality between human and animal. Without the appropriate composition in reality, the mental sentence ‘A human is an animal’ will fail to be true if human beings fail to exist. Hence, Boethius concludes, ‘A human is of necessity an animal’ is false.

As Alain de Libera has observed, Boethius seems to present combinations in reality as truthmakers for affirmative predications.27 Boethius claims that compositions in reality “make true [facere veram]” compositions in speech, and he describes compositions in reality as “as it were the cause” of truth. Boethius argues that eternal truths must have eternal causes of their truth. Since humans

26 Boethius of Dacia, *Omnis homo*, 78: “Sic autem triplex invenitur compositio, scilicet compositio que est in re ipsa, compositio que est in intellectu, et compositio que est apud sermonem. Itaque in istis semper veritas ex priorum compositione et ex veritate prime compositionis tamquam ex causa sua, que non potest facere veram compositionem apud sermonem nisi sit vera compositio apud intellectum, ex quo est compositio sermonis et non erit compositio vera apud intellectum nisi consimilis sit compositio in re. Si enim sit in re divisio et apud intellectum compositio, erit falsa compositio intellectus.” This opinion is close to that expressed by Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1051a1-20.

27 See his entry on “Truth-Maker” in *Vocabulaire Européen des philosophies*, 1326.
Medieval Background

and animals are not eternal, they cannot cause the truth of ‘Every human of necessity is an animal’.28

Some of Boethius’s opponents accept his claim that an affirmative predication is true only if it has an ontological correlate, but they maintain that ‘Every human is an animal’ is true with no humans existing; their task is to provide a suitable ontological correlate for ‘Every human is an animal’. Philosophers such as the Bachelor in Boethius of Dacia’s discussion of this sophismata and the anonymous author of a text recently edited by Alain de Libera argue for a distinction between two kinds of being: existential being (esse existentiae) and essential being (esse essentiae).29 They claim that ‘Every human is an animal’ is made true not by individual humans but by the essence of a human. The essence of a human, moreover, has essential being even if no humans exist.

If a truthmaker is understood roughly as a portion of reality in virtue of which a truth-bearer is true, then it seems clear that there is some notion of truthmaking lurking in the medieval discussion of the sentence ‘Every human is of necessity an animal’. What is not clear is exactly how the relevant philosophers are conceiving of truthmaking and the truthmaker principle. What we have here is not a theory of truthmaking but a vague gesture at the notion of a truthmaker. As will become clear in chapter seven, the early modern debate about truthmakers for eternal truths is one legacy of the late medieval debate concerning the sophisma, ‘Every human is of necessity an animal’. As far as I have seen no one in the later debate argues that every true affirmative predication is made true by an existing combination, but the attempt to ground the eternal truths in some sort of non-existing beings with essential being survives well into the early modern period.

28 See the reply to the first question.
29 See Boethius of Dacia, Omnis homo, 79. Siger of Brabant reports this view in Écrits de logique, 54.
2.3 Verificare and Verificatio

The terms ‘verificare’ and ‘verificatio’ make frequent appearances in 14\textsuperscript{th}-century logical texts. What relation, if any, do these terms bear to the early modern scholastic ‘verificativum’?

Medieval logicians use the terms ‘verificare’ and ‘verificatio’ in a variety of ways. Many medieval logicians take the notion of verification as a primitive and use it to explain semantic notions such as signification and supposition. This is how Ockham, for example, explains supposition:

> Supposition is said to be, as it were, standing for something else, in such a way that when a term in a proposition stands for something, so that we use the term for something of which (or of a pronoun pointing to it) that term (or the nominative of that term, if it is in an oblique case) is verified [\textit{verificatur}], it stands for [\textit{supponit}] that [thing]. At least this is true when the suppositing term is taken significatively.\textsuperscript{30}

This passage is a bit puzzling for a reason I will discuss shortly, but the general idea is clear enough. Ockham explains that a term \(\phi\) stands for Socrates, say, if (and only if?) \(\phi\) is verified of Socrates. As mentioned above, medieval logicians tend to take the notion of verification as a primitive, opting not to explain what verification amounts to, and Ockham is no exception. However, medieval logicians do often propose tests for verification. One such test is that \(\phi\) is verified of Socrates if and only if ‘Socrates is \(\phi\)’ is true. Another test is that \(\phi\) is verified of Socrates if and only if ‘This is \(\phi\)’ is true, said while pointing to Socrates. This

second test is hinted at by Ockham in the above passage when he says that a term can be verified of a thing or “of a pronoun pointing to it.”

The passage from Ockham is puzzling because it contains two different conceptions of verification. First, Ockham indicates that verification obtains between terms and the “things” for which they stand when he says, “we use the term for something of which […] that term […] is verified.” Here verification obtains between a term and the thing for which the term stands. But Ockham also indicates that verification obtains between terms in a proposition: a term is verified “of a pronoun pointing to” the thing for which the term stands. So this passage presents two views of verification. On one view, verification obtains between terms and the things for which they stand; on the other view, verification obtains strictly between terms in a proposition. Other medieval logicians speak of verification with the same ambiguity.

As far as I am aware, there is no secondary literature that deals with the technical meaning of ‘\textit{verificare}’. Fortunately, there is no need for us to settle on one reading or another. On either reading, verification is a relation between terms and the things they stand for or terms and other terms; it is not a relation between truthmakers and truth-bearers. It seems that this late medieval usage of ‘\textit{verificare}’ and ‘\textit{verificatio}’ bears no interesting relation to the early modern scholastic understanding of ‘\textit{verificativum}’.

There is another use of ‘\textit{verificare}’ and ‘\textit{verificatio}’ in late Medieval logical literature, although is appears to have been rare. In his \textit{Treatise on Supposition}, Jean Buridan writes:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[31] These tests can also be found in Albert of Saxony, \textit{Quaestiones circa logicam}, nn. 95.2, 225, 228.2.2.2, 230, 231; Paul of Venice, \textit{Logica parva}, II.4-5.
\item[32] Cf. Albert of Saxony, \textit{Quaestiones circa logicam}, nn. 30, 63.6.1.2, 91, 91.1, 91.3, 91.3.1, 91.5, 231; Paul of Venice, \textit{Logica parva}, II.4-5.
\item[33] However, it is worth noting that Albert of Saxony explicitly states that verification properly obtains between terms and other terms in a proposition. See \textit{Quaestiones circa logicam}, n. 231. Albert sometimes speaks as if terms can be verified of non-linguistic things, but in light of n. 231, he must be read as speaking loosely in these places. See nn. 91, 91.1, 91.3, 91.3.1, 91.5.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Verification is different from supposition, for verification is properly of a sentence and not of a term, but supposition is of a term and not a sentence […] But in true affirmatives there must be verification of the sentence for some thing or things for which the term supposits.\(^{34}\)

How are we to understand Buridan’s conception of verification? Peter King claims, “Buridan uses ‘verification’ to refer to the causes of the truth or falsity of a given sentence.”\(^{35}\) However, this interpretation does not seem correct. Buridan uses the phrase “cause of truth” in a technical manner. He explains: “By ‘the cause of the truth’ of some sentence I mean those sentences any one of which is sufficient for the truth of the given sentence.”\(^{36}\) To illustrate a cause of truth, Buridan claims that the (true) sentence ‘Socrates is running’ is one cause of the truth of ‘A human is running’.\(^{37}\) Hence, for Buridan, the cause of a true sentence is another true sentence. Some medieval logicians seem to have thought of verification as a relation obtaining between sentences ‘p’ and ‘q’ when there is a valid inference from p to q or vice versa.\(^{38}\) However, Buridan himself does not think of verification as a relation between sentences. In the passage about verification quoted above, Buridan claims that verification of a sentence is “for some thing or things the term stands for.” Verification obtains between things that terms stand for and sentences, not strictly between sentences and other sentences. In sum, for Buridan the “cause of truth” relation obtains strictly between sentences, while the verification relation obtains between things and sentences; it appears, then, that ‘verification’ does not “refer to the causes of the truth or falsity of a given sentence,” pace King.

\(^{34}\) 1.3, Trans. Peter King, Jean Buridan’s Logic. I have modified the translation slightly.
\(^{35}\) King, Jean Buridan’s Logic, 337, n. 12.
\(^{36}\) Treatise on Consequences, 1.2.3, trans. Peter King, Jean Buridan’s Logic, 179. For a brief discussion of the late medieval locution, ‘cause of truth’, see Alain de Libera’s entry on “Truth-Maker” in Vocabulaire Européen des philosophies, 1325-1326.
\(^{37}\) Treatise on Consequences, 1.2.4, trans. Peter King, Jean Buridan’s Logic, 179.
\(^{38}\) See, e.g., Peter of Spain, Syncategoremata, ch. 4, n. 33; and Strode, Logica, cited in Terminologica logica, 273 n. 189 and 477.
So what does Buridan mean when he says that a sentence is verified “for some thing or things the term stands for”? Unfortunately, Buridan does not say. However, we can get a firmer grip on the meaning of Buridan’s “verification” by considering the standard nominalist truth conditions he gives for affirmative propositions. Buridan claims that an atomic affirmative proposition of the form ‘a is F’ is true if and only if the terms ‘a’ and ‘F’ stand for the same thing.39 From these truth conditions we may surmise that ‘Socrates is snub-nosed’ is verified for Socrates just in case ‘Socrates’ and ‘snub-nosed’ both stand for Socrates. On my proposal, the verification conditions of a proposition for a thing can be read off of the truth conditions for that proposition.

It is noteworthy that for Buridan a sentence is verified for a thing, not by a thing.40 Here we are evidently not dealing with truthmaking in the contemporary and 17th-century scholastic sense. Moreover, for Buridan as for Ockham, the truth of a proposition is purely a function of sub-sentential semantic relations—nämlich, the supposition of the terms of a sentence. Notice that for Buridan a proposition like ‘Socrates is snub-nosed’ requires for its truth only Socrates. But as contemporary philosophers often point out, Socrates cannot be the truthmaker for ‘Socrates is snub-nosed’ because Socrates is not sufficient for the truth of ‘Socrates is snub-nosed’. (The existence of Socrates is compatible with the falsity of ‘Socrates is snub-nosed’.) Truthmaker theorists posit something in addition to Socrates—something like the fact that Socrates is snub-nosed—to account of the truth of ‘Socrates is snub-nosed’. But given his nominalist truth-conditions, Buridan has no need for truthmakers in the contemporary sense. We therefore have two reasons to think that Buridan’s verification is substantially different from the 17th-century and contemporary notion of truthmaking. First, in

40 Walter Chatton consistently uses ‘verificare’ in this way. See, e.g., *Prologus*, q. 1, a. 1, lines 96, 158, 234, 464, 526, 539, 777; *Reportatio* I, d. 30, q. 1, a. 4, p. 237, n. 57. I discuss many of these passages in §5.
Buridan’s terminology, a sentence is verified for a thing rather than by a thing. Second, Buridan simply has no need for a truthmaker theory in the contemporary and 17th-century sense.

2.4 Complexe significabile

Oxford nominalists of the 14th-century had a debate about the objects of knowledge. If I know that an ass is not a rock (to use one of Ockham’s examples), I am in a certain mental state that constitutes my knowing: what is that mental state about? Adam Wodeham (1298-1358), an Oxford philosopher who studied under William Ockham and Walter Chatton, answers that the objects of knowledge are the “total significates” of propositions. These items later became known as complexe significabilia. Dominik Perler and Susan Brower-Toland have argued that Wodeham’s theory of the complexe significabile is a truthmaker theory. However, I will argue that the evidence for the Perler-Brower-Toland interpretation of Wodeham is thin at best. At the same time, my discussion of Wodeham will reveal a line of indirect influence on the 17th-century discussion, although the line of influence will become fully evident only after our discussion of early modern scholastic theories of truth in the third chapter. As will emerge,

41 For many years it was thought that Gregory of Rimini was the originator of the theory of complexe significabile, thanks in large part to the work of Hubert Elie, Le complexe significabile. G. Gál, “Adam Wodeham’s Question on the complexe significabile as the Immediate Object of Scientific Knowledge,” shows that Rimini was directly influenced by Wodeham. I think the notion can also be found in Ockham, Quodl. 3.8, a. 1, where Ockham writes: “This act [of assent] has as its objects things outside the mind, viz., a rock and a donkey. And yet it is not the case that a rock is known or that a donkey is known; rather, what is known is that a rock is not a donkey.” (Citations of Ockham’s Quodlibeta are from the Freddoso, Kelly translation). Here Ockham distinguishes between the object of assent and what is known by means of assent. What is known on Ockham’s view appears to be structurally identical to a complexe significabile. Gabriel Nuchelmans has argued that Wodeham’s opinion should be viewed in light of a debate that goes back to Abelard in the 12th century (Nuchelmans, “Adam Wodeham on the Meaning of Declarative Sentences.”)

the 17th-century discussion of truthmakers appears to be a further development of the line of thought found in Wodeham’s discussion of the objects of knowledge.

Wodeham’s immediate interlocutors on the topic of the objects of knowledge include William of Ockham and Walter Chatton. Just as contemporary philosophers tend to think of knowledge as a belief state subject to certain (to be specified) conditions, Ockham, Chatton, and Wodeham conceive of knowledge as a mental state of assent subject to certain (to be specified) conditions. Hence, the question, what is the object of knowledge, was thought to be equivalent to the question, what is the object of assent?

Two answers naturally suggest themselves. According to one answer endorsed by Ockham, propositions, conceived of as mental sentences, are the objects of assent. Ockham defends this answer on the basis of the fact that when we assent to something, what we assent to can be true or false. Only propositions have truth-values. So, propositions are the objects of assent.

According to a second answer, the objects of assent are not propositions but the things signified by propositions. In other words, the objects of assent are objects of propositions. In the secondary literature this view goes by the name, ‘res theory’, and it is endorsed by Walter Chatton, often a harsh critic of

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43 Chatton agrees with Wodeham on this, but as Chatton reports, Ockham and Peter Auriol think that the proposition itself is the act of belief/knowledge. Auriol and Ockham recognize the distinction between entertaining a proposition and believing it, and on Chatton’s telling they account for that distinction by claiming that verbs denoting propositional attitudes connote a separate act of the will. See Chatton, Prologus, q. 1, a. 1, lines 445-462, and 490-493.

44 Throughout his career Ockham thought that the objects of assent are propositions. However, Ockham changed his view on what a proposition is in response to some arguments raised by Chatton. Ockham’s later view is complicated by the fact that he recognizes two different kinds of assent. For Ockham’s early views see Elizabeth Karger, “Mental Sentences according to Burley and the Early Ockham”. For Ockham’s later views, see Quodl. 3.8, 4.16, 5.6. On Ockham’s change of mind, see Elizabeth Karger, “William of Ockham, Walter Chatton and Adam Wodeham on the Objects of Knowledge and Belief.”

45 Of course, assent itself can have truth-value in a secondary way, but the truth-value of an act of assent is purely a function of the proposition at which the assent is aimed.

46 Quodl. 3.8.
Ockham.\textsuperscript{47} There is disagreement in the literature about what Chatton takes to be
the object of a proposition. On one reading, each proposition has one object: the
object of the proposition’s subject term; on another reading, each proposition has
two objects: the objects of the proposition’s subject and predicate terms.\textsuperscript{48} For our
purposes, it will not be necessary to settle this dispute, and I will arbitrarily
adopt the second reading: according to Chatton, a proposition signifies the
things signified by its subject and predicate terms. Hence ‘The dog is fluffy’
signifies the dog and fluffiness. Accordingly, the dog and fluffiness are, on
Chatton’s view, the objects of my assent when I believe that the dog is fluffy.

Chatton endorses the \textit{res} theory partly on the basis of what I call ‘the
apprehension rule’:

\textbf{The apprehension rule:} Nothing is the object of an act of assent without
being previously cognized by a distinct act of apprehension.\textsuperscript{49}

In other words, one cannot assent to something one has not thought about. The
apprehension rule is endorsed by Ockham, Chatton, and Wodeham alike.\textsuperscript{50}
Chatton points out that typical cases of assent are not preceded (or simultaneous
with) apprehensions of mental states. Rather, they are preceded (or simultaneous
with) apprehensions of extra-mental things like Socrates and his snub-nose.

\textsuperscript{47} See Walter Chatton, \textit{Prologus}, q. 1, a. 1.
\textsuperscript{48} Nuchelmans endorses the first reading, and Perler and Gaskin endorse the second. See
Nuchelmans, “Adam Wodeham on the Meaning of Declarative Sentences,” 181; Perler, “Late
Medieval Ontologies of Facts,” 150; Richard Gaskin, “Complexe significabilia and Aristotle’s
Categories,” 188.
\textsuperscript{49} Chatton, \textit{Prologus}, q. 1, a. 1, lines 138ff. Chatton marshals many additional arguments (see
\textit{Prologus}, q. 1, a. 1, lines 290ff.), but I leave them aside for brevity and because Wodeham seems to
have been most moved by the argument from apprehension. In reconstructing Chatton’s
apprehension argument, Wodeham emphasizes the phenomenological aspect of apprehension,
assuming that we are always aware of what we apprehend.
\textsuperscript{50} See Ockham, \textit{Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum ordination}, prol., q. 1, (OT 1, 60); Chatton
\textit{Prologus}, q. 1, a. 1, lines 125-137; Wodeham, \textit{L.sec.}, dist. 1, q. 1, a. 1, §6, lines 15-17.
Given the apprehension rule, it follows that the objects of assent are (typically) not mental states but things outside the mind.

Adam Wodeham was a student of both Ockham and Chatton. He tended to defend Ockham against Chatton’s critiques and was often a harsh critic of Chatton.\footnote{See pp. 12-13 of Rega Wood’s introduction to the critical edition of \textit{L.sec}.} When it comes to the objects of knowledge, however, Wodeham positions himself against Ockham. Wodeham is moved by Chatton’s phenomenological argument to the effect that when we assent to something, we are typically not even aware of our mental states.\footnote{\textit{L.sec.} dist. 1, q. 1, a. 1, §4, lines 9-11. Wodeham also has several complicated arguments to the effect that the proposition theory of assent is internally incoherent. A full explication of these arguments would take us too far afield. Interested readers may consult Brower-Toland, “Facts vs. Things,” §2.}

Wodeham therefore concludes with Chatton that the object of assent is not a proposition but what is apprehended by means of a proposition. Unlike Chatton, however, Wodeham does not think that \textit{things} are apprehended by propositions. Rather, what is apprehended or signified by a proposition is what Wodeham calls a “total significate” and what Wodeham’s followers later call a “\textit{complexe significabile}.”

Even as Wodeham was writing, he knew that the most pressing challenge faced by his theory was to explain what a \textit{complexe significabile} is. He imagines an objector asking incredulously, “What is it that you are calling the total object of a proposition?”\footnote{Wodeham, \textit{L.sec.}, dist. 1, q. 1, a. 1, §8.} This question is especially pressing given that there appears to be no place for \textit{complexe significabilia} in the Aristotelian categories.

Wodeham consistently denotes the \textit{complexe significabile} using an \textit{oratio obliqua} construction—in Latin, the objective infinitive; in English, a \textit{that} clause. The total significate of the proposition, “God is God,” says Wodeham, is \textit{Deum esse Deum} or \textit{that God is God}. More generally, the total significate of a proposition
of the form ‘a is F’ is that a is F or what Wodeham generally calls a sic esse (that it is such). But what sort of thing is that a is F?

Wodeham is much better at saying what a complexe significabile is not than he is at saying what a complexe significabile is. Wodeham is clear that the complexe significabile is not mind-dependent, not complex, not incomplex, not a substance, not something [aliquid], and not nothing. When pressed for an explanation of such items as that a human is an animal, Wodeham’s only answer is to replace ‘human’ with its definition: that a human is an animal, Wodeham explains, is that a rational animal is an animal.

Needless to say, scholars since Wodeham’s time have found such explanations less than helpful. Nevertheless, Dominik Perler and Susan Brower-Toland have recently defended the idea that complexe significabilia are states of affairs that function as truthmakers.

Although the truthmaker interpretation of the complexe significabile has been defended by able scholars, the evidence for it is thin. Perler’s argument for the claim that the complexe significabile is a truthmaker is at times confusing, and his

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54 Wodeham uses a variety of terms for the generic complexe significabile, including ‘sic esse’, ‘sic esse in re’, and ‘esse quid’. These phrases can be translated along the lines of ‘that something is such and such (in reality)’.

55 See Wodeham, L.sec., dist. 1, q. 1, a. 1, §§8-9.

56 Wodeham, L.sec., dist. 1, q. 1, a. 1, §8.

57 Perler, “Late Medieval Ontologies of Facts”; Brower-Toland, “Facts vs. Things”. It should be noted that while Perler and Brower-Toland both identify complexe significabilia with facts (or, equivalently, with states of affairs), Perler struggles to explain the ontological status of facts (see pp. 158-159), while Brower-Toland argues that Wodeham introduces facts as fundamental entities new to the Aristotelian ontology.

58 Perler makes several confusing claims in the course of his argument. For example, he first claims that the terms ‘true’ and ‘false’ qualify “something expressed by ‘that a is F’” (160). The latter item is a complexe significabile. This suggests that complexe significabilia are truth-bearers on Perler’s reading. Indeed, Perler goes on to state, “we can nominalize a sentence p and use it as a subject in ‘That p is true’ only if ‘p’ signifies that p” (161). Here Perler predicates truth of ‘That p’, again suggesting that complexe significabilia are truth-bearers. But then Perler goes on to say that “‘true’ and ‘false’ can exclusively be predicated of sentences” and that complexe significabilia are truthmakers, not truth bearers (161). Additionally, Perler makes the surprising claim that the sentence ‘Socrates is white’ “can be called true if and only if it signifies that Socrates is white” (161). But one would think that ‘Socrates is white’ could signify that Socrates is white even if Socrates was not white.
argument seems to hinge on a passage taken not from Wodeham but from Ockham:

Thus a sentence is called true because it signifies as being the case that which really is the case [sic esse a parte rei sicut est].

Perler’s argument seems to go as follows. According to the passage from Ockham, a sentence is true because it signifies sic esse… Hence, the sic esse is the truthmaker of a true sentence. According to Wodeham, the significate of a sentence (complexe significabile) is a sic esse. Hence, the significate of a sentence (complexe significabile) is a truthmaker.

This argument does not inspire confidence. If Wodeham did think that complexe significabilia are truthmakers, one would hope for a passage to that effect from Wodeham rather than from Ockham. Moreover, Ockham’s passage does not say what Perler wants it to say. To be sure, Ockham does say that a sentence is true because it signifies “sic esse,” but here the “sic” is correlative with “sicut”. The sense of Ockham’s passage is not that a sentence is true because it signifies something called ‘sic esse’; rather, the sense of the passage is that a sentence is true because it signifies that something is as it really is. Ockham’s claim is not about truthmakers at all.

Susan Brower-Toland’s argument for the truthmaker reading of Wodeham is also less than convincing. Brower-Toland bases her reading on an objection that Wodeham makes to the “anti-realist” theories of assent defended by Ockham and Scotus. Based on Wodeham’s objection, Brower-Toland concludes that Wodeham is operating with something like a correspondence theory of truth: thus he identifies objects of judgment with the extramental relata of the relevant correspondence relations. On his view, therefore, the object of a judgment is an entity to which a true

judgment corresponds; it is, in other worlds, the extramental grounds or truthmaker for the judgment.60

As far as I can tell Brower-Toland bases her reading on Wodeham’s claim that the object of a sentence of the form “p’ corresponds with a thing’ is a complexe significabile. Brower-Toland appears to assume that the complexe significabile in question is identical with the “thing” referred to in the sentence. The situation, on Brower-Toland’s reading, can be illustrated as follows:

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fig. 1

On this reading, the term ‘thing’ signifies the same complexe significabile as is signified by the sentence as a whole. It would follow that ‘p’ is true because it corresponds with a complexe significabile. But notice that nothing forces the reading on which the significate of “p’ corresponds with a thing’ is also the significate of ‘thing’. Indeed, this reading seems to be ruled out by Wodeham’s theory of complexe significabile itself; according to that theory, the significate of “p’ corresponds with a thing’ is that ‘p’ corresponds with a thing, which is presumably not the significate of ‘thing’ in “p’ corresponds with a thing’.

Not only do Perler and Brower-Toland offer scant evidence for the truthmaker reading, there are two problems with that reading. One problem is that on the truthmaker reading, Wodeham would be committed to the claim that false propositions have no significates.61 This is not only implausible in itself,62

60 Brower-Toland, “Facts vs. Things,” 622.
61 As Brower-Toland herself admits (622-623).
but also seems contrary to the spirit of Wodeham’s discussion, which appears to be about the objects of assent generally rather than about the objects of true assent in particular. Nowhere does Wodeham explicitly limit his discussion to true acts of assent only.

Second, while there is no direct textual evidence suggesting that \textit{complexe significabilia} are truthmakers, there is textual evidence suggesting that \textit{complexe significabilia} function as truth-bearers. After establishing that the objects of assent are \textit{complexe significabilia}, Wodeham considers whether the subject term of a proposition can signify a \textit{complexe significabile}. He concludes that it can, and he gives two examples of propositions the subject terms of which signify a \textit{complexe significabile}. A \textit{complexe significabile} is signified by the subject terms of propositions such as

‘That a human is an animal is true’

‘That a human is a sensitive animate substance is true’

These propositions take as subjects exactly the sorts of items Wodeham has called \textit{complexe significabilia}—items denoted by an \textit{oratio obliqua} construction. What is presently of interest are the examples Wodeham chooses. In both examples Wodeham predicates truth of a \textit{complexe significabile}. We have no reason to suspect that Wodeham is here giving ill-formed or otherwise confused examples, especially since ill-formed or confused examples would be less dialectically effective for his purposes. Wodeham’s examples therefore suggest that phrases denoting \textit{complexe significabilia} generally function as the subject terms in statements of the form ‘That \(p\) is true’. This function of \textit{complexe

\footnote{Whether or not a mental proposition signifies anything depends does not depend on its truth, nor on the existence of its signifycate. For example, the mental sentence, ‘A dairy product orbits the earth’ signifies that a dairy product orbits the earth whether or not a dairy product actually does orbit the earth.}

\footnote{In her footnote 51, Brower-Toland claims, “at one point in his discussion Wodeham explicitly states that the entities that serve as objects are not truth-bearers.” She then goes on to cite a passage in which Wodeham states no such thing.}
significabilia shows that Wodeham does conceive of complexe significabilia as truth-bearers.

To show that complexe significabilia are truth-bearers is not yet to show that they are not truthmakers. Perhaps Wodeham has an identity theory of truth, according to which truth-bearers are also truthmakers. But it is telling that Wodeham never explicitly indicates that complexe significabilia play the role of truthmakers. So even if they can play that role in his theory, nevertheless Wodeham was not self-consciously advocating a truthmaker theory. Because Wodeham leaves open the ontological status and function of the complexe significabile, the 17th-century notion of a truthmaker might represent a further development of his view.

Those 17th-century philosophers who had the notion of a truthmaker often draw a distinction corresponding to the distinction between a partial and total signifyate of a proposition. In the 17th-century, this distinction is drawn in terms of the “inadequate” and the “adequate” object of a proposition, but it is functionally the same distinction. Giovanni Battista Giattini, for example, argues that a proposition of the form ‘a is F’ has as its adequate object an “identity” or “togetherness” [simultas] of a and F, while Giattini’s opponents hold the res theory of judgment, according to which ‘a is F’ is about the intentional objects of ‘a’ and ‘F’. Further, many 17th-century scholastics did endorse a theory of truthmaking similar to that attributed to Wodeham by Perler and Brower-Toland. They thought that the truthmaker for a proposition is that proposition’s total object. While there is no textual evidence (that I have seen) linking any of the 17th-century truthmaker theorists directly to Wodeham, it seems likely that the later thinkers were influenced by the same theory of the significates of propositions endorsed by Wodeham.

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2.5 Chatton’s Principle

The clearest truthmaker principle I have found in late medieval philosophy is advanced not by Adam Wodeham but by his philosophical nemesis Walter Chatton. Most philosophers are familiar with Ockham’s Razor: “A plurality should not be posited without necessity.”\(^6^5\) Few are familiar with the converse methodological principle advanced by Chatton, a principle Armand Maurer has dubbed “the anti-razor.”\(^6^6\) Whereas Ockham’s Razor is reductivist in spirit, urging us to eliminate from our ontology anything that is not strictly necessary, Chatton’s principle reminds us that we must posit entities when they are needed. Ockham, of course, would agree that we must posit entities when they are needed. But when are they needed? This question is a matter of dispute between Ockham and Chatton. According to Chatton, we must posit entities when they are required to make a proposition true.

Various formulations of Chatton’s Principle appear in his commentaries on the *Sentences*. One such formulation is as follows:

If three things are not sufficient for making true an affirmative proposition that is verified for things, then it is necessary to posit a fourth, and so on.\(^6^7\)

As a rough first pass, Chatton’s Principle states that for any true proposition ‘p’ of the right sort—the sort that is “verified for things”—the things that exist are “sufficient” for the truth of ‘p’. This statement of Chatton’s Principle raises two questions. First, what is it for things to be “sufficient” for the truth of a proposition? Second, Chatton evidently intends to restrict the application of his principle to propositions that are “verified for things”; what does this restriction amount to? I will take these questions in turn.

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\(^6^5\) This is one of many formulations found in Ockham’s corpus. For further discussion see Armand Maurer, “Ockham’s Razor and Chatton’s Anti-Razor”; Magali Roques, “Le principe d’économie d’après Guillaume d’Ockham.”

\(^6^6\) Armand Maurer, “Ockham’s Razor and Chatton’s Anti-Razor.”

\(^6^7\) *Reportatio* I, d. 30, q. 1, a. 4, p. 237, n. 57: “Propositio affirmativa, quae quando verificatur pro rebus; si tres res non sufficient ad verificandum eam, oportet ponere quartum, et sic deinceps.”
Chatton explains insufficiency as follows:

By “things do not suffice for the truth of a proposition” I understand that, with those things present in such a way, it can be the case that the proposition is false.68

From this passage we may derive a first-pass definition of insufficiency for the truth of a proposition:

**Insufficiency:** The x’s do not suffice for the truth of a proposition ‘p’ if and only if it is possible for the x’s to exist “in such a way” while ‘p’ is false.

This is a definition of insufficiency, and what we are after is a definition of sufficiency. This is easily obtained by taking the converse of Chatton’s definition of insufficiency, obtaining:

**Sufficiency:** The x’s suffice for the truth of a proposition ‘p’ if and only if it is not possible that the x’s exist “in such a way” while ‘p’ is false.

What is the significance of Chatton’s qualification, “in such a way”? Elsewhere Chatton adds more detail to the qualification:

Those things are not sufficient to account for the fact that a proposition is true with which it is consistent that, in whatever way they are present according to arrangement and duration without a new thing, the proposition would be false.69

Here Chatton is concerned with the spatio-temporal arrangement of things. The idea seems to be that the x’s are insufficient for the truth of ‘p’ if and only if it is

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68 *Prologus*, q. 1, a. 1, p. 33-34, lines 464-479: “Hoc intelligo per res non sufficere ad verificandum propositionem: quod cum illis rebus sic praesentibus posset stare quod propositio sit falsa.”

69 *Lectura* I, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1, n. 17, p. 7. See also *Prologus*, q. 1, a. 1, p. 33-34: “Illae res non sufficiunt ad hoc quod propositio sit vera, cum quibus qualitercumque praesentibus sine alia re, stat quod ipsa sit falsa.” See also *Prologus*, q. 2, a. 1, p. 85, lines 252-254: “Item, ibi sufficiens necessitas ponendi tres res, ubi propositio verificatur pro rebus, et duae res qualitercumque praesentes sine alia re non sufficiunt ad eius veritatem.”
possible that ‘p’ is false while the x’s are arranged in the way they are arranged.\footnote{Another reading of the above passage is possible. Chatton might mean that the x’s are insufficient for the truth of ‘p’ if and only if it is possible that ‘p’ is false for any way the x’s might be arranged. The resulting definition of sufficiency would then be:}

Employing this idea in the definition of Sufficiency, we obtain:

**Sufficiency*: The x’s suffice for the truth of a proposition ‘p’ while arranged $\phi$-ly if and only if it is impossible for the x’s to exist and be arranged $\phi$-ly while ‘p’ is false.

Combining Chatton’s Principle with Sufficiency*, we obtain the official version of Chatton’s Truthmaker Principle:

**CTP**: For every true proposition ‘p’ of the right sort, there is some thing or things, the x’s, which are arranged in such a way that, necessarily, if the x’s are arranged in that way, then ‘p’ is true.

As far as I can tell, CTP and CTP* have the same ontological consequences. However, I prefer CTP over CTP* for two reasons. In the first place, Sufficiency* (and consequently CTP) reflect from a more natural reading of the text. (See especially *Lectura* I, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1, n. 76, p. 24). Second, suppose an apple and a box suffice for the truth of ‘The apple is in the box’. According to CTP* there a possible arrangement—the apple-in-the-box arrangement, say—such that, necessarily, if the apple and box are in that arrangement, then it is true that the Apple is in the box. But presumably, not only is such an arrangement possible, but it is also actual, as indicated by CTP. Hence, I think CTP is Chatton’s intended view. At any rate, if CTP* is the intended view, CTP includes what appears to be a harmless addition: the claim that the x’s are actually in one of the possible arrangements mentioned on the right-hand side of CTP*.
I will return below to the qualification ‘of the right sort’. For now I want to emphasize that it is clear from several passages that Chatton is committed to CTP. In one such passage, Chatton claims, “While those things are so present according to situation and duration in the way required by the proposition, it is not possible that the proposition be false.”71 I take it Chatton means to say that, for a certain true proposition ‘p’, it is not possible that ‘p’ be false while things are arranged in a certain way. This is precisely the idea expressed by CTP.

The qualification introduced by Chatton’s words, ‘in whatever way they are present’, turns out to be significant. To understand the significance of the qualification, let us apply CTP to a truth about arrangements. Suppose I put this apple in this box (and leave it there until you are done reading this section). Now consider the truth ‘The apple is in the box’. According to CTP, the apple and the box by themselves are sufficient for the truth of ‘The apple is in the box’, for it is necessary that, if the apple and the box are arranged apple-in-the-box-wise, then the ‘The apple is in the box’ is true. It is a consequence of Chatton’s qualification, expressed by the words, ‘in such a way’ and ‘in whatever way they are present’, that arrangement is an ontological free lunch: in order to account for truths about arrangements, we need only to posit the items arranged and not the arrangement itself.

This consequence is embraced by Chatton in his response to objections. One such objection presents a counter-example to Chatton’s Principle: “This is true, ‘This column is on my right’, but it can be false with the same things existing.”72 What is the upshot of this objection? How exactly does the objection go? In the first place, it is important to see that the objector misunderstands Chatton’s

71 Lectura I, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1, n. 14, p. 6: “Dum illae res sic sunt praesentes situ et duratione sicut propositio requirit, non est possibile quod propositio sit falsa.” Cf. Lectura I, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1, n. 12, p. 5: “Aliqua propositio sic contingens est ita necessario vera quando est vera, quod non est possibile omnes res existere uniformiter praesentes secundum situm et durationem sine alia re, sicut propositio requirit ad hoc quod sit vera, et tamen quod propositio sit falsa.” See also Lectura I, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1, n. 20, p. 7.

72 Lectura I, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1, n. 37, p. 11: “Haec est vera ‘ista columna est mihi dextra’, et tamen eisdem rebus existentibus potest esse falsa.”
Principle. The objector takes Chatton to be committed to the following Truthmaker Principle:

**TP**: For any truth ‘p’, there are some things, the x’s, such that necessarily, if the x’s exist, then ‘p’ is true.

The objector proposes a counter-example to TP. Consider a possible world \( w \) containing only me and a column. In \( w \), it is true that the column is on my right. Now consider a possible world \( v \) containing only me and a column, but in \( v \) the column is not on my right. \( w \) and \( v \) contain the same items, but different truths are true in them. According to TP, however, this situation is impossible, since, according to TP, if ‘The column is on my right’ is true in \( w \), and \( v \) contains the same items as \( w \), and those items necessitate the truth of ‘The column is on my right’, then ‘The column on my right’ must be true in \( v \) as well.

Chatton responds by pointing out that the objection is irrelevant [*hoc non est ad propositum*].\(^{73}\) This is because TP is stronger than CTP, and Chatton is committed to the latter and not the former. CTP can therefore accommodate the data presented in the counterexample. Let us see how this works. According to CTP, if it is true in \( w \) that the column is on my right, then there are some things—me and the column—arranged in such a way—the-column-on-my-right-wise—that, necessarily, if the column and I are arranged that way, then it is true that the column is on my right. The possibility of a world \( v \) with the same ontology but different truths as \( w \) is not a counterexample to CTP. Chatton can explain the different truths in \( v \) because in \( v \) things are arranged differently. The upshot is that CTP does not require positing new entities to account for new truths about

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\(^{73}\) See also *Lectura I*, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1, n. 76, p. 24: “Eisdem rebus uniformiter praesentibus situ et duratione sine alia re, sicut quando verum est dicere quod ‘iste liber iacet male’ vel ‘ista columna est mihi dextra’, non est compossibile quod propositio sit falsa. Ideo non cum ponitur ibi alia res. Tamen existere possent aliter praeentes, et esset propositio falsa, sed hoc non est ad propositum.”
arrangements of things. The effect is to exempt truths about arrangements from the need for truthmakers: the apple and the box are sufficient (in Chatton’s sense) for the truth of ‘The apple is in the box’ although the apple and the box together do not necessitate the truth of ‘The apple is in the box’.

Now that we have seen how Chatton’s Principle is to be understood, we may return to Chatton’s restriction of his Principle. To what sorts of true propositions does Chatton’s Principle apply? We have already seen that Chatton restricts application of his Principle to true affirmative propositions that are “verified for things.” What does this latter restriction amount to? In other passages Chatton adds that his Principle applies to affirmative propositions that are verified for things that (i) actually exist74 (ii) at the same time.75 The upshot of this restriction is that Chatton’s Principle does not apply to things that do not exist—i.e., it does not apply to propositions about impossible beings, fictitious beings, or merely possible beings. Chatton also restricts the application of his principle to present tense truths. In one passage Chatton says that his Principle applies to the proposition ‘The heat warms the wood’ because the truth of that proposition “does not depend on the future but only on fire and wood and heat and things present here.”76 Hence, Chatton’s Principle applies only to truths that are solely about presently existing things; it does not apply to truths about the past or future, about impossible things, fictitious things, or merely possible things.

We can now give a more precise formulation of Chatton’s Truthmaker Principle by incorporating Chatton’s restriction:

74 Lectura I, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1, n. 16, p. 7.
75 Reportatio II, d. 2, q. 1, a. 1. Latin transcribed from the Paris manuscript in Maurer, ‘Ockham’s Razor and Chatton’s Anti-Razor,” 427, fn. 28.
76 Reportatio I, d. 30, q. 1, a. 4. dd. 10-48, p. 237, n. 57: “Ex quo enim veritas eius non dependet a futuro sed solum ab igne et ligno et calore et rebus hic praeentibus.”
CTP*: For every true proposition ‘p’ that is solely about presently existing things, there is some thing or things, the x’s, arranged in such a way that, necessarily, if the x’s are arranged in that way, then ‘p’ is true.

Now that we know what Chatton’s Principle amounts to, we can see an example of how he uses it. Chatton and Ockham engaged in a debate about whether there are relational entities over and above absolute or non-relational entities. Characteristically, Ockham argues that everything is absolute, that there are no relational entities. Chatton, on the other hand, argues for relational entities, and he does so using his Principle. He asks us to consider some fire burning some wood and the true proposition ‘The fire burns the wood’. The existence of the fire and the wood, arranged in any way you please, is compatible with the falsity of the sentence, ‘The fire burns the wood’, since God can produce the fire and the wood, and God can even burn the wood, without it being the case that the fire burns the wood. In Chatton’s view, no amount of additional absolute entities can be sufficient for the truth of ‘The fire burns the wood’. In order to make it true that the fire burns the wood, Chatton argues, we must posit a relation—burning—that obtains between the fire and the wood.\textsuperscript{77}

It is undeniable that CTP* is a truthmaker principle close in spirit to contemporary versions of the truthmaker principle. Moreover, it is clear that Chatton, like contemporary truthmaker theorists, uses his Principle to regiment ontological inquiry and that his Principle is motivated by a desire to catch cheaters, chiefly Ockham.\textsuperscript{78} However, Chatton’s Truthmaker Principle suffers from the same problem from which many if not all contemporary truthmaker principles suffer: lack of appropriate motivation. Chatton nowhere tells us why

\textsuperscript{77} Chatton, Reportatio I, d. 30, q. 1, a. 4, p. 237, n. 57.

\textsuperscript{78} Chatton uses his Principle again and again to refute Ockham’s reductionist program. See Prologus, q. 1, a. 1, pp. 33-34; Prologus, q. 2, a. 1, p. 85; Prologus, q. 2, a. 6, pp. 130-144; Prologus, q. 3, a. 3, 197-198; Prologus, q. 2, p. 84-85; Lectura I, d. 3, q. 3, n. 65; Lectura, I, d. 1, q. 1, n. 82; Lectura I, d. 1, q. 4, n. 23-25; Reportatio I, d. 30, q. 1, a. 4; Reportatio I, d. 1, q. 2, a. 1; Reportatio II, d. 2, q. 1, a. 1.
his principle should be restricted to truths solely about presently existing things, and he nowhere tells us why he builds the notion of arrangement into his definition of sufficiency, effectively exempting truths about arrangements from the need for truthmakers. As we shall see, it is precisely with respect to these questions that the early modern scholastics represent an advance in truthmaker theory over 13th and 14th-century adumbrations of such a theory. With these adumbrations behind us, we may now turn to 17th-century theories of truthmaking.
TRUTH IN 17TH-CENTURY SCHOLASTICISM

As we have seen, many early modern scholastic philosophers conceive of truthmakers as portions of reality responsible for the truth of propositions. This is clear from the ways in which early modern scholastics tend to use the term ‘verificativum’:

The immediate and formal truthmaker of a proposition is that by which a proposition is immediately and formally rendered true.¹

The objective, formal, and immediate truthmaker of any act is that which the act expresses […] and which is such that by its mere existence the act is true (if the act exists) […].²

The formal truthmaker of any judgment is that by which the act is rendered formally true.³

It is clear that for the early modern scholastics a truthmaker is a portion of reality in virtue of which a true proposition is true. But it is not clear what the account of truthmaking is, nor indeed whether there is just one account or many. In chapter one I outlined five questions, answers to which are constitutive of an account of truthmaking. In chapter four I will show how many early modern scholastic philosophers would answer these five questions. Before advancing to the details of the early modern scholastic account(s) of truthmaking, however, some groundwork needs to be laid. This is because it is difficult to find much in

¹ Peinado, Phys., lib. 1, d. 4, s. 4, n. 12, p. 177: “Verificativum immediatum & formale propositionis est id a quo propositio immediate & formaliter redditur vera.”
² Madritano, Prodromus seu prolegomena ad scholasticas disciplinas, d. 7, ch. 7, p. 775, n. 52: “Verificativum obiectivum, formale, ac immediatum cuiuslibet actus est illud, quod actus enunciat (Si enim per actum non enunciatur erit ad summum verificativum illativum) quodque est tale, ut, ipso solo existente, actus sit verus, si hic quoque existat, &, ipso non existente, actus sit falsus.”
³ Anonymous, Disputatio de obiecto et verificativo propositionum, f. 217v: “Verificativum formale alicuius iudicii est illud a quo actus redditur verus formaliter.”
the way of an explicit theory of truthmaking in the early modern scholastic literature.

A number of remarks suggest that early modern scholastics thought there was an intimate connection between the notion of a truthmaker and the notion of truth. Although it might seem obvious that there is an intimate connection between truth and truthmaking, this is not obvious from a contemporary point of view, since truthmaker theory is not a theory of truth. This is clear from the fact that truthmaking is typically defined in terms of truth, so if a theory of truthmaking were a theory of truth, it would be circular. For the early modern scholastics, however, the notion of a truthmaker seems to have been closely related to the theory of truth, as can be seen from the following quotations:

One must explain what it is for a proposition to be true, and what a proposition requires on the part of the object in reality in order to be true. This I call a ‘truthmaker’.4

You can’t explain what truth is unless you assign an object as truthmaker, to which the cognition must be conformed.5

And so the object is extrinsic to the cognition, but it is not extrinsic to truth. Since truth is the commensuration of both the object and the act, it intrinsically and constitutively includes [importat] both the object and the act: the object as truthmaker and the act as made-true [verificatum].6

In the first quotation, Giovannibattista Giattini suggests that the notion of a truthmaker is somehow required to account for “what it is for a proposition to be true”; in the second quotation, Giattini claims that the notion of a truthmaker is required to explain “what truth is”; in the final quotation, Giovanni Battista de

4 Giattini, Logica, q. 6, a. 5, p. 292: “Debet assignari quid sit propositionem esse veram, & quid requirat ex parte objecti realiter ad hoc ut sit vera, quod appello verificativum.”
5 Giattini, Logica, q. 8, a. 5, p. 447: “Nec certe potest explicari quid sit veritas, nisi assignetur objectum verificativum cui debet conformari cognitio.”
Benedictis claims that truthmakers are partly constitutive of truth. These quotations encourage us to look at early modern scholastic theories of truth in order to reconstruct their accounts of truthmaking. This is what I propose for the present chapter.

Like their late medieval forebears, early modern scholastics typically recognize a distinction between transcendental truth and formal truth. Roughly, transcendental truth is a feature of every being whatsoever; formal truth is the sort of truth that attaches to mental sentences in virtue of their accurately representing the world.\(^7\) Our current interest is in this latter sort of truth, which also goes by the names ‘categorical truth’, ‘propositional truth’, ‘formal truth’, and ‘truth of a cognition’.

In this chapter our focus will be on the question, “What is formal truth?” Before proceeding it will be useful to clarify what exactly this question amounts to. The question, ‘What is truth?’, is naturally understood in one of two ways. First, by asking ‘What is truth?’ one might be asking for an analysis of what it is to be true. We could call this the ‘analytic question’. An answer to the analytic question would fill in the right-hand side of the schema:

\[
\text{x is true} =_{df} \text{____}. 
\]

As a point of comparison, an analytic question is what philosophers typically have in mind when they ask, ‘What is knowledge?’, and it is what Socrates has in mind when he asks Euthyphro, ‘What is piety?’ When the early modern scholastics ask ‘What is truth?’ however, they are not primarily interested in the analytic question. Rather, they are interested in what I call the ‘metaphysical question’. The metaphysical question asks what sort of thing truth is. Another

\(^7\) A *locus classicus* for the distinction between formal truth and transcendental truth is in Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 16, a. 1 (IV, 206). See also Suárez, DM 8.7; Izquierdo, *Pharos scientiarum*, d. 3, q. 1, cst. 2, p. 116.
way to put this question is to ask, in what ontological category does truth belong? Is truth a relation, a property, a being of reason, or something else altogether?

Note that the analytic question and the metaphysical question can come apart—i.e., an answer to the metaphysical question need not (but can) entail an answer to the analytic question, and *vice versa*. For example, the claim that truth is a property is an answer to the metaphysical question but not the analytic question; and the (implausible) claim that for a proposition to be true is for it to be believed by God is an answer to the analytic question but not the metaphysical question. By comparison, the claim, `for S to know that *p* is for S to have a justified, true belief that *p*` is an answer to the analytic question but not the metaphysical question; and the claim that knowledge is a property is an answer to the metaphysical question but not the analytic question. When the early modern scholastics ask ‘What is truth?’, they are primarily interested in the metaphysical question, although, as we shall see, sometimes answers to the metaphysical question entail answers to the analytic question.

The metaphysical question receives attention in nearly every early modern scholastic disputation about truth, resulting in a proliferation of views. At the beginning of his discussion of the metaphysical question, Bartolomeo Mastri observes,

> Although among the older philosophers this difficulty was not very important, more recent philosophers nonetheless love to conduct everlasting quarrels.⁸

Mastri’s comment fits well with the idea that the notion of a truthmaker is connected to the notion of truth. It is likely that the revival of intense theorizing about truth led to new ways of thinking about truth and to the notion of a truthmaker. In his discussion of truth, Mastri surveys no less than 8 different

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answers to the question, ‘What is truth?’⁹ For our purposes it will not be necessary to discuss all of these answers to the metaphysical question. In this chapter I focus primarily on two views, which I call the semi-extrinsic denomination view and the connotation view. Both of these views entail what I call the standard account of truthmaking, which, I believe, is operative in much of the 17th-century literature on truthmaking.

Francisco Suárez plays a pivotal role in the scholastic history of theorizing about truth. He raises arguments against identifying truth with a property or relation of any kind, but his discussion of his positive view is cryptic, leading to a debate about the correct interpretation of Suárez and the correct view of truth. The two sides of the debate endorse what I call the semi-extrinsic denomination view and the connotation view. In §2 I show how both the semi-extrinsic denomination view and the connotation view can make sense of various passages in which the notion of a truthmaker is linked to the theory of truth.

Perhaps the two most natural responses to the metaphysical question about truth are (i) truth is a property or (ii) truth is a relation. I will therefore begin (§1) by saying something about the fate of these views at the hands of the early modern scholastics.

Before proceeding I should say a word about early modern conceptions of truth-bearers. Most early modern scholastics conceive of truth-bearers as mental states of some kind. There were debates about exactly which sorts of mental states are truth-apt, but it was generally agreed that the so-called acts of composing and dividing—Aristotle’s second operation of the intellect—are paradigmatic truth-bearers.¹⁰ Such mental states go by a variety of names,

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⁹ For an extensive discussion of a variety of theories of truth, many of which I will not discuss, see Hurtado, *Universa philosophia*, De anima, d. 9, s. 3, pp. 574ff.

¹⁰ For discussion of the truth-aptitude of simple apprehensions and sensory cognitions, see Hurtado, *Universa philosophia*, De anima, d. 9, s. 2, p. 574; Suárez, DM, 8.3; Carleton, *Philosophia universa*, Logic, d. 44, s. 2; Izquierdo, *Pharus scientiarum*, d. 3, q. 2, p. 117 and t. 2, d. 3, q. 2, prop. 2, p. 118; Mauro, *Liber secundus*, q. 58, p. 328. Vázquez, *Commentariorum ac disputationum in primam
including ‘proposition’, ‘judgment’, ‘cognition’, ‘mental act’, and ‘act’; whatever name they go by, they could aptly be described as mental sentences. In what follows I arbitrarily prefer the term ‘proposition’ to denote truth-apt mental sentences. There were further debates about the nature and structure of propositions, but I will largely set these debates aside. As far as I have seen, the early modern scholastics did not explicitly draw a token/type distinction with respect to truth bearers, but there are some indications that they thought of truth bearers as mental sentence tokens rather than types, and going forward I will assume that they conceive of truth bearers as mental sentence tokens. When early modern scholastics talk about the truth of a specific sentence, they should be understood as talking about the truth of a token of that sentence type. This is important because a sentence type containing indexicals—for example, ‘Peter exists now’—will be true or false only relative to a context, whereas a token of that type can be true or false simpliciter. Indeed, one reason why I think early modern scholastics generally thought truth bearers are tokens rather than types is that they tend to assume that propositions containing indexicals are true or false simpliciter, not relative to a context. It should also be noted that if truth bearers are mental sentence tokens, then truth is mind-dependent insofar as, if there are no mental sentence tokens, there are no truths. This is a consequence that I think early modern scholastics would be happy to accept; as we have seen, some even build it into the truth conditions for a proposition that the proposition exists.

partem Sancti Thomae tomus primus, d. 75, q. 16, a. 2, p. 445. For a discussion of the truth-aptitude of so-called practical cognition, see Izquierdo, Pharus scientiarum, d. 3, q. 1, cst. 3, p. 117.

11 For extensive discussion of these debates, see Izquierdo, Pharus scientiarum, d. 2, q. 4, pp. 82ff.

12 Madritano, Prodromus seu prolegomena ad scholasticas disciplinas, d. 7, ch. 7, p. 775, n. 52: “Verificativum objectivum, formale, ac immediatum cuiuslibet actus est illud, quod actus enunciat (Si enim per actum non enunciatur erit ad summum verificativum illativum) quoque est tale, ut, ipso solo existente, actus sit verus, si hic quoque existat, &; ipso non existente, actus sit falsus.”
3.1 The Monadic Property View and the Real Relation View

The title question of the second section of Suárez’s disputation on truth (DM 8.2) is, “What is the truth of a cognition?” Suárez begins by explaining some of the options, one of which is that truth is “something absolute in the act itself.”\(^{13}\) Slightly later he reports the view as follows, “Truth is a real property of the act itself.” The primary argument for this view seems to have been that truth is a perfection of a mental act. Perfections are intrinsic properties. So, truth is an intrinsic property.\(^ {14}\) I’ll call this “the perfection argument.” The perfection argument hinges on the assumption that perfections are intrinsic properties. It is therefore clear from the perfection argument that the view under consideration is one according to which truth is an intrinsic property.

Suárez rejects this view of truth. In an argument that derives from Ockham, Suarez observes that propositions can change truth-value without undergoing an intrinsic change.\(^{15}\) Suppose I form the proposition ‘Socrates is sitting’ at a time when Socrates is sitting. Socrates then stands up. Meanwhile I continue to think that Socrates is sitting. No change occurs in my mental state (we may assume), and so no change occurs in the proposition that Socrates is sitting. That proposition accordingly changes truth-value without any intrinsic change. This shows that change in truth-value is not an intrinsic change. Consequently, truth is not an intrinsic property.

Although this argument presupposes, controversially, that propositions can change truth-value, it can be reformulated without that presupposition. For many true propositions could have been false without any intrinsic difference in

\(^{13}\) DM 8.2.1 (XXV, 277): “…an, scilicet, in ipso actu sit aliquid absolutum…”

\(^{14}\) This is a simplified version of the second and third arguments in DM 8.2.1. It also seems to have been how many philosophers after Suárez understood the perfection argument.

\(^{15}\) Suárez, DM 8.2.3-5 (XXV, 278-279). Note that Suárez’s argument derives from Ockham (Summa logicae II, c. 43; Expos. Praedicam., c. 9, s. 14; Quodl. v, q. 24). Ockham’s version of the argument is discussed in Marilyn McCord Adams, “Ockham on Truth,” 152. Contemporary versions of this argument can be found in Rassmussen, Defending the Correspondence Theory of Truth, 2; Merricks, Truth and Ontology, 182.
themselves. Suppose the proposition that Socrates is sitting at t is true. There
could be an exact duplicate of that proposition in a world in which Socrates is not
sitting at t, and in that world that proposition would be false.\textsuperscript{16} But if truth were
an intrinsic property, a difference in truth-value would be an intrinsic difference.
Since a difference in truth-value is not in fact an intrinsic difference, truth is not
an intrinsic property.

Of course this argument leaves open the possibility that truth is an extrinsic
property. The early modern scholastic notion of an extrinsic denomination did
the contemporary work of extrinsic properties. Early modern scholastics
distinguish between intrinsic denominations, extrinsic denominations, and semi-
extrinsic denominations. A semi-extrinsic denomination is like a property that is
partly extrinsic and partly intrinsic. An example of such a property might be
\textit{being gold and ten meters away from something iron}. This property is partly intrinsic
because it is composed of an intrinsic property—\textit{being gold}—and partly extrinsic
because it is composed of an extrinsic property—\textit{being ten meters away from
something iron}. Many of the authors of concern here thought that truth is a semi-
extrinsic denomination, or what a contemporary philosopher might call a partly
extrinsic property. More on the details of this view in §2.

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As far as I have seen scholastics universally endorse a conformity theory of truth:
roughly, truth is conformity between a truth-bearer and its object.\textsuperscript{17} Talk of truth

\textsuperscript{16} Hurtado infamously claims that the truth-value of a proposition is an intrinsic, essential feature
of that proposition. If a proposition were false instead of true, it would be a different proposition.
However, Hurtado’s view was vigorously opposed for the rather obvious reason that some truths
seem to be contingently true. In fact, Hurtado denies that some truths are contingently true. See
Hurtado, \textit{Universa philosophia}, De anima, d. 9, subs. 4, pp. 578-579.

\textsuperscript{17} E.g., Suárez, DM 8 (XXV, 275): “Supponimus ex communi omnium consensu, veritatem realem
consistere in adaequatione quadam seu conformitate inter rem et intellectum.” Hurtado, \textit{Universa
philosophia}, De anima, d. 9, s. 1, n. 1, p. 573: “Veritas consistit in conf[o]rmitate actus cum objecto,
as conformity naturally leads to the thought that truth is a relation. For what sort of thing is conformity if not a relation? This is exactly the line of thought that leads followers of Scotus to think that truth is a relation. As Martin Meruisse writes,

And first it is proven that truth is a relation as follows: because every conformity is a relation by which something is said to be conformed to something else. But truth is the conformity by which the intellect or its action is said to be conformed to the object cognized. Therefore, truth is a relation.18

Mastri follows Meruisse in this line of argument.19 Further, Meruisse and Mastri think that truth is a real relation, as opposed to a relation of reason.20 Because Mastri’s discussion is significantly more detailed than Meruisse’s, in this section I focus on Mastri.

Early modern scholastics widely accept three necessary conditions for a relation’s being real:

If $a$ stands in a relation $R$ to $b$, then $R$ is a real relation iff

1. $a$ and $b$ are real;21

2. $a$ is really distinct from $b$ (no real relation is reflexive);

18 Meruisse, Rerum metaphysicarum libri tres, lib. 2, ch. 3, part 2, q. 1, concl. ult., p. 357: “Et imprimis quod [veritas] sit relatio probatur. Quia conformitas omnis est relatio, qua aliquid dicitur alteri conforme. At veritas est conformitas qua intellectus vel actio eius dicitur conformis objecto cognito. Ergo, veritas est relatio.” Meruisse reports that this is Scotus’s opinion.
19 See Mastri, Philosophiae tomus primus, d. 10, q. 2, a. 3, n. 29, p. 295: “[C]onformitas est quaedam intentionalis similitudo & imago; ergo est quaedam relatio.”
20 For Mastri’s lengthy discussion of real relations, see Philosophiae tomus primus, d. 8, pp. 234-279. The early modern scholastics had much to say about the nature of real relations. John Doyle’s English translations of Francisco Suárez’s disputation on relations runs to 230 pages, and Mastri’s discussion is no less rich. However, we need not enter into the complexities of the debate about real relations here. For more on the early modern scholastic discussion of relations, see Penner, “Rodrigo de Arriaga on Relations”; Penner, “Suárez on the Reduction of Categorical Relations.”
21 Cf. Suárez, DM 47.8.1 (XXVI, 814).
(3) R “arises from the nature of the terms, and not by a comparative act of the intellect.”

The last condition amounts to saying that the relation is mind-independent. Mastri thinks that truth meets these three conditions. To see why, consider the following example. Suppose the proposition, ‘Peter runs’, is true because it is conformed to Peter’s running. The terms of this instance of the truth relation (supposing truth is a relation) are (a) the proposition that Peter runs, and (b) Peter’s running. Both of these items are real and, furthermore, distinct, satisfying conditions (1) and (2). Moreover, the proposition that Peter runs is true mind-independently in the sense that no one need ever think that ‘Peter runs’ is true in order for it to be true; someone must think that Peter runs in order for there to be a truth-bearer, of course, but the proposition, ‘Peter runs’, might be true without anyone ever thinking, ‘It is true that Peter runs’. Accordingly, the truth relation in the present instance is a real relation, not a relation of reason.

The example just given, however, was carefully chosen, and as Mastri’s opponents well knew, problem cases loom. Suárez, for example, argues that some instances of truth fail to satisfy condition (1). To see why, we need to introduce a bit more terminology. Scholastics generally thought that relations are asymmetrical, and they distinguish between the subject of a relation and a terminus of a relation. If $a$ stands in $R$ to $b$, then $a$ is the subject of $R$, and $b$ is the terminus of $R$. Now suppose for the sake of argument that truth is a relation. In every instance of truth there is a real subject—namely, the true proposition—but Suárez argues that “sometimes the real terminus is absent.” The real terminus is sometimes absent, in Suárez’s view, because some truths are about non-existent

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22 Mastri, Philosophiae tomus primus, d. 8, q. 1, n. 1, p. 234: “Tertia, tandem, quod oriatur ex natura extremorum, & non per actum comparativum intellectus.” Mastri remarks that these three conditions are “accepted by everyone”. Suárez lists all three conditions in DM 47.4.2 (XXVI, 799).

23 DM 8.2.4 (XXV, 278): “At aliquando deest in hac conformitate terminus realis, ut quando iudicium verum est de non entibus.” Cf. DM 47.8.2 (XXVI, 811).
things. Suárez distinguishes between two senses of ‘real’; something is real in the strict sense if and only if it exists; something is real in the broad sense if and only if it is possible. Here Suárez is using ‘real’ in the strict sense. I will call this the ‘missing terminus objection’.

Mastri responds to the missing terminus objection by saying that truth is not a categorical relation but a transcendental relation. Transcendental relations are special partly because they might have termini that do not exist. As far as I can tell, Suárez has no response to this move, but many opponents of the real relation view of truth saw relations as superfluous in accounting for truth. To see why, return to our first example, the proposition that Peter runs. Mastri would say that ‘Peter runs’ is true if and only if it stands in the conformity relation to Peter’s running. Mastri’s opponents point out that the appeal to a relation here is unnecessary. For if ‘Peter runs’ exists, and Peter’s running exists, then ‘Peter

24 It is worth noting in passing that if a truthmaker makes something true by existing, Suárez is here denying Truthmaker Maximalism. I think that Suárez does deny Truthmaker Maximalism, but I will not argue for that claim here.
25 See DM 2.4.
26 DM 47.8.4 (XXVI, 815); DM 47.8.7 (XXVI, 816).
27 Mastri discusses transcendental relations in Philosophiae tomus primus, d. 8, q. 1, nn. 2-6, pp. 234-235. He explicitly states that transcendental real relations may hold between non-existent objects in q. 6, a. 1, n. 80, p. 250. Penner briefly discusses Arriaga’s view of transcendental relations in “Rodrigo de Arriaga on Relations,” 44. For Mastri’s response to the missing terminus objection, see Philosophiae tomus primus, d 10, q. 2, a. 3, n. 34, pp. 295-296: “Tum 3. Cognitio entis rationis & non entium nequit conformari illi suti sunt in seipsis, cum nullum esse habeant a parte rei, nec sint res, sed in intellectu, at veritas sumitur in oridine ad rem, ut est in se, ergo in hac cognitione veritas non dicet relationem conformitatis […] Ad 3. Quando dicimus veritatem esse conformitatem ad rem sicuti est in se, res non accipitur proprie & positive, ut a non ente distinguitur, & venit a ratu rata ratum; sed sumitur pro objecto quod cognoscitur, quae cumque illud sit, & ut venit a rereris; nec per ly ’sicuti est in se’, insinuatur semper existentia a parte rei, sed potius natura, conditio & essentia illius, quod cognoscitur (quam habent suo modo entia rationis & negationes) & existentia objectiva in cognitione practica.” See also Mastri, Philosophiae tomus primus, d. 10, q. 2, a. 3, n. 31, p. 295: “Haec tamen differentia reperitur inter actus necessarios intuitivos & abstractivos, quod illi necessario dicunt ordinem ad objectum existens, & actuale ut sic, quare semper ordo ille est inter extrema realia actu; isti vero necessario abstrahunt ab existentia objecti, & quamvis objectum sit existens, de per accidens est illis, quia illud respiciunt non ut existens, sed ut abstrahit ab existentia, qua ratione propositiones istae sunt sempiternae veritatis, & verbum in ipsis absolvitur ab omni temporis differentia, qua propter de ratione formalis conformitatis istorum actuum est, quod non sit inter extrema realia, & actu existentia, eo vel maxime quia possunt ad non entia terminari.”
28 See, e.g., Izquierdo, Pharus scientiarum, d. 3, q. 1, prop. 2, p. 111.
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runs’ is true. Call this the ‘parsimony objection’. The parsimony objection, originally formulated by Ockham, was a common argument for the reduction of real relations to their terms, and it is an important piece of the dialectical puzzle because many philosophers who reject the real relation view of truth might also reject the operative premise in Suárez’s “missing terminus” objection. Mastri’s response to the objection is simply to dig in his heels and insist that relations are not reducible to their terms, but for this claim he offers no compelling arguments.

3.2 Suárez’s Legacy:
The Semi-Extrinsic Denomination View and the Connotation View

If truth is neither a property nor a relation, what could it be? Suárez addresses the question, ‘What is truth?’ in section two of his disputation on truth in his Metaphysical Disputations. After arguing that truth is neither a property nor a relation, Suárez defends the following two obscure claims:

(4) Truth adds nothing real and intrinsic to a proposition but connotes an object that is as represented by the true proposition.

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29 For this sort of objection, see Suárez, DM 8.2.17-20 (XXV, 228-89) and Polizzi, Tomus tertius, d. 25, s. 1, n. 3, p. 359; Arriaga, Cursus philosophicus, d. 14, subs. 5, n. 28, p. 170.
30 See Henninger, Relations, 123-125.
31 For discussion see Sydney Penner, “Rodrigo de Arriaga on Relations,” 38. It is unclear to me why the parsimony objection would be taken to show that truth is not a relation, rather than that truth is a relation that is reducible to its terms. However, I think these alternatives are merely terminological variants of each other.
32 Mastri considers the objection that the appeal to relations in a theory of truth is superfluous in Philosophiae tomus primus, d. 10, q. 2, a. 3, n. 35, p. 294. For his response to the general argument for the reduction of real relations to their terms, see Tomus primus, d. 8, q. 3, a. 2, n. 37, p. 241.
33 Suárez, DM 8.2.9 (XXV, 279): “Veritatem cognitionis ultra ipsum actum nihil addere reale et intrinsecum ipsi actui, sed connotare solum objectum ita se habens sicut per actum repraesentatur. Haec assertio sequitur ex praecedentibus; nam actum esse verum plus aliquid dicit quam actum esse; et non dicit aliquid reale absolutum vel relativum ultra ipsum actum, nec etiam dicit proprietiam et rigorosam relationem rationis; ergo nihil aliud potest praeter dictam connotationem seu denominationem consurgencem ex connexione seu conjunctione talis actus et objecti.”
(5) Truth includes (i) a representation and (ii) an object as represented by the representation.34

It is not immediately clear what claims (4) and (5) mean (more on these claims below). Nor is it clear which claim, (4) or (5), represents Suárez’s answer to the metaphysical question. Suárez’s lack of clarity on this question, along with his endorsement of claims (4) and (5), led to a further debate about the proper interpretation of Suárez and about the nature of truth.

Writing on truth about 50 years after Suárez, Sebastián Izquierdo begins his disputation on truth with a literature review. He lists the views rejected by Suárez, and then he adds Suárez’s view to the list: “Suárez himself (see [d. 8] n. 9) says that truth adds nothing intrinsic to the cognition, but only connotes an extrinsic object.” But, Izquierdo adds, “This can be understood in two ways. Either truth consists entirely in the cognition, with the object posited as a connoted condition that is entirely extrinsic to the proposition […] or truth includes both the cognition and the object in its concept.”35 These two views correspond to the two claims, (4) and (5), made by Suárez in DM 8.2. In this

34 Suárez, DM 8.2.12 (XXV, 280): “Ex dictis concludo veritatem cognitionis includere talem representa tionem cognitionis quae habeat conjunctam conformitantiam objecti ita se habentis, sicut per cognitionem repraesentatur. Probatur ex dictis, quia ad veritatem nec sola repraesentatio sufficit, si objectum non ita se habeat sicut repraesentatur: neque concomitantia objecti potest sufficere ad denominationem veritatis, nisi praesupposita praedicta representa tione vel potius includendo illam; quia veritas non est sola illa denominatio extrinsea, sed includit intrinsecam habitudinem actus terminatam ad objectum taliter se habens.”

section I explain these two views of truth (interpretations of Suárez). As we shall see, these are the views behind the early modern scholastic conception of truthmaking.

3.2.1 The Semi-Extrinsic Denomination View

I begin with the view Izquierdo himself endorses. After rejecting a number of alternatives, Izquierdo endorses the view that, “truth always consists in a denomination that is partly extrinsic, taken partly from the object.” Izquierdo goes on to say that truth is a “semi-extrinsic denomination.” The standard-bearers of this view were Francisco Oviedo and Rodrigo Arriaga. Oviedo writes,

Every act that is distinct from its object has truth that is partly intrinsic and partly extrinsic—intrinsic insofar as its truth posits \( dicit \) the entity of the act, and extrinsic insofar as it posits the object distinct from the act.

Arriaga is also a clear advocate of the semi-extrinsic denomination view:

Our conclusion is this: Truth consists in a denomination that is partly intrinsic to the proposition and partly extrinsic: intrinsic insofar as it posits \( dicit \) the proposition itself affirming [for example] the running of Peter, but extrinsic insofar as it posits the object itself existing in the way \( eo modo \) in which it is affirmed by the proposition.

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36 I will not argue for either view as an interpretation of Suárez, but for what it is worth I think Suárez would endorse the connotation view of truth. My reason for thinking so is that the debate about truth seems to track the debate about relations, and Suárez endorses a view that looks much like a connotation view of relations. See DM 47.2.22 (XXVI, 792); 47.8.10 (XXVI, 817).


38 *Pharus scientiarum*, d. 3, q. 1, prop. 6, n. 38-41, p. 116.


40 Arriaga, *Cursus philosophicus*, Logic, d. 14, s. 1, subs. 5, n. 23, p. 170: “Nostra conclusio est, Veritas consistit in denominatione partim intrinsecum & partim extrinsecum. Intrinsecam, quatenus dicit ipsum propositionem affirmantem cursum Petri: extrinsecum vero, quatenus dicit ipsum objectum eo modo existens, quo per propositionem affirmatur.” See also the rest of subs. 5.
Arriaga also notes that this view is the most common scholastic view of truth. In order to explain the semi-extrinsic denomination view, we need to take a detour through the notion of a denomination.

### 3.2.2 Denominations

The notion of a denomination is ubiquitous in early modern scholasticism. I’ll begin by providing a rough sketch of the concept, then I will discuss some ways in which the concept can be further spelled out.

A typical denomination involves three items: a subject (or, as Polizzi says, a “quasi-subject”; more on this qualification shortly), a denominating form, and a denominative name. The denominative name is used to denominate the subject because of the denominating form. For instance, suppose our denominating name is ‘white’, our subject is Socrates, and a denominating form is Socrates’ whiteness. The idea is that we use the name ‘white’ to denominate Socrates because of Socrates’ whiteness.

Denominations can be intrinsic, extrinsic, or semi-extrinsic. A denomination is intrinsic if the denominating form is intrinsic to (or identical with) the subject. An example of an intrinsic denomination is given in the proposition ‘Socrates is white’ because whiteness is intrinsic to Socrates. A denomination is extrinsic if its denominating form is extrinsic to the subject. Common examples of extrinsic denominations include ‘Socrates is cognized’ and ‘Socrates is seen’: the terms ‘cognized’ and ‘seen’ apply to Socrates because of cognitive and perceptual episodes external to Socrates (we are supposed to

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The fifth edition of Arriaga’s *Cursus philosophicus* repeats Arriaga’s positive view and responses to objections from the first edition almost verbatim. I will work mainly from the first edition.

41 *Cursus philosophicus*, d. 14, s. 1, subs. 5, n. 23, p. 170.

42 As can be seen from John Doyle, “Prolegomena to a Study of Extrinsic Denomination in the Work of Francisco Suárez, S.J.”

understand that Socrates is not thinking about or looking at himself). The contemporary concept of a Cambridge property, or extrinsic property, does the work of the early modern scholastic concept of an extrinsic denomination. Finally, a denomination is semi-extrinsic if its denominating form is partly intrinsic and partly extrinsic to the subject. We will see how this works in the case of truth.

Some clarifications are now in order. We can now see why Polizzi calls the subject of a denomination a ‘quasi-subject’. In some cases, the subject of a denomination is a subject in the proper sense—Socrates, for example, is properly the subject of whiteness because whiteness inheres in Socrates. In the cases of extrinsic and semi-extrinsic denominations, however, this is not the case. Socrates is not properly the subject of the cognitive episode in virtue of which he is thought about, nor is he the subject of the perceptual episode in virtue of which he is seen. It is for this reason that other philosophers call the subject of a denomination the ‘thing denominated’, a phrase with less metaphysical baggage than ‘subject’. A second terminological clarification: a denominating form need not actually be a form. It can also be anything of any ontological category.

I have explained the notion of a thing denominated, a denominating form, and a denominative name. But I have not yet explained denomination itself. What exactly is a denomination? When Arriaga says that truth is a semi-extrinsic denomination, with what sort of thing is he identifying truth? It is natural to think that a denomination is a linguistic phenomenon whereby a predicate is applied to a subject. This sort of interpretation is common in the secondary literature. In his landmark article on extrinsic denominations in Suárez, John Doyle writes,
Let me provisionally describe extrinsic denomination as a designation of something, not from anything inherent in itself, but from some disposition, coordination, or relationship which it has toward or with something else.44

Here Doyle explains that a denomination is a designation of something, designation presumably being a linguistic phenomenon. Similarly, Jorge Gracia and Daniel Novotný write,

A denomination is the substitution of the name N2 of a thing T2 for the name N1 of another thing T1 to which T2 is somehow related.45

Here denomination is supposed to be the act of substituting one name for another. This too is a linguistic phenomenon. Finally, Christopher Shields writes,

An extrinsic denomination of a is some predicate, being-ϕ, which a bears non-intrinsically.46

Here an extrinsic denomination is conceived of as a predicate—a piece of language. (It is unclear how something can bear a predicate, but that is another problem.)

There is some textual evidence that denomination is a linguistic phenomenon. The clearest evidence that I have found for this reading is in Gabriel Vázquez:

Second, I think that before the operation of the intellect there is no real denomination from some thing or from an extrinsic form. For because denomination is the appellation of a name, it is the work of reason, and a thing which is absolute in itself, if it is denominated relatively, it is denominated by an intellect conceiving of it relatively. For names are imposed by us so we can signify what we think about things. Hence, to concede that there is some real extrinsic denomination before any

44 Doyle, “Prolegomena to a Study of Extrinsic Denomination in the Work of Francis Suárez, S.J.,” 122-123. Doyle goes on to say that this provisional characterization is not quite right for reasons that I mention below.
act of the intellect implies a contradiction in the object. For if it is a denomination, it is the expression of some intellect. [my emphasis]47

In this passage Vázquez makes two claims. First, he says that denominations are not real, by which he means that they are not mind-independent. The reason for this, and his second claim, is that a denomination is the “appellation of a name” or the “expression of some intellect”. So this passage seems to support the idea that a denomination is a linguistic phenomenon.48 I’ll call this the ‘anti-realist conception’ of denominations. It is striking that when paired with the semi-extrinsic denomination view of truth, the anti-realist conception of denominations entails that truth is a mind-dependent linguistic phenomenon.

Although the anti-realist conception of denominations is perhaps the natural one, and it is clearly supported by the above text from Vázquez, other early modern scholastics argue that denominations are mind-independent realities rather than linguistic phenomena.49 This can be seen clearly in the following passage from Suárez. Here Suárez is considering the question whether extrinsic denominations are beings of reason, and his primary opponent appears to be Vázquez:

If a denomination is taken from a real form, by this very fact it exists in reality, and consequently it does not pertain to beings of reason. The antecedent is clear because that form has true real being without dependence on reason. Therefore the

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47 Vázquez, Commentariorum ac disputationum in primam partem Sancti Thomae liber secundus, d. 115, ch. 2, n. 2, p. 32: “Secundo existimo, ante intellectus operationem non esse realem aliquam denominationem ab aliqua re, aut forma extrinseca. Quia denominatio cum sit nominis appellatio, est etiam opus rationis, et res quae absoluta in se est, si relate denominatur, ab intellectu relate eam concipiente denominatur: nomina enim a nobis imposita sunt, ut id quod de rebus concipimus, significemus: quare concedere denominationem aliquam extrinsecam realem ante quemcumque intellectum, contradictionem implicat in objecto: nam si est denominatio, est alicuius intellectionis expressio.”

48 Note that language is mental for scholastics, so the claim that a denomination is “the appellation of a name” is consistent with the claim that it is “the expression of some intellect,” and both claims support the linguistic interpretation.

49 By “mind-independent” I mean what the early modern scholastics typically meant: a is mind-independent iff a exists apart from being the object of thought. In this way, minds and even thoughts are mind-independent.
denomination coming from that form is also real, although it is extrinsic, and it does not have being merely objectively in the intellect or in virtue of some activity or fiction of the intellect.\textsuperscript{50}

Here Suárez claims that a denomination is real if the denominating form from which it is taken is real. In the next passage, Suárez directly confronts Vázquez’s view of denominations:

You will say, because it is merely a denomination, it cannot be more than a being of reason, for denomination is the work of reason. I respond. If by ‘denomination’ someone were to understand the imposition of a denominative name, that indeed is a work of reason. But now we are not concerned about the imposition of a denominative name, for in this way even an intrinsic denomination is a work of reason, considered as an imposition of a denominative name. But we are concerned with the unions and relations of things themselves, in which such denominative names are grounded. These are not works of reason.\textsuperscript{51}

Here Suárez rejects the anti-realist conception of denominations. The reason for doing so is that when we talk about denominations, “we are concerned with the unions and relations of things themselves in which such denominative names are grounded.” I take it that what Suárez means here is that when we talk about denominations, we are talking about denominative forms and their relations to denominated subjects. Because Suárez identifies denominations with real beings, I will call his conception of denominations the ‘realist conception’.

\textsuperscript{50} Suárez, DM 54.2.10, (XXVI, 1020): “Si denominatio sumitur a forma reali, hoc ipso in rebus existit, et consequenter non pertinet ad entia reationis. Antecedens patet quia illa forma habet verum esse reale sine dependentia a racione; ergo etiam denominatio ab illa proveniens, quamvis extrinseca, realis tamen est, et non est tantum objective in intellectu, aut per negatiationem aut fictionem eius.” See also Suárez, DM 54.2.14, (XXVI, 1021): “Quocirca, si praeceise sistamus in denominatione extrinseca proveniente a forma reali, et ab aliqua eius habitudine non ficta, sed vera, et in re ipsa existente, non existimo pertinere ad ens rationis, sed comprehendi sub latitudinem entis realis, saltem ex parte formae denominantis.”

\textsuperscript{51} Suárez, DM 54.2.10, (XXVI, 1020): “Dices: hoc ipso quod est sola denominatio, non potest esse plus quam ens rationis, nam denominatio opus rationis est. Respondetur: si per denominationem quis intelligat impositionem nominis denominativi, illud quidem est opus rationis. Sed nunc non agimus de impositionem nominis denominativi, hoc enim modo etiam denominatio intrinseca, quantum ad impositionem nominis denominativi, est opus rationis. Sed agimus de ipsarum rerum unionibus aut habitudinibus, in quibus talia denominativa nomina fundatur, quae non sunt opera rationis.”
Let’s pause to take stock. According to the semi-extrinsic denomination view, truth is a denomination that is partly intrinsic and partly extrinsic to a true proposition. This raises the question, what sort of thing is a denomination? As we have just seen, there are two conceptions of denominations in the early modern scholastic literature: the anti-realist conception, and the realist conception. On the anti-realist conception, denominations are mind-dependent, linguistic phenomena. When this view is paired with the semi-extrinsic denomination view of truth, it entails that truth is a mind-dependent, linguistic phenomenon. On the realist conception, denominations are real beings in which denominative names are grounded. When this conception is paired with the semi-extrinsic denomination view, it entails that truth is a real being in which the denominative name, ‘true’, is grounded. The question now is, which conception of denominations is supposed to be paired with the semi-extrinsic denomination view of truth?

Oviedo and Arriaga, the standard-bearers of the semi-extrinsic denomination view, both accept the realist conception of denominations. Oviedo weighs in on the debate between Vázquez and Suárez concerning the ontological status of extrinsic denominations, and he sides with Suárez:

I agree with Father Suárez [...] and many others: every extrinsic denomination coming from a real form, whether physical or intentional, is real, mixed with no being of reason. I prove this conclusion. A denomination is taken from a denominating form; therefore, if the form is real, the denomination will be real.52

In this passage Oviedo endorses the realist conception of denominations. Arriaga also weighs in on the controversy over the ontological status of extrinsic denominations, and he takes the Suárezian line that extrinsic denominations are

52 Oviedo, Tomus II philosophiae, Metaph., cv. 12, pt. 5, n. 3, pp. 361-362: “Sentio cum P. Soar. [...] & alii plurimi omnem denominationem extrinsecam provenientem a forma reali, sive physica, sive intentionalis, esse realem absque ulla mixtura entis rationis. Probo hanc conclusionem: denominatio sumitur a forma denominante; ergo si forma est realis, denominatio erit realis.”
real beings. In the fifth edition of his *Cursus philosophicus* (1669), Arriaga explicitly rejects the view that truth is a being of reason. It therefore appears that the semi-extrinsic denomination view of truth is supposed to be paired with a realist conception of denominations. If so, then the semi-extrinsic denomination view of truth amounts to the following:

**The Semi-Extrinsic Denomination View:** Truth is a real being that is (i) partly intrinsic and partly extrinsic to a true proposition, (ii) in which the denominative name, ‘true’, is grounded.

But what sort of being is partly intrinsic and partly extrinsic to a true proposition? Recall the following passage from Arriaga:

> Our conclusion is this: Truth consists in a denomination that is partly intrinsic to the proposition and partly extrinsic: intrinsic insofar as it posits [*dicit*] the proposition itself affirming [for example] the running of Peter, but extrinsic insofar as it posits the object itself existing in the way [*eo modo*] in which it is affirmed by the proposition.

According to this passage, truth somehow involves two items: (i) the proposition itself, and (ii) its intentional object. When early modern scholastics discuss the semi-extrinsic denomination view of truth, they often speak as if truth is a *mereological sum* of a proposition and its intentional object.

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53 Arriaga adds the caveat that if we think of extrinsic denominations as intrinsic properties, they become beings of reason. See, *Cursus philosophicus*, Metaphysics, d. 6, s. 1, pp. 782-783.

54 Arriaga, *Cursus philosophicum iam noviter auctus*, d. 14, s. 1, subs. 2, p. 224.

55 Arriaga, *Cursus philosophicus*, Logic, d. 14, s. 1, subs. 5, n. 23, p. 170: “Nostra conclusio est, Veritas consistit in denominatione partim intrinseca propositioni, & partim extrinseca. Intrinseca, quatenus dicit ipsum propositionem affirmantem cursum Petri: extrinseca vero, quatenus dicit ipsum objectum eo modo existens, quo per propositionem affirmatur.” See also the rest of subs. 5. The fifth edition of Arriaga’s *Cursus philosophicus* repeats Arriaga’s positive view and responses to objections from the first edition almost verbatim. I will work mainly from the first edition.
Giuseppe Polizzi, an opponent of the semi-extrinsic denomination view, reads both Oviedo and Arriaga as endorsing the claim that truth is a mereological sum. In his discussion of truth, Polizzi writes,

The first conclusion is that the object is not an intrinsic part composing formal truth and falsity. This is against Arriaga […] Oviedo […] and other contemporaries who think that truth is composed of two intrinsic parts, one of which is intrinsic to the proposition—indeed, it is the proposition itself—insofar as it affirms, e.g., Peter’s running, and the other part is extrinsic to the proposition but intrinsic to the truth, and it is the object existing in the way in which it is affirmed by the proposition.\(^\text{56}\)

According to this passage, Arriaga’s view is that truth is the mereological sum of a true proposition and its intentional object. Indeed, Arriaga speaks several times of the “parts” of truth and even states that truth is a “complex” or “composite.”\(^\text{57}\) Arriaga’s followers make similar statements about the “parts” of truth. Richard Lynch says that truth is an “aggregate” of a proposition and its object.\(^\text{58}\) Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza tells us, “In Suárez’s opinion, the object is a part of truth.”\(^\text{59}\) Luis de Losada suggests that this view eventually won out over its competitors to become the “common” Jesuit view of truth:

The common opinion in our School is that truth consists in a complex of an act and an object, in such a way that by the name ‘truth’ an act is implied [importetur] directly, and an object indirectly, and so the denomination ‘true’ is partly intrinsic,\(^\text{56}\)

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\(^\text{56}\) Polizzi, *Siculi platiensis tomus tertius*, d. 25, s. 4, n. 33, p. 366: “Prima conclusio: Objectum non est pars intrinsece componens veritatem & falsitatem formalem. Est contra Arriagam loco citato subsect. 5, Oviedum ibi s. 3, & alias Recentiores existimantes veritatem ex duplici parte sibi intrinsea componi, quaram una est intrinsea propositioni, immo est ipsa propositio, quatenus affirmat V.G. cursum Petri; altera vero extrinseca propositioni, licet intrinsea veritati & est ipsum objectum eo modo existens, quo per propositionem afirmatur.”

\(^\text{57}\) See *Cursus philosophicus*, Logic, d. 14, s. 2, subs. 7, nn. 37, 39, p. 172.

\(^\text{58}\) Lynch, *Universa philosophia scholastica tomus primus*, lib. 10, t. 1, ch. 1, n. 6, p. 361. Lynch is an alethic pluralist. He distinguishes between two kinds of truth. One kind is essential to “metaphysically certain” propositions, and another kind is accidental. The accidental kind is the aggregate. See *Universa philosophia scholastica tomus primus*, lib. 10, t. 1, ch. 4, 367-368. Lynch’s alethic pluralism is not important for present purposes.

\(^\text{59}\) Hurtado, *Universa philosophia*, De anima, d. 9, s. 3, subs. 3, n. 22, p. 576: “In sententia P. Suárez objectum est pars veritatis.” For Hurtado’s evaluation of the composite view, see *Universa philosophia*, De anima, d. 9, s. 3, subs. 3, pp. 576ff.
partly extrinsic to the act: intrinsic insofar as it involves the act itself, extrinsic insofar as it implies the object.\footnote{Losada, Cursus philosophici prima pars, t. 5, d. 2, ch. 1, n. 2 p. 231 (erroneously marked p. ‘131’): “Sententia in Schola nostra communis Veritatem stare dicit in complexo actus & objecti, ita ut hoc nomine Veritas importetur actus in recto, objectum in obliquo, priondeque denominationem veri esse partim intrinsecam, partim extrinsecam actu, intrinsecam prout involvit actum ipsum, extrinsecam prout importat objectum.” See also Maximus Mangold, Philosophia recentior, vol. 1, Ontology, diss. 4, a. 1, s. 4, n. 98, p. 96.}

Earlier we saw that truth on the semi-extrinsic denomination view is conceived as a real being that is partly intrinsic and partly extrinsic to a true proposition. In light of the above passages about the “parts” of truth, it seems we can now state what sort of real being is partly intrinsic and partly extrinsic to a proposition. When the semi-extrinsic denomination view is paired with a realist conception of denominations, the result is what I will call the ‘composite view’ of truth:

**The Composite View:** The truth of a proposition ‘p’ is the mereological sum of ‘p’ and its intentional object.

The mereological sum of ‘p’ and its intentional object is the real being that is partly intrinsic and partly extrinsic to a true proposition.

As I understand it, the semi-extrinsic denomination view may be paired either with a realist or with an anti-realist conception of denominations. When paired with a realist conception, the result is the composite view. It is important to draw a distinction, subtle though it is, between the semi-extrinsic denomination view and the composite view; although most advocates of the semi-extrinsic denomination view endorse the realist conception of denominations, some seem to fall back to the anti-realist conception in the face of certain difficulties that I will explain in chapters five and six.

Before proceeding it is important to note how advocates of the semi-extrinsic denomination view of truth conceive of the “object” of a proposition. Early
modern scholastics draw a standard medieval distinction between the partial and the total or so-called “adequate” object of a proposition. The partial object of a proposition is the intentional object of the subject or predicate of the proposition. The adequate object is the object of the proposition taken as a whole. To illustrate, consider the proposition,

\[(P) \text{‘Peter is running’}\]

Peter and running are partial objects of (P), while the adequate object of (P) is said to be *Peter’s running*. When advocates of the semi-extrinsic denomination view say that truth is composed of a proposition and its object, they mean the adequate object. The composite view may therefore be restated as follows:

**The Composite View:** The truth of a proposition ‘p’ is the mereological sum of ‘p’ and its *adequate* intentional object.

### 3.2.3 The Composite View and Truthmaking

We are now in a position to understand how the composite view relates to the idea of a truthmaker. According to the composite view, the total intentional object of a proposition ‘p’ makes ‘p’ true by literally composing the truth of ‘p’. This idea is expressed in a quotation that we have already seen:

And so the object is extrinsic to the cognition, but it is not extrinsic to truth. Since truth is the commensuration of both the object and the act, it intrinsically and constitutively includes [importat] both the object and the act: the object as truthmaker [verificativum] and the act as made-true [verificatum].

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61 As explained in chapter two, the idea of a total object of a mental sentence is used by Adam Wodeham to play the role of the object of judgment.

Here Benedictis endorses the composite view of truth, and he identifies one part of truth—the intentional object—as the truthmaker of a true proposition. Other scholastics speak of truthmakers as ‘parts’ of truth. In his discussion of future contingent truths, Maximus Mangold writes,

Further, it is asked in virtue of what are [future contingent truths] true or false? Or, what is their truthmaker, as they say in the schools […] Here we are only inquiring after that part of truth, or the truthmaker inadequately taken, distinct from the proposition, in virtue of which the proposition is formally and immediately denominated ‘true’, and which they call the objective truthmaker.63

Here Mangold speaks of the truthmaker of a true proposition as the object of the proposition and as a part of the truth of the proposition. Francisco Peinado similarly speaks of a truthmaker as something “constitutive” of truth.64

In another “smoking gun” passage, the anonymous author of an unpublished text, probably dating from the late 17th century, draws a connection between truthmaking and the composite view of truth as follows:

The formal truthmaker of any judgment is that by which the act is rendered formally true […] For example, the formal truthmaker of this judgment, ‘Peter is possible’, is the possibility with which the truth of that act is partially identified. [my emphasis]65

This passage occurs in the beginning of a section on truthmaking; our anonymous author is explaining the concept of a truthmaker, and he explains the notion of a truthmaker using what appears to be the composite view of truth: truthmakers are partly identical to (or part of) truth itself. Indeed, later in the

63 Mangold, Philosophia recentior, vol. 1, Ontology, diss. 4, a. 1, s. 3, n. 98, p. 96: “Ulterius quaeritur per quid verae aut falsae sint? Sive, quodnam sit illarum verificativum, ut loquuntur scholae […] Solum hic inquiritur illa pars veritatis, seu verificativum inadaequate sumptum distinctum ab ipsa propositione, per quod haec formaliter & immediate denominatur vera, quodque vocant verificativum objectivum.”
64 Peinado, Phys., lib. 1, d. 7, s. 1, n. 34, p. 187.
65 Anonymous, Disputatio de objecto et verificativo propositionum, f. 217v.
same disputation the author claims, “Truth consists in the existence of the act and the existence of the object.” The author of the above passage endorses the composite view of truth, and he explains that truthmakers are partly constitutive of truth.

My suggestion, therefore, is that for many early modern scholastics the notion of a truthmaker is intimately related to the composite view of truth. A truthmaker is literally a maker of truth insofar as the truthmaker for a proposition is a part of that proposition’s truth. I return to the account of truthmaking entailed by the composite view of truth in the next chapter. Before moving on, however, I must discuss an important alternative to the composite view.

3.2.4 The Connotation View

As far as I have been able to ascertain, the composite view of truth is, as Losada maintains, the dominant view among those mostly Jesuit 17th-century scholastics who employ the notion of a truthmaker. But it is not the only view of truth endorsed by those who employ the notion of a truthmaker. Giuseppe Polizzi, for example, explicitly rejects the composite view of truth, endorsing instead what I call the connotation view. Others endorsing the connotation view include Giattini and Thomas Compton Carleton, who features prominently in the chapter-five discussion of negative entities. The connotation view of truth is in some ways opaque and not entirely compelling. Nonetheless, because it enjoys currency among philosophers who use the notion of a truthmaker, it deserves some attention if we wish to explain the philosophical provenance of the notion of a truthmaker in the 17th century.

66 Anonymous, Disputatio de obiecto et verificativo propositionum, f. 221v: “Veritas stat in existentia actus et existentia objecti.”
In keeping with the realist conception of denominations, Polizzi explicitly states that truth is a denominating form:

From what has been said it is clear that formal propositional truth is a *form denominating an act as true*, and it is identified with that act in such a way that it essentially implies [importet] also the object of the act. It remains to be seen in which of the above three ways the object is essentially implied: whether as an intrinsic part, as an impure connotatum, or as a pure connotatum. [my emphasis]67

In the first half of this quotation, Polizzi identifies truth with a denominating form. Thus far his view is in agreement with the composite view, which also identifies truth with a denominating form. Polizzi also agrees with the composite view that the object of a true proposition is “essentially implied” by the truth of that proposition. In other words, the truth of a proposition somehow involves (i) the proposition and (ii) its object.

But as Polizzi goes on to note in the second half of the quotation, there is more than one way to understand the claim that truth “essentially implies” a proposition and its object: the object can be implied as a part, as an impure connotatum, or as a pure connotatum.

In the latter two cases, Polizzi is adducing the notion of connotation. The notion of connotation appears here and there in early modern scholastic literature; one school of philosophers, the so-called *Connotatores*, were infamous for their (over)use of the notion of connotation to solve traditional philosophical problems. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find a detailed explanation of connotation as the early modern scholastics understand it, and the notion remains unclear if not confused.68

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67 Polizzi, *Siculi platiensis tomus tertius*, d. 25, s. 4, n. 32, p. 366: “Ex dictis constet, veritatem formalem propositionis esse formam denominantem actum verum, & ita identificari cum illo, ut essentialiter importet etiam objectum illius: videndum restat, quonam ex tribus dictis modis illud essentialiter importet: num tanquam partem sibi intrinsecam, an vero tanquam connotatum impurum, an denique tanquam purum.”

68 I am not the only one confused. Polizzi notes that the theory of connotation was widely misunderstood in his own day too: “Connotatores, quorum mentem quamplures Recentiores non
Polizzi explains that a denominating form can “essentially imply” something in one of three ways: as a part, as an impure connotatum, or as a pure connotatum. The claim that truth is a denominating form requiring the object of a proposition as a part should now be clear from the foregoing discussion of the composite view of truth. On this understanding, the denominating form associated with the predicate ‘true’ is a mereological sum, one of whose parts is the object of the proposition.

Second, a denominating form might essentially imply something as an impure connotatum. Polizzi explains this idea as follows:

The form is totally identified with the subject in such a way that the subject itself is essentially connected with the other thing.69

Let F-ness be a denominating form, let \( a \) be the subject of the denomination ‘F’, and let \( b \) be the thing essentially implied by the denominating form. The idea seems to be that F-ness essentially implies \( b \) as an impure connotatum if and only if (i) F-ness is identical to \( a \), and (ii) \( a \) is essentially connected with \( b \). Polizzi’s example of an impure connotatum involves the transcendental relation between creature and creator:

bene callentes [...] Unde non es mirum, si contra eos futilia argumenta & nullius ponderis rationes intorqueant” (Siculi platiensis tomus primus, d. 39, s. 1, n. 2, p. 436). Unfortunately Polizzi does nothing to remedy this situation. Historians of late medieval philosophy might be tempted to read Ockham’s famous theory of connotative terms into Polizzi’s remarks on connotation and truth. Although in the end such a reading might be correct (or at least helpful), at this point it would be hasty. While Ockham’s theory of connotative terms is a theory about language, the theory of connotation as Polizzi uses it appears to be a metaphysical rather than linguistic theory. Polizzi consistently speaks of “connotative entities” [entia connotativa] rather than connotative terms (see Siculi platiensis tomus primus, d. 39, s. 1, n. 2, p. 436; in the context of his discussion of truth, see Siculi platiensis tomus tertius, d. 25, s. 4, n. 41, p. 367). I think this is the source of much of the confusion around the early modern scholastic conception of connotation; Polizzi’s remarks about connotation make much more sense if we construe him as making a point about language rather than metaphysics. Alas, that is not how things go.

69 Polizzi, Siculi platiensis tomus tertius, d. 25, s. 4, n. 31, p. 365: “Ita illa forma identificetur totaliter cum subjecto, ut subjectum ipsum sit essentialiter cum re illa connexum.”
So also the transcendental relation that the creature expresses \textit{dicit} toward God essentially requires God because it is entirely identified with the creature in such a way that it essentially implies a connection with God, so that the creature can neither exist nor be understood without God.\textsuperscript{70}

According to this example, each creature is identical with a certain transcendental relation proper to being created. And each instance of the transcendental relation is essentially connected with God. Hence, God is an impure connotatum of the transcendental relation, \textit{creature}.

If truth implies the object of a proposition as an impure connotatum, the result is that (i) truth is identical to a true proposition, and (ii) a true proposition is essentially connected to its object. For example, suppose it is true that Peter is running. According to the impure connotatum view of truth, the truth of ‘Peter is running’ is identical to the proposition that Peter is running, and the proposition that Peter is running is essentially connected with the running of Peter; if Peter were not in fact running, the true proposition ‘Peter is running’ could not exist.

As crazy as this view seems, it was infamously endorsed by Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza.\textsuperscript{71} Hurtado’s view was widely criticized on the grounds that, intuitively, the proposition that Peter runs could exist even if, contrary to fact, Peter were not running. Given the counter-intuitive nature of Hurtado’s view, it is surprising how much attention it gets in the primary literature. It more or less sets the agenda for the debate about truth in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century. Although it was a minority view, it seems to have been the theory to beat.\textsuperscript{72}

Finally, a denominating form might essentially require something as a so-called pure connotatum. In this way, “the form is entirely identified with its

\textsuperscript{70} Polizzi, \textit{Siculi platiensis tonus tertius}, d. 25, s. 4, n. 31, p. 366: “Sic etiam relatio transcendentalis, quam dicit creatura ad Deum, essentialiter exigit ipsum Deum, quia nimimum ita est totaliter identificata cum creatura, ut haec essentiam connexionem ad Deum importet, ita ut neque esse, neque intelligi valeat sine Deo.”

\textsuperscript{71} See Hurtado, \textit{Universa philosophia}, De anima, d. 9, subs. 4, pp. 578-579.

subject and essentially implies the thing in such a way that the subject itself is not essentially connected with the thing, but whether the thing exists or not, the subject still exists.”\textsuperscript{73} Polizzi’s example of a pure connotatum is the denominating form associated with the predicate ‘firstborn’.\textsuperscript{74} Suppose Peter is firstborn. As Polizzi explains, Peter is identical with the denominating form, \textit{firstborn}, and being firstborn essentially implies a second-born, but Peter himself is not essentially connected with a second-born: Peter would still exist even if his younger sibling did not. So the second-born is a pure connotatum of the denominating form, \textit{firstborn}.

Polizzi opts for the third option: “the object,” he explains, “essentially pertains to formal truth and falsity as a pure connotatum.”\textsuperscript{75} Given his previous explanation of the notion of a “pure connotatum,” it follows that Polizzi thinks truth is a denominating form that is (i) identical to a true proposition and (ii) essentially implies the object of the proposition as a pure connotatum. He explains:

\begin{quote}
The same entity of the act, when its object is posited, is truth, and when its object is taken away, is falsity.\textsuperscript{76}
\end{quote}

Besides the entity and intrinsic perfection of the act, [truth] connotes something else extrinsic [to the act], without which the nature of truth cannot subsist.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{73} Polizzi, \textit{Siculi platiensis tomus tertius}, d. 25, s. 4, n. 31, p. 366: “Ita illa forma identificetur totaliter cum suo subjecto, & essentialiter rem illam importet, ut subjectum ipsum non sit cum dicta re essentialiter connexum; sed sive sit res, sive non, adhuc subjectum in suo esse permaneat.”
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{75} Polizzi, \textit{Siculi platiensis tomus tertius}, De anima, d. 25, s. 4, n. 46, p. 368: “Objectum ad veritatem & falsitatem formalem pertinet essentialiter tanquam connotatum purum.” Those who are familiar with Ockham will notice that this view has similarities with Ockham’s view of truth (See Ockham, \textit{Quodl.} v, q. 24). Polizzi does not reference Ockham in this connection, but other early modern scholastics do. See Mastri, \textit{Philosophiae tomus primus}, d. 10, art. 3, n. 25, p. 292: “Quae opinio fuit Ocham I Periher. C. 1. sustinentis veritatem dicere formaliter entitatem actus, non ut sic, sed ut connotat objectum, cui conformatur, & sequitur Suar. D. 8. Metaph. S. 2.”
\textsuperscript{76} Siculi platiensis tomus tertius, d. 25, s. 4, n. 46, p. 369: “Eadem entitas actus, posito objecto, est veritas, & eo ablato, est falsitas.”
In the first passage, Polizzi claims that the “entity of the act” is truth when the object is posited; it is not clear whether the entity of an act is distinct or not from the act itself, but given Polizzi’s explanation of “pure connotatum,” he seems to be saying here that the act itself is identical to truth when its object is posited. In the second passage, Polizzi states that the nature of truth is such that truth itself is essentially connected with the object of a true proposition. As Polizzi himself notes, the connotation view of truth is inspired by Suárez’s claim that truth adds nothing to a proposition but connotes its object. The connotation view of truth is also endorsed by Giattini and Thomas Compton Carleton. Mastri rejects the view, but he thinks that it represents the proper reading of Suárez.

It is not clear that the connotation view of truth is even coherent. To see the problem, consider the true proposition, ‘Peter runs’. According to Polizzi, the truth of that proposition is identical to the proposition itself. But suppose Peter stops running. Now the truth of the proposition has ceased to exist, but the proposition itself has not ceased to exist. How can the truth of the proposition cease to exist if it is identical to the proposition itself, which still exists? This objection was raised by several opponents of the connotation view, and it moves

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77 Polizzi, Siculi platiensis tomus tertius, De anima, d. 25, s. 4, n. 46, p. 368: “Praeter entitatem & intrinsecam perfectionem actus connotare aliquid aliud extrinsecum, sine quo veritatis ratio non subsistit.”

78 Siculi platiensis tomus tertius, d. 25, s. 4, n. 46, p. 368.

79 As Polizzi notes, Carleton sometimes seems to confuse the connotation view with the composite view. See Polizzi, Siculi platiensis tomus tertius, d. 25, s. 4, n. 46, p. 369. For evidence that Suárez endorsed the connotation view, see DM 8.2.9 (XXV, 279). Giattini endorses a restricted version of the connotation view, and he is convinced by Hurtado that certain judgments are essentially true. See Giattini, Logica, q. 8, a. 5, p. 448-450.

Arriaga to call the connotation view “unintelligible.”81 I agree that the connotation view, spelled out as a metaphysical thesis rather than as a claim about the predicate ‘true’, is unintelligible; it is puzzling that Polizzi himself does not seem to see this.

For our purpose it is unimportant whether the connotation view is finally coherent or not. The important upshot for our purpose is that on the connotation view, as on the composite view, every true proposition is made true by its adequate intentional object. I return to the account of truthmaking entailed by the connotation view in the next chapter.

3.3 Conclusion: Truth and Conformity

In section one I mentioned that most scholastics endorse the idea that truth is conformity between a proposition and its intentional object. But we have also seen that many scholastics think that truth is a semi-extrinsic denomination or that truth is identical to a true proposition. One might now wonder what has happened to the conformity theory of truth.

Most early modern scholastics, including those discussed above, explicitly endorse the conformity theory of truth. However, there was significant disagreement about how to understand the conformity theory. As Izquierdo tells us, “Both ancient and modern philosophers think that truth must be conformity between a cognition and the thing cognized, even if they are not in conformity in explaining what such a conformity amounts to.”82 In closing, I want to explain how both the composite view of truth and the connotation view can be

81 Izquierdo Pharus scientiarum, d. 3, q. 1, prop. 3, pp. 111-112. Cf. Arriaga, Cursus philosophicus, 5th ed., d. 14, s. 1, n. 8, p. 224; s. 1, subs. 2, n. 12, p. 224-225; Hurtado, Universa philosophia, De anima, d. 9, s. 3, subs. 3, nn. 20-23, p. 576; for more general arguments against connotation as a metaphysical thesis, see Hurtado, Universa philosophia, Metaphysics, d. 6, s. 2, subs. 7, pp 792-79.
82 Izquierdo, Pharus scientiarum, t. 2, d. 3, q. 1, n. 3, p. 110: “Alii communiter prisci & moderni veritatem praedictam in conformitate cognitionis cum re ipsa cognita censent ponendum esse, tametsi in explicando quid sit eiusmodi conformitatem non conformentur.”
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understood as ways of cashing out the claim that truth is conformity between a thought and its object.

The composite view of truth seems to entail the following analysis of what it is to be true:

**The standard analysis of truth:** For a proposition ‘p’ to be true is for ‘p’ to exist and the adequate intentional object of ‘p’ to exist.\(^8\)

If the truth of ‘p’ is the mereological sum of ‘p’ and its intentional object, it follows that ‘p’ is true if and only if ‘p’ exists and its intentional object exists. This bi-conditional does not express a mere correlation between the truth of ‘p’ and the existence of the intentional object of ‘p’; rather, the bi-conditional is true because what it is for a proposition to be true, on the composite view, is for a proposition and its object to exist. Hence, the composite view seems to bear commitment to the standard analysis of truth. The idea that advocates of the composite view are committed to the standard analysis of truth is supported by the following quotation from Arriaga:

> For a proposition to be true is nothing other than for it to affirm [for example] Peter’s running, and for this to exist in reality. But this implies two things: the proposition and the existence of the object. [my emphasis]\(^8\)

Arriaga explains what it is to be true using an example: ‘Peter runs’ is true if and only if Peter’s running exists. This is what we would expect given the standard

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\(^8\) Cf. Mark Jago, “The Truthmaker Non-Maximalist’s Dilemma,” 904: “[…] what it is for a proposition <A> to be true is for it to be made true, so that truthmaking is constitutive of truth. This is one way to make sense of truth as a substantial property (or relation, in any case), as opposed to a minimal property […] or a purely logical property […]”

\(^8\) Cursus philosophicus, Logic, d. 14, s. 1, subs. 5, n. 27, p. 170: “Propositionem esse veram, nihil aliud est, quam ipsam affirmare cursum Petri, & hunc dari a parte rei: sed hoc dicit duo, & propositionem & existentiam objecti.”
analysis of truth, since Peter’s running is the adequate intentional object of ‘Peter runs’.

If the composite view entails the standard analysis of truth, then the connotation view seems to as well. When Polizzi says that the truth of a proposition ‘p’ “essentially implies” its adequate intentional object, I understand him to mean that what it is for ‘p’ to be true is for its adequate object to exist. Further, Polizzi tells us,

> Besides the entity and intrinsic perfection of the act, [truth] connotes something else extrinsic [to the act], *without which the nature of truth cannot subsist.* [my emphasis]\(^85\)

As we have seen, when Polizzi says that truth connotes something extrinsic to the act, he is referring to the intentional object of the act. And when he says that the nature of truth cannot subsist without the intentional object of the act, I take him to mean that what it is for an act (proposition) to be true is for its intentional object to exist. Hence, Polizzi also seems committed to the standard analysis of truth. Giattini, another advocate of the connotation view, also seems committed to the standard analysis of truth when he says, “you can’t explain what truth is unless you assign an object as truthmaker, to which the cognition must be conformed.”\(^86\) Here Giattini claims that what it is for a proposition to be true is for it to have a truthmaker. Of course, this claim is circular as an analysis of truth, since what it is to be a truthmaker will presumably be explained in terms of truth. But since Giattini, like his contemporaries, thinks that the truthmaker for a

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\(^{85}\) Polizzi, *Siculi platiensis tomus tertius*, De anima, d. 25, s. 4, n. 46, p. 368: “Praeter entitatem & intrinsecam perfectionem actus connotare aliquid aliquid extrinsecum, sine quo veritatis ratio non subsistit.”

\(^{86}\) Giattini, *Logica*, q. 8, a. 5, p. 447: “Hinc confirmatur nostra sententia de ente rationis, quod scilicet veritas cognitionis arguit aliquod ex parte objecti, quod appelavimus objectum verificativum; ex eo enim quod sit vera haec cognitio: Verbum non est Creatura, debet dari a parte rei negatio Verbi Creaturae; quod est verificativum & motivum formale talis propositionis. Nec certe potest explicari quid sit veritas, nisi assignetur objectum verificativum cui debet conformari cognitio.” Maximus Mangold speaks the same way about the “objective truthmaker.” See *Philosophia recentior*, vol. 1, Ontology, diss. 4, a. 1, n. 98, p. 96.
proposition ‘p’ is the intentional object of ‘p’, he can restate his analysis using the term ‘intentional object’ rather than ‘truthmaker’; the result would be the non-circular analysis in the standard analysis of truth. I conclude that advocates of both the composite view and the connotation view of truth seem committed to the standard analysis of truth.87

The conformity theory of truth is supposed to provide an analysis of what it is to be true. On this theory, for a proposition ‘p’ to be true is for it to be conformed to its object. But this analysis is not illuminating; one would like to know what it is for a proposition to be conformed to its object. My suggestion is that early modern scholastics committed to the standard analysis of truth take it to be a way of cashing out conformity. This suggestion helps to reconcile (i) early modern scholastic endorsements of the conformity theory of truth on the one hand, and (ii) early modern scholastic endorsements of the composite view or connotation view of truth on the other hand. Moreover, there is some textual evidence that at least some early modern scholastics understand the standard analysis of truth as an explanation of conformity. For example, Giattini writes:

In the definition of ‘true’, the conformity of a cognition with its object consists in the fact that there really is an identity of subject and predicate when the cognition is affirmative, and there really is a negation of identity between subject and predicate when the cognition is negative.88

Here Giattini explains that what it is for a proposition of the form ‘a is F’ to be conformed to its object, which is the identity between a and F, is just for that object to exist; what it is for a proposition of the form ‘a is not F’ to be conformed

87 As we shall see in chapter seven, however, things are not so straightforward for some thinkers who endorse ontological pluralism. It is safe to set this issue aside for now, since it seems to have been an aberration.

88 Giattini, Logica, q. 8, a. 5, p. 452: “Conformitas cognitionis cum objecto in ratione verae consistit in hoc quod a parte rei detur identitas inter praedicatum & subjectum cum cognitio est affirmativa, & negatio identitatis cum est negativa.”
to its object, which is the negation of identity between $a$ and $F$, is for that object to exist.

Further, Antonio Pérez, one of the first early modern scholastics to use the term ‘truthmaker’, characterizes truthmaking in terms of conformity:

The truthmaker of a proposition I call that object coexisting with the proposition and to which the proposition is conformed as not dissimilar to it in existence. From this conformity the proposition is called true. For example, a proposition about the future is true because it coexists with the futureness [futuritio] affirmed, or because the proposition exists while the futureness that it affirms exists.\(^8^9\)

In the first sentence of this passage Pérez explains that a truthmaker is (i) the object of a proposition and (ii) that to which a true proposition is conformed. The first sentence by itself does not establish that a proposition is true because its object exists, but that seems to be implied by Pérez’s example in the final sentence of the passage. There Pérez states that a proposition about the future is true because the “futureness” that it affirms exists. The idea appears to be that a proposition about the future is about a “futureness”, and it is true because that futureness exists. This example seems to be an instance of the standard analysis of truth, as applied to future tense propositions. Indeed, we shall see in chapter six that some of Pérez’s followers endorse precisely the view described here. This passage is important because it supports several of the claims I have made in this chapter. First, because Pérez explains truthmaking in terms of conformity, it suggests that Pérez’s conception of a truthmaker falls out of or is explicable in terms of his conception of truth. Second, it suggests that Pérez endorses the standard analysis of truth, and it thereby suggests that some early modern scholastics endorse the standard analysis of truth. Third, it shows that Pérez

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\(^8^9\) Perez, *De existentia et attributis divinis*, d. 1, ch. 8 (cited from MS. in Schmutz, *La Querelle des Possibles*, 488, fn. 90): “Verificativum propositionis appello illud objectum cui propositio tanquam sibi coexistenti conformatur ut in existendo non dissimilis ipsi, a qua conformitate dicitur vera. V.g., propositio de futuro est vera quia coexistit futuritioni affirmatae, seu quia existat propositio existente futuritione quam affirmat.”
thinks of a truthmaker, in light of the standard analysis, as the object of a proposition, such that a proposition is true just in case its object (truthmaker) exists. Finally, because Pérez begins the above passage talking about the conformity theory, and then he illustrates the conformity theory with an instance of the standard analysis, the above passage suggests that Pérez thinks of the standard analysis as a conformity theory. That is the main claim of this section.

It is not hard to see why early modern scholastics would have been attracted to the standard analysis of truth. The standard analysis dispenses with the mysterious notion of conformity and analyzes truth in terms of (i) intentionality and (ii) existence. Existence is arguably primitive, admitting of no further analysis. And while it may be difficult to explain how intentionality works, most philosophers will accept the occurrence of intentionality, and it is therefore available in most philosophical toolkits. At any rate, if intentionality is a mystery, it is everyone’s mystery, not only the conformity theorist’s. The standard analysis of truth therefore improves on the conformity theory by reducing conformity to existence and intentionality.
THE STANDARD ACCOUNT OF TRUTHMAKING

In the previous chapter we saw that the notion of a truthmaker is, for the early modern scholastics, intimately tied to the notion of truth. In particular, the composite view and the connotation view of truth seem to imply that every truth has a truthmaker, its adequate intentional object. In this chapter I spell out the account of truthmaking entailed by both the composite view and the connotation view of truth. I will call this the ‘standard account of truthmaking’ because, as we will see in Part II of the dissertation (ch. 5-7), some philosophers depart from the details of the standard account. Most notably, some philosophers are uncomfortable with Truthmaker Maximalism, the claim that every truth has a truthmaker, and they depart from the standard account by rejecting or reinterpreting Truthmaker Maximalism.

I organize this chapter around the questions for an account of truthmaking raised in chapter one:

1. Which truths need truthmakers and which do not?
2. Is truthmaking a cross-categorical necessitation relation? In other words, do truths and truthmakers belong to distinct ontological categories, and do truthmakers necessitate truths?
3. Can truths and truthmakers be paired off one-one?
4. Must truthmakers be relevant to the propositions they make true, or are there trivial applications of the truthmaker principle?

4.1 The Standard Account

In the first place, it should be clear by now that the standard account of truthmaking includes a commitment to Truthmaker Maximalism, since a
proposition is true if and only if its intentional object exists, and the truthmaker for a proposition is its intentional object. Several passages from the primary literature indicate commitment to Truthmaker Maximalism. For example, Silvestro Mauro writes:

> In *all* propositions some existence, or the ultimate truthmaking actuality of the proposition, is affirmed. [my emphasis]¹

Mauro here claims that every proposition affirms the existence of something. Mauro calls the object affirmed by a proposition a ‘truthmaker’, presumably, because a proposition is true if and only if what it affirms to exist does exist. Hence, on Mauro’s view every truth has a truthmaker. In another passage, Giattini states,

> There must be some object in virtue of which a proposition is made true when it is true.²

Giattini’s statement appears to be fully general. Hence, Giattini also appears to endorse Truthmaker Maximalism. Finally, in an anonymous manuscript on truthmakers we read, “every act that is strictly true in the present ought to have a truthmaker strictly existing in the present.”³ The author of this passage is actually committed to something stronger than Truthmaker Maximalism, for he says that every proposition that is true now has a *present* truthmaker. At any rate, it appears that advocates of the standard account are committed to Truthmaker Maximalism.

As we have seen, Truthmaker Maximalism is controversial among contemporary philosophers. Peter Simons calls Truthmaker Maximalism “the

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¹ Mauro, *Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus*, q. 47, p. 170 (ad 5).
² Giattini, *Logica*, q. 6, art. 5, p. 293: “Debet dari aliquod objectum, per quod propositio verificetur quando est vera.”
³ Anon., *Disputatio de objecto et verificativo propositionum*, 220v: “Omnis actus de praesenti stricte verus debet habere verificativum stricte de praesenti existens.”
most tendentious of Armstrong’s general truthmaking principles”, and Julian Dodd regards truthmaker theory itself as “a superstition”. I presume this is a colorful way of saying that the idea that truths have truthmakers is unmotivated. Far from being a superstition, the early modern scholastic commitment to Truthmaker Maximalism is entailed by the composite and connotation theories of truth. In the dialectical context of early modern scholasticism, those who wish to restrict the truthmaker principle must earn the right to do so by offering a theory of truth that does not entail Truthmaker Maximalism. Perhaps the primary motivation for rejecting Truthmaker Maximalism in the contemporary literature is that it seems to have extravagant ontological implications. It is worth noting that early modern scholastics were quite aware of the ontological implications of Truthmaker Maximalism. Commitment to this doctrine sparked debates about truthmakers for negative truths, tensed truths, and modal truths. These debates are the subjects of the next three chapters.

In chapter one we saw that many contemporary truthmaker theorists think that truthmakers necessitate truths, but there is some disagreement over how to formulate this claim. If necessitation is conceived as follows,

\[ T \text{ necessitates the truth of } 'p' =_{df} \text{ Necessarily, if } T \text{ exists, then } 'p' \text{ is true,} \]

then advocates of the standard account of truthmaking are likely to say that truthmakers do not necessitate truths. The reason is that the above formulation of necessitation says nothing about truth-bearers, whereas early modern scholastics

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5 Dodd, An Identity Theory of Truth, 9; see also Dodd, “Is Truth Supervenient on Being?”
typically insist that there is truth only if there is a truth-bearer. Truth is not merely a function of what the world is like, but it is also a function of what truth-bearers are like.

As we have seen, advocates of the standard analysis of truth are committed to the claim that a proposition ‘p’ is true if and only if ‘p’ exists and its object exists. If we assume that a theory of truth is necessarily true if true at all, we can infer that advocates of the standard analysis are committed to the modalized version of this claim, which I will call ‘□Truth’:

□Truth: Necessarily, a proposition ‘p’ is true if and only if ‘p’ exists and its object exists.

Reading the bi-conditional in □Truth from right to left, we get

Necessarily, if a proposition ‘p’ exists and its object exists, then ‘p’ is true.

In chapter one I called this formulation of Necessitation “Conditional Necessitation”. It should now be clear that advocates of the standard analysis of truth are committed to the view that truthmakers necessitate truths, where Necessitation is understood as Conditional Necessitation.

In chapter one we also saw that some contemporary philosophers claim that truthmaking is subject to a relevance constraint. To see why, suppose our account of truthmaking is as follows:

Trivial Truthmaker: T makes ‘p’ true if and only if, necessarily, if T and ‘p’ exist, then ‘p’ is true.

Trivial Truthmaker is so-called because it allows trivial truthmakers. For example, it is necessarily the case that if my left ear exists and the proposition
that goes by the name ‘Gödel’s second incompleteness theorem’ exists, then Gödel’s second incompleteness theorem is true. It follows from Trivial Truthmaker that my left ear makes Gödel’s second incompleteness theorem true. This result seems wrong, however, because my left ear is irrelevant to Gödel’s second incompleteness theorem. In order to block this result, some philosophers want to subject truthmaking to a relevance constraint.

The relevance constraint is not only built into but is also explained by the standard analysis of truth. According to the standard analysis, the truthmaker for ‘p’ is the intentional object of ‘p’—i.e., what ‘p’ is about. Hence, truthmakers are relevant to truths insofar as truths are about their truthmakers, and Gödel’s second incompleteness theorem is not made true by my left ear because Gödel’s second incompleteness theorem is not about my left ear.

Many early modern scholastics explicitly endorse the idea that truths are about their truthmakers, and this idea plays an important dialectical role in 17th-century ontological debates about truthmakers for various sorts of truths. For example, Francisco Peinado writes:

> It seems well known from the terms themselves that no internal or external speech and no act of the intellect is rendered true by something that it does not say, by an object that it does not represent. For who would say that this act, ‘Peter runs’, is formally made true by the existence of God or by any other entity distinct from the running of Peter, which the act represents?⁷

As we will see in the next three chapters, this aboutness constraint on truthmaking plays an important role in Peinado’s distinctive theory of truthmaking.

By requiring that truths be about their truthmakers, the standard account of truthmaking invalidates the entailment principle:

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⁷ Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 3, s. 2.4, n. 32, p. 265: “Nam ex terminis ipsis videtur notum quod nulla loquutio interna aut externa nullusque actus intellectus redditur verus ab eo quod ipse non dicit, & ab objecto quod non repraesentat. Nam quis dicat hunc actum: *Petrus currit* verificari formaliter ab existentia Dei, aut ab alia entitate distincta a cursu Petri, quem repraesentat actus?” See also *Phys.*, lib. 1, d. 4, s. 4, n. 8, p. 175.
The entailment principle: If T make ‘p’ true and ‘p’ entails ‘q’, then T makes ‘q’ true.

Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra has argued against the entailment principle on the grounds that it entails the conjunction thesis.⁸

The conjunction thesis: If T makes ‘p ⋀ q’ true, then T makes ‘p’ true and T makes ‘q’ true.

Rodriguez-Pereyra argues that the conjunction thesis is false. To use his example, suppose ‘Peter is a man and Saturn is a planet’ is made true by the conjunctive fact that Peter is a man and Saturn is a planet. It would follow from the conjunction thesis that ‘Peter is a man’ is made true by the conjunctive fact that Peter is a man and Saturn is a planet. But Rodriguez-Pereyra notes, ‘Peter is a man’ cannot be made true by that conjunctive fact because part of the conjunctive fact is the fact that Saturn is a planet, and the fact that Saturn is a planet is “totally irrelevant” to the truth of ‘Peter is a man’.⁹ In short, the conjunction thesis allows for truthmakers that are not wholly relevant to the truths they make true. Because the entailment thesis entails the conjunction thesis, and the conjunction thesis is false, Rodriguez-Pereyra rejects the entailment thesis. By requiring that truths be about their truthmakers, the standard account of truthmaking also invalidates the conjunction thesis and, thereby, the entailment principle. The standard account invalidates the conjunction thesis because ‘Peter is a man’ is not about a conjunctive fact (or two facts taken together), so it is not made true by a conjunctive fact (or two facts taken together). Again, because the entailment principle entails the conjunction thesis, and the conjunction thesis is false on the

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The Standard Account of Truthmaking

standard account of truthmaking, the entailment principle is false on the standard account.

It is important to note, however, that in the latter half of the 17th century some philosophers, including Peinado, began to draw a distinction between so-called formal truthmakers and “illative” or “radical” truthmakers. The author of the anonymous disputation mentioned above draws the distinction as follows:

The formal truthmaker of some judgment is that by which the act is formally rendered true. The illative truthmaker is whatever is connected with the fact that the proposition is true, but which is not constitutive [of the proposition’s being true]. For example, the formal truthmaker of this act, ‘Peter is possible’, is the possibility with which the truth of that judgment is partially identified. The illative truthmakers are God’s necessary predicates, or whatever else is connected with the fact that the object of the aforesaid proposition is as it is said to be by the act.10

As this passage suggests, the primary difference between formal truthmakers and illative truthmakers is that formal truthmakers are constitutive of the truth of a proposition, whereas illative truthmakers are merely “connected” to the truth of a proposition. It is not entirely clear what this connection amounts to, but it seems to involve at least necessitating the truth of the proposition. Moreover, the term ‘illativum’ is derived from the term ‘infero’, which can mean ‘to draw an inference’. So it might be the case that an illative truthmaker for ‘p’ is something from whose existence we can infer that ‘p’ is true. For example, from God’s knowledge that Peter will sin we may infer that Peter will sin. But God’s knowledge is merely an illative, not a formal truthmaker for ‘Peter will sin’. A further difference between formal and illative truthmakers is that truths are

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10 Anonymous, *Disputatio de obiecto et verificativo propositionum*, f. 217v: “Verificativum formale alicuius iudicii est illud a quo actus redditur verus formaliter. Verificativum illativum est quodlibet connexum cum eo quod propositio sit vera, quod tamen non sit constitutivum. Exempli gratia, verificativum formale huius iudicii ‘Petrus est possibilis’ est possibilitas, cum qua inadaequate identificatur istius iudicii veritas; illativum sunt praedictata necessaria Dei, vel quodlibet aliud cum eo connexum quod obiectum praedictae propositionis se habeat sicuti per actum enuntiatur.”
about their formal truthmakers, but they are not about their illative truthmakers, as Madritano tells us in the following passage:

An objective, formal, and immediate truthmaker of any act is that which the act expresses [enunciat]. For if it is not expressed by the act, it will be at most an illative truthmaker.¹¹

So although most early modern scholastic truthmaker theorists would say that truths are about their formal truthmakers, they sometimes carve out conceptual space for a kind of truthmaker—an illative truthmaker—that is not the intentional object of the truth it makes true. Most of the early modern scholastic discussion of truthmaking centers on the notion of a formal truthmaker. I will accordingly set aside the notion of an illative truthmaker. (I return to illative truthmaking briefly in the excursus on Peinado’s account of truthmaking.)

Contemporary philosophers widely agree that truthmaking is cross-categorial in the sense that truths and truthmakers typically belong to distinct ontological categories. Many early modern scholastics explicitly acknowledge that truths and truthmakers typically belong to distinct ontological categories. Giattini, for example, observes, “The object [of a cognition] is often a substance, and the cognition is always an accident.”¹² Here Giattini is conceiving of truth-bearers—i.e., acts of cognition—as accidents of the mind. Because truthmakers are often not accidents, he would agree with contemporary truthmaker theorists that truthmaking is cross-categorial.

Recall that contemporary truthmaker theorists often claim that the truthmaker relation is ‘many-many’ in the sense that one truthmaker can make true many propositions taken individually, and many entities taken individually can make a single proposition true. So long as distinct truths can share an

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¹¹ Madritano, Prodromus, d. 7, ch. 7, n. 52, p. 775: “Verificativum obiectivum, formale, ac immediatum cuiuslibet actus est illud quod actus enunciat. Si enim per actum non enunciatur erit adsummum verificativum illativum.”

¹² Giattini, Logica, q. 8, a. 5, p. 447: “Obiectum saepe est substantia, & cognitio semper est accidens.”
intentional object and consequently a truthmaker, the standard account is compatible with the idea that one truthmaker can make many truths true. Indeed, Silvestro Mauro thinks that God is the single truthmaker for a variety of distinct propositions, including ‘God exists’, ‘Man is a rational animal’, ‘Horse is a hinnible animal’, and ‘Peter is possible’. Mauro’s position might seem odd in light of the requirement that truths are about their truthmakers. Indeed, one important objection to Mauro’s view is precisely that propositions such as ‘Man is a rational animal’ do not appear to be about God. As we shall see in chapter seven, Mauro is aware of this kind of objection and responds by trying to make conceptual space for the claim that every necessary proposition is, in a sense, about God.

Although the standard analysis of truth is compatible with the idea that one truthmaker can make true many truths, it seems to presuppose that each proposition has only one intentional object; since the truthmaker of a proposition is its intentional object, it follows that each true proposition has exactly one truthmaker. There is some textual evidence for this reading. In one passage, Giattini tells us,

One must explain what it is for a proposition to be true, and what a proposition requires on the part of the object in reality in order to be true. This I call a ‘truthmaker’.

Here Giattini describes a truthmaker as that which is required for the truth of a proposition. If a truthmaker for ‘p’ is something required for the truth of ‘p’, it follows that ‘p’ has only one truthmaker, for if ‘p’ could have multiple truthmakers, each of which would be sufficient for the truth of the proposition, then it would not be the case that each truthmaker is required for the truth of the proposition.

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13 Mauro, Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus, q. 47, p. 165a, n. 6.
14 Mauro, Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus, q. 47, pp. 169b.-173 (ad 5-8).
15 Giattini, Logica, q. 6, art. 5, p. 292: “Debet assignari quid sit propositionem esse veram, & quid requirat ex parte objecti realiter ad hoc ut sit vera, quod appello verificativum.”
proposition. To illustrate, suppose that ‘p ∨ q’ has two truthmakers, the fact that \( p \) and the fact that \( q \). On that supposition, the fact that \( p \) could fail to exist, and yet ‘p ∨ q’ would still be true, since the fact that \( q \) would still exist. On the supposition that ‘p ∨ q’ has two truthmakers, neither truthmaker is required for the truth of ‘p ∨ q’. But because Giattini clearly states that the truthmaker for a proposition is required for the truth of that proposition, it seems Giattini cannot allow that truths have multiple truthmakers.

Is this a problem for the standard account of truthmaking? Not obviously.\(^{16}\) An advocate of the standard account might distinguish between a proposition’s immediate and ultimate truthmakers, where immediate truthmakers are reducible to or realized by ultimate truthmakers.\(^{17}\) For example, suppose that an advocate of the standard account claims that ‘Obama exists or Bush exists’ is made true by a disjunctive fact. Let us write \{Obama ∨ Bush\} for the disjunctive truthmaker for ‘Obama exists or Bush exists’. It is open to an advocate of the standard account to claim that \{Obama ∨ Bush\} is reducible to or realized by both Obama and Bush, the ultimate truthmakers for ‘Obama exists or Bush exists’. In this way, the standard account can be made to accommodate the intuitions behind the widespread contemporary endorsement of the claim that truthmaking is many-many. To be sure, the strategy of distinguishing between immediate and ultimate truthmakers is not explicitly advocated in the early modern scholastic literature. Nonetheless, such a strategy could help make sense of the view, apparently entailed by the standard analysis of truth, that every truth has only one truthmaker.

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\(^{16}\) For discussion of this view, see Künne, *Conceptions of Truth*, 115-117.

\(^{17}\) I vaguely recall having heard Kit Fine draw this distinction in a talk. For formal details relevant to immediate truthmaking, see Van Fraassen “Facts and Tautological Entailment”; Fine “Counterfactuals Without Possible Worlds”.

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4.2 Departures from the Standard Account

We have been able to reconstruct a reasonably detailed account of truthmaking on the basis of the standard analysis of truth, which, I have argued, is entailed by two common 17th-century views of truth. I have called this account of truthmaking ‘the standard account’ because some philosophers depart from it in at least one important respect. If my reading is correct, advocates of both the composite view and the connotation view of truth are committed to Truthmaker Maximalism. In many cases the advocates of these theories seem to embrace this commitment (e.g., Polizzi, Carleton, Giattini). In other cases, however, advocates of these theories have a more complicated relationship to the doctrine of Truthmaker Maximalism: sometimes they seem to embrace it, but other times they seem to reject it. Arriaga is a good example of this sort of case.

In several passages Arriaga, an advocate of the composite view, seems to commit himself to Truthmaker Maximalism:

For a proposition to be true is nothing other than for it to affirm [for example] Peter’s running, and for this to exist in reality. But this implies two things: the proposition and the existence of the object. [my emphasis]18

Similarity is not a true relation. It is the coexistence of two terms that are naturally of the same species or genus. I say the same thing about Truth, which is nothing other than a denomination taken from the affirmation of the object and the existence of the object affirmed. [my emphasis]19

Arriaga notes here and elsewhere20 that his treatment of truth mirrors his treatment of categorical relations in general. Arriaga reduces categorical relations to their terms. Hence, if Paul and Peter are both white, their similarity with

18 Cursus philosophicus, Logic, d. 14, s. 1, subs. 5, n. 27, p. 170: “Propositionem esse veram, nihil aliud est, quam ipsam affirmare cursum Petri, & hunc dari a parte rei: sed hoc dicit duo, & propositionem & existentiam objecti.”
19 Cursus philosophicus, Logic, d. 14, s. 1, subs. 6, n. 36, p. 172: “Similitudinem non esse veram relationem, sed coexistentiam duorum extremorum in eiusdem speciei aut generis natura. Idem dico de Veritate, quae nihil aliud est quam denominationi desumpta ex affirmatione objecti, & existentia objecti affirmati.”
respect to whiteness is identical to the whiteness of Paul and Peter. But what happens if Paul dies? According to Arriaga, the similarity-instance perishes when one of its terms perishes:

For if the relation includes the terminus as a part, and the terminus cannot exist without itself, who will doubt that the relation cannot exist without the terminus existing?\(^{21}\)

According to Arriaga, there is no categorical relation without both terms. Because Arriaga assimilates his treatment of truth to that of relations, it follows that there is no truth without both a proposition and its object—i.e., every true proposition has a truthmaker, its object.

In spite of these strong indications of Arriaga’s commitment to Truthmaker Maximalism, Arriaga is not always comfortable with that commitment. Arriaga’s opponents point out that he is in trouble when it comes to tensed truths, for the objects of tensed truths (they assume) do not exist. One would expect Arriaga to deny that the objects of tensed truths do not exist, but he does not. Instead, in the face of this objection from tensed truths, Arriaga appears to reject Truthmaker Maximalism. I will discuss Arriaga’s response to this objection in more detail in chapter six. For now I want to highlight the tension between Arriaga’s apparent commitment to Truthmaker Maximalism and his preferred ontology. Arriaga is not alone in harboring such a tension: several authors endorse the composite view of truth but are not comfortable with Truthmaker Maximalism. Their task is to reconcile the composite view with the denial of Truthmaker Maximalism. Their efforts to achieve this task are partly the subjects of the following three chapters.

\(^{21}\) Arriaga, *Cursus philosophicus*, Logic, d. 12, s. 10, n. 54, p. 155: “Si enim relatio includit ipsum terminum tamquam partem, terminusque non potest sine seipso existere, quis dubitabit, totam relationem daris non posse sine termino existente? Haec in nostra sententia sunt certissima.”
PART II

NEGATIVE TRUTHS

In the previous chapter I outlined an account of truthmaking that was apparently prevalent in 17th-century scholasticism. In this and the next two chapters, we will see how early modern scholastic theories of truth and truthmaking intersect with ontological debates about truthmakers for negative truths, tensed truths, and eternal truths. Some philosophers attempt to locate portions of reality in virtue of which such truths are true. Others attempt to justify the claim that such truths are not grounded in anything that exists. The task of Part II of the dissertation is to examine these two approaches to truthmaking for the various problematic truths.

The problem of finding truthmakers for negative truths is arguably the most trenchant problem in contemporary literature on truthmaking,¹ and in the 17th century, the problem gave rise to a lively scholastic debate—a “very famous question [quaestio valde celebris]”²—about the nature and ontological status of negations. Some early modern scholastics argue that negative truths are made true by sui generis negative entities; others argue that negative truths are made true by positive entities; still others argue that negative truths have truthmakers “in the negative sense” only. As I will explain, a truthmaker in the negative sense is something that makes a proposition true by failing to exist. Following Jacob

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Schmutz, I call these views ‘carentism’, ‘incompatibilism’, and ‘nihilism’, respectively. In the contemporary literature it is broadly agreed that the prospects for each of these views are not good—that the notion of a negative entity is incoherent, that incompatibilism undergenerates negative truths, and that nihilism is completely ad hoc. While the early modern scholastic versions of carentism, incompatibilism, and nihilism are subject to some objections, they are not subject to the objections raised in the contemporary literature. I argue that carentism is not incoherent, that incompatibilism does not undergenerate, and that nihilism is not ad hoc. In the end, however, I think the nihilist solution is preferable.

5.1 Carentism

Some philosophers who endorsed Truthmaker Maximalism were led by that doctrine to accept the existence of negations. For instance, Giattini makes the following truthmaker argument for the existence of negations:

It seems like you have to say that there are negations in reality and that negations have some objective truth distinct from every real positive being. This conclusion is proven because there must be a formal truthmaker for a negative proposition—e.g., for the proposition by which I say “Light is not in the air”. But this truthmaker is not something positive. Therefore, it is a negation, distinct from everything positive.

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3 Schmutz, “Réalistes, nihilistes et incompatibilistes: le débat sur les negative truthmakers dans la scolastique Jésuite Espagnole,” which is the source of many of my sources. References for each view can be found in subsequent sections. I have seen two additional views mentioned in the primary literature. According to one view, the negation of F is identical to the merely possible F. According to another view, a negation is a mereological sum of the thing negated and an act of the intellect denying existence of that thing (See Peinado, Disputationes in duos libros de generatione et corruptione, lib. 1, t. 2, d. 4, s. 1, n. 7, p. 204). I have not found adherents of these views in print, so I will leave them aside.

4 Giattini, Logica, q. 6, a. 2, p. 265: “Dicendum videtur negationes dari a parte rei, & habere aliquam veritatem objectivam distinctam ab omni ente reali positivo. Probaratur conclusio, quia debet dari verificativum formale propositionis negativae; qua v.g. dico: in aere non est lux. Sed hoc verificativum non est quid positivum, ergo est negatio distincta ab omni positivo.”
Notably, Giattini thinks that the major premise of this argument—the premise that there must be a truthmaker for negative truths—is “certain.” Nor is Giattini the only philosopher to make truthmaker arguments for the existence of negations. Polizzi, who endorses the connotation view of truth discussed in chapter four, makes the following truthmaker argument for the existence of necessary lacks:

From the fact that some negative propositions are eternally true – e.g., ‘Man is not a horse’, ‘A goat-stag cannot exist’ etc. – you have to admit that from eternity there have been truthmakers for such propositions. Such truthmakers can only be the necessary lacks of the things of which they are lacks.5

And although Carleton does not use the term ‘truthmaker’, he is clearly motivated by truthmaker considerations to accept the existence of negations:

That the man is dead, that the fire is extinguished, that Peter is not sitting and is not reading, that Paul is blind, and six hundred other such propositions, are no less true, really and mind-independently, than that the man lives, that Peter sees, &c. Therefore there must be something in reality from which the denomination [‘true’] comes to these propositions. But that couldn’t be anything except negations.6

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5 Polizzi, *Siculi platiensis tomus tertius*, d. 50, s. 2, n. 23, p. 645: “Hoc enim ipso quod dantur propositiones quaedam negativae aeternae veritatis, ut V. G. homo non est equus, hircocervus non potest existere, &c. necesse est fateri dari ab aeterno verificativa dictarum propositionum, quae non possunt esse nisi carentiae necessariae rerum, quarum sunt carentiae.”

6 Carleton, *Philosophia universa*, Logic, d. 18, s. 2, n. 6, p. 82: “Non minus a parte rei & nemine cogitante verum est hominem mori, ignem extingui, Petrum non sedere, non legere, Paulum esse caecum, & sexcenta huiusmodi, quam hominem vivere, Petrum videre, &c. ergo aliquid esse a parte rei debet a quo hae iis denominationes proveniant, sed nihil excogitari aliud potest praeter negotiationes.” Another argument Carleton uses is as follows: “The proposition, ‘There is no other world’ is about a real object no less than an affirmative proposition is, since the former is a knowable truth just as much as its opposite is, and contradiction is not only found in acts of assent and dissent, but also in objects.” [Non minus datur objectum a parte rei in quod fertur haec propositio, *alia mundus non est*, quam in quod fertur propositio affirmans, haec enim tam est veritas cognoscibilis, quam oppositum, & contradictio non solum exercetur in actibus assensus & dissensus, sed etiam in objectis (*Philosophia universa*, Logic, d. 18, s. 2, n. 4, p. 81).] The thought lurking behind this quotation is that every truth is true because its object exists. So ‘There is no other world’ must be true because its object – the lack of another world – exists. So there are lacks.
The above arguments are meant to support carentism, the view that negative truths are made true by negative entities. In this section I explain Thomas Compton Carleton’s development of the hypothesis of negative entities and assess its prospects for solving the problem of negative truths.

Carleton was the first of the early modern scholastics to develop a systematic theory of negative entities, as he himself notes in his disputation on lacks:

Juan Caramuel Lobkowitz (1606-1682) testifies to Carleton’s originality with respect to the theory of lacks: “Certainly no one explicitly dealt with the existence of negative beings before Father Compton [Carleton].” Moreover, Carleton’s account exerts a significant influence on subsequent carentists. Writing 86 years after the publication of Carleton’s discussion of negative beings, Luis de Losada reports of carentism, “In favor of this opinion most people [plurimos] refer to Father Compton.” Given that Carleton appears to have been the first to develop a systematic theory of negative entities, and that his theory was influential on the subsequent debate, Carleton’s discussion of negative entities bears historical interest. Because Carleton’s theory is as far as we know the first of its kind,

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8 Lobkowitz, *Leptotatos*, diss. 2, a. 1, s. 2, n. 142, p. 77. No one dealt with the existence of negative beings in print at any rate: Antonio Pérez reports that Benito de Robles was the first to endorse realism about lacks (Pérez, *In primam partem tomus primus*, d. 3, ch. 4, s. 8, n. 129, p. 87). According to Jacob Schmutz, de Robles was an influential teacher of illustrious philosophers such as Hurtado, Arriaga, and Pérez, but he did not publish anything (Schmutz, “Réalistes,” 144-150). For more on Pérez’s view of negative entities, see Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl*, 230-250.

9 See, e.g., Polizzi, *Siculi platiensis tomus tertius*, d. 50.

10 Losada, *Cursus philosophici tertia pars*, Metaphysics, d. 4, ch. 2, n. 9, p. 150. See also Polizzi, *Siculi platiensis tomus tertius*, d. 50, s. 3, n. 43, p. 648; Quirós, *Opus philosophicum*, d. 107, s. 1, n. 2, p. 738.
however, it is not always as explicit as we would like, and it leaves some questions unanswered. Fortunately, Carleton’s theory can often be elucidated by considering the philosophical context and relevant background of his discussion, as well as the views of other carentists. I will therefore advert to Carleton’s near contemporaries where it helps to elucidate Carleton’s own views. This practice confers the additional benefit of giving one a sense of broader trends in 17th-century thought about negative entities.

Carleton was born in Cambridge in 1591 and entered the Society of Jesus in 1617. England not being kind to Jesuits at the time, Carleton went abroad for his education. Sources vary as to where Carleton was educated, but it seems likely that he was educated at the college of St. Omer in France, and then in Madrid and Valladolid, Spain, where he was a fellow student with the illustrious Spanish philosopher and theologian, Rodrigo de Arriaga (1592-1667). Carleton later became professor of theology at the English college of the Jesuits at Liège. He was one of the first scholastic authors to offer a wide-ranging critique of Cartesian philosophy in a scholastic textbook.

Before discussing Carleton’s theory of negative entities, it will be useful to introduce some technical vocabulary. Carleton uses the terms ‘lack’, ‘negation’,

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11 Biographical details can be found in Backer and Backer, vol. 2, coll. 1354-5; Monchamp, *Histoire du cartésianisme en Belgique*, 170-172; John McCormick, “A Jesuit Contemporary of Descartes”; Doyle, “Thomas Compton Carleton S.J.: On Words Signifying More than their Speakers or Makers Know or Intend.” 4; Knebel, *Will, Würfel, und Wahrscheinlichkeit*, 561; Schmutz, “Réalistes,” 151, fn. 40; Ramelow, *Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl*, 477; and the entry on Carleton at www.scholasticon.fr, which is an excellent source of information on many early modern scholastic authors. Note that there is some discrepancy in the biographical details found in these sources.

12 Arriaga’s *Cursus philosophicus* was printed in five editions between 1632 and 1669. He also wrote *Disputationes theologicae* in eight volumes. There is an entry on Arriaga in Pierre Bayle’s *Dictionaire historique et critique*, vol. 2.

13 Carleton’s low estimation of Cartesian philosophy is on display in the preface to his *Philosophia universa* (Antwerp: 1649). Carleton criticizes Descartes’s views of: substantial and accidental forms (Physics, d. 11-12), the Eucharist (Physics, d. 12), creation (Physics, d. 41, s. 1, n. 5), “rarefaction” (De Ortu, d 11, s. 2), the body (De anima, d. 7, n. 2), and matter (de Coelo, d. 2, s. 1, n. 10). For more on Carleton’s criticism of Descartes’s view of the Eucharist, see Monchamp, *Histoire du cartésianisme en Belgique*, 170-187.
and ‘privation’ to denote negative entities. In one place Carleton tells us that he uses the terms ‘lack’, ‘negation’, and ‘privation’ “indiscriminately for the same thing.” However, Carleton’s claim to use these terms indiscriminately is not entirely correct. Following Aristotle, scholastics standardly define a privation as the lack of a form in a subject apt to have that form. Thus the lack of vision in a frog counts as a privation because a frog is apt to see, but the lack of vision in a rock does not count as a privation because a rock is not apt to see. From the standard definition of privation it follows that every privation is a lack, but it is not the case that every lack is a privation.

It was also common for early modern scholastics to define negations in terms of lacks: a negation is the lack of a form in a subject that is not apt to have that form—e.g., the lack of vision in a rock is a negation. It follows from this definition that the lack of Peter, for example, is not a negation, because Peter is not a form. On this common conception, negations and privations are mutually

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14 In one place Carleton uses the term ‘non-being’, but this usage is purely for literary effect.

15 Carleton, *Philosophia universa*, Logic, d. 18, s. 8, n. 1, p. 85: “Rem vel formam non esse est privationem illius, negationem, seu carentiam (hic enim promiscue pro eodem accipimus) esse.” Note that Carleton claims to use these terms indiscriminately “here [hic].” It is likely that Carleton meant “in this argument” or “in this section,” not “in this disputation.”

16 See Aristotle, *Categories* 12a26–13a36; *Metaphysics* 1022b22–1023a8 and 1055a34–1055b29; Aquinas endorses the standard definition in *ST* I, q. 48, a. 5 (IV, 496); Carleton explains the standard definition of “privation” in *Philosophia universa*, Logic, d. 18, s. 8, nn. 8-14, p. 86. For other early modern scholastic statements of the standard definition, see Hurtado, *Universa philosophia*, Physics, d. 3, s. 1, n. 1, p. 185; Polizzi, *Siculi platiensis tomus tertius*, d. 50, pref., p. 640 (note that Polizzi’s d. 50 is erroneously headed on some pages as d. 49); Peinado, *De gen.*, lib. 1, d. 4, s. 1, n. 2, p. 202; Arriaga, *Cursus philosophicus*, Physics, d. 2, s. 12, n. 172, p. 241; Losada, *Cursus philosophici tertia pars*, Metaphysics, d. 4, ch. 1, n. 3, p. 147.

17 Carleton does not offer an explicit explanation of what aptness amounts to, but in one place he claims that a lack of a form counts as a privation with respect to a subject if that subject is able to receive the form as well as the effects of that form (*Philosophia universa*, Logic, d. 18, s. 10, n. 4, p. 88). This suggests that Carleton has a merely modal conception of aptness, which would be much more permissive than a teleological notion (cf. Lobkowitz’s diagram in *Leptotatos*, p. 72). Nothing in what follows hangs on Carleton’s conception of aptness.

18 Hurtado, *Universa philosophia*, Physics, d. 3, s. 1, p. 185; see also Peinado, *De gen.*, lib. 1, d. 4, s. 1, n. 2, p. 202; Polizzi, *Siculi platiensis tomus tertius*, d. 50, pref., p. 640; Arriaga, *Cursus philosophicus*, Physics, d. 2, s. 12, n. 172, p. 241; Giattini, *Logica*, q. 6, a. 2, p. 260; Losada, *Cursus philosophici tertia pars*, Metaphysics, d. 4, ch. 1, n. 3, p. 147 (Losada notes that ‘negation’ can be taken both as the lack of a form in a subject not apt to have that form, or as the lack of any thing. Losada’s use of ‘negation’ therefore conforms with Carleton’s use).
exclusive sub-categories of lacks. However, the distinction between lacks and negations does not seem to play any role in Carleton’s theory, and Carleton does seem use the terms ‘lack’ and ‘negation’ indiscriminately. (I follow Carleton in this practice.) Because he does not formally recognize a distinction between lacks and negations, Carleton gives one account of the metaphysics of both lacks and negations. As we shall see, however, privations receive special treatment.

What then is a lack or negation? A full answer to this question will unfold over the course of this section; for now we can quote Carleton’s preliminary characterization of lacks:

Whatever they are, they are certainly pernicious and even fatal to positive things; for negative things rise by the fall of positive things, are born by their ruin, live by their death.19

In light of this characterization of lacks, Carleton sometimes calls lacks “removals of beings [remotiones entium].”20 It is important to note that Carleton calls lacks “removals” and not “removers [removentes]” of beings. This choice suggests that lacks are not causally responsible for the non-being of positive entities—indeed, as we shall see below, lacks have no causal powers whatsoever. Rather, lacks constitute the non-being of positive entities.

Since carentists are Aristotelians, one wonders at the outset to which of the Aristotelian categories negative entities belong. In his discussion of the categories, Carleton explains that lacks do not belong to any of the ten traditional Aristotelian categories.21 Negative entities are therefore neither substances nor accidents of any kind: they are sui generis.

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19 Philosophia universa, Logic, d. 18, preface, p. 80.
20 Philosophia universa, Logic, , d. 18, s. 1, n. 1, p. 81.
21 Philosophia universa, Metaphysics, d. 6, s. 2, n. 2, p. 584.
5.1.1 “How can any existent really be negative?”

Early modern scholastic opponents of carentism allege that there is no way to draw a principled distinction between positive and negative entities. Antonio Bernaldo de Quirós expresses this worry by riffing on the etymology of “positive”: a positive entity is just something that posits something in reality. But every entity posits something in reality. So every entity is positive. This was a common worry about the concept of negative entities. Some contemporary philosophers have expressed similar worries about the distinction between positive and negative entities. For instance, Josh Parsons writes, “What is it for a chair, a person, or a rock to be positive? I have honestly no idea.”

Prima facie there are two ways one might account for the difference between positive and negative entities: one might account for the difference in terms of existence or in terms of essence – in terms of how something is or in terms of what something is. The idea behind the first approach would be to posit a new mode of existence, which might be expressed by its own quantifier in a formal language. On this view, negative beings are negative because they have negative existence. The negative existence view is suggested by the phrase ‘negative being’ [esse negativum] and similar terms such as Polizzii’s ‘abusive
being’ [esse abusivum].27 The idea behind the second approach is that negative beings exist with the same kind of existence as positive beings, but they are negative because of something peculiar about their essences.

Both strategies may be found in the early modern scholastic literature, but Carleton endorses the second strategy.28 As we have already seen, Carleton calls negative entities “removals of beings [remotiones entium].” Later he distinguishes between positive and negative entities as follows:

A positive thing is not a pure removal, but it has many other functions. The positive beingness [entitas]29 of a positive thing is distinguished [from negative beingness] by means of these other functions.30

According to this passage, negative entities are removals of beings and nothing else besides. Positive beings are also removals of beings (since positive beings remove their negations), but positive beings have “many other functions” besides that of removing beings.

There is an obvious problem with this characterization of the distinction between positive and negative entities, a problem that did not go unnoticed by early modern scholastic opponents of carentism.31 The problem is that negative entities do have other functions in addition to being removals of beings. Most notably, negative entities make negative truths true.

It is hard to believe that Carleton overlooked the fact that negative entities are truthmakers for negative truths, so his account of the distinction between positive and negative entities cannot amount merely to the claim that negative

27 For an instance of the latter, see, e.g., Polizzi, Sicii platiensis tomus tertius, d. 50, s. 11, n. 188, p. 673 [NB Polizzi’s p. 673 is erroneously marked 667].
28 Giattini and Benito de Robles appear to endorse the first strategy. For more on Robles see Schmutz, “Réalistes,” 146-147; for Giattini, see Logica, q. 6, a. 2, p. 266.
29 I am not entirely happy with the translation of “entitas” as “beingness”, but I have already used “entity” for “ens.” At any rate, the scholastic “entitas” is not equivalent to the contemporary “entity.”
30 Carleton, Philosophia universa, Logic, d. 18, s. 6, n. 7, p. 85: “Res positiva non est pura remotio, sed multa habet munia realia, ex quibus positiva eius entitas dignescitur.”
31 See, e.g., Peinado, De gen., lib. 1, t. 1, d. 4, s. 3, n. 26, p. 212; Losada, Cursus philosophici tertia pars, Metaphysics, d. 4, ch. 2, n. 14, p. 152.
truths have only one function. Fortunately, his remarks on the distinction between positive and negative entities make more sense if we consider them in light of similar remarks made by his contemporaries. Other carentists and their opponents consistently account for the negativity of negative entities by saying that they are essentially mere removals or excluders of positive entities. Giuseppe Polizzi, who models his theory of negative entities on Carleton’s, accounts for the distinction between positive and negative entities as follows:

Just as a positive contingent thing has its own essence and existence, so also does its lack. But the essence of a lack consists in the fact that it is the pure exclusion of something else from its company. So a lack’s only intrinsic feature is that it excludes from reality the positive thing of which it is a lack.\(^\text{32}\)

Here the distinguishing feature of lacks is that they are essentially mere excluders. This account of the distinction between positive and negative entities seems to have become fairly mainstream, since it was repeated even by opponents of carentism. Luis de Losada, for example, describes lacks as follows: “The entire or primary quiddity [of a lack] is the removal of positive existence.”\(^\text{33}\)

Carleton’s account of the negativity of negative entities makes sense if we construe it along the lines of the account here endorsed by Polizzi and reported by Losada. The claim is that for every negative entity \(n\), the essence of \(n\) is fully constituted by being the removal of some entity \(p\). A negative entity may have

\(^{32}\)Polizzi, *Siculi platiensis tomus tertius*, d. 50, s. 8, n. 156, p. 667: “Sicuti res positiva contingens habet suam essentiam & existentiam, ita eius carentia; consistit autem essentia carentiae in eo quod sit pura exclusio alterius a suo consortio, ita ut ex suis intrinsecis nihil aliud habet nisi excludere a parte rei rem positivam, cuius est carentia.” In some places Polizzi seems to endorse both views of ontological negativity discussed here. However, it is his notion of a pure excluder that does the heavy lifting in his theory of lacks, and the notion of negative existence appears to be dispensable.

\(^{33}\)Losada, *Cursus philosophici tertia pars*, Metaphysics, d. 4, ch. 2, n. 9, p. 150: “Tota vel primaria quidditas [carentiae] sit remotio existentiae positivae.” Izquierdo discusses this account of the negativity of negative entities at *Pharus scientiarum*, d. 9, q. 3, n. 37, p. 194. Pietro Sforza Pallavicino has a similar account of the negativity of negative entities, but his account is given in terms of the essence of negative entities together with relations of modal co-variation between a negative entity and that which it excludes from reality. See Pallavicino, *In primam secundae tomus primus*, d. 3, q. 2, a. 2, pp. 79-82.
additional features such as being a truthmaker or being located in such-and-such a place, but these features do not enter into the essence of the negative entity. Positive entities, by contrast, have essential features besides that of being a removal of a being.

It might help to clarify the notion of a removal of being. At a first pass, the notion of a removal of a being can be characterized as follows. To be the removal of \( p \) is to stand in a certain relation of modal co-variation with \( p \): for \( m \) to be the removal of \( p \) is for it to be the case that, necessarily, if \( m \) exists, then \( p \) does not exist. Now this characterization needs to be finessed in two ways. First, as we shall see, Carleton thinks that lacks remove things from regions of space-time, so the characterization of ‘removal’ needs to be relativized to space-time regions. Second, Carleton does not think that to be a removal of \( p \) is merely to stand in the appropriate relation of modal co-variation. Carleton thinks that the removal of \( p \) stands in the appropriate relation of modal co-variation to \( p \) because it constitutes the very non-being of \( p \).

On my reading, to be a negative being is to have an essence fully constituted by being the removal of something; to be a positive being is to have an essence that includes a property other than being the removal of something.\(^{34}\) For example, the essence of the lack of Obama is fully constituted by being the removal of Obama. By contrast, the essence of Obama is not fully constituted by being the removal of something, since the essence of Obama includes additional properties, such as being human.

We now know how Carleton and his followers account for the negativity of negative entities, but many questions remain. How are negative entities

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\(^{34}\) An interesting alternative proposal, suggested by the passages from Polizzi and Losada, is to take ontological positiveness as primitive and define negativity in terms of it: to be negative is to be a pure removal of something positive. This procedure presupposes a prior conception of positivity.
individuated? Are they concrete or abstract? How are they related to their subjects (if they have subjects)? I will take these questions in turn.

### 5.1.2 Individuating Lacks

At the foundation of Carleton’s theory of lacks are two methodological principles that together provide a way to approach what might otherwise seem like an intractable problem: determining the identity conditions of lacks. The first principle says, roughly, that we can learn about lacks by considering the things of which they are lacks. The reason behind this principle is that lacks are defined in terms of the things of which they are lacks. The lack of Peter, for example, is essentially an excluder of Peter. So we can use Peter’s identity conditions to find out about the identity conditions of the lack of Peter.35

The second principle I call “Carleton’s Razor,” the inspiration for which is familiar:

**Carleton’s Razor:** Negative entities are not to be multiplied without necessity.36

Carleton’s point is that positing two lacks when one will do is similar to positing two causes when one will do.37 Both practices are to be avoided.

Using these two methodological principles, Carleton establishes three further principles that together tell us how lacks are individuated both specifically and numerically. First is the Principle of Specific Diversity:

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35 Carleton presupposes that we can have singular thought about the non-existent. For a contemporary defense of this view, see Crane, *The Objects of Thought*.

36 Carleton, *Philosophia universa*, Logic, d. 18, s. 7, n. 4, p. 85: “Sicut enim non sunt multiplicanda entia sine necessitate, ita & non entia.” Here Carleton uses “non-entity” rather than negation, but I take it the point of doing so is purely literary: it nicely recalls Ockham’s version of the Razor.

37 See Carleton, *Philosophia universa*, Logic, d. 18, s. 8, n. 4, p. 86.
Principle of Specific Diversity: Lacks are multiplied with respect to species according to the specific diversity of forms to which they are opposed.\footnote{Carleton, \textit{Philosophia universa}, Logic, d. 18, s. 7, n. 1, p. 85: “Dico primo: Carentiae multiplicantur specie secundum diversitatem specificam formarum quibus opponuntur.”}

Peter and Pegasus are different in kind (species), so it follows from Carleton’s Principle of Specific Diversity that the lacks of Peter and Pegasus are different in kind. The Principle of Specific Diversity is motivated by the first methodological principle discussed above. Since the lacks of Peter and Pegasus are defined in terms of Peter and Pegasus, and since Peter and Pegasus are distinct in kind, so are their lacks.

Carleton uses the same approach to establish a Principle of Numerical Diversity:

Principle of Numerical Diversity: The number of negations is to be taken from the number of things or forms that the negations remove.\footnote{Carleton, \textit{Philosophia universa}, Logic, d. 18, s. 7, n. 2, p. 85: “Dico secundo: Negationum numerus a formarum seu rerum quas removent numero desumendus est.” Cf. Hurtado, \textit{Universa philosophia}, Physics, d. 3, s. 1, n. 8, p. 186. Carleton was likely influenced by Hurtado’s discussion of the individuation of lacks, although Hurtado was not a carentist.}

The Principle of Numerical Diversity tells us that there is a one-one correlation between lacks and the things they remove.\footnote{Someone might worry that there is a formal problem lurking behind the Principle of Numerical Diversity. The principle tells us that the number of negations = the number of things removed by the negations. It is often thought that statements of the form ‘the number of Fs = n’ are materially equivalent to statements quantifying over the Fs. If so, then ‘the number of non-existents = n’ is equivalent to a statement quantifying over non-existents, and Carleton’s Principle of Numerical Diversity appears to entail non-sense. At least three responses are available to Carleton. First, he could deny the equivalence on the grounds that there are infinitely many non-existents; hence, there is no finite quantificational statement equivalent to ‘the number of lacks = the number of non-existents’. Second, he could admit the equivalence and deny that quantification expresses existence. This would be to admit a domain of discourse (quantification) that includes non-existents. For a recent defense of this sort of move, see Crane, \textit{The Objects of Thought}, ch. 2. Failing these two options, he could go Meinongian and admit that non-existents have a mode of being that falls short of existence, and the quantifier expresses this inferior mode of being.} Hence, the lack of Peter is distinct from the lack of Paul if and only if Peter is distinct from Paul.
Carleton’s Principle of Numerical Diversity results in a staggering number of lacks.\textsuperscript{41} To illustrate: for every possible, non-actual entity in David Lewis’s pluriverse, there is a lack of that entity in Carleton’s actual world. For every alien property in David Lewis’s pluriverse, there is a lack of that property in Carleton’s actual world. But Carleton also countenances lacks of impossible objects such as chimeras, alien gods, and goat-stags.\textsuperscript{42} There are more things in Carleton’s heaven and earth than are dreamt of in David Lewis’s philosophy.\textsuperscript{43}

There is a further question about the individuation of lacks left unanswered by Carleton’s Principle of Numerical Diversity. Suppose Peter and Paul are both blind. How do we count the lack of sight? Are there distinct lacks of sight for Peter and Paul, or is there just one lack of sight, which Peter and Paul somehow share? Carleton answers this question with his Principle of Non-Multiplication:

\textbf{Principle of Non-Multiplication:} Lacks are not multiplied according to the multiplication of subjects.\textsuperscript{44}

The Principle of Non-Multiplication tells us to ignore the subject of a lack when counting the lack. Accordingly, there is only one lack of sight that is somehow shared by Peter and Paul.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{41} Carleton explicitly claims that there is an actual infinity of lacks in \textit{Philosophia universa}, Physics, d. 46, s. 4, n. 6, p. 391.
\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Philosophia universa}, Logic, d. 18, s. 2, n. 2, p. 81.
\textsuperscript{43} Because lacks are individuated according to those (possible and impossible) things of which they are lacks, we might hope for a theory that tells us how possible and impossible things are individuated. No such theory is found in Carleton’s discussion of lacks. But note that Carleton’s theory can accommodate disagreement over the individuation of possible and impossible objects. All he is committed to is the generic claim that the individuation of negations tracks the individuation of possible and impossible objects.
\textsuperscript{44} This is the conclusion of \textit{Philosophia universa}, Logic, d. 18, s. 8, the question of which is, “Whether negations are multiplied in accordance with the multiplication of subjects” [“Num ad subiectorum multiplicationem multiplicantur Negationes.”]
\textsuperscript{45} Carleton’s principle of non-multiplication raises a question about his theory of properties. If the lack of a property is not multiplied according to subject, then if follows from the principle of numerical diversity that properties are also not multiplied according to subject, which suggests
Negative Truths

Because the Principle of Non-Multiplication can seem counterintuitive, it needs argument. Carleton establishes this principle using an example that I call the “Creation Case.” Suppose that at \( t_0 \) there is space with a lack of air and a lack of light. Now suppose that at \( t_1 \) God creates air. After \( t_1 \) there is space and air, but still no light. In short, darkness persists throughout the creation of air.

What happens at \( t_1 \) to the lack of light that existed at \( t_0 \)? You might have a strong intuition that nothing happens to the lack of light that was at \( t_0 \): it remains and is furthermore responsible for the darkness at \( t_1 \). If you have this intuition, Carleton not only shares your intuition about the creation case, but he gives an argument in its favor. The alternative to saying that the original lack of light remains when the air is created is to say that the original lack perishes, giving way to a new lack when the air is created. But Carleton claims that such a move would be \textit{ad hoc} since there is no reason why the original lack should perish.\footnote{Carleton, \textit{Philosophia universa}, Logic, d. 18, s. 8, n. 5, p. 86.} So it seems that the original lack of light from \( t_0 \) remains throughout \( t_1 \), when air is created. If so, we can also conclude that at \( t_1 \) no new lack of light comes into being. For if a new lack of light arose upon the creation of air, there would then be two lacks of light, which would violate Carleton’s Razor.\footnote{Carleton, \textit{Philosophia universa}, Logic, d. 18, s. 8, n. 3, p. 85: “Ut aer in eo casu denominetur privatus luce, non opus esse ut nova emergat negatio, sed negationem prius suo modo existentem ad id munus sufficere. Sicut non sunt multiplicanda entia sine necessitate, ut diximus sect. praecedente, ita \textit{neque non entia}, sed nulla est necessitas novam hic statuendi negationem emergentem. Ergo.”} Carleton concludes that the lack of light in empty space is not distinct from the lack of light in air.

How does the creation case support the Principle of Non-Multiplication? In the creation case, Carleton thinks of empty space as one subject and air as another. Since there is only one lack of light for the empty space at \( t_0 \) and for the air at \( t_1 \), there is only one lack of light for two subjects. Hence, lacks are not

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\textit{Note:} Carleton conceives of properties as universals rather than as tropes. Carleton’s theory of properties, however, lies outside the scope of this chapter.
multiplied according to subject. It should be noted, however, that the Principle of Non-Multiplication was controversial among carentists.48

5.1.3 “What, though, is a non-hippopotamus and where exactly in the room is it?”49

I take it to be the hallmark of abstract objects that they are (i) not located in space and time and (ii) do not feature in causal interactions. For the purpose of this dissertation, I will understand concrete objects to be objects that (i) are located in space and time or (ii) do feature in causal interaction.50 Based on these criteria, Carleton’s lacks count as concrete objects.

It is clear from the creation case that for Carleton negative entities are located in space and time. The spatio-temporal location of negative entities is a running theme in Carleton’s discussion, and it can be found in the following passages:

Strictly speaking, there is only one negation for each thing or form, but it is divisible. Hence, once a thing or form is posited, its negation is not entirely taken away, but only that part of the negation that corresponds to the place where the thing or form is produced.51

So when Peter is first produced, he does not destroy the whole negation of himself but only that part of his negation that was in the place where he was produced. But when Peter successively comes into contact with various parts of his negation, he successively destroys them, and new parts of his negation emerge in those parts of space that he successively leaves behind. For in each place there must be one of two contraries: a thing or its negation.52

48 Polizzi rejects it in Saeculi platiensis tomus tertius, d. 50, s. 1, nn. 192-197, pp. 673*-674.
50 The disjunctive statement of these criteria allows God to be a concrete object even if not located in space and time. It also allows for concrete objects that do not feature in causal interactions. We might want to allow for the latter possibility in case there is a concrete object outside the light-cones of every other concrete object, and so not causally relevant to any
51 Carleton, Philosophia universa, Logic, d. 18, s. 8, n. 1, p. 85: “Unius rei seu formae una tantum, per se loquendo, est negatio, sed divisibilis, quae proinde, re vel forma posita, non tota tollitur, sed illa tantum negationis pars quae loco, ubi res vel forma productur aut locatur, respondet.”
52 Carleton, Philosophia universa, Logic, d. 18, s. 9, n. 10, p. 87: “Petrus ergo quando primo producitur non totam tollit sui negationem, sed illam tantum eius partem, quae illo in loco erat
These are remarkable passages, and several points in them require comment. The point I wish to emphasize by quoting these passages is that for Carleton lacks occupy space and time.\(^{53}\) In both passages, moreover, Carleton claims that a positive entity \(p\) is not in a location because part of \(p\)’s lack is in that location.\(^{54}\) Carleton therefore suggests that lacks have parts, and this suggestion requires comment.

Although Carleton speaks as if lacks have parts, Carleton is committed to the simplicity of lacks for the following reason. If the lack of Peter had proper parts, those parts would presumably be smaller lacks of Peter. But the postulation of smaller lacks of Peter would violate both Carleton’s Razor and the Principle of Numerical Diversity; as is clear from the first passage above, “strictly speaking, there is only one negation for each thing or form.” If there is only one lack of Peter, it is hard to see how Peter’s lack could have parts. Nonetheless, Carleton consistently speaks as if lacks are “divisible” and have “parts”. How are we to resolve this tension at the heart of Carleton’s theory of lacks?

My suggestion is that it is best to conceive of Carleton’s lacks not as having proper parts but as spatially extended simples (although, as we will see below, privations are not simple).\(^{55}\) I suggest that the “parts” of negations are the various spatial subregions of one spatially extended simple negation. We can conceive of the left and right hemispheres of a spatially extended simple. In our non-technical moments, we can call those distinct hemispheres “parts,” although strictly speaking a spatially extended simple has no parts. If God creates Pegasus

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\(^{53}\) Compare Izquierdo, *Opus theologicum*, t. 3, d. 5, q. 9 and t. 4, do. 8, q. 7.

\(^{54}\) While Carleton accounts for the non-existence of a thing at a place by appeal to the presence of the thing’s negation in that place, some of Carleton’s opponents appeal to the negation of the thing’s presence at that place. Cf. Izquierdo, *Opus theologicum*, t. 3, d. 5, q. 9, prop. 2-3.

\(^{55}\) For contemporary discussion of extended simples, see Simons, “Extended Simples”; McDaniel, “Extended Simples”.

in the middle of Times Square, he does not, strictly speaking, destroy a part of Pegasus’s lack (because Pegasus’s lack does not have parts); rather, he changes the shape of Pegasus’s lack by contracting it around the Pegasus-shaped region of space occupied by Pegasus.

A second point in the above two passages that merits comment is Carleton’s claim that “in each place there must be one of two contraries: a thing or its negation.” It follows from this remarkable claim that, not only are there infinitely many negations in Carleton’s universe, but there are also infinitely many negations in each location of Carleton’s universe, since infinitely many things fail to exist at each location.

It is therefore clear that Carleton’s lacks satisfy the first criterion for being a concrete object: lacks occupy space and time. This is a desired result, for surely it is dark in this room because there is a lack of light in this room; it would be strange if it were dark in this room in virtue of an abstract entity without any location.

It is clear that Carleton’s lacks satisfy the first criterion for being a concrete object: lacks occupy space and time. What about the second criterion? Are lacks capable of causal interaction? Carleton insists that lacks do not have causal powers. However, this point needs to be finessed for two reasons. First, although lacks do not have causal powers, there does seem to be some sense in which positive entities can act causally on negative entities: I can move my lack by moving myself; I can banish the lack of light from a room simply by flipping a switch. These seem to be genuine causal interactions, but it is not clear how Carleton would account for them. Aristotelian efficient causation on the influx model does not seem to fit the bill, since it seems clear that when I move my lack, nothing “flows into” it. What we can say is that at least some lacks change location as a result of the changing locations of positive entities. A second point that is relevant to the issue of causality is that Carleton, following Aristotle,

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56 *Philosophia universalis*, Physics, d. 2, s. 1, n. 2, p. 203.
agrees that privations are principles of change. In spite of the relevance of lacks to the goings-on of the positive natural world, it remains the case that Carleton’s lacks do not have causal powers, and so arguably fail to satisfy the causal criterion for being a concrete object. Because they satisfy the first criterion, however, they should count as concrete objects.

The picture that emerges from the above passages is as follows. Your lack exists wherever you are not located: you are surrounded by your lack, just as in the sea you are surrounded by water, displacing it wherever you go. It should now be clear that Carleton’s lacks are not conceived of as negative facts. Negative facts are structured complexes built out of individuals, properties, and relations. The negative fact that Theatetus is not flying, for example, might be composed of Theatetus, the property of flying, and something like an anti-instantiation relation—alternatively, it might be composed of Theatetus and the property of not-flying. At any rate, Carleton’s lacks have no constituents at all; therefore, they are not structured complexes, and, a fortiori, they are not facts. This is an important point because other commentators who have written on this topic have claimed that the early modern scholastics thought of lacks and negations as negative facts.

We now know how Carleton individuates lacks and that lacks are concrete, spatio-temporally located, extended simples. Moreover, we can interact with contingent lacks, which are also principles of change. But lacks not only account for the non-existence of something, they also account for something’s lacking a property. We therefore need to know how lacks affect their subjects.

58 Jacob Schmutz attributes the negative facts view to Carleton in particular. See Schmutz, “Réalistes,” 154: “Comme tous les scolastiques, Compton Carleton embrasse une stricte théorie de la vérité-correspondance: au même titre que les faits positifs rendent des jugements affirmatifs vrais, de faits négatifs rendent des jugements négatifs vrais.” See also Knebel Will, Würfel und Wahrscheinlichkeit, 175; and Ramelow, Gott, Freiheit, Weltenwahl, 231.
5.1.4 Lacks, Privations, and Their Subjects

Carleton explicitly states that privations cannot be “properly in a subject”. He does not explain what “properly in a subject” means, but a good guess is that being properly in a subject is something like inhering in a subject. As we have seen, however, a privation is standardly defined as the lack of a form in a subject apt to have that form. If privations cannot be “properly in a subject,” then Carleton must come up with a way in which a privation can be “in” and can affect its subject. This goes for negations of properties more generally, not just for privations.

Carleton claims that a sufficient condition for a’s not being F is that the lack of F is “intimately present” to a. It is clear from Carleton’s examples that by a lack being “intimately present” to a subject, he means that the lack and the subject are spatially coincident in some way. For example, Carleton claims that if an angel is “penetrated” with dark air, the angel as well as the air will be dark. In order to explain Carleton’s conditions for something’s lacking a property, we need two location relations. Where Carleton uses the term “penetrates” to describe the appropriate spatial relation, I shall use the term “pervades,” and I shall say that F pervades a region of space r just in case no subregion of r is free of F. I shall say that a is entirely located in r just in case a is located in r and nowhere else. Now we may say that a is pervaded by F just in case a is entirely located in r and F pervades r—in short, a is pervaded by F just in case in every region where there is a, there is F. From Carleton’s example of the dark angel, we can gather the following sufficient condition for a’s not being F.

59 *Philosophia universa*, Logic, d. 18, s. 8, n. 8, p. 86. See also Polizzi, *Siculi platiensis tomus tertius*, d. 50, s. 11, n. 188, p. 673*.
60 Carleton, *Philosophia universa*, Logic, d. 18, s. 8, nn. 7, p. 86: “Negations ought to be somehow intrinsic to Peter—that is, intimately present to him, which, as I have said, is sufficient to takes something intrinsic away from him\ Debere [negationes] aliquo modo Petro esse intrinsecas, nempe intime praesentes, quod sufficit, ut dixi, ad aliquid intrinsecum ab eo tollendum.”
61 Some might be surprised to find that incorporeal substances can be dark, but nothing hinges on this choice of example.
62 For discussion of these and other location relations, see Parsons, “Theories of Location”.
Sufficient condition for lacking a property: If \( a \) is pervaded by the lack of \( F \), then \( a \) is not \( F \).

This condition is meant to apply to negations as well as privations—it accounts for a rock’s not being able to see as well as for a frog’s not being able to see. One might now wonder why pervasion by a lack is a sufficient but not necessary condition for lacking a property. This has to do with Carleton’s special treatment of the metaphysics of privations in particular, which I explain shortly.

Thus far Carleton has given a unified account of negations and privations. He is compelled, however, to give a special account of privations in response to a bizarre objection concerning overlapping demons. As we know, demons have the misfortune of lacking grace. And as we also know, nothing is easier than for two demons to occupy the same region of space. Apparently, 17th-century scholastic philosophers had the intuition that distinct demons have distinct privations of grace. But if two demons—Alichino and Barbariccia, say—occupy the same region of space, then according to Carleton’s theory of privations as it stands there is no sense in which the two demons have distinct lacks of grace.

Given Carleton’s claim that lacks are not multiplied according to the multiplication of subjects, we would expect him simply to deny the intuition that distinct demons have distinct privations of grace. Oddly enough, he tries to accommodate rather than deny the intuition. In doing so, Carleton effectively accepts the following principle of multiplication for privations:

Principle of Multiplication for Privations: Privations are multiplied according to the multiplication of subjects.

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63 The problem of overlapping demons is discussed in *Philosophia universa* Logic, d. 18, s. 8, nn. 9-10.
Carleton’s task is to reconcile the Principle of Multiplication for Privations with his Principle of Non-Multiplications for lacks more generally. If lacks aren’t multiplied according to subject, and privations are lacks, how can privations be multiplied according to subject? Carleton’s answer to this question significantly complicates his theory of privations.

Carleton hits upon a solution to the problem of coincident demons by considering the fact that when a subject has a property, the subject is somehow united with that property. If the union between a subject and a property is a positive entity, then it must have its own lack: if there is a union between Paul and sight, there is also a lack of union between Paul and sight. The lack of union between Paul and sight, moreover, is defined in terms of Paul; it can therefore play a role in making Paul’s blindness in some sense his own and in making Alichino’s lack of grace in some sense his own. Privations, Carleton now claims, are aggregates or mereological sums of (i) the lack of a form and (ii) the lack of union between the subject and the form:

Privation transcendentally taken is nothing other than the complex [composed] of the negation of a form and the negation of union with respect to a subject naturally apt to receive such a union and form.64

In other passages Carleton speaks of the negations of form and union as “parts” of a privation (Philosophia universa, 86.9-12). We can now say that Alichino’s privation of grace is composed of (i) the lack of grace and (ii) the lack of union between Alichino and grace; Barbariccia’s privation of grace is composed of (i) the lack of grace, and (ii) the lack of union between Barbariccia and grace. Because these composite privations have distinct parts, they are distinct privations. Alichino and Barbariccia can rest assured of not having to share their privations with other demons.

64 Philosophia universa, Logic, d. 18, s .9, nn. 4, p. 88: “Privatio transcendentaliter sumpta nihil aliud est quam complexum illud ex negatione formae & negatione unionis, respectu subjecti ex natura sua apti eiusmodi unionem & formam recipere.”
Negative Truths

We can now see why pervasion by a lack of $F$ is merely a sufficient condition for $a$’s not being $F$: $a$ can also fail to be $F$ if $a$ is pervaded by a lack of union between $a$ and $F$, even if $a$ is pervaded by $F$. This is clear from the following passage:

Thus if there is a union of light with water, even if that lit \textit{[lucidus]} water is penetrated with air, nonetheless the air will not be lit \textit{[lucidus]}, nor will it have light in itself with respect to the formal effect of light, unless the union of this light is placed in the same place along with the air.\textsuperscript{65}

Here Carleton imagines water, light, and air occupying the same region of space. Although the light and the air are in the same place, the air will not be lit if (\textit{per impossibile}?) there is no union between the air and the light \textit{in the same place} as the air and light. The upshot is a second sufficient condition for a thing’s lacking a property:

\textbf{Second sufficient condition for lacking a property}: If $a$ is pervaded by the lack of union between $a$ and $F$, then $a$ is not $F$.

Note that this second sufficient condition for a thing’s lacking a property, like the first condition, is fully general in that it applies to negations as well as privations.

To recap this section, Carleton complicates his theory of lacks by claiming that privations are composite lacks: the privation of a property $F$ with respect to a subject $a$ is composed of (i) the lack of $F$ and (ii) the lack of union between $a$ and $F$. This complication of Carleton’s theory is motivated by the need to reconcile the Principle of Multiplication for Privations with the Principle of Non-Multiplications for non-privative lacks. It is not clear why Carleton accepts the Principle of Multiplication for Privations, but other caretists also accept that

\textsuperscript{65} Carleton, \textit{Philosophia universa}, Logic, d. 18, s. 8, n. 12, p. 86: “Etiamsi aqua illa lucida intime penetretur cum aere, aer tamen non erit lucidus, nec habebit in se lucem quoad effectum illius formalem, nisi etiam unio huius lucis ponatur illic similiter cum aere.”
principle. In order to avoid the complication in Carleton’s theory, those who accept the Principle of Multiplication for Privations also accept that principle as applied to lacks more generally. Consequently, these other carentists offer a unified treatment of privations and non-privative lacks.

We have also seen that Carleton offers two sufficient conditions for a thing’s lacking a property. These conditions are fully general, applying to negations as well as privations. Something can lack a property by being pervaded by (i) the lack of that property, or (ii) the lack of union with that property. Carleton does not say whether these conditions can be fulfilled separately, but in the case of privations he must say that they cannot, since a’s privation of F is composed of the lack of F and the lack of union between a and F.

5.1.5 Theological Objections

Before God created anything, this typewriter did not exist. Hence, before God created anything, the lack of this typewriter did exist. This statement entails, first, that the lack of this typewriter existed from eternity, and second, that the lack of this typewriter is an uncreated entity. Carleton postulates lacks of impossible objects such as goat-stags and round squares. Such lacks are not only eternal and uncreated but also necessary. So Carleton’s position entails that there are infinitely many necessary, eternal, uncreated entities other than God. Sometimes Carleton’s opponents call the theological implications of Carleton’s theory “ridiculous” and “plainly absurd.” Other times they put a finer point on the objection.66

66 Izquierdo, *Pharus scientiarum*, d. 9, q. 3, n. 37, p. 195.
67 See, e.g., Giattini, *Logica*, q. 6, a. 2, p. 267ff; Izquierdo, *Pharus scientiarum*, d. 9, q. 3, n. 37 and 41, pp. 194-196; Losada, *Cursus philosophici tertia pars*, Metaphysics, d. 4, ch. 2, n. 15, p. 152; Peinado, *De gen.*, lib. 1, t. 2, d. 4, s. 3, n. 29, p. 213; Mauro, *Quaestiones philosophicarum liber secundus*, q. 49, pp. 202-204; Pérez, *In primam partem tomus primus*, d. 3, ch. 4, s. 8, n. 130, p. 87. These philosophers raised several additional objections to carentism. I focus on the most obviously problematic objections.
In the first place, there is the first line of the Nicene Creed: “We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible.” *Prima facie*, this line of the creed implies that there are no uncreated beings other than God. This problem cannot be skirted simply by stipulating that God does in fact create all things, lacks included. For, as Silvestro Mauro points out, this response leads to another problem. Mauro explains that God can consider himself and conclude, “My infinite perfection is good enough for me. I don’t want there to be anything imperfect.” Based on these reflections, God can decide not to create anything at all. But if lacks are created, then it seems that God cannot abstain from creating. For by deciding not to create Socrates, for instance, God must create the lack of Socrates, and so on for everything else. As Mauro puts it, God is the fountain of all being, and he ought to be able to close the fountain if he so chooses (or, one might add, never open it in the first place). But if carentism is correct, and if God creates lacks, then God cannot close the fountain of being: for every positive being \( p \), God must create \( p \) or its negation. Carleton therefore faces a dilemma: either lacks are uncreated, which conflicts with the first line of the Nicene Creed, or they are created, and God is forced to create something.

In the second place, God is supposed to be omnipotent, but if there are necessary lacks, then there are things that God cannot destroy. He must simply put up with them, and this seems to detract from God’s power. Izquierdo asks, “How can he be omnipotent who can’t rid himself of the company of such essences?”

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68 Mauro, *Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus*, q. 49, p. 202-203: “Secundo, Deus videns se continere omnem perfectionem potest dicere, *sufficit mihi mea infinita perfectio; nolo ut sit quidquam imperfectum ac defetuosum*; Deus non posset hoc dicere, si necessitaretur ad ponendas negationes distinctas a se; ergo, &c. Tertio Deus est primus fons ex quo ita effluat omne ens, ut possit libere claudere talem fontem, faciendo ne quidquid effluat; sed ex opposita sententia sequitur, quod Deus ita hoc non posset; nam eo ipso, quod velit nihil producere, effluunt infinitae negationes abusivae; ergo, &c.”

69 Izquierdo, *Pharus scientiarum*, d. 9, q. 3, n. 41, pp. 195: “Quo pacto est omnipotens ille, qui a talium essentiarum consortio se non potest eximere?” For a contemporary statement of similar
Finally, Carleton’s reification of privation smacks of Manichaeism. The Manicheans thought that evil exists and is uncreated. Augustine identifies evil with the privation of good precisely in order to maintain that evil does not exist. If Carleton, like many scholastic philosophers before him, also identifies evil with privation, then his view begins to take on a Manichaean aspect insofar as evil would then be an uncreated entity. Such are the theological objections to Carleton’s carentism. What can be said about them?

It is clear that Carleton is not concerned with the theological objections, for he dedicates only one sentence to each objection. In the remainder of this section I report Carleton’s surprisingly terse responses to the theological objections, but I leave it to theologians to determine whether Carleton’s carentism passes doctrinal muster.

Carleton responds to the first two worries reported above. In the first place, he admits that lacks are uncreated. However, Carleton thinks he can accommodate the traditional commitments of classical theism because, he says, those commitments concern positive entities only. Hence, according to Carleton, a theist must maintain that God is the only uncreated positive being, not that God is the only uncreated being simpliciter.

In order to accommodate the first line of the Nicene Creed, Carleton denies that negative entities are things; hence, he agrees that God is “the maker of all things.” As I understand it, this response is equivalent to claiming that “all things” contains an implicitly restricted quantifier, ranging over only positive things.

worries, see Alvin Plantinga, Does God Have a Nature? I have stolen the turn of phrase, “simply put up with them” from this work.

70 Mauro mentions the Manichean connection in Liber secundus, q. 49, p. 204, but this objection did not get as much attention as the others, indicating that even opponents of carentism did not think that carentism commits one to Manichaeism.

71 See Confessions III.12, VII.18.

72 Philosophia universa, Logic, d. 18, s. 6, n. 6, p. 85.

73 For a contemporary instance of this move, see Van Inwagen, ‘God and Other Uncreated Things’. 
From the fact that God does not create lacks, it does not immediately follow that lacks are entirely independent of God. Much ink has been spilled in the attempt to carve out conceptual space for uncreated beings that are somehow distinct from God yet somehow dependent on God. There is no sign that Carleton wishes to avail himself of these efforts—there is no sign of the formal distinction or exemplar causation in Carleton’s discussion of lacks. For Carleton there seems to be no sense in which lacks are ontologically dependent on God. By Carleton’s lights this admission is not theologically problematic because Christian doctrine only requires that positive entities be dependent on God. Moreover, there remains a sense in which the location of contingent lacks is under God’s control, since God can move the lack of Pegasus, for example, by placing Pegasus. Carleton admits that God has no such control over necessary lacks. But, he maintains, saying that God cannot destroy the lack of a round square is no worse than saying that God cannot make a round square, and everyone is committed to the latter claim. So the fact that God cannot destroy the lack of a round square is not a problem and certainly not a special problem for carentism.

Carleton does not respond to the objection about Manichaeism. This might seem puzzling at first, since the Manichean objection seems like an obvious objection to raise. But in fact it is easy to see why Carleton was not worried about the charge of Manichaeism: he rejects the privation theory of evil.

Historians of philosophy sometimes assume that every scholastic philosopher endorsed a privation theory of evil invented by Augustine, codified by Aquinas, and repeated for good measure by Suárez. As is usually the case

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74 For one early modern scholastic example of such efforts, see Albertini’s appropriation of (the traditional reading of) Henry of Ghent’s view of eternal essences (Corollaria, tomus secundus, p. 1, d. 1, q. 1), discussed in chapter seven.
75 Philosophia universa, Logic, d. 18, s. 6, n. 6, p. 85.
76 See, e.g., Newlands, “Leibniz on Privations, Limitations, and the Metaphysics of Evil”; Maria Rosa Antognazza, “Metaphysical Evil Revisited.” It should be noted that Aquinas and Suárez
with scholastic philosophy, however, things are not so straightforward. We have already seen that 17th-century scholastics had a debate about the ontological status and nature of privations. They also had a debate about the privation theory of evil. In his theological work, Carleton discusses the question “whether the badness \([\text{malitia}]\) of sin formally consists in something positive or in something negative—i.e., in a privation of rectitude that ought to be in something”; he observes that this question “has been disputed most bitterly in the schools,” and the resulting disagreement was “not a light one.” Carleton goes on to argue forcefully against the privation theory of evil. He claims that hatred toward God, for example, is a mental act that is bad in itself; it is not bad because it is attended by a privation. In particular, hatred toward God is not bad because it is a lack of love for God, for hatred toward God is worse than a mere lack of love for God. Carleton has a similar view of physical (non-moral) evil. Pain, for example, is a state of the body that is bad in itself, not because of an attendant privation. Pain is certainly not reducible to a lack of pleasure, for pain is much worse than a mere lack of pleasure. Carleton has several arguments to the effect that the privation theory of evil is not only counterintuitive but also incoherent. These (in my view convincing) arguments merit a separate discussion of their own, a discussion which is beyond the scope of this chapter. The important point for now is that Carleton does not identify evil with privation, and he therefore escapes the charge of Manichaeism.

were not the only scholastic philosophers, nor were they generally representative of anything like “the scholastic view.”

77 See Carleton, \textit{Cursus theologicus tomus primus}, d. 100, pp. 446ff.: “Acerrimeque in Scholis disputata quaestio est, in quo formaliter eius [peccati] malitia consistat, positivo an negativo, privatione scilicet rectitudinis inesse debitae, qua de re non levem video inter Auctores dissensionem.” On this debate see also Pallavicino, \textit{In primam secundae tomus primus}, d. 3, q. 2, a. 3, p. 82ff.

78 Carleton, \textit{Cursus theologicus tomus primus}, d. 100, s. 1, nn. 4-5, p. 446.

79 Carleton, \textit{Cursus theologicus tomus primus}, d. 100, s. 3, n. 6, p. 448.

80 This is not to say that \textit{no} privations are evil. Carleton admits that the privation of \(x\) is bad for \(x\). Carleton’s view, however, is that moral and physical evil are not reducible to privations, and they often consist in positive states.
Negative Truths

It is worth noting that even if Carleton did identify evil with privation, he could still respond to the charge of Manichaeism. The Manicheans did not merely accord ontological status to evil; as reported by Augustine, they claimed that evil is an eternal, uncreated, corporeal substance with which God is engaged in an eternal struggle.\(^{81}\) It is not obvious that the problem with Manichaeism lies with the claim that evil exists rather than with some other part of this picture. Carleton mentions Manichaeism only once and briefly in his discussion of privation. There he interprets the Manichean view as the claim that “evil is some substance that is by its nature evil.”\(^{82}\) Even if Carleton did identify evil with privation, he would not thereby endorse the claim that evil is a substance (much less a corporeal substance). Carleton would also deny that God is engaged in an eternal struggle with evil. In short, Carleton would make a very bad Manichean.

5.1.6 A Difficulty for the Hypothesis of Negative Entities

We have seen that Carleton postulates negative entities because he thinks they are required as truthmakers for negative truths. We have also seen that Carleton conceives of negative entities as pure removals of being, as spatio-temporally located, extended simples with which we can interact and which affect their subjects by means of spatial overlap. Moreover, Carleton conceives of privations as composite lacks composed of lacks of properties and lacks of union between the relevant properties and subjects.

Thus far I think Carleton produces a coherent and sophisticated theory of negative entities. As I will now explain, however, Carleton’s theory of negative entities is subject to a serious criticism that, in my view, presents a problem for any theory of negative entities.

\(^{81}\) Confessions, V.20.
\(^{82}\) Carleton, Cursus theologicus tomus primus, d. 100, s. 4, n. 3, p. 449.
As we have seen, Carleton thinks that privations must be in some sense intrinsic to their subjects. Since the subjects of lacks are in space and time, their privations must also be. It would be strange if Peter was blind in virtue of something abstract. How could an abstract object be responsible for Peter’s inability to see? In his criticism of voluntarism—the view that divine decrees make negative truths true (Cf. §2 below)—Polizzi cites Job 17, “In the darkness I placed my bed.”

Polizzi concludes from this passage that darkness is in a place. Since darkness is a paradigm lack, at least some lacks are in a place. Nor does Polizzi’s argument hinge on the revealed status of Job 17; we routinely and truly say the sort of thing Job said. Prima facie it seems that lacks, if they exist, must be located. We can state the first desideratum for a theory of negative entities, as a first pass, as follows:

**Localization:** Negative entities are non-abstract.

The motivation for Localization is that negative entities are supposed to account for the way the concrete world is (or is not)—they account for concrete things’ lacking properties and for other things’ not existing in certain locations. In order to account for how concrete things are not, negative entities must be concrete in the sense of being located in space and time. Intuitively, moreover, negative entities cannot be located just anywhere. If Peter is blind in virtue of a negative entity, that negative entity should be located at least roughly where Peter is. Peter should not be blind in virtue of something on the moon (unless Peter is on the moon). And if a negative entity is supposed to account for the absence of arctic penguins, that negative entity should be located not just anywhere but in the arctic. Again, it is hard to see how a negative entity located on the moon could account for an absence of penguins in the arctic. Intuitively, then, negative

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83 Polizzi, *Siculi platiensis tomus tertius*, d. 50, s. 6, n. 69, p. 652.
entities that account for something’s not being in a place should be in the relevant place. We can fine-tune Localization* to reflect this desideratum:

**Localization:** The negative entity responsible for \(x\)’s not being in a region of space \(r\) should be located in \(r\) and only in \(r\).

How could something in the Amazon account for the lack of penguins in the arctic?

The problem is that Localization is in tension with another desideratum for the theory of negative entities:

**Generalization:** Negative entities are truthmakers for negative existential truths.

Carleton’s theory of lacks passes the Localization test with flying colors. On Carleton’s theory, Peter does not exist in a region \(r\) if and only if Peter’s lack exists in \(r\). But it is hard to see how Carleton’s theory can satisfy Generalization. On Carleton’s view the lack of Peter exists at the same time (but not in the same place) as Peter, since the lack of Peter exists everywhere Peter does not exist. So the mere existence of the lack of Peter cannot be the truthmaker for ‘Peter does not exist’. So it seems that Carleton does not provide truthmakers for negative existential truths after all.

Carleton would respond to this objection by saying that Peter does not exist *simpliciter* just in case Peter’s lack exists everywhere. To turn this claim into a solution to the problem of negative truths, Carleton would have to posit an entity that necessitates the truth of ‘Peter’s lack exists everywhere’. It is not clear what such an entity would be, but a natural suggestion is to posit a state of affairs or fact that somehow consists in Peter’s lack existing everywhere. Such a fact would be composed of three items: (i) the entirety of space, (ii) Peter’s lack, and (iii) the
location relation. The thought would be that these items, combined in whatever way is appropriate for the unity of facts, compose the fact that Peter’s lack is everywhere, and that fact necessitates the truth of ‘Peter does not exist’. The suggestion is therefore to combine Carleton’s theory of negative entities with a theory of facts in such a way that negative entities can enter into composition with positive entities to form facts. The resulting facts would then be truthmakers for negative truths.

But there is a problem with this solution. The problem can be put roughly as follows. Being such that Peter does not exist is an extrinsic property of anything spatio-temporal that has that property. Nothing spatio-temporal can be intrinsically such that Peter does not exist. Hence, the world cannot be intrinsically such that Peter does not exist, and neither can the fact that Peter’s lack pervades the world. In order to explain the problem with a bit more detail, I will use counterpart theory, but nothing hinges on this choice. Consider two worlds: \( \top \) and \( w \). Let’s call the entirety of space in \( \top \) ‘\( S \)’. Peter does not exist in \( \top \). On the present suggestion, that is because the fact that the lack of Peter pervades \( S \) exists in \( \top \). Let’s call this fact ‘F’. Now suppose \( w \) contains an intrinsic duplicate of \( \top \), so it contains a counterpart of \( S \), and that counterpart is pervaded by a lack of Peter. Hence, \( w \) contains a counterpart of F. Call it, ‘\( F_c \)’. But \( w \) is also bigger than \( \top \) in that it contains more space than \( \top \). Let’s call the “extra” space in \( w \) ‘\( S^+ \)’. We may suppose that Peter is contained in \( S^+ \). It follows from this supposition that it is possible for F to coexist with Peter, since there is a world, \( w \), in which Peter coexists with \( F_c \), a counterpart of F. Hence, the fact that Peter is not in \( S \) does not necessitate the truth of ‘Peter does not exist’.

It is hard to see how any theory of negative entities can satisfy both Localization and Generalization. To get a sense of the difficulty, I’ll briefly show why none of the views available in the contemporary literature satisfies both desiderata. I will begin with Armstrong’s totality fact. Armstrong’s idea is to gather all of the first-order facts, and then postulate the additional fact that there
are no more facts. To see how this works, consider a toy analogue of Armstrong’s view. Consider a world \( w \) containing only three marbles, \( a, b, \) and \( c \). What makes it true, in \( w \), that there are no unicorns? It seems all there is in \( w \) are the three marbles, and they are not sufficient to make it true that there are no unicorns, because they can exist along with a unicorn. Armstrong’s idea is to gather all the marbles into an aggregate, and postulate a new fact, the fact that there is nothing other than \( a, b, \) and \( c \). This fact guarantees that there are no unicorns, since none of the marbles is a unicorn. Leave the toy analogue behind now and return to the actual world. Armstrong thinks the actual world is composed of facts. So instead of gathering all the marbles together and saying, that’s all, his totality fact gathers all the facts together and says, that’s all. (So to speak. Facts don’t literally say anything. I’ll give a more precise formulation soon.) The resulting totality fact necessitates the truth of every negative truth. For example, ‘There are no unicorns’ is made true by the fact that the actual facts are all the facts. Armstrong’s totality fact is composed of the aggregate of all facts, the property being a fact, and the “totaling relation”. The structure of the totality fact is schematized as follows:

The Totality Fact: \( \text{Tot}(\text{the aggregate of all facts, being a fact})^{84} \)

where ‘Tot’ stands for the totaling relation. Armstrong repeatedly states that his totality fact is a negative fact.\(^85\) So we are dealing here with a theory of negative facts.

It is not obvious whether Armstrong’s totality fact is supposed to be abstract or not. There is some textual evidence that suggests Armstrong thinks of totality facts as abstract and therefore not located. Armstrong thinks that totality facts are

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\(^{84}\) Armstrong, *Truth and Truthmakers*, 74. Armstrong gives a similar analysis of minimal truthmakers for negative truths in §6.2.1. My criticism applies to both analyses.

\(^{85}\) Armstrong, *Truth and Truthmakers*, 54, 58, 70.
second-order facts because they have facts as constituents, and he writes: “Why should I not back up a little and say that only first-order states of affairs are non-abstract?” This suggests that Armstrong conceives of totality facts as abstract. If so, then his totality facts straightforwardly fail to satisfy Localization.

But perhaps Armstrong should not conceive of the totality fact as abstract. After all, they have concrete constituents that are located in space and time. The aggregate of all facts is located, and the property of being a fact is located wherever there is a fact. So maybe Armstrong can say that the totality fact is located where its constituents are.

Yet this move does not help satisfy Localization. Now the problem is not that the totality fact is not located. The problem is that the totality fact is located in the wrong place. The totality fact is everywhere. But localization says that that negative entity responsible for x’s not being in r is located in r and only in r. For example, it is dark in my closet because of a lack of light in my closet. On Armstrong’s view, it is dark in my closet because of a fact that pervades all of space; the thing in virtue of which there is no light in my closet is partially located in my closet, but it is also located in my kitchen, in the depths of the sea, on the moon, and beyond. If it is counterintuitive to say that it is dark in my closet in virtue of something abstract, it is equally counterintuitive to say that it is dark in my closet in virtue of something on the moon. So Armstrong’s totality fact fails to satisfy Localization even if it is located in space and time.

C. B. Martin interprets Armstrong as advocating abstract totality facts. Martin would have no truck with abstract facts. He wants to account for negative truths by appeal to concrete, localized absences:

Absences are categorically different from Armstrong’s general states of affairs because absences are non-abstract, localized (ontically if not epistemically) spatio-

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Negative Truths

temporal states and Armstrong’s general factness entities concerning general facts or states of affairs are abstract and not spatio-temporal.\textsuperscript{87}

It is pretty clear that Martin’s primary motivation is the satisfaction of Localization. Here I think he succeeds. But in doing so he appears not to satisfy generalization. Martin does not offer much detail about his conception of absences, but he does tell us, “Absences only exclude what they are absences of from their spatio-temporal region.”\textsuperscript{88} The idea seems to be that the absence of light, say, is located where and only where there is no light. Thus far Martin’s conception of absences looks very much like Carleton’s conception of lacks. But then it is subject to the same criticism: a localized state of the world cannot make a negative existential true.

Stephen Barker and Mark Jago have proposed a new theory of negative facts. Their theory is sophisticated, and here I will only present the bare essentials. Barker and Jago postulate a primitive \textit{anti-instantiation} relation and say that particular negative facts are composed of concrete individuals, properties, and the anti-instantiation relation. For example, the fact that Socrates is not flying is composed of Socrates, the property of flying, and anti-instantiation. $[Fa]$ is a schematization of the fact that $a$ anti-instantiates $F$. Particular negative facts account for particular negative truths such as ‘Socrates is not flying’, but not for general or existential negative truths. To account for negative existentials, Barker and Jago posit the higher order property of \textit{being instantiated} and write $[In F]$ for the fact \textit{that $F$ is not instantiated}, which is the truthmaker for ‘There are no Fs’.\textsuperscript{89} For example, ‘There are no unicorns’ is made true by the fact that unicornhood anti-instantiate $\textit{instantiation}$ — or, in plain English, the fact that unicornhood does not have the property of being instantiated.

Barker and Jago agree that negative facts should be located in space and time:

\textsuperscript{87} Martin, “How It Is,” 59.
\textsuperscript{88} Martin, “How It Is,” 62.
\textsuperscript{89} Barker and Jago, “Being Positive About Negative Facts,” 127.
We view facts, including negative facts, as spatiotemporally located entities. Their spatiotemporal location is given by the spatiotemporal location of their concrete constituents.90 Barker and Jago illustrate the spatio-temporal location of their negative facts using several examples: the fact that Fred is not happy is located where Fred is located, and “the fact that the Eiffel Tower is not next to the Sydney Opera house is located at the discontinuous region occupied by the Eiffel Tower and the Sydney Opera house.”91 But these are both examples of particular negative facts. It is much harder to see how their general negative facts could be located in the right place. To see this, consider Barker and Jago’s own example, the fact that there is no hippo in a particular lake. Barker and Jago conceive of this fact as the fact that there are no lake-dwelling hippos, where lake-dwelling is presumably taken to be dwelling in the relevant particular lake. This fact can be schematized as, $\left[ \text{In}(\text{Being a lake-dwelling hippo}) \right]$. In other words, the fact that being a lake-dwelling hippo is not instantiated makes it true that there are no hippos in the lake. Now where is this fact located? According to Barker and Jago, it is located where its concrete constituents are located. The constituents of this fact are the instantiation relation and the property being a lake-dwelling hippo, and it is not obvious that either of these constituents is concrete. Being a lake-dwelling hippo certainly appears to be non-concrete, since it is not instantiated. If Barker and Jago want to maintain that the fact that there are no hippos in the lake is located, it seems they must claim that the instantiation relation is concrete, and that the fact that there are no hippos in the lake is located wherever the instantiation relation is located. According to Barker and Jago, the instantiation relation is a primitive relation that accounts for the unity of positive facts—it brings Socrates and being snub-nosed together to form the fact that Socrates is snub-nosed. So

perhaps Barker and Jago will want to maintain that \( \text{[In(Being a lake-dwelling hippo)]} \) is located wherever there is a positive fact. In that case, Barker and Jago’s negative facts are again in the wrong place. The fact that there is no hippo in the lake ought to be in the lake and only in the lake. But on their account it is either not located or it is located anywhere there is a fact. For instance, it is located here on my desk. Whatever motivation there is for saying that negative facts are located in space and time, that motivation seems ill-served by the claim that negative facts are located wherever any positive fact is located.

This concludes my survey of the main contenders for a theory of negative entities in the contemporary literature. If my arguments go through, the theories of Carleton and Martin can satisfy Localization but not Generalization; the theories of Armstrong and Barker and Jago can satisfy Generalization but not Localization. It is hard to see how any theory of negative entities could satisfy both desiderata. One option I have not explored is a hybrid theory combining, say, Barker and Jago’s negative facts with Carleton’s lacks. I think it’s fair to say, however, that such a hybrid theory would stretch the bounds of credulity.

5.2 Incompatibilism

If my objection to carentism is on the mark, carentism does not succeed in providing truthmakers for negative truths. While there may well be an alternative way to develop the hypothesis of negative entities in such a way as to satisfy both Localization and Generalization, in this section I want to consider another approach. A natural thought is to say that negative truths are made true by positive entities. I call this view ‘Incompatibilism’. Polizzi describes Incompatibilism as follows:

There are individual positive things with which contingent lacks are identified, which are opposed to the individual things of which they are lacks. Thus, the negation of light is identified with something positive that is opposed to and incompossible with light. The negation of Peter is identified with some other
positive thing, and the negation of Bucephalus is identified with another positive thing, and so on.\footnote{Polizzi, \textit{Siculi platiensis tomus tertius}, d. 50, s. 3, n. 39 p. 648: “Prima est cuiusdam innominati apud Giattinum in sua logica qu. 6 art. 2 fol. Mihi 265. Hic putavit dari singula positiva, cum quibus identificentur carentiae contingentes, quae sint opposita rebus singulis, quarum hae sunt carentiae, & sic negationem luminis identificari cum aliquo positivo opposito lumini, & incompossibili cum illo, cum alio vero positivo identificari negationem Petri, & cum alio negationem Bucephali, & sic de reliquis.” As Polizzi reports it, the view is supposed to be restricted to contingent lacks—i.e., lacks of contingent entities—but this restriction is not essential to Incompatibilism.}

Here Polizzi describes Incompatibilism as the claim that negative entities are identical to or reducible to positive entities. It is important to note that incompatibilists accept the need for negative entities based on the truthmaker arguments given above. Indeed, incompatibilist Silvestro Mauro argues, “There must be negations insofar as they are required to make negative propositions true.”\footnote{Mauro, \textit{Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus}, q. 49, n. 1, p. 197: “In tantum debenter dari [negationes] in quantum requiruntur ad verificandas propositiones negativas.” Cf. Pallavicino, \textit{In primam secundae tomus primus}, d. 3, q. 2, a. 5, n. 7, p. 92: “Nulla enim alia necessitas est ponendi negationes, nisi ad hoc ut detur & verificativum iudicii negantis.”} But Mauro goes on to identify negations with positive entities. Ultimately, the Incompatibilist view is that negative truths are made true by positive entities.

Although Incompatibilism is often discussed in the primary literature, it is difficult to find adherents in print. The most detailed account of Incompatibilism that I have found is given by Mauro.\footnote{My discussion is based on Mauro, \textit{Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus}, q. 49, pp. 197ff. According to Schmutz ("Réalistes", 168), Antonio Pérez was the primary defender of this view, but we do not have the texts in which Pérez deals with this question. Pallavicino attributes a voluntarist version of incompatibilism to Pérez in \textit{Disputationum in primam secundae}, d. 3, q. 2, a. 2, n. 1, p. 80. Peinado discusses Incompatibilism but does not mention Mauro in connection with it. Instead he says that the standard-bearer of the view is Antonio Pérez. Gaspar de Ribadineira apparently endorses the same opinion in \textit{manuscriptis}: “Stant pro hac sententia plures ex nostris RR [Recentiores] secuti Patrem Antonium Pérez, eandemque sententiam in manuscriptis illustrat P. Doct. Gasp. De Rivad. Magister meus” (Peinado, \textit{De gen.}, lib. 2, t. 2, d. 4, n. 5, p. 204.)} In this section I show how Mauro develops Incompatibilism by showing how he responds to (or would respond to) various objections old and new. Mauro’s version of Incompatibilism overcomes
some of the most popular objections to contemporary versions of the view, but as we shall see, it is ultimately untenable. In order to respond to an objection about the conditions of decree satisfaction, which I explain below, Mauro is forced to make a concession that puts him on a slippery slope to Nihilism.

Perhaps the most popular objection to Incompatibilism in the 17th century—as well as now—is that it undergenerates. It is often agreed that positive entities can account for what Raphael Demos, an early 20th-century advocate of Incompatibilism, calls “particular negative truths,” but it is also often alleged that Incompatibilism cannot account for what Demos calls “general negative truths.” For our purposes it will not be necessary to define particular versus general negative truths; it will be sufficient to give examples. It is plausible that the ball’s being green can make it true that the ball is not red, or that John’s being at the store can make it true that John is not at home. The trouble lies with negative existential propositions such as ‘Pegasus does not exist’. What positive item could account for the non-existence of Pegasus? In the spirit of this sort of worry, Polizzi finds it simply incredible that a positive entity could make it true that it is dark outside:

Contrary to common sense, this opinion multiplies positive entities. For who ever dreamed that the air is made dark at night time by something positive that excludes light and which the sun destroys at its coming?

And Giattini asks, “What positive thing can be incompatible with light in such a way that when it exists light does not exist in the air?” As we have seen, carentists posit the lack of light as a truthmaker for ‘It is dark outside’. But it is

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95 See “A Discussion of a Certain Type of Negative Proposition.”
96 Polizzi, *Siculi platiensis tomus tertius*, d. 50, s. 3, n. 50, p. 649: “Contra communem sensum haec [sententia] entia positiva multiplicant, quis enim unquam somniavi aerem noctis tempore constitui tenebrosam per terminum quemdam positivum exclusivum luminis, quem postea, sole adventante deperdat?”
97 Giattini, *Logica*, q. 6, a. 2, p. 260: “Quid enim positivum potest esse incompossibile cum lumine ita ut ad existentiam illius lumen non existat in aere?”
unclear what positive entity could make that and similar negative propositions true.

In order to solve this problem, Mauro distinguishes between necessary negative existentials and contingent negative existentials. According to Mauro, necessary truths require necessary truthmakers. The only necessary being is God, so God is the truthmaker for necessary negative truths. I will discuss Mauro’s view of necessary truths in greater detail in chapter seven, so I will set necessary truths aside for now.

Mauro claims that contingent negative existential truths are true from eternity, and therefore they require truthmakers that are both contingent and eternal. Only one sort of thing is contingent and eternal: divine decrees, which are contingent because they depend on God’s free choice and eternal because everything about God is eternal.

The view that divine decrees can serve as truthmakers—a view that I shall call “voluntarism”—was apparently common in the 17th century. As Polizzi reports, voluntarism is the view that

Contingent lacks are identified with divine decrees that exclude the contingent things of which they are lacks. Thus [voluntarists] say that the negation of the world, which existed from eternity, was nothing other than the decree by which God said, “I don’t want the world until a certain time.”

It is clear that voluntarism is a variety of incompatibilism, since divine decrees are positive entities that make negative truths true. Divine decrees are handy truthmakers because they necessitate truths: necessarily, if God says “Let there be no light,” then there is no light.

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98 Polizzi, *Siculi platiensis tomus tertius*, d. 50, s. 3, n. 41 p. 648: “Tertia sententia est quorumdam recentiorum quos ex parte sequitur Marus lib. 1 qq. Physephic [sic] qu. 49, dicto 3. Hi existimant carentias contingentes identificari cum decretis divinis exclusivis rerum contingentium, quorum sunt carentiae; unde dicunt negationem mundi quae ab aeterno exstitit, nihil aliud fusisse, quam decretum, quo Deus dixit: nolo mundum usque ad certum tempus; sic Ribadineira disput. 6 de scientia Dei num. 10 & alii apud Quiros in suo *cursu* disput. 107 sect. 1, nu. 4.” The Ribadineira passage cited here is not actually about voluntarism. In that passage, Ribadineira defends the view that God’s essence is the truthmaker for necessary negative truths.
**Excursus: Contemporary Objections**

Mauro’s version of Incompatibilism seems capable of accounting for negative existential truths. However, George Molnar and David Armstrong have each raised additional undergeneration worries. It will be worth investigating whether their undergeneration worries pose a problem for Mauro’s Voluntarist brand of Incompatibilism.

George Molnar raises as a counterexample to Incompatibilism the case of Marie, a particular radium atom, and the truth that Marie is not in a state of decay. According to current physics at any rate, “there seems to be no positive state of affairs existing at \( t \) that either logically or nomically excludes Marie’s being in a decay state at \( t \)”\(^{99}\)

In addition to Molnar’s counterexample, Armstrong calls our attention to an important difference between determinable and determinate properties.\(^{100}\) Length, color, and shape are determinables; five meters, scarlet, and square are determinates. Armstrong points out that Incompatibilism is successful when determinates are denied of something: the fact that the ball is green can be the truthmaker for ‘The ball is not scarlet’. But it is less clear that Incompatibilism can account for propositions denying determinables of something: what positive entity, Armstrong asks, can be the truthmaker for ‘This liquid is colorless’?

Mauro of course does not anticipate Molnar’s case of Marie the radium atom. Nor does he consider Armstrong’s counterexample of determinable properties. However, I do not think that Molnar’s and Armstrong’s objections are conclusive, and I think we can offer a response on Mauro’s behalf.

Molnar’s objection from the physics of radioactive decay mistakenly presupposes that the truthmaker relation is causal or nomic. The fact that in

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\(^{99}\) Molnar, “Truthmakers for Negative Truths,” 75.

\(^{100}\) Armstrong, *Truth and Truthmakers*, 63.
current physics there is no state that “nomically entails” that Marie is not in a decay state is irrelevant to the question whether ‘Marie is not in a decay state’ has a truthmaker or not, since the truthmaker relation is not a relation of nomic entailment. Moreover, I can think of at least one state of affairs that logically entails that Marie is not in a decay state: Marie’s being in a stable state. Molnar does not argue that there is no such state. Further, if divine decrees are available as truthmakers for negative truths, Mauro could maintain that God’s decree that Marie not be in a decay state makes it true that Marie is not in a decay state.

Armstrong claims that Incompatibilism triumphs when it comes to determinates, but it fails when it comes to determinables. But in fact determinables do not present a special problem for Incompatibilism. If numbers or angels exist, they are colorless because they are by nature immaterial. If the number two and the angel Gabriel are essentially immaterial, then the number two itself and Gabriel himself might be be truthmakers for ‘The number two is colorless’ and ‘Gabriel is colorless’. Moreover, if Liquid X is in fact colorless, it seems plausible that Liquid X’s lack of color is due to Liquid X’s microphysical structure. In general, perhaps determinable properties of physical items are reducible to the microphysical properties of those items.

According to Armstrong, this sort of defense reveals a deeper problem with Incompatibilism:

The trouble with [Incompatibilism] is that its truth or falsity seems to depend far too much on the way that the world happens to be. Should not our account of negation, an all-pervasive and fundamental feature of our thought and discourse, be such as to demand truthmakers that do not depend upon the particular way that the world happens to be?101

It is hard to feel the force of this objection. It is, first of all, not entirely clear what the objection is. On one reading, Armstrong thinks that our account of negation ought to be independent of how the world is. But charity demands another

101 Armstrong, Truth and Truthmakers, 63.
Negative Truths

reading. Metaphysical theories are accounts of how the world is, so it would be strange to demand that our metaphysical theories ought to float free from how the world is - doubly strange coming from a truthmaker theorist who claims that all true propositions depend on how the world is. More likely, then, Armstrong intends to emphasize the contingency suggested by the words, “how the world happens to be”. So perhaps the thought is that metaphysical theories are necessarily true if true at all, and so should not depend on contingent matters of fact.

Now, it is not obvious that metaphysical theories are necessarily true if true at all (perhaps some worlds are deterministic, others not), but I will grant that for the sake of argument. Still, Armstrong’s objection faces a dilemma. The defense of Incompatibilism that I have proposed relies on the metaphysical theory that determinables are reducible to microphysical properties. If metaphysical theories are necessarily true (if true at all), then the proposed defense of Incompatibilism relies not on a contingent matter of fact but on a necessarily true (if true) metaphysical theory that determinable properties are reducible to microphysical properties. It is therefore not the case that Incompatibilism depends on the way the world happens to be, if by “the way the world happens to be” Armstrong means the way the world contingently is. On the other hand, if metaphysical theories can be contingently true, then there is no reason to think that they ought not depend on contingent truths. Armstrong therefore presents no cogent reason to reject Incompatibilism.

Where does this leave us? According to Mauro’s brand of Incompatibilism, divine decrees are truthmakers for contingent negative truths that are true from eternity, including negative existential truths. Contingent negative truths that are not true from eternity, such as ‘This liquid is colorless’, are made true by positive entities other than divine decrees. Molnar and Armstrong argue that Incompatibilism undergenerates in principle. But I have argued that the oft-
repeated counterexamples to Incompatibilism are unpersuasive, and Mauro’s brand of incompatibilism seems to dodge the undergeneration worries.

**End Excursus**

It seems that Mauro’s voluntarist brand of Incompatibilism is capable of answering popular undergeneration objections. However, early modern scholastics raised effective objections against voluntarism itself.\(^{102}\) Here I want to focus on two objections. In my view, neither of the objections is knock-down, but the first reveals one commitment of voluntarism, and the second puts pressure on the Incompatibilist who endorses voluntarism to accept Nihilism.

Opponents of voluntarism allege that voluntarism assigns the wrong content to negative propositions.\(^{103}\) As we saw in chapters three and four, true propositions are supposed to be about their truthmakers. Opponents complain that voluntarism does not satisfy this aboutness constraint. Intuitively, ‘Peter does not exist’ is not about a divine decree, contrary to the voluntarist brand of Incompatibilism. Mauro addresses this objection in his treatment of the eternal truths, so I shall put off his solution until chapter seven.

Opponents also raise what I call ‘satisfaction arguments’ against voluntarism. If I issue a decree that you shut the door, my decree is satisfied if and only if you shut the door. Unless my decree is about itself (‘Let this decree exist!’), the satisfaction of my decree depends on conditions outside the decree itself. As Giattini says, if God decrees, “Let the sun not exist,” then “certainly the divine nolition essentially requires outside of itself the non-being of the sun. We

\(^{102}\) Cf. Polizzi, *Siculi platiensis tomus tertius*, d. 50, s. 5, pp. 652-662; Giattini, *Logica*, q. 6, a. 2, pp. 261-265; Quirós, *Opus philosophicum*, d. 46, nn. 10-12, p. 276; Peinado, *De generatione et corruptione*, lib. 1, t. 2, d. 4, n. 4, p. 203. These philosophers raise many interesting arguments against voluntarism, but I cannot discuss them all here.

\(^{103}\) For an explicit statement of this objection, see Anonymous, *Disputatio de obiecto et verificativo propositionum*, f. 218r. I take it this is also the point of Giattini’s thought experiment with the blind Angel in *Logica*, q. 6, a. 2, p. 262; cf. Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 3, s. 2.4, n. 32, p. 265.
commonly call this the negation of the sun.”104 In ordinary cases there must be something, not the divine decree itself, that satisfies the decree. It is natural to say, as Giattini does, that the lack of the sun satisfies God’s decree that there be no sun. The lack of the sun, moreover, is not identical to God’s decree that there be no sun; otherwise, God’s decree would satisfy itself.

The satisfaction argument is exactly analogous to the original truthmaker argument. To see this, recall the analysis of truth that motivates the standard account of truthmaking:

**The standard analysis of truth:** For a proposition ‘p’ to be true is for ‘p’ to exist and for the adequate intentional object of ‘p’ to exist.

The satisfaction argument presupposes a similar analysis of decree-satisfaction:

**Decree Satisfaction:** For the decree that p to be satisfied is for the adequate object of ‘p’ to exist.

For example, the object of God’s decree that there be no light is the lack of light. So God’s decree that there be no light is satisfied if and only if there is a lack of light. According to Mauro, lacks generally are identical to divine decrees. It follows from Decree Satisfaction that the decree that there be no light is satisfied by itself. But opponents charge that this seems wrong. Since the decree is apparently not about itself, it cannot be satisfied by itself. If per impossibile God decrees that there be no light, and there is light nonetheless, then God’s decree would not be satisfied.

In response, Mauro rejects Decree Satisfaction. In order to motivate his rejection of Decree Satisfaction, he draws our attention to the difference between

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104 Giattini, *Logica*, q. 6, a. 2, p. 262: “Certe nolitio divina essentialiter exigit extra se non esse solem, quod communiter appellamus negationem solis.”
volition and nolition. The term ‘volition’ comes from the Latin ‘volo’, ‘I want’. Latin also has a verb that English does not have, ‘nolo’, which is best translated ‘I want-not.’ If a volition is an act of willing, we can say that a nolition is an act of unwilling.) According to Mauro, volitions and nolitions are distinct kinds of mental states that can share an object, much like love and hate are distinct kinds of mental states that can share an object. Hence, the volition expressed by the decree, ‘Let Peter exist’, is about Peter, and the nolition expressed by ‘Let Peter not exist’ is also about Peter; the volition and nolition differ not according to object but only according to their “modus tendendi”. A “modus tendendi” is literally a way of intending or aiming at an intentional object. 17th-century terminology for the modus tendendi was somewhat fluid. One may also find in the literature phrases like modus tenendi—literally, a way of holding—and modus repraesentandi—a mode of representing. These are terminological variants meant to pick out what I will call an “intentional mode”. The important point is that many early modern scholastics recognize a distinction between intentional objects and the way in which we think about intentional objects—intentional modes. One particularly helpful example of this distinction comes from Francisco Peinado. He says that love and hate are different intentional modes. Love and hate are object-directed—they are mental states with intentional objects—but they cannot be differentiated based on their objects, since love and hate can share an object. Peinado concludes that love and hate differ “ex modo tendendi”—they have different intentional modes. In the 17th-century there are many debates about how much work the notion of an intentional mode can do. As we shall see, the notion of an intentional mode plays a central role in Francisco Peinado’s theory of truthmaking. There was also a debate about whether volition and

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105 The relevant passage is in Mauro, Qvaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus, q. 49, pp. 213-215.
nolition differ according to their objects or according to their intentional modes. Mauro claims that they differ according to intentional mode.\textsuperscript{106}

Decree Satisfaction assumes that every divine decree is a volition. But according to Mauro, the decrees responsible for the non-existence of things are nolitions. The upshot of this claim is that the object of the nolition expressed by ‘Let Peter not exist!’ is not the lack of Peter but Peter himself. Clearly, a nolition with respect to an object $x$ is not satisfied if $x$ exists. This shows that nolitions provide counter-examples to Decree Satisfaction. Since the satisfaction argument relies on Decree Satisfaction, which is not generally true, the argument is unsound.

As we will see in the next section, Mauro’s response to the satisfaction argument is exactly analogous to the view defended by nihilists. If Mauro’s response to the satisfaction argument is a good one, and if it is structurally identical to the position taken by nihilists, one wonders whether it is not better to be a nihilist in the first place. After explaining the nihilist position, it will become clear how it is analogous to Mauro’s defense of Incompatibilism. I will return to the evaluation of Mauro’s rejection of Decree Satisfaction below.

### 5.3 Nihilism

17\textsuperscript{th}-century nihilists claim that negative truths do not have truthmakers “in a positive sense”. I will explain this claim in greater detail below. Nihilism was developed in great detail by Francisco Peinado, who taught at the University of Alcalá, and it was further developed by his junior colleague at Alcalá, Juan de Ulloa Madritano. In this section I focus primarily on the accounts of Peinado and Madritano, beginning with Peinado. Peinado’s account of truthmaking generally is distinctive and philosophically very interesting. I will explain Peinado’s

\textsuperscript{106} For more on this debate, see, Lugo, \textit{Disputationes scholasticae et morales de virtute et sacramento poenitentiae}, d. 1, s. 2, pp., 3ff; Arriaga, \textit{Cursus philosophicus}, De anima, d. 7, s. 1, ss. 1, nn. 1-4, p. 664.
account over the course of this and the next two chapters, where I discuss
truthmakers for tensed truths and modal truths. Before turning to Peinado’s
view of truthmakers for negative truths, however, it will be useful to begin with
a preliminary discussion of Peinado’s theory of truth.

5.3.1 Peinado’s Theory of Truth: A First Pass
Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza created a lively controversy in the 17th century when
he maintained that truth is identical to a true proposition and that any given true
proposition could not have failed to be true. In Disputation V of his commentary
on De anima, Peinado addresses the ensuing controversy. After repeating the
standard slogan about truth being conformity, he writes, “About the physical
constituents [de constitutivis physicis] of truth there is a famous question and
difficulty—namely, with what is that conformity and similarity identified? With
the act alone? Or with the act and the object? Or with something distinct from
both the act and the object?” \(^{107}\) The question here is the question addressed
already in chapter three. As we saw there, a prevalent answer to this question is
that truth consists in a true proposition and its intentional object. This is the view
that Peinado endorses:

The more common opinion teaches that the formal truth of any act about any object
is entirely identified with the act and its object, and it is partially \([\text{inadaequate}]\)
identified with either of them. This is the opinion of Oviedo […] Arriaga […]
Izquierdo […] Quiros […] and nearly all the Jesuits \([\text{omnes nostri}]\) who follow the
Doctor Eximius \([\text{Suárez}]\).\(^{108}\)

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\(^{107}\) Peinado, De anima, lib. 2, d. 5, s. 1, n. 2, p. 326-327: “De constitutivis physicis veritatis est
celebris quaestio, & difficultas, cum quonam scilicet ea conformitas & similitudo identificetur?
An cum solo actu? An cum actu & objecto? An cum aliquo distincto ab utroque?”

\(^{108}\) Peinado, De anima, lib. 2, d. 5, s. 1, n. 10, p. 331: “Communior sententia docet veritatem
formalem cuiuscumque actus circa quodvis objectum aдаequate identificari cum actu & objecto,
& inadaequate cum quolibet horum. Ita P. Oviedo controversia 7 de Anima punct 1 §3, Arriaga
disp. 14 Logicae, Izquierdo in Pharo disp. 3, sect. 1, Quiros disp. 99 & ferre omnes nostri sequutti
Peinado goes on to endorse the view described here, which he explicitly attributes to both Arriaga and Oviedo. I argued in chapter three that, according to the view in question, truth is the mereological sum of a true proposition and its intentional object. This interpretation receives some support from Peinado’s presentation of the view. For he initially raises the question as a question about the constituents, which we can understand as parts, of truth. He then states that truth is identical to a true proposition (act) and its object, which makes sense on the supposition that truth is a mereological sum of a true proposition and its object. In a later passage Peinado invokes the idea of parthood again, saying “The object of any act is a partial constituent [constitutivum inadaequatum] of truth.”\footnote{Peinado, \textit{De anima}, lib. 2, d. 5, s. 3, n. 23, p. 338: “Veritas formalis ciuslibet actus identificatur cum actu & objecto aadequate.”} In another passage he says that truth is a “complex” and speaks of the “parts” of truth.\footnote{Peinado, \textit{Phys.}, lib. 2, d. 7, s. 1, subs. 2, nn. 27-28, p. 184.}

As I argued in chapter three, the composite theory of truth entails the standard analysis of truth:

\textbf{The standard analysis of truth:} For a proposition ‘p’ to be true is for ‘p’ to exist and for the adequate intentional object of ‘p’ to exist.

Although Peinado never explicitly endorses the standard analysis of truth, he often comes close. For example, he says, “Any act that is essentially connected to the existence of its object is essentially determined to truth. Therefore it is essentially true.”\footnote{Peinado, \textit{De anima}, lib. 2, d. 5, s. 3, n. 21, p. 337: “Quilibet actus essentialiter connexus cum existentia objecti est essentialiter determinatus ad veritatem. Ergo est essentialiter verus.”} The idea in this passage seems to be that any act that is essentially such that its object exists is essentially true. This claim would make sense if Peinado thought that what it is for a proposition to be true is for its object to exist. Moreover, Peinado often uses as an example of a true proposition ‘Peter Eximium Doctorem disp. 8 Metaphysicae.” See also \textit{De anima}, lib. 2, d. 5, s. 3, n. 23, p. 338: “Veritas formalis ciuslibet actus identificatur cum actu & objecto aadequate.”}
runs’, and he speaks as if ‘Peter runs’ is true if and only if Peter’s running exists.\textsuperscript{112}

As a first pass, then, we can say that Peinado aligns himself with the composite view of truth discussed in chapter three. As we have seen, the composite view of truth entails that every truth has a truthmaker. Peinado agrees that every truth has a truthmaker, but his interpretation of this claim is far from standard. As we shall see, the above characterization of Peinado’s view of truth is a first pass only, and it needs to be revised in light of his distinctive account of truthmaking for negative, tensed, and modal truths.

5.3.2 Peinado on Negative Truths

Peinado discusses truthmakers for negative truths at length in two places: first, in a disputation on lacks, and second, in a section of a disputation on operations of the intellect.\textsuperscript{113} The fact that Peinado’s theory of truthmaking for negative truths shows up in a disputation on operations of the intellect is telling. As we will see, his theories of judgment and truthmaking are of a piece.

Peinado expresses his view on truthmakers for negative truths in puzzling ways. He says, for instance:

\begin{quote}
The truthmaker for the negative act, ‘Peter does not exist’, is Peter negatively represented by that act. Say the same thing about any other negative act.\textsuperscript{114}
\end{quote}

Here Peinado suggests that negative truths have truthmakers: the truthmaker for ‘Peter does not exist’ is “Peter negatively represented.” But it is not clear what

\textsuperscript{112} De anima, lib. 2, d. 5, s. 2, n. 11, p. 331: “Veritas formalis actus naturalis de objecto contingenti non identificatur cum actu solo, sed cum actu & objecto. Probatur 1. Veritas formalis huius actus Petrus currit connectitur cum cursu Petri; sed hic actus non connectitur cum cursu Petri.” De anima, lib 2, d. 5, s. 2, n. 14, p. 334: “Licet [the proposition that Peter is running] intrinsece affirmet cursum Petri, non tamen intrinsece habet, quod cursus in re sit.”

\textsuperscript{113} The disputation on lacks is in De generatione et corruptione, lib. 1, t. 2, d. 4. The section on truthmakers for negative truths is in De anima, lib. 2, d. 3, s. 2.4.

\textsuperscript{114} Peinado, De anima, lib. 2, d. 3, s. 2.4, n. 32, p. 266: “Verificativum huius actus negativi Petrus non existit (idem dicitio de quovis alio) esse Petrum negative repraesentatum per hunc actum.”
“Peter negatively represented” amounts to. Peinado is no less puzzling in other passages:

The formal truthmaker of an affirmative proposition is the existence affirmed. Therefore, the formal truthmaker of a negative proposition is nothing other than the existence denied.\textsuperscript{115}

So the existence that exists in instant A makes true this act: ‘Peter exists in A’. The same [existence] not existing in B makes true this act: ‘Peter does not exist in B’.\textsuperscript{116}

In these passages, Peinado suggests that what makes it true that Peter does not exist is the existence of Peter. But this seems to embody a deep confusion about the nature of truthmaking. If Peter does not exist, how can his existence make it true that he does not exist?

Faced with such objections, Peinado offers some clarification:

When we say, “A non-existent object makes-true a negative proposition,” by this act we take the object negatively, since it is the same as to say, “The object does not exist, and the proposition says that and nothing else.”\textsuperscript{117}

From this passage it is clear that to take or represent an object negatively is just to say that it does not exist, and to say that a non-existent object makes true a negative proposition is just to say that the object does not exist, and the proposition says that it does not exist. So all Peinado’s puzzling remarks amount

\textsuperscript{115}Peinado, \textit{De anima}, lib. 2, d. 3, s. 2.4, n. 34, p. 266: “Verificativum formale propositionis affirmativae est existentia affirmata: ergo nihil aliud est verificativum formale propositionis negativae, nisi existentia negata.”

\textsuperscript{116} Peinado, \textit{De anima}, lib. 2, d. 3, s. 2.4, n. 35, p. 266-267: “Itaque existentia (idem dic de quovis alio objecto) quae existens in instanti A verificat hunc actum: \textit{Petrus existit in A}; eadem non existens in B verificat hunc actum: \textit{Petrus non existit in B}.”

\textsuperscript{117} Peinado, \textit{De anima}, lib. 2, d. 3, s. 2.4, n. 37, p. 268: “Quando dicimus: \textit{Objectum non existens verificat propositionem negativam}, hoc ipso actu summimus negative objectum, quia idem est ac dicere: \textit{Objectum non existit & propositio id & non aliud dicit.”} Cf. in the same place (n. 37, p. 267): “Quando dicimus, propositionem negativam esse veram […] aequivalet enim illa propositio huic: \textit{Objectum non existit, & existens est actus id dicens}.”
to something straightforward: ‘Peter does not exist’ is true if and only if Peter does not exist.\(^{118}\)

My reading of Peinado is corroborated by his response to the following argument for the existence of a truthmaker for negative truths:

When this act [‘The Antichrist does not exist’] is true, its truthmaker exists, for it is denominated ‘true’ from its truthmaker. But when this true act exists, the Antichrist does not exist. Therefore something else exists, which is its truthmaker.\(^{119}\)

This is an objection to Peinado’s claim that the Antichrist is the truthmaker for ‘The Antichrist does not exist’. The argument may be formalized as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
(1) & \text{ ‘The Antichrist does not exist’ is true.} \\
(2) & \text{When a proposition is true, its truthmaker exists.} \\
(3) & \text{The Antichrist does not exist.} \\
(4) & \text{Therefore, the Antichrist is not the truthmaker for ‘The Antichrist does not exist’.}
\end{align*}
\]

Peinado responds by rejecting the second premise. He explains: “That is to say, for a negative act to be true now is for the act to exist now and for its object not to exist, since the act says that its object does not exist.”\(^{120}\) Peinado’s response to this argument therefore supports my reading of Peinado’s puzzling remarks above. When Peinado says, for example, “The truthmaker for the negative act, ‘Peter does not exist’, is Peter negatively represented by that act,” he means simply that

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\(^{118}\) Peinado, *De generatione et corruptione*, lib. 1, t. 2, d. 4, s. 4, n. 38, p. 217: “Ratio est quia, ut haec propositio, *Petrus non existit* sit modo vera requiritur quod Petrus non existat modo; si enim modo existeret Petrus falsa esset propositio.”

\(^{119}\) Peinado, *De generatione et corruptione*, lib. 1, t. 2, d. 4, s. 5, n. 55, p. 224: “Quando hic actus [*Antichristus non existit*] est verus, datur eius verificativum. Nam a verificativo denominatur verus; sed quando datur hic actus verus non datur Anti Christus. Ergo aliquid aliud, quod sit eius verificativum.”

\(^{120}\) Peinado, *De generatione et corruptione*, lib. 1, t. 2, d. 4, s. 5, n. 55, p. 224: “Est dicere, esse verum nunc actum negativum est esse actum nunc, & objectum nunc non esse: quia actus enuntiat objectum suum nunc non dari.”
‘Peter does not exist’ is true if and only if Peter does not exist. The idea seems to be that Peter, by not existing, in some sense makes it true that Peter does not exist. As Peinado writes elsewhere,

In order for ‘Peter does not exist’ to be true now, it is required that Peter not exist now. For if Peter did exist now, that proposition would be false. But the truthmaker for that proposition is Peter, since Peter alone is its object. Therefore a negative proposition is made true by an object and truthmaker that does not exist.\textsuperscript{121}

Peinado’s followers developed terminology designed to make his view easier to express. Juan de Ulloa Madritano (1639-1723), Peinado’s junior colleague in Alcalá, introduces a distinction between truthmakers “in the positive sense” and truthmakers “in the negative sense”. He explains “truthmaker in the positive sense” as follows:

The truthmaker of any act in the positive sense is that which the act is about \textit{[atingitur per actum]}, and additionally is such that when it exists, in proportion to the intentional mode, the act is true, and when it is absent, the act is false.\textsuperscript{122}

I will return to the point about the intentional mode shortly; for now we may set that notion aside. The point I wish to draw attention to is that for Madritano, a truthmaker T in the positive sense for a proposition ‘p’ is something that (i) ‘p’ is about and (ii) is such that ‘p’ is true if and only if T exists. A truthmaker in the positive sense is therefore simply what we have been calling a truthmaker all along.

By way of contrast, here is Madritano’s explanation of “truthmaker in the negative sense”:

\textsuperscript{121} Peinado, \textit{De generatione et corruptione}, lib. 1, t. 2, d. 4, s. 4, n. 38, p. 217: “Ut haec propositio \textit{Petrus non existit} sit modo vera, requiritur quod Petrus non existat modo; si enim modo existeret Petrus falsa esset propositio; sed verificativum huius propositionis est Petrus, siquidem solus Petrus est eius objectum; ergo propositio negativa verificatur ab objecto, & verificativo non existente.”

\textsuperscript{122} Madritano, \textit{Prodromus}, d. 7, ch. 7, n. 53, p. 776: “Verificativum cuiusvis actus, quod tale sit in sensu positivo, est illud quod attingitur per actum, & insuper est tale ut ipso existente, proportionate ad modum tenendi, actus hic est verus, & ipso absente, est falsus.”
Truth and Truthmaking in 17th-Century Scholasticism

A truthmaker in the negative sense I call that which the act is about and is such that, with it not existing the act is true. Notice the difference here with truthmaker in the positive sense.123

Madritano explains that a truthmaker in the negative sense T for a proposition ‘p’ is something that (i) ‘p’ is about, and (ii) such that ‘p’ is true if and only if T does not exist.

Madritano’s introduction of the distinction between a truthmaker in the positive sense and in the negative sense allows him to express Peinado’s view more efficiently. Madritano repeatedly tells us that negative truths do not have truthmakers in the positive sense,124 yet they do have truthmakers in the negative sense. For example, the proposition,

(P) ‘Peter does not exist’,

is made true in the negative sense by Peter, since (P) is about Peter and is true if and only if Peter does not exist. So Madritano’s new terminology allows him to say, with Peinado, that (P) is made true (in the negative sense) by Peter. But the upshot of the view is that negative truths do not have truthmakers in the positive sense. Madritano’s view is nicely summarized in the following passage:

You will say, so what is required for a negative proposition to be true? I respond that nothing is required in the positive sense, since negative propositions are not of the sort that strictly and properly require anything in order to be true; rather, they are of the sort whose truth is precisely prevented by something—namely, by the existence of their object.125

123 Madritano, Prodromus, d. 7, ch. 7, n. 54, p. 777: “Verificativum in sensu negativo voco illud quod attingitur per actum, & est tale ut ipso non existente (ecce distinctionem a verificativo in sensu positivo) actus sit verus.”
Hence, Madritano’s view, and Peinado’s, is that negative truths do not require anything for their truth. Using the standard terminology, we would say that Peinado’s view is that negative truths do not have truthmakers. Using Madritano’s terminology, we would say that negative truths have truthmakers in the negative sense but not in the positive sense. This amounts to the claim that negative truths are such that they are true if and only if their objects do not exist. I will preserve Madritano’s terminology in explicating Peinado’s view because the claim that a negative truth is true just in case its object does not exist is more precise than the claim that negative truths do not have truthmakers.

We saw in chapter four that the composite theory of truth entails a fully general truthmaker principle: every truth has a truthmaker. As far as we have seen, Peinado agrees, but he does not understand truthmakers as things that make a proposition true by existing. In order to make this difference clear, it will be useful to provide an explicit statement of Peinado’s truthmaker principle. Let an atomic proposition be any proposition free of logical connectives and sentential operators. Let a molecular proposition be any proposition built out of one or more atomic propositions, logical connectives, or sentential operators. By definition, a negative proposition is molecular. For simplicity I want to focus for now only on atomic propositions and their negations, and I will use the term ‘negative proposition’ strictly for the negation of an atomic proposition. We can now state Peinado’s truthmaker principle. I will call it the ‘hybrid truthmaker principle’ because it admits truthmakers in both the positive and negative sense. As a first pass, we can state Peinado’s truthmaker principle as follows:

**Peinado’s hybrid truthmaker principle**: Atomic propositions have truthmakers in the positive sense. Negative propositions have truthmakers in the negative sense.

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sunt ex eis qae stricte ac proprie requirunt aliquid, ut verae sint; sed ex eis quarum veritati officit praeceise aliquid, nimirum existentia sui objecti.”
This is a first pass statement because it omits an important part of Peinado’s account of negative truths—namely, that negative truths do not have truthmakers in the positive sense. I introduce and motivate this amendment below. First, however, I want to show why Peinado endorses the hybrid truthmaker principle as stated. Then it will be easier to explain his motivation for the amendment.

5.3.3 Motivating Peinado’s Truthmaker Principle: The Intentional Mode View Of Affirmation And Negation

Peinado’s truthmaker principle is motivated by an analysis of truth that is motivated in turn by Peinado’s theory of truth-bearers. I’ll begin with his theory of truth-bearers. There was an early modern scholastic debate about how contradictory propositions differ. Obviously, propositions of the form ‘p’ and ‘¬p’ are distinct propositions. But what explains their difference? Some philosophers maintained that ‘p’ and ‘¬p’ differ because they have different intentional objects. For example, ‘Peter exists’ is about Peter, while ‘Peter does not exist’ is about the lack of Peter. This sort of view tends to be endorsed by carentists and incompatibilists, including Giattini, Carleton, Polizzi, and Mauro. Others, however, maintain that contradictory propositions are about the same thing, but they differ according to their intentional mode. The idea is that affirmation and negation are distinct ways of thinking about intentional objects.

Carleton, *Philosophia universa*, Logic, d. 18, s. 5, nn. 2-3, p. 84; Polizzi, *Siculi platiensis tomus tertius*, d. 50, s. 9, pp. 668ff. Peinado cites “Oviedo, controv. 12” for the *modus tenendi* view, but I have not been able to find the relevant locus.

See, for example, Izquierdo, *Pharus scientiarum*, d. 2, q. 4, n. 171, p. 83; d. 2, q. 4, prop. 4, pp. 89ff; Lugo, *Disputationes scholasticae et morales, de virtute et sacramento poenitentiae*, d. 1, s. 3, nn. 13-14, pp. 3-4; nn. 17-25, pp. 4-5. Russell discusses a contemporary version of the *modus tenendi* view in *Human Knowledge*, 124-126, and Soames appears to endorse this view in “Cognitive Propositions,” 99.
Negative Truths

Some early modern scholastics use intentional modes to account for the role of logical connectives in mental propositions. The idea is that logical connectives do not represent – do not have intentional objects – but are the mind’s logical operations on intentional objects. Luis de Losada explains,

In conditional acts, copulative acts, and disjunctive or vague acts, the particles ‘if’, ‘and’, and ‘or’ do not represent some conditionality, copulation, or disjunction or vagueness on the part of the object; they merely indicate a certain mode of representing. The same thing must be said about the particle ‘not’ in negative acts.\(^{128}\)

On the view Losada here reports, the disjunction ‘Peter is talking or Paul is talking’ is not about a disjunctive state of affairs, but it is about both Peter’s talking and Paul’s talking. ‘Or’ corresponds to a certain mental operation on those objects.\(^{129}\) And as Losada indicates, some philosophers apply this view of the logical connectives to affirmation and negation. Peinado is one such philosopher. His idea is that ‘p’ and ‘¬p’ differ not according to their intentional objects but according to their intentional modes.\(^{130}\) Peinado illustrates his view with the examples of love and hate.\(^{131}\) I might change from loving Obama to hating Obama without changing the object of my affections because love and hate are different ways of being cognitively related to objects. Similarly,

\(^{128}\) Cursus philosophici tertia pars, Metaphysics, d. 4, ch. 3, s. 29: “Sicut in actibus conditionatis, copulativis, & disjunctivis, aut vagis, particulae si, &, vel, non repraesentant ex parte objecti conditionalitatem, copulationem, disjunctionem, aut vaguitatem aliquam, sed indicant solum peculiarem repraesentandi modum; ita sententiendum de particula non in negativis.”

\(^{129}\) Peinado agrees that logical connectives are non-representational intentional modes: “Item copulativa haec: Petrus currit, & Joannes audit, & haec disjuntiva: Vel Joannes audit, vel Petrus currit, quarum una potest esse vera, & altera falsa, non ex diversitate objecti; sed ex diverso modo illud enuntiandi” (De anima, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 1, n. 4, p. 365).


\(^{131}\) Peinado, De anima, lib. 2, d. 3, s. 2,3, n. 27, p. 263.
affirmation and negation are different ways of being cognitively related to objects, and contradictory propositions have the same intentional object. I will call Peinado’s view of affirmation and negation the ‘intentional mode view’ of affirmation and negation.\textsuperscript{132}

Return now to the analysis of truth that, I argued, follows from the composite view of truth:

**The standard analysis of truth:** For a proposition ‘p’ to be true is for ‘p’ to exist and for the adequate intentional object of ‘p’ to exist.

We can now see that this analysis of truth is not available to Peinado. This is clear if we consider an example. According to the intentional mode view of negation, ‘Peter does not exist’ is about Peter. Pairing the standard analysis with the intentional mode view of negation, one arrives at the conclusion that ‘Peter does not exist’ is true if and only if Peter exists, which is obviously incorrect. In order to accommodate his view of negation, Peinado therefore must modify the standard analysis with respect to negative truths, and this is precisely what he does. As we have already seen, he gives the following analysis of truth with respect to negative propositions: “For a negative act to be true now is for the act to exist now and for its object not to exist, since the act says that its object does not exist.”\textsuperscript{133} In light of this passage, it seems that Peinado gives distinct analyses of truth for positive and negative propositions, as follows (keeping implicit the condition concerning the existence of a truth-bearer):

\textsuperscript{132} Here a question arises as to how to treat iterated negations of the form ‘\neg\neg p’. Peinado does not address this question, but a natural suggestion is to say that ‘\neg\neg p’ is a second order negative *modus tenendi* whose intentional object is the first order negative *modus tenendi*, which is aimed at the object of ‘p’. If I love my love of cigarets, then I have a second order love for a first order love of cigarets; similarly, if I deny that \neg p, then I have a second order denial of the first order denial that p. For a similar view, see Soames, “Cognitive Propositions,” 98-99.

\textsuperscript{133} Peinado, *De generatione et corruptione*, lib. 1, t. s, d. 4, s. 5, n. 55, p. 224: “Est dicere, esse verum nunc actum negativum est esse actum nunc, & objectum nunc non esse: quia actus enuntiat objectum suum nunc non dari.”
**Positive Truth:** For a positive proposition to be true is for its object to exist.

**Negative Truth:** For a negative proposition to be true is for its object not to exist.\(^{134}\)

Given the above definition of ‘truthmaker in the positive sense’ above (a truthmaker in the positive sense \(T\) for a proposition ‘\(p\)’ is something that (i) ‘\(p\)’ is about and (ii) is such that ‘\(p\)’ is true if and only if \(T\) exists), Positive Truth entails that positive truths have truthmakers in the positive sense. And given the above definition of ‘truthmaker in the negative sense’ (a truthmaker in the negative sense \(T\) for a proposition ‘\(p\)’ is something that (i) ‘\(p\)’ is about, and (ii) is such that ‘\(p\)’ is true if and only if \(T\) does not exist), Negative Truth entails that negative truths have truthmakers in the negative sense. Peinado’s analyses of truth for positive and negative truths therefore entail his hybrid truthmaker principle, and his analyses are in turn motivated by his intentional mode view of affirmation and negation.

The foregoing raises several questions about Peinado’s theory of truth: Can he provide a unified analysis of truth? How can he reconcile his analysis of truth for negative truths with his composite theory of truth? Before addressing these questions, I want to modify his truthmaker principle in light of a further, important point.

As we have seen, Peinado thinks that negative truths have truthmakers in the negative sense. But he also thinks that negative truths do not have truthmakers in the positive sense. This is one of Peinado’s primary contentions in his disputation on truthmakers for negative truths. Peinado considers an objection according to which, “The proposition ‘Peter does not exist’ requires some truthmaker that exists now.” Peinado simply denies this claim. And although the objection focuses on a single proposition, ‘Peter does not exist’, it is supposed to challenge Peinado’s claim that negative truths generally do not have existing truthmakers. Peinado’s claim that negative truths do not have existing truthmakers is philosophically important because it amounts to a restriction of the truthmaker principle: only positive truths have truthmakers in the positive sense. Because this is an important part of Peinado’s view that is not entailed by the foregoing, it needs motivation.

Peinado motivates the claim that negative truths do not have truthmakers in the positive sense by way of his intentional mode view of negation and what I call ‘the aboutness constraint on truthmaking’. The aboutness constraint on truthmaking says that no truth is made true by something that the truth is not about. Peinado endorses the aboutness constraint in the following passage:

It seems well known that no internal or external speech and no act of the intellect is rendered true by something that it does not say, by an object that it does not represent. For who would say that this act, Peter runs, is formally made true by the

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135 Peinado, De Anima, lib. 2, d. 3, s. 2, subs. 4, n. 39, p. 269: “Haec propositio Petrus non existit requirit aliquod verificativum modo existens [...]”

136 Peinado unfortunately does not explicitly state that negative truths generally do not have existing truthmakers, but it is unmistakable that this is his view.
existence of God or by any other entity distinct from the running of Peter, which the act represents.\textsuperscript{137}

We can see why Peinado’s intentional mode view of negation, together with the aboutness constraint, entails that negative truths do not have truthmakers in the positive sense. In an argument against Incompatibilism, Peinado reasons,

A negative proposition (e.g., ‘Peter does not exist’) does not have for its object the lack of Peter, but that existence which it negates […] But no proposition is made true by something that is not its object […] Therefore, a lack identified with something positive is not necessary for making true negative propositions.\textsuperscript{138}

Although this is an argument against Incompatibilism, it generalizes. Any proposition that has a truthmaker is made true by its object. ‘Peter does not exist’ is about Peter. But since Peter cannot be the truthmaker in the positive sense of ‘Peter does not exist’, it follows that ‘Peter does not exist’ cannot have a truthmaker in the positive sense. More generally, since ‘p’ and ‘¬p’ have the same object, and since the truthmaker of a proposition is its object, ‘p’ and ‘¬p’ cannot both have truthmakers in the positive sense, on pain of contradiction.\textsuperscript{139}

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{137} Peinado, \textit{De anima}, lib. 2, d. 3, s. 2.4, n. 32, p. 265: “Nam ex terminis ipsis videtur notum quod nulla loquutio interna aut externa nullusque actus intellectus redditur verus ab eo quod ipse non dicit, & ab objecto quod non repraesentat. Nam quis dicat hunc actum: Petrus currit verificari formaliter ab existentia Dei, aut ab alia entitate distincta a cursu Petri, quem repraesentat actus?” Cfr. Peinado, \textit{Phys.}, lib. 1, d. 7, s. 1, n. 8, p. 175: “Quod reddit necessario veram hanc propositionem est objectum per ipsum directe attactum et affirmatum. Nam, ut infra fusius exonemus, omnis propostitio a solo suo objecto redditur vera vel falsa.” The \textit{locus infra} referred to here is s. 2, n. 12, p. 177.

\textsuperscript{138} Peinado, \textit{De generatione et corruptione}, lib. 1, t. s, d. 4, s. 2, n. 23, p. 211: “Proposito negativa, v. gr. haec Petrus non existit, non habet pro objecto carentiam Petri; sed ipsum existentiam, quam negat, ut communiter tenent RR etiam ex adversariis. Sed nulla proposito verificatur, ab eo, quod non est eius objectum, quia ut alibi exprofesso exponam, veritas formalis cuiuslibet actus, stat aedaequate in actu & objecto: ergo carentia identificata cum positivo, non est necessaria ad verificandas propositiones negativas.”

\textsuperscript{139} Russell at one time endorsed a similar view: “Suppose it is a fact that Socrates is dead. You have two propositions: “Socrates is dead” and “Socrates is not dead”. And those two propositions correspond to the same fact; there is one fact in the world which makes one true and one false” (\textit{The Philosophy of Logical Atomism}, 13).
Peinado therefore denies that negative truths have truthmakers in the positive sense. For the sake of clarity, we can make this explicit in his truthmaker principle as follows:

**Peinado’s hybrid truthmaker principle:** Atomic propositions have truthmakers in the positive sense. Negative propositions have truthmakers in the negative sense but not in the positive sense.

Peinado’s truthmaker principle entails that negative truths are not made true by portions of reality, since they do not have truthmakers in the positive sense. In vain do we search for an existing portion of reality in virtue of which it is true that there are no arctic penguins. This is a philosophically important implication of Peinado’s theory of judgment and the aboutness constraint on truthmaking. If his theory of judgment and the aboutness constraint on truthmaking can be defended, it seems we would have good reason to call off the search for truthmakers (in the positive sense) for negative truths. While I cannot undertake a full defense of these views here, I think something can be said for them.

### 5.3.4 Motivating the Aboutness Constraint and the Intentional Mode View of Negation

As we saw in chapter one (§4), many contemporary philosophers want to accept some form of relevance constraint on truthmaking in order to solve the problem of trivial truthmakers for necessary truths. The aboutness constraint is one way to spell out the needed relevance constraint. So the aboutness constraint derives some support from the fact that it can solve the problem associated with the proliferation of trivial truthmakers.

One consideration in favor of the intentional mode view of judgment is that it accounts for a needed distinction between force and content. The so-called
force/content distinction is needed to accommodate what Peter Geach calls “the Frege point.” Geach makes the Frege point as follows:

A thought may have just the same content whether you assent to its truth or not; a proposition may occur in discourse now asserted, now unasserted, and yet be recognizably the same proposition.\[140\]

Here Geach identifies the content of a thought as a proposition. The content or proposition may occur in discourse as asserted or unasserted. Force is what accounts for the content’s being asserted or not. Whether the content is asserted or not is independent of the content itself, so Geach thinks we need to draw a distinction between force and content.

In addition to asserting content, it seems we can deny content. So it seems that there are two kinds of force: positive force and negative force, which correspond to affirmation and denial, respectively. The intentional mode view of judgment can account for both positive and negative force, since judgments can have either a positive or a negative intentional mode with respect to an object. Peinado maintains that his opponents cannot account for negative force. This is because according to his opponents the negativity of a negative proposition is part of the “content” rather than the “force” of a judgment. On his opponents’ view, therefore, we can only ever affirm content, not deny it.\[141\]

Peinado also maintains that the intentional mode view can explain the nature of contradiction. Two propositions are contradictory on this view just in case they are about the same object and have opposing intentional modes—in other words, two propositions are contradictory just in case one denies what the other affirms. Because his opponents reject denial as a distinct intentional mode, they cannot explain the nature of contradiction. It is illuminating to view this

\[140\] Geach, “Assertion.” For Frege on the Frege point, see “The Thought,” 193-194. Although recognition of the need for the force/content distinction is often attributed to Frege, it actually goes back at least to the middle ages. See, e.g., Pini, “Scotus on Assertion and the Copula”; Klima, “John Buridan and the Force-Content Distinction.”

\[141\] Peinado, De anima, lib. 2, d. 3, s. 2.4, n. 26, p. 262.
argument as follows. The task is to account for the difference between positive and negative propositions. Two accounts are on the table. On the intentional mode view, positive and negative propositions have positive and negative intentional modes. On what I will call the ‘object view’, positive and negative propositions have different intentional objects. For example, ‘Obama exists’ is about Obama, and ‘Obama does not exist’ is about a lack of Obama. Peinado’s objection to the object view of negation is that the object view does not deliver what it promises—it cannot account for the distinction between positive and negative propositions. This is because propositions that do not differ with respect to object might nonetheless differ with respect to polarity—one might be positive and the other negative. To see this, consider an example. According to (one version of) the object view of negation, ‘Obama does not exist’ is about the lack of Obama. But ‘The lack of Obama exists’ is also about the lack of Obama, yet it is not syntactically negative. ‘Obama does not exist’ is syntactically negative while ‘The lack of Obama exists’ is syntactically positive. The question is, what accounts for the syntactic difference? Peinado’s point is that the object view cannot account for the syntactic difference because ‘Obama does not exist’ and ‘The lack of Obama exists’ do not differ with respect to their object, yet they do differ with respect to polarity. On the intentional mode view, however, ‘Obama does not exist’ and ‘The lack of Obama exists’ are syntactically different—one is negative and the other is positive—because they have different intentional modes.

There seems to be prima facie good reason to accept both the aboutness constraint and the intentional mode view of judgment. If so, then Peinado seems to have found a principled reason to deny that negative truths have truthmakers in the positive sense. The aboutness constraint and the intentional mode view of judgment together imply that positive and negative truths cannot both have truthmakers in the positive sense.
Excursus on Mauro

We can now see how Mauro’s response to the satisfaction argument is structurally identical to Peinado’s response to the truthmaker argument. Mauro’s response is to say that volition and nolition differ according to intentional mode rather than according to their intentional objects. On this view, both the volition, ‘Let Peter exist’, and the nolition, ‘Let Peter not exist’, are about Peter. Distinguishing in this way between volitions and nolitions allows Mauro to reject Decree Satisfaction. But Decree Satisfaction is analogous to the analysis of truth motivating Truthmaker Maximalism on the standard account:

Decree Satisfaction: The decree that \( p \) is satisfied if and only the adequate object of ‘\( p \)’ exists.

The standard analysis of truth: For a proposition ‘\( p \)’ to be true is for ‘\( p \)’ to exist and for the adequate intentional object of ‘\( p \)’ to exist.

If Mauro can motivate the denial of Decree Satisfaction by appeal to the intentional mode view of volition and nolition, it is hard to see why he could not equally motivate the denial of the standard analysis by appeal to the intentional mode view of affirmation and negation. Hence, there seems to be no reason for a defender of Mauro’s brand of Incompatibilism not to endorse Peinado’s brand of Nihilism.

5.3.5 Peinado’s Theory of Truth

I now want to return to Peinado’s problematic theory of truth. Peinado’s theory of truth is problematic because he endorses the composite theory of truth. But the composite theory entails the standard analysis of truth and the claim that every truth has a truthmaker in the positive sense, while Peinado rejects both the
standard analysis and the latter claim. How then can Peinado reconcile his composite theory of truth with his truthmaker principle?

Peinado is aware of the conflict between his composite view of truth and his truthmaker principle. After endorsing the composite view, Peinado raises the following objection:

The truth of this act, ‘Adam does not exist’, is not constituted by the act and its object. Therefore neither is the truth of this act: ‘Peter is possible’. The antecedent is proven. Now the truth exists, but now the object does not exist. Therefore, this truth is not constituted by the object. The minor is certain because, if the object of the proposition, ‘Adam does not exist’, is Adam himself, then the object does not exist now.142

By Peinado’s lights, some truths are such that their objects do not exist. Therefore, truth is generally not the mereological sum of a proposition and its object, and the composite view of truth is not correct. This objection pinpoints the conflict between Peinado’s theory of truth and his ontology: Peinado seemingly does not have the ontology required to sustain his theory of truth. I will call this ‘the missing part objection.’

Peinado’s response to the objection in the above passage relies on the notion of alienation:

I deny that this truth exists now if ‘exists’ is taken per statum with respect to the act and the object. I concede that this truth exists now if ‘exists’ is taken per statum with respect to the act and per alienationem with respect to the object.143

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142 Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 5, s. 3.3, n. 33, p. 344: “Veritas huius actus: Adamus non existit non constituitur ex actu & objecto: ergo neque veritas huius: Petrus est possibilis. Antecedens probatur. Modo datur haec veritas: modo non datur objectum: ergo haec veritas non constituitur ex objecto. Minor est certa: Quia si objectum huius propositionis, Adamus non existit est ipse Adamus, hic modo non datur: si est eius carentia; neque haec datur modo quia carentia, juxta nos, nihil est, ideo nequit modo existere.”

143 Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 5, s. 3.3, n. 33, p. 344: “Ad argumentum, neg. antecedens. Ad probationem, distinguo majorem: Modo datur haec veritas ly datur sumpto per statum, quoad actum, & objectum, nego. Sumpto per statum quoad actum, & per alienationem quoad objectum, concedo majorem, & concessa minori, distinguo consequens: Sumpto ly constituitur per statum quoad actum, & objectum, concedo: sumpto per statum quoad actum, & per alienationem quoad
Alienation is what happens to a verb when it receives a non-standard signification in virtue of other terms in a proposition. In propositions of the form ‘a is F’, ‘is’ standardly has a present tense, indicative signification. But in some cases, ‘is’ has a non-standard signification. For example, in propositions of the form, ‘a is past’, ‘is’ does not have its usual signification, but has a past tense signification. Thus, ‘a is past’ signifies that a existed, not that a’s pastness exists.

Another common example is ‘a is dead’, which does not signify that a has the property of being dead or that a’s death exists but that a was alive and now is not. Unfortunately Peinado does not tell us how exactly alienation works. But let

objectum, ngeo consequentiam. Est dicere: Hic actus: Adamus non existit respicit, ut objectum Adamum non existentem modo: unde, ut verus fit, tam longe abest, ut petat Adamum existere.” There must be an error in this passage: the last occurrence of “concedo” and “nego” must have been reversed by the printer. This conclusion is forced by a consistent reading of Peinado’s view. Moreover, scholastic philosophers usually state the reading of the premise they deny before the reading they accept.

Peinado gives an explanation of alienation in his discussion of tense. See De anima, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4, n. 66, pp. 400-401: “Verbum in propositione, ratione particulae positae ex parte praedicati, ita solet ut licet ipsum verbum secundum se significet de praesenti, ut conjunctum tamen cum ea particula, non significet aliquid de praesenti; sed de praeterito, aut futuro. Sic Verbum est, secundum se sumptum, significat existentiam de praesenti, & tamen ut conjunctum cum ea particula mortus in hac propositione, Petrus est mortuus, non significat Petrum existere de praesenti, sed de praeterito.” In Phys. (lib. 1, d. 7, s. 2, n. 25, p. 183) Peinado attributes the alienation doctrine to Francisco Alonso (Alphonsonus), who describes alienation as follows: “Ut autem id clarius intelligendatur, advertendum est, id esse discriminis inter propositiones de secundo adiacente et propositiones de tertio adiacente (propo-
us grant him that there is such a phenomenon as alienation, and let us see if it can help him reconcile his composite view of truth with his ontology.

The missing part objection asks us to consider the proposition,

(1) ‘Adam does not exist’.

According to the objection, the truth of ‘Adam does not exist’ cannot have its object as a part, because its object, Adam, does not exist. Because the truth of (1) exists, but its object does not, the truth of (1) cannot be a composite of (1) and its object. Hence, the composite view is mistaken.

Peinado responds by invoking the notion of alienation with respect to the proposition,

(2) ‘The truth of ‘Adam does not exist’ exists’.

According to the composite view of truth, (2) is equivalent to

(2*) The proposition ‘Adam does not exist’ exists, and the object of ‘Adam does not exist’ exists.

But, the objection points out, (2*) is not true on Peinado’s view, since ‘Adam does not exist’ is about Adam, who does not exist.

Peinado responds by saying that ‘exists’ in (2*) should be taken with its standard signification with respect to the proposition and per alienationem with respect to the object of the proposition. (2*) should therefore be understood as saying,

(2’) The proposition ‘Adam does not exist’ exists, and Adam does not exist.
(2’) is true. Hence, there is a sense in which (2) is true, insofar ‘exists’ is taken per alienationem with respect to the object of a negative proposition.

Peinado’s semantic contortions do not seem adequate to reconcile his theory of truth with his ontology. Being as charitable as possible, we may grant that there is a sense in which (2) is true, but Peinado fails to explain how truth can be composed of a proposition and its object if the object does not exist. Fiddling with semantics will not help, since the objection is metaphysical.

Although Peinado’s response to the missing part objection seems inadequate, I think that it shows that Peinado is more concerned about truth conditions for ascriptions of truth than he is about the metaphysics of truth itself. If this is correct, then when Peinado says that truth is identical to or composed of a true proposition and its object, he might be interpreted as making the plausible point that ascriptions of truth are governed partly by the intrinsic features of a proposition and partly by the ontological status of its object. I now want to develop this line of interpretation and argue that it preserves the parts of Peinado’s theory of truth that seem most important to him.

My suggestion is to pair the semi-extrinsic denomination view of truth with an anti-realist conception of denominations. Recall that on the anti-realist conception, a denomination is not a real thing but is “the expression of some intellect”. When this view of denominations is paired with the semi-extrinsic denomination view of truth, the latter amounts to the claim that truth is not anything real but is “the expression of some intellect”. What could that mean? In the contemporary literature on truth, one often finds the claim that truth is in some sense not really a property. Crispin Wright writes that truth is not “a property of intrinsic metaphysical gravitas.” Paul Horwich writes,

> [...] Truth is not a complex or naturalistic property but a property of some other kind. (Hartry Field suggests the term ‘logical property’.) [...] According to minimalism, we should...beware of assimilating being true to such properties as being turquoise, being

145 “Truth in Ethics,” 213.
Wolfgang Künne claims that while ‘true’ is a perfectly respectable predicate, truth is not a property in any robust, metaphysical sense. \(^{147}\) I think that the early modern scholastic claim that truth is a denomination, on the anti-realist conception of denominations, can be understood along the (admittedly imprecise) lines quoted above. The idea is that, although there is nothing in rerum natura that answers to the word ‘truth’, the predicate ‘true’ is a perfectly respectable predicate that, moreover, can be correctly applied to certain things in certain to-be-specified circumstances. This much captures the claim that truth is a denomination on the anti-realist conception of denominations. What of the claim that the denomination in question is semi-extrinsic? We can understand this as a generic claim about the application conditions of the predicate ‘true’—namely, that ‘true’ applies to a proposition ‘p’ partly but in virtue of how ‘p’ is intrinsically and partly in virtue of how things stand with the object of ‘p’.\(^{148}\) For example, the predicate ‘true’ applies to the proposition ‘Peter is running’ partly in virtue that proposition’s intrinsic property of saying that Peter is running and partly in virtue of the existence of its object. I will call this ‘the anti-realist, semi-extrinsic denomination view of truth’, or, substituting barbarism for prolixity, ‘the ARSED view of truth’. The ARSED view of truth tells us more about what truth is not—it’s not a thing—than it does about how the predicate ‘true’ operates. For the rest of the story, we need an analysis of truth.

As we have seen, Peinado provides the following two-headed analysis of truth:

Positive Truth: For a positive proposition to be true is for its object to exist.

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\(^{147}\) Künne, *Conceptions of Truth*, 87-92.
\(^{148}\) For a similar view, see Künne, *Conceptions of Truth*, 333-339.
**Negative Truth:** For a negative proposition to be true is for its object not to exist.

The problem with this sort of analysis is that it is not unified, and so it implies that there are different ways of being true for different sorts of propositions. The result would be a disjunctive analysis of truth. It was a working assumption among early modern scholastics that truth ought to be subject to a single analysis. As Suárez writes, “truth ought to have the same account [*ratio*] in every case.” But what exactly is wrong with a disjunctive analysis of truth? Besides the fact that a disjunctive analysis is less theoretically parsimonious than a unified analysis, it is not clear that truth can do the philosophical work we want it to if given a disjunctive analysis. To give one example, we say that an argument is valid if and only if it is truth-preserving. If there is a unified analysis of truth, the concept of truth can help us explain validity. We can say that when an argument is truth-preserving, there is some one condition such that, if the premises satisfy it, then the conclusion satisfies it. But if what it is to be true differs according to proposition types, it is no longer clear what truth-preservation amounts to.

I want to propose a unified analysis of truth that preserves Peinado’s remarks about truth. My idea is to use a recursive analysis inspired by Tarski’s recursive definition of truth. Let p, q, r, be variables over atomic and molecular propositions. For simplicity I want to start by assuming that there is only one logical connective, negation (¬), and I want to set aside tense, modality, and other complicating syntactical features. Focusing thus on a part of a language, we can define truth as follows:

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149 DM 8.2.2 (XXV, 277): “Veritas eiusdem rationis debet esse in omnibus.”
Analysis of Truth 1.0

\( p \) is true =\( df \) (i) \( p \) is an atomic proposition whose object exists, or

(ii) \( p \) is the negation of a proposition \( q \), and \( q \) is false.

Clause (i) entails the first part of Peinado’s truthmaker principle, that every atomic proposition has a truthmaker. Clause (ii), together with the intentional mode view of negation, entails the second part of Peinado’s truthmaker principle, that negative truths have truthmakers in the negative sense. This can be seen as follows. Consider the negation, ‘\( \neg q \)’ of the atomic proposition ‘\( q \)’. According to clause (ii) ‘\( \neg q \)’ is true if and only if ‘\( q \)’ is false. According to clause (i) ‘\( q \)’ is false if and only if its object does not exist. According to the intentional mode view of negation, the object of ‘\( \neg q \)’ is the object of ‘\( q \)’. So, ‘\( \neg q \)’ is true if and only if its object does not exist. Given the definition of ‘truthmaker in the negative sense’, it follows that ‘\( \neg q \)’ has a truthmaker in the negative sense (its object). One benefit of the above analysis is that it defines truth for iterated negation. Hence, ‘\( \neg \neg q \)’ is true if and only if ‘\( q \)’ is true. (It follows that ‘\( \neg \neg q \)’ has a truthmaker in the positive sense. Accordingly, we must understand Peinado’s claim that negative truths do not have truthmakers in the positive sense to be about first-order negative truths.)

As we have seen, Peinado and many of his contemporaries endorse an intentional mode view not only of negation but of all logical connectives. For reasons similar to those explained in §3.3 above, it follows that the standard analysis of truth is not adequate with respect to molecular propositions. As far as I have seen, Peinado does not discuss molecular propositions, but we can account for them in the recursive analysis by adding a clause for conjunction:

Analysis of Truth 1.1

\( p \) is true =\( df \) (i) \( p \) is an atomic proposition whose object exists, or

(ii) \( p \) is the negation of a proposition \( q \), and \( q \) is false, or
(iii) \( p \) is a conjunction of two propositions \( q, r \), and \( q \) is true and \( r \) is true. ¹⁵¹

The remaining logical connectives can, of course, be defined in terms of conjunction and negation. Clauses (i)-(iii) will tell us what is required on the part of the object(s) of a molecular proposition in order for that proposition to be true.

5.4 Conclusion

As we saw in chapter one, many contemporary philosophers think that restricting the truthmaker principle is ad hoc and takes the teeth out of truthmaker theory. Trenton Merricks writes:

[...] the only reason to scale back Truthmaker to exempt negative existentials is that there do not seem to be truthmakers for negative existentials. Truthmaker theorists who proceed in this way have no principled objection to the cheater who, when confronted with her own apparently truthmakerless truths, scales back Truthmaker accordingly. For this cheater is simply adopting the strategy of the timid truthmaker theorist, concluding that since there do not seem to be any truthmakers for a certain kind of truth, none are required. ¹⁵²

Armstrong assesses the situation in a similar way:

One can, of course, simply assert that a proposition such as \(<\text{there are no unicorns}>\) stands in no need of any truthmaker or other ontological ground. But this seems to be no more than giving up on truthmakers as soon as the going gets hard. ¹⁵³

And Ross Cameron writes:

¹⁵¹ This analysis has clear affinities with both Russell’s logical atomism and Tarski’s recursive definition of truth. See Russell, The Philosophy of Logical Atomism and Tarski, “The Semantic Conception of Truth.” Helpful discussions of Tarki’s definition are in Kirkham, Theories of Truth, and Künne, Conceptions of Truth. See also Black, “The Semantic Definition of Truth,” 61. For brief discussion of the recursive correspondence theory of truth, see David, Correspondence and Disquotation, 119-124. David notes that someone adopting the recursive analysis cannot define the logical connectives in terms of truth, on pain of circularity.

¹⁵² Merricks, Truth and Ontology, 40.

¹⁵³ Armstrong, Truth and Truthmakers, 70.
Truthmaker theory is a theory about what it is for a proposition to be true; it’s not the kind of theory that can apply only in a restricted domain. What possible reason could one have for thinking of some propositions that they need to be grounded in what there is that doesn’t apply to all propositions? Why should it be okay for negative truths to go ungrounded and not okay for positive truths to go ungrounded?154

I think that Peinado would regard these claims as overstated. As we have seen, Peinado’s truthmaker principle is a terminological variant of a restricted truthmaker principle: only positive truths have truthmakers in the positive sense. Peinado’s reason for denying that negative truths have truthmakers in the positive sense is not merely giving up when the going gets hard—it is motivated by his intentional mode view of judgment, together with his aboutness constraint on truthmaking, both plausible and independently motivated views. Why is it “okay” for negative truths to go ungrounded and not okay for positive truths to go ungrounded? “Because,” Peinado would say, “my theory of truth-bearers and the aboutness constraint on truthmaking entails that negative truths are ungrounded, and my theory of truth entails that positive truths are grounded.” As we shall see in the next two chapters, Peinado extends his approach to negative truths to tensed and modal truths.

154 Cameron, “How to be a Truthmaker Maximalist,” 411-12. Cf. Mumford, “Negative Truth and Falsehood,” 49. In a forthcoming paper, Cameron rescinds the claim that truthmaker theory is a theory about what it is to be true (“Truthmakers,” §5).
Future Contingents

Many early modern scholastics follow their disputations on truth with disputations on the truth of future contingent propositions. The debate about future contingents is relevant to several disputes in theology: How and through what medium does God know future contingent truths? How is the truth of future contingents compatible with free will?¹ Our focus will be on (part of) the philosophical background of the theological debates. Several early modern scholastics raise the question of truthmaking for future contingent propositions. For example, after arguing that future contingent propositions have a determinate truth-value, Maximus Mangold raises the following question,

Further, it is asked in virtue of what are [future contingent propositions] true? Or, what is their truthmaker, as they say in the schools.²

This chapter is about the early modern scholastic debate about Mangold’s question. I assume that what one says about future contingent truths can be said for tensed truths generally. Future contingents are singled out by the scholastics merely for their theological import. So although the chapter focuses, with the scholastics, on truthmakers for future contingent propositions, it is relevant to the more general issue of truthmakers for tensed propositions.

I want to begin with a map of the logical space around the problem of tensed truths. I will construct our map by presenting an inconsistent tetrad, loosely

¹ Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 6, p. 362: “Doctrina huius disputationis viam sternit controversiae in Theologia gravissimae, scilicet de modo, & medio, in quo Deus futura, praecipue conditionata, & libera cogniscat; an, videlicet, ea videat Deus per scientiam visionis immediate terminatam ad decretum divinum metaphysice connexum cum eorum conditionata futuritione?”

² Maximus Mangold, *Philosophia recentior*, vol. 1, Ontology, diss. 4, a. 1, s. 3, n. 98, p. 96: “Ulterius quaeritur, per quid verae aut falsae sint [propositiones de contingentibus absolute futuris]? Sive, quodnam sit illarum verificativum, ut loquuntur scholae.”
following the recent work of Ben Caplan and David Sanson.³ Begin with presentism, the claim that everything that exists is present.⁴ Presentism is opposed to eternalism, the claim that not only present but also past and future things exist. According to presentism, dinosaurs and lunar outposts do not exist; to use early modern scholastic examples, Adam (the parent of the human race) does not exist, nor does the Antichrist (who is yet to come). According to eternalism, all of the above exist: dinosaurs and Adam, lunar outposts and the Antichrist. The inconsistent tetrad is then as follows:

- **Future:** Some future contingent propositions are true.
- **Truthmaker:** Every true proposition has an existing truthmaker.
- **Presentism:** Everything that exists is present.
- **Independence:** Future truths are not made true by present things.

To illustrate the inconsistency between these four propositions, consider the future contingent proposition,

(1) The Antichrist will sin.

According to Future, some future contingent propositions are true; suppose (1) is one of them. According to Truthmaker, (1) has an existing truthmaker. According to Presentism, everything that exists is present, so the truthmaker for (1) is present. But according to Independence, (1) is not made true by something present. So we have a contradiction. Since the tetrad is inconsistent, we must deny one or more of its four members. Hence, there are broadly speaking four possible approaches to the problem of finding truthmakers for tensed truths.

³ See Caplan and Sanson, “Presentism and Truthmaking.”
⁴ In order to render presentism non-trivial, ‘exists’ must be read tenselessly.
In this chapter I explain the fate of each of the four members of our inconsistent tetrad at the hands of early modern scholastic philosophers. Before proceeding, two notes about terminology are in order.

Early modern scholastics tend to use the term “future” to denote something that does not exist but will exist. Hence, the proposition ‘x is future [futurum est]’ entails that x does not exist now. As Hurtado explains, “What exist now and will exist later are not said to be future so much as they are said to remain in being.” In order to say that x will exist without implying that x does not exist now, a scholastic might say that x will be [erit] rather than that x is future [futurum est]. This understanding of “future” will not play a large role in the following discussion, but it helps to understand some of the passages cited.

### 6.1 Denying Future?

The early modern scholastics were aware of the possibility of denying that future contingent propositions are true. This is partly because, on a common reading of Aristotle, Aristotle claims that future contingent propositions have no truth-value. Some early modern scholastics were also aware of truthmaker arguments for the denial of Future. Peinado, for example, considers the following argument:

This act, ‘Peter will sin tomorrow’ cannot be determinately true now, unless there is now something determining the proposition to truth, something making the proposition true [verificans]. But there is no such thing now. Therefore, that proposition cannot be determinately true now. Proof of the minor [i.e., that ‘Peter will sin’ does not have a truthmaker]. The act does not now make itself true, because we are supposing that it is indifferent to truth. The act’s object does not make the act true, because the object does not exist now. A divine decree about Peter’s sin does not make the act true because God does not decree sin. Nor does divine knowledge of Peter’s sin make it true that Peter will sin because it is true that God has such

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5 Hurtado, *Universa philosophia*, De anima, d. 9, s. 6, subs. 1, n. 82, p. 584. See also n. 88, p. 585.
knowledge because the sin will exist, rather than that the sin will exist because God has such knowledge. Therefore, there is nothing that determines that act to truth.6

The premises in this argument are constituted by the latter three members of our inconsistent tetrad: Truthmaker, Presentism, and Independence. The conclusion is the denial of Future for propositions of the form ‘S will sin’. Notice that it is not obvious that the argument generalizes. The argument depends on the premise that God does not decree sin, but not every future contingent truth is about someone sinning. Still, if some future contingent truths do not have a determinate truth value, that might provide a reason to think that no future contingent truths have determinate truth value.

Early modern scholastics were aware of the reasons to reject Future, but I have not seen anyone reject Future in print, nor have I seen anyone mentioned by name who rejects Future. Early modern scholastics typically give two sorts of reasons for accepting Future, one theological and one philosophical. The theological reason is that the Bible contains prophecies about the future, and prophecies must be considered true at the time they are made. Moreover, God has knowledge of the future, and knowledge is factive.7 Consequently, among early modern scholastics there is widespread agreement that future contingent

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6 Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 2, n. 19, p. 373: “Nequit nunc esse determinate verus hic actus: Petrus peccabit cras, nisi sit modo aliquid eam propositionem determinans ad veritatem; aliquidque eam propositionem verificans, sed nihil tale est modo. Ergo nequit modo esse ea propositio determinative vera. Probatur minor. Modo non verificat actus ille se ipsum; quia supponimus esse indifferentiem ad veritatem. non objectum. Quia objectum non datur hodie. Non decretum divinum de tali peccato, quia Deus nullum decretum habet intrinsece connexum cum peccato. Non scientia divina de peccato, quia potius verum est Deum habere eam scientiam, quia existit peccatum, quam exititurum esse peccatum, quia Deus habet eam scientiam. Ergo nihil est quod determinet illum actum ad veritatem.”

7 Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 1, n. 6, p. 366; Arriaga, *Cursus philosophicus*, Logic, d. 14, s. 5, subs. 3, n. 98, p. 182; Vázquez, *In primam partem tomus primus*, d. 64, ch. 1, p. 247ff; d. 66, ch. 2, p. 257ff. For philosophical defense of Future, see Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 2, p. 366ff.; Arriaga *Cursus philosophicus*, Logic, d. 14, s. 5, subs. 3, nn. 88-97, pp. 181-192; Hurtado, *Universa philosophia*, d. 9, s. 6, subs. 2, p. 587ff; Vázquez, *In primam partem tomus primus*, d. 66, ch. 3, p. 258ff; Polizzi, *Siculi platiensis tomus tertius*, d. 28, s. 4, p. 400ff; Suárez, *De scientia quam Deus habet de futuris contingentibus*, lib. 1, ch. 2 (XI, 296ff). For more on the late medieval precedents for the early modern discussion of Future, see Calvin Normore, “Future Contingents.”
propositions have determinate truth-values, and that some future contingent propositions are true. According to Peinado, for example, everyone agrees that ‘The Antichrist will exist’ is true.⁸

Early modern scholastics also provide philosophical (non-theological) arguments for Future. Peinado claims that the following contradiction is necessarily false:

(2) ‘Peter will sin tomorrow, and Peter will not sin tomorrow.’

Because (2) is false, it’s negation is true, and the negation of (2) is equivalent to (3):

(3) ‘Peter will sin tomorrow, or Peter will not sin tomorrow.’

So (3) is true. Peinado also makes the following assumption

**Peinado’s assumption:** “A disjunctive proposition cannot be determinately true without one of the categorical propositions that compose it being determinately true.”⁹

Peinado’s assumption amounts to the claim that ‘p V q’ is true only if ‘p’ is true or ‘q’ is true. It follows that (3) is true only if ‘Peter will sin tomorrow’ is true or ‘Peter will not sin tomorrow’ is true. In either case, a future contingent proposition is true.

This argument can be resisted by adopting a non-classical, three-valued logic and maintaining that (2) and (3) are neither true nor false, but this approach

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⁸ Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 1, n. 3, p. 364.
⁹ Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 2, n. 9, p. 367: “Nequit propositio disjunctiva esse determinate vera, quin aliquia ex catheticis, quibus constat sit vera determinate.”
requires giving up the law of non-contradiction as well. Because early modern scholastics were generally committed to classical logic, they were committed to Future.

### 6.2 Denying Presentism

In *Summa Theologiae* I, 14.13, Thomas Aquinas addresses the question “Whether God has knowledge of future contingents.” In his response to this question, Aquinas distinguishes between two ways of considering a contingent item. First, one may consider a contingent item “in itself, insofar as it is actual.” In this way, a contingent item cannot be considered as future, but only as present. (The assumption here seems to be that something is actual if and only if it is present). Second, a contingent item may be considered “as in its causes” or as future. Presumably the idea here is that one considers something in its causes by inferring from the existence of its causes that it will exist. For example, I can consider in its causes the sun’s rising tomorrow by thinking about the current conditions and laws of nature that, if unchecked, will result in the sun’s rising. Crucially, a contingent item, considered in its causes, can still fail to exist. Hence, a contingent item, considered as future, cannot be the object of certain cognition. However, a contingent item, considered as present, can be the object of certain cognition, “just as when I see that Socrates is sitting.”

With this distinction in hand, Aquinas asserts that God knows contingent items considered as present. God knows contingent items as present, Aquinas states, because contingent items are present to God:

> But eternity, which exists all at once, embraces the whole of time [...] Hence all things in time are present to God from eternity [...] because his gaze is born from eternity to all things as [prout] they are in his present-ness [praesentialitate].

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10 *ST* I, q. 14, a. 13, Resp (IV, 186): “Aeternitas autem, tota simul existens, ambit totum tempus, ut supra dictum est. Unde omnia quae sunt in tempore, sunt Deo ab aeterno praesentia, non solum...”
In another attempt to explain this view, Aquinas famously says that God is like someone on a hill, watching wayfarers on a road below.\textsuperscript{11} The wayfarers can only see what is immediately in front of them, but God can see everything happening on the road at once. Similarly, we wayfarers can only see what is temporally present, but God can see all wayfarers, past, present, and future, all at once.

There is one reading of Aquinas’s remarks according to which he is endorsing eternalism. Aquinas states that “all things in time are present to God from eternity.” One might think that $x$ is present to $y$ if and only if $x$ and $y$ exist at the same moment, where eternity is some sort of atemporal moment. Because God does not exist in time, but in eternity, the claim that “all things in time are present to God from eternity” seems to entail that all things in time also exist in the eternal moment—i.e., that they are eternal.

One might also argue for an eternalist reading of Aquinas’s remarks as follows. Let $x$ and $y$ be any successive temporal items.

(1) $\forall x (x$ is present to God if and only if $x$ coexists with God).
(2) $\forall x (if x exists at any time, then $x$ is present to God). (Aquinas’s view)
(3) $\forall x (if x exists at any time, then $x$ coexists with God). (1, 2)
(4) Therefore, $\forall x \forall y (if x exists at any time, and $y$ exists at any time, then $x$ and $y$ coexist with each other). (By 3 and the transitivity of coexistence).

But if $x$ and $y$ exist at different times, the only way to make sense of (4) is to introduce an eternal sense of “exist”: to say that $x$ and $y$ coexist in this sense is to say that they both exist eternally. Hence, Aquinas seems to be committed to eternalism. Aquinas’s comparison of God with the hill-top watcher also supports

\textit{ea ratione qua habet rationes rerum apud se praesentes, ut quidam dicunt: sed quia eius intuitus fertur ab aeterno super omnia, prout sunt in sua praesentialitate.”}\textsuperscript{11}  
\hspace{1em} ST I, q. 14, a. 13, ad 3 (IV, 187).
the eternalist reading. Just as all the wayfarers on the road below must all exist in order to be viewed by the hill-top watcher, so all the temporal wayfarers must exist in order to be present to God.

Of course, the eternalist reading of Aquinas is not compulsory, for as Aquinas goes on to explain, “all things in time are present to God from eternity […] because his gaze is born from eternity to all things.” The “because” clause suggests that things are not really present to God from eternity, but only intentionally present. They are present to God only insofar as God cognizes them. So Aquinas’s remarks in ST I, 14.13 strongly suggest but do not unambiguously support an eternalist reading. Indeed, in other places Aquinas sounds like a presentist. In the Disputed Questions on Truth he says, “That which is future, insofar as it is future, is not [non est], and similarly that which is past, insofar as it is past, [is not].”

Given the ambiguity of Aquinas’s remarks in ST I, 14.13, it is not surprising that 16th and 17th-century philosophers disagreed on the proper reading of that passage and on the question whether “all things in time are present to God from eternity.” Some philosophers, such as Suárez and Vázquez, argue that for Aquinas temporal things are merely intentionally present to God. But others argue for an eternalist reading. One especially rich explanation of this position

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12 QDV 1.5, ad 6 (XXII, 19.314): “Illud quod est futurum, in quantum est futurum, non est, et similiter quod est praeteritum, in quantum huistmodi.”

13 This debate about the proper interpretation of Aquinas has resurfaced in the contemporary literature, apparently without any awareness of its history. See Craig, “Was Aquinas a B-Theorist of Time?” and Leftow’s response, “Aquinas on Time and Eternity.”

14 Suárez, De futuris contingentibus, lib. 1, ch. 7, esp. n. 18, (XI, 325-326). Molina seems to be the target of Suárez’s discussion in ch. 7. See also Vázquez, In primam partem tomus primus, d. 64, ch. 1, p. 247ff. Molina attributes this reading also to Sylvestro Mazzolini Prieras, Harvey Natalis, and Didacus de Deza. See Molina, On Divine Foreknowledge, 100.2 (cited by page and section). Others, such as Domingo Bañez, argue for a form of determinism, along with the thesis that God knows future contingents in their causes. See Bañez, Scholastica commentaria in primam partem, q. 13, a. 13.

15 Vázquez (d. 64, ch. 2, n. 5, p. 247) attributes the eternalist reading to Capreolus, Cajetan, Farrariensis, Richard of Middleton (Mediavilla), and Catherinus. Catherinus is probably Ambrosius Catherinus, the Catholic disputant of Martin Luther. According to Vázquez, Cajetan plagiarized his interpretation of Aquinas from Richard of Middleton. Polizzi (Siculi platiensis
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can be found in Luis de Molina’s famous *Liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, praedestinatione et reprobatione concordia* (Concordia). Although Molina’s eternalism is inspired by a text from the *Summa*, it should not be confused with what I, following Peinado, will call ‘the Thomist view’, which I discuss in the next section.

In disputation 48 of the *Concordia*, Molina addresses the question “whether all the things that exist, have existed, and will exist in time are present to God from eternity with their own proper existence.” Molina argues that an affirmative answer to this question is entailed by his definition of eternity. According to Molina,

> Eternity is in itself a certain indivisible duration, a simultaneous whole having as a unit an infinite durational latitude by virtue of which it coexists and corresponds as a whole with the whole of time and as a whole with each interval and point of time.\(^{16}\)

According to this definition, eternity has three features:

1. Eternity is an infinite duration.
2. Eternity is indivisible—it has no temporal parts.
3. Eternity is a simultaneous whole.

The first two features of eternity are clear enough: eternity is a temporally extended simple. But the third requires some explanation. Molina himself explains that (iii) is supposed to express the temporal analogue of holenmerism—the doctrine according to which a whole is wholly present to the

\(^{16}\) Molina, *On Divine Foreknowledge*, 99.2. Sometimes philosophers claim that eternity entails lack of duration (see, e.g., Anthony Kenny, *The God of the Philosophers*, 38). Clearly that is not the case for Molina. For more on Molina’s theory of eternity, see Molina, *Commentaria in primam D. Thomae partem, in duos tomos divisa*, q. 10. For more on the medieval debate about whether eternity has duration, see q. 10, d. 2.
whole of something else and is simultaneously wholly present to each of its parts. It follows from (i) that eternity is present to each moment of time; according to (iii), the correspondence in question, is “not unlike the way in which the human soul is wholly in the whole human body and wholly in each of its parts.” The upshot of (iii) is that eternity is wholly present to the whole of time and wholly present to each moment in time. Because eternity encompasses every moment in time, Molina concludes that all things in time are present to eternity. Molina expresses his conclusion in a number of ways, including, “whatever exists in time […] coexists with and exists in the indivisible now of eternity,” and strikingly, “things that come to exist successively in time exist all at once in eternity.” The latter claim seems to commit Molina to eternalism. Molina’s commitment to eternalism is unmistakable in his responses to objections, which are punchy enough to quote at length:

First objection. That which does not exist is not able to coexist with anything, since coexistence requires the existence of both terms. But future things do not yet exist, nor have they existed. Therefore, they do not coexist from eternity with either God or eternity, and hence they are not present to God from eternity with their actual existence.

Second objection. Just as in God eternity embraces every time, so too the immensity of the divine essence embraces or touches every place. But God is not present to, nor does He coexist with, any place before that place exists […] Therefore, neither will eternity be present to or coexist with any time before that time exists.

Third objection. Things that are not able to coexist with each other will not be able to coexist with some third thing, either. But past time and future time are not able to coexist at the same time. Therefore, they are not able to be present to God from eternity with their actual existence, nor are they able to coexist with eternity.

19 On Divine Foreknowledge, 98.2.
20 On Divine Foreknowledge, 100.3-101.5. I have modified the translation of objection three.
These objections were fairly common in the 16th and 17th centuries, and they can also be found in the contemporary discussion of eternalism. Notice that all three of these objections turn on the assumption of presentism. According to the first objection, the Antichrist (say) does not coexist with God from eternity because the Antichrist, being future, does not exist at all. The second objection makes the same point. The third objection assumes that the only way to exist is to exist at a time. Since successive temporal entities cannot coexist at one and the same time, they cannot coexist with God either. (This argument assumes the transitivity of coexistence).

Someone who holds that God is present to all temporal things can easily respond to the objections by rejecting the presentist assumption on which they turn, and this is precisely how Molina responds. Molina distinguishes between two senses of the present tense form of ‘exist’, corresponding to two kinds of present: the temporal present and the eternal present. The present tense form of ‘exist’ is ambiguous between existence in the temporal present and existence in the eternal present. This move (or something like it) is standard in eternalist circles in the early modern period as well as now.

Armed with the distinction between existence in the temporal present and existence in the eternal present, Molina can solve the above three objections. To the first he denies that future items such as the Antichrist do not exist at all: “Even though future things neither exist at the present time nor have existed in

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21 Richard Swinburne uses objection three as an argument against divine timelessness, apparently without being aware of its historical pedigree (The Coherence of Theism, 220), and also apparently conflating the doctrine of timelessness with the Aquinas’s doctrine of the presence of eternity to all temporal items. Anthony Kenny also repeats the argument and attributes it to Suárez (The God of the Philosophers, 39). These objections can also be found in Bañez, Scholastica commentaria in primam partem, q. 13, a. 13, p. 208.

22 Cf. Armstrong, Truth and Truthmakers, 148: “The Omnitemporalist will urge that there are two senses of the word ‘exist’ involved. It may mean ‘exists now’, and in that sense Caesar does not exist. But it may mean ‘is a reality’, and Caesar is, of course, a reality (in the way that Jove is not).” (Note that Molina does not think there are two sense of existence, but he thinks there are two senses of ‘present’.) See also Parsons, “Truthmakers, the Past, and the Future,” 162-163. For another instance of this move in an early modern author, see Bañez, Scholastica commentaria in primam partem, q. 13, a. 13, pp. 209-210.
the past, they nonetheless exist in the indivisible now of eternity.” Molina offers the same sort of response to the second objection. To the third Molina denies that the only way to exist is to exist at a time: “For past time and future time, which cannot coexist with each other at any time, can coexist in eternity […] and also with eternity itself.”

Strictly speaking, Molina does not reject presentism tout court. Because the present is two-fold, there are at least two readings of the presentist thesis: (i) everything exists in the temporal present; (ii) everything exists in the temporal present or in the eternal present. Molina endorses (ii) and rejects (i), which we may call “temporal presentism.” According to Molina, Adam and the Antichrist, dinosaurs and lunar outposts, all exist in the eternal present, even if not in the temporal present: “[Adam] exists in the indivisible, to be sure, but infinite now of eternity, which embraces all of time, and in which there exists whatever exists in time.” Molina’s rejection of temporal presentism is sufficient to establish him as an eternalist in the contemporary sense of that term.

Molina’s brand of eternalism was widely discussed in the 16th and 17th centuries, but as far as I have seen, none of the scholastic philosophers of this period uses eternalism to solve the problem of future truths: no one argues that future truths are true because future items exist in the eternal present. Eternalism is nowadays seen as the least problematic solution to the problem of tensed truths, so it is striking that the early modern scholastics do not appreciate the

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24 On Divine Foreknowledge, 106.16.
25 Molina even explicitly says that Adam exists in the eternal present. See On Divine Foreknowledge, 102.8. See also 103.10. It should be noted that Molina appears to rescind his eternalism in d. 49, 125.18-126.18. It is hard to see how Molina can reconcile the claims made in d. 48 and d. 49. At any rate, his discussion in d. 48 is sufficient to show that eternalism is certainly in the early modern scholastic air.
26 Armstrong introduces and swiftly rejects a version of eternalism that seems to be similar to Molina’s in Truth and Truthmakers, 147.
alleged power of eternalism for solving the problem of finding truthmakers for future truths.27 What explains this striking omission?

One looks in vain for an explicit explanation of why eternalism was not considered a viable solution to the problem of future truths. Eternalism (as far as I have seen) was not even discussed in the context of the debate about truthmakers for future truths. While eternalism was on the philosophical radar, it was not anywhere near the vicinity of truthmaking for future truths. I think there is a reason for this omission. In short, the existence of the Antichrist in eternity does not make it true that the Antichrist will exist because the existence of the Antichrist in eternity is compatible with the negation of ‘The Antichrist will exist’. Something with existence in eternity might have existence in eternity because it has past or present existence rather than future existence. Adam as well as the Antichrist has existence in eternity, but ‘Adam will exist’ is false (barring resurrection) while ‘The Antichrist will exist’ is true. In short, existence in eternity is not a respecter of times; as Molina says, “Eternity lacks a before and after. It is a simultaneous whole.”28 That is why everything in eternity is present to God rather than past or future. As a result, something’s existing in eternity cannot guarantee the truth of a future proposition. I suspect that this is the reason why the discussion of eternalism does not arise within the context of debates about future contingent truths.

In spite of the differences between contemporary versions of eternalism and Molina’s version, I think there is a lesson here for contemporary eternalists. It is often thought that eternalism de facto solves the problem of finding truthmakers for tensed truths. For example, Josh Parsons claims,

28 On Divine Foreknowledge, 109.21; translation modified.
Realists about the past and future have no problem coming up with truthmakers for propositions about the past and the future. Past and future objects will do. 29

Armstrong claims,

The Omnitemporal view [i.e., eternalism] provides straightforward truthmakers for all truths about the past and the future. The past exists. The future exists. They are ‘there’ (they exist, they are real) to be truthmakers. 30

Jamin Asay and Sam Baron claim,

What makes claims about the past and future true are exactly the same sorts of entities that make claims about the present true. Kripke makes true <Kripke exists>, and Socrates makes true <Socrates existed>. 31

Perhaps encouraged by such claims, Giuliano Torrengo remarks,

Note that for the eternalist, [solving] the grounding problem is trivial. 32

But as our discussion of Molina’s eternalism shows, solving the grounding problem is not trivial, not even for an eternalist. The mere existence of the past is not sufficient to make past-tense truths true, just as it is not sufficient to make present-tense truths true. The existence of Caesar does not make it true that Caesar existed just as the existence of Caesar does not make it true that Caesar will exist. This can be seen from the fact that a token of the sentence ‘Caesar will exist’, tokened in the present, is false, even if eternalism is true. This can be made clear in a diagram as follows:

29 Parsons, “Truthmakers, the Past, and the Future” 170.
30 Armstrong, *Truth and Truthmakers*, 145-146. Sometimes it is not even stated but simply assumed that eternalism solves the problem of tensed truths. See, e.g., Sider, *Four-Dimensionalism*, 35-42
31 Asay and Baron, “The Hard Road To Presentism,” 325.
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As represented by the diagram, the first token of ‘Caesar will exist’ is true, while the second is false. This shows that the eternal existence of Caesar is not sufficient to make true a token of ‘Caesar will exist’. If it were sufficient, it would make both tokens true.

It might be thought that eternalists have an easy way out here. Perhaps they should translate tensed sentences into tenseless ones so that ‘Caesar will exist’, tokened at time $t_1$, means ‘Caesar exists after $t_1$’, which can be made true by the tenseless fact that Caesar exists at $t_{n>1}$. The problem with this move is that it is questionable whether tensed sentences can be translated into tenseless ones without loss of meaning; indeed, consensus in the contemporary literature seems to be that they cannot be.\footnote{For an entry to the discussion, see Oaklander, “Two Versions of the New B-Theory of Language”.

(A) ‘The meeting happened’

I can infer that I missed the meeting. But from

(B) ‘The meeting is (tenselessly) happening at $t’

I cannot infer that I missed the meeting. So something is lost in translation from (A) to (B). If (A) cannot be translated by (B), then a tenseless fact cannot make (A)
true for the reasons discussed above (the existence of a tenseless fact is not sufficient for the truth of a tensed proposition).34

I am not claiming that eternalists cannot provide truthmakers for tensed truths. What I am claiming is that providing truthmakers for tensed truths is not trivial, not even for an eternalist. If presentists have a prima facie problem finding truthmakers for tensed truths, merely rejecting presentism does not thereby solve the problem.

6.3 Denying Independence

Francisco Peinado raises the question of truthmakers for future contingent truths as follows:

In order for these [future contingent] propositions to be determinately true, is it necessary that there be something presently existing, coexisting with the propositions and connected with the existence of the object for the time implied by the copula, so that, prescinding from this connected thing, such propositions cannot now be true?35

In short, do future truths require present truthmakers? Peinado reports that “all or nearly all” the Thomists and a few Jesuits answer this question in the affirmative—that is, they deny Independence and claim that future truths have present truthmakers.36 Because the Thomists of Peinado’s time generally deny

34 Nathan Oaklander, a B-theorist of time, argues along similar lines that tensed sentences are all false because tenseless facts cannot make tensed sentences true. Oaklander, “Two Versions of the New B-Theory of Language,” 290-300.
35 Peinado, De anima, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 1, n. 6, pp. 365-366: “An, ut modo hae propositiones sint determinate verae, necessarium sit aliquid de praesenti existens, & coexistens propositionibus connexum cum existentia objecti pro tempore importato per copulam, ita ut praescindendo ab hoc connexo, nequeant modo propositiones esse verae?”
36 Peinado, De anima, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 1, n. 6, pp. 365-366: “Tale connexum requirunt Thomistae omnes, aut fere omnes, consentiuntque P. Antonius Perez, & pauci ex nostris cum Pat. Rivadeneyra disput. 10 de Scientia Dei, capit. 2. Illud negant Eximus Doctor opusc. de Scientia futurorum, P. Vazquez I. Part. Disp. 66, P. Arriaga, P. Oviedo, P. Hurtado, & uno agmine caeteri omnes DD. Nostri antiqui & moderni, vel ex eo adhaerent toto corde huic sententiae, quia contrariam non bene cohaerere judicant, cum doctrina Societatis circa Scientiam Mediam.” For a
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Independence, I will call the denial of Independence ‘the Thomist view’, but I make no claims as to its relation to Thomas Aquinas. I will focus on the discussions of Ribadeniera and his student Silvestro Mauro.\(^{37}\)

Ribadeniera argues for the denial of Independence as follows:

In order for a judgment formed in the present moment about a future contingent to be determinately true in the present moment, it is necessary that there presently exist an infallible connection with the fact that the event affirmed should exist later. The proof is contained in the following syllogism. For this proposition, Peter will sin tomorrow, to be presently true, it is necessary that its truth presently exist. But this truth implies an infallible connection with the sin as existing later. Therefore, in order for this judgment to be determinately true in the present moment, it is necessary that there presently exist an infallible connection with the event as existing afterwards. The consequence is evident, and the minor clear, because a truth about tomorrow’s existence of Peter’s sin is essentially incompatible with the fact that Peter does not sin tomorrow. The major seems certain. For what else is it for a judgment to be true now, than for its truth to exist now?\(^{38}\)

Suppose that (1) is formed at time \(t\), and, further, that (1) is true.

\[(1) \text{‘} E \text{ will exist’.}\]

In order for (1) to be true at \(t\), the truth of (1) must exist at \(t\). But the truth of (1) is infallibly connected with the future existence of \(E\); for it is true that, necessarily,
if (1) is true, then $E$ will exist. Hence, if (1) is true at $t$, then there is something at $t$ infallibly connected with the future existence of $E$.

Someone might concede that if (1) is true at $t$, then its truth is infallibly connected with the future existence of $E$. But, obviously enough, the truth of (1) is not the truthmaker for (1) in the technical sense of truthmaking. So Ribadeniera’s argument does not show that the likes of (1) have present truthmakers.

But to Ribadeniera this objection misunderstands the nature of truth. He explains:

For it is not intelligible that a formal effect be present while what is included in that effect is not present. For who would perceive that a whole is present and its part absent? But in the formal effect of a true act is essentially contained a determination that the object exist as it is asserted by the act.39

To see Ribadeniera’s point, recall the composite theory of truth from chapter three. According to that theory, the truth of a proposition is a mereological sum of the proposition and its truthmaker. So according to that theory, the truth of a proposition cannot exist without its truthmaker existing. Ribadeniera is here making the same kind of point. The truth of (1) “contains” a determination that $E$ will exist. Hence, the truth of (1) is infallibly connected with the future existence of $E$ because the truth of (1) contains something—a truthmaker—that is infallibly connected to the future existence of $E$.

But as Peinado points out, it is here that Ribadeniera overplays his hand. As we saw in chapters three and four, if the truth of a proposition requires the existence of anything, it is the proposition’s object, not some other thing infallibly connected with the proposition’s object. For instance, the composite theory of truth says that truth is a mereological sum of a proposition and its object, not a

39 Ribadeniera, De scientia Dei, d. 6, ch. 2, n. 11, p. 278: “Nam intelligibile non est praeuentem esse effectum formalen, & non esse praeens, quod includitur in illo. Quis enim percipiat praeens esse totum; & absentem partem illius? At in effectu formali actus veri clauditur essentialiter determinatio ut sit objectum, prout asseritur ab actu.”
proposition and some other thing that is infallibly connected with its object. In short, truths are about their truthmakers, and future truths are not about present items. So future truths cannot be made true by present items.

Two responses to Peinado’s criticism are available to the advocate of the Thomist view. First, a Thomist might simply modify the standard analysis of truth. This is what Ribadeniera does:

Therefore, just as for a judgment to be conformed to its object with the conformity of truth is for the judgment to exist on the one hand, and on the other hand for the object to exist as affirmed by the judgment, or for there to be a determination that the object exist in that way, so also for a judgment to be conformed now to its object with the conformity of truth, is for the judgment to exist now on the one hand, and on the other for the object to exist now as it is affirmed by the judgment or for there to be now a determination that there be such an object.  

Here Ribadeniera explains what it is for a proposition to be conformed to its object with the sort of conformity constitutive of truth. He maintains the following:

‘p’ is conformed to O =df ‘p’ exists and either O exists as affirmed by ‘p’, or something else exists that determines the existence of O as affirmed by ‘p’.

However, this is a highly irregular analysis of what it is for a proposition to be conformed to its object. Ribadeniera’s analysis is disjunctive, and as will become clear below, Peinado can give a disjunctive analysis of truth that does not bear the ontological cost of Ribadeniera’s analysis.

Another response to Peinado’s criticism would be to argue that future truths are about wholly present items and can therefore have wholly present

40 Ribadeniera, *De scientia Dei*, d. 12, ch. 2, n. 13, pp. 285-286: “Sicut igitur iudicium esse conforme objecto conformitate veritatis est iudicium ex una parte dari, & ex alia vel dari objectum, ut per iudicium affirmatur, vel dari determinationem, ut eo modo detur objectum, sic iudicium esse objecto *conforme nunc* conformitate veritatis, est iudicium ex una parte dari nunc, & aliunde nunc dari, vel objectum, ut affirmatur per iudicium, vel determinationem, ut sic detur objectum.”
truthmakers. Ribadeniera himself explicitly denies this. The proposition that Peter will sin, he says, is at least in part about Peter’s future sin.\(^{41}\) Perhaps aware of the weakness in his teacher’s position, Silvestro Mauro says that a future proposition is about a present futureness [futuritio].\(^{42}\) (I explain what a futureness is below). Just as ‘a is F’ is generally about a’s Fnness, so ‘E is future’ is about E’s futureness. While E itself is future, it is future in virtue of a present futureness. 

And, more generally, future propositions are about present futurenesses. This move allows Mauro to turn the standard analysis of being true in favor of the Thomist position. According to the standard analysis, for a proposition ‘p’ to be true is for the intentional object of ‘p’ to exist. Now Mauro adds that the object of a future proposition is a present futureness. So according to the analysis of being true, a future proposition is true if and only if that futureness exists. Notice that this by itself does not entail the denial of Independence because the futureness in question could fail to be present—i.e., eternalism could be true. But Mauro is clearly riffing off of Ribadeniera, so there is reason to think that for Mauro as well as for Ribadeniera, if the truth of ‘p’ exists at \(t\), then the truthmaker for ‘p’ exists at \(t\). In short, if a future proposition ‘E will exist’ is true at \(t\), that is because there is a futureness at \(t\) connected with the future existence of \(E\).\(^{43}\)

What are these present items connected with future events? Among those who deny Independence, there were two common answers to this question: God’s knowledge and God’s decrees regarding the future.\(^{44}\) Both answers are

\(^{41}\) See Ribadeniera, *De scientia Dei*, d. 12, ch. 2, nn. 7-8, pp. 276-277.

\(^{42}\) Mauro, *Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus*, q. 51, p. 376: “Ex dictis quaestione 47 & 49, alius mundus qui non est, sed potest esse, distinguatur a suo non esse, & a sua possibilitate, quae sunt; ergo etiam peccatum crastinum, quod non est, sed erit, distinguitur a sua futuritione, per quam nunc denominatur futurum.” It will be clear from the other chapters that Mauro’s approach to future truths is consistent with his approach to modal and negative truths.

\(^{43}\) Peinado is unhappy with Mauro’s view. He notes, “*Peccatum Anti Christi est futurum* […] non aequivalet huic: *modo existit aliquid connexitum cum eo quod peccatum non existens hodie existat cras*” (*De anima*, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4, n. 46, p. 389). See also nn. 47-48.

\(^{44}\) Mauro endorses the former in *Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus*, q. 61, pp. 374ff. See also q. 59, pp. 343ff. In the contemporary literature, Alan Rhoda (“Presentism, Truthmakers, and God”) defends a similar view, according to which God’s memories make past truths true. For an
subject to difficult objections. God’s knowledge that Peter will sin counts as knowledge because it is true that Peter will sin; it is not true that Peter will sin because God knows it. So now the original question returns: what makes God’s knowledge of future truths true? As Peinado notes, God’s beliefs are true for the same reason ours are: because they have truthmakers.45

Divine decrees necessitate the truth of future truths, but divine decrees present a problem for free choice. Suppose Peter will be offered a bribe tomorrow, and it will be up to him whether he will accept the bribe or not. Suppose Peter will freely take the bribe. In that case, it is true now that Peter will take the bribe. From the Thomist position it follows that God’s decree that Peter take the bribe makes it true that Peter will take the bribe. But God’s decree that p brings it about that p. So God’s decree that Peter will take the bribe brings it about that Peter will take the bribe. It is therefore hard to see how Peter’s taking the bribe is in any way up to him; it is hard to see how Peter freely takes the bribe, when God makes him take the bribe. Of course, this is the old problem of theological determinism, about which I have nothing new to add. It will be more interesting to consider how Ribadeniera responds to objections to the idea that future truths have present truthmakers.

Two objections are standardly raised against the idea that future truths have present truthmakers. The first objection presents a counterexample that trades on attack on this view and defense of the claim that divine decrees are truthmakers for future truths, see Collegium Ripense de Santa Cecilia, Cursus philosophicus iuxta miram doctrinam et Scholam D. Thomae, vol. 3, Metaphysics, dubium 4, conf. 5-6, pp. 420-430.

45 Peinado, De anima, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4, n. 54, p. 395: “Veritatem formalem actu[um] divinorum etiam adaequate stare in ipsis actibus et objectis.” Caplan and Sanson advance a similar objection in “Presentism and Truthmaking,” 202, but their version of the objection begs the question against the presentist. They say, “God remembers that Plato had a beard for the same reason that the proposition that Plato had a beard is true: because Plato had a beard. But it is not because God remembers that Plato had a beard that the proposition that Plato had a beard is true.” Mauro would simply deny this claim, saying that a past propositions p is true because God remembers p, and God remembers p (partly) because p, thus denying that it is true that p for the same reason that God remembers that p. Better to state the objection as Peinado does: God’s memories are true, so they too require truthmakers. So the original question returns. Alan Rhoda considers a version of this objection to his own view, but again, Rhoda’s version of the objection is not as cogent as Peinado’s. See Rhoda, “Presentism, Truthmakers, and God,” 55.
an analogy between time and space. Peinado raises this objection as a response to an argument for the Thomist position. The argument goes as follows:

In order for this proposition, ‘Peter’s sin is going to happen \( \text{est futurum} \)’, to be determinately true now, in the present, it ought to have something in the present, which it would lack in the present if it were false.\(^{46}\)

The unstated conclusion of this argument is that future truths have present truthmakers. In response, Peinado parodies the argument:

In order for this proposition, ‘The Pope is present at Rome’, to be determinately true here in Alcalá, it ought to have something here in Alcalá, which it would lack if it were false. Therefore, there ought to be something in Alcalá connected with the presence of the Pope in Rome, by which such a proposition is determined to truth and constituted as true rather than false. For how can the Pope existing in Rome determine the truth of a proposition existing in Alcalá? The arguments [for the Thomist position] are similarly defeated by replacing terms of temporal distance with terms of local distance.\(^{47}\)

Those who endorse the Thomist position claim that if ‘\( p \)’ is true at \( t \), then ‘\( p \)’ must have a truthmaker at \( t \). Peinado is here highlighting the fact that we do not typically demand the same of truth in a place: ‘\( p \)’ might be true in a region \( r \) without having a truthmaker in \( r \). If we do not demand spatial co-location of truths and their truthmakers, why demand their temporal co-location?

\(^{46}\) Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4, n. 76, pp. 407-408: “Ut haec propositio, Peccatum Petri est futurum, sit nunc, & de praesenti determinate vera, debet habere aliquid de praesenti, quo careret de praesenti si esset falsa.”

\(^{47}\) Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4, n. 77, p. 408: “Ut haec propositio, Papa est praesens Romae, sit hic Compluti determinate vera debet habere aliquid hic Compluti, quo careret si hic esset falsa. Ergo Compluti debet esse aliquid connexum cum praesentia Romana Papae, a quo talis propositio determinetur ad veritatem, & constitutur vera, potius quam falsa. Nam qua ratione Papa existens Romae potest determinare veritatem propositionis existentis Compluti? Similiter instantur confirmationes transferendo terminos distantiae temporalis ad distantiam localem.” Juan de Ulloa Madritano raises the same objection in *De anima*, 318, n. 24
A Thomist could respond to this objection by denying that space and time are analogous in the way suggested by the objection. According to the objection, (2) and (3) below are supposed to analogous:

(2) The Pope will exist.
(3) The Pope is in Rome.

(2) and (3) are analogous because they both say of the Pope that he is located in a distant location: (3) says he is located in a distant spatial location, while (2) says he is located in a distant temporal location. According to the objection, if (3) does not need a spatially present truthmaker, then (2) does not need a temporally present truthmaker. This objection trades on an analogy between space and time, but those who endorse the Thomist position are likely to be presentists, and to a presentist there is an important disanalogy between space and time. Existence is not a respecter of spatial locations: distinct objects can exist in distinct spatial locations. But according to presentism, existence is a respecter of temporal locations: distinct objects cannot have distinct temporal locations because everything that exists is temporally located in the present. And as I explained above, from Future, Presentism, and Truthmaker, it immediately follows that every truth has a presently existing truthmaker. In order for the objection to go through, we need a premise analogous to Presentism, a premise according to which everything that exists is spatially present or occupies one spatial location. Such a premise no one is likely to accept.

The second objection standardly raised against the claim that future truths need present truthmakers is more successful. For the second objection, recall that according to many early modern scholastics, truth is a semi-extrinsic denomination. We saw in chapter three that there are multiple ways to

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48 Ribadeniera has a different response, but his response is complicated and unsatisfactory. See *De scientia Dei*, d. 12, ch. 2, n. 14, p. 283.
understand the notion of a semi-extrinsic denomination, but for present purposes
we can understand a semi-extrinsic denomination on the anti-realist conception.
The idea, roughly, is that the predicate ‘true’ applies to a proposition ‘p’ in virtue
of a denoming form that is partly intrinsic to ‘p’ and partly extrinsic to ‘p’.

The second objection brings forth examples of extrinsic denominations the
denoming forms of which are temporally distant from the things
denominated. Many such examples can be found in the literature. Some of the
more straightforward ones include the following. Someone is called ‘father’
because of a past act of conception; a house is called ‘old’ because of a past
duration; a painting of Caesar is called ‘accurate’ partly because of Caesar’s past
visible properties; two people are called ‘married’ because of a past exchange of
vows; and so on. As these examples are supposed to show, if F is an extrinsic
denomination, a can be called ‘F’ in virtue of something temporally distant from
a. And because truth is a semi-extrinsic denomination, a proposition can be
called ‘true’ partly in virtue of something—its truthmaker—temporally distant
from the proposition. The conclusion of this sort of argument is Independence—
the claim that future truths are true independently of the present—a claim which
so-called Thomists like Ribadeniera and Mauro deny.

These examples put Ribadeniera in an awkward position. In response, he
digs in his heels and claims that every denoming form is temporally present
to the thing denominated. For example, married people are married in virtue of
something temporally present: God’s knowledge of their past exchange of vows.
Peinado notes that this response is consistent, but it flies in the face of common
sense. Intuitively, it is true that this man is old, for example, because he is now
living and has lived for a long time previously, not because God knows that this

49 See Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4.1, n. 43, p. 388; Peinado, *Phys.*, lib. 2, d. 7, s. 1, subs. 2, n. 19, p. 180; Ribadeniera, *De scientia Dei*, d. 12, ch. 2, nn. 24-27, pp. 286-289.
man is old. Nor do we take ourselves to be speaking of God’s mental states when we say that this man is old. Peinado seems correct to point out that Ribadeniera’s response to the present objection is utterly implausible.

If denominating forms generally do not need to be temporally present to things denominated, there is no reason to think that truthmakers must be temporally present to true propositions. Based on this kind of reasoning, many Jesuits accept Independence, the claim that future truths are true independently of the present. Most also accept Future and Presentism. They are therefore forced to reject Truthmaker, the claim that every truth has an existing truthmaker. Rather than reject this idea wholesale, however, they accept a modified form of Truthmaker in a way that I will now explain.

6.4 Modifying Truthmaker

Peinado states his own view as follows:

The true opinion is what nearly all the older members of our order defend—namely, that propositions about an absolute future contingent (and the same holds with propositions about future conditionals) are constituted as true now adequately by their own entity and the entity of an object not existing now, prescinding from any other thing connected with a future event.

To see what Peinado is claiming here, consider a future truth of the form ‘E will exist’, formed at $t$. Peinado claims that the truth of ‘E will exist’ is constituted at $t$ by (i) the proposition that $E$ will exist, and (ii) $E$ itself, which does not exist at $t$. ‘E will exist’ is true, Peinado says, prescinding from anything (other than the

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50 Peinado, De anima, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4.1, n. 44, p. 388: “Quis enim aliud quaerit pro veritate huius actus, homo est senes, quam hominem modo vivere, cum antae viverit multos annos?”

51 Peinado, De anima, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4.1, n. 36, p. 384: “Probatur vera sententia. Ea est, quam fere omnes AA. Nostri contra Thomistas defendunt. Propositiones de futuro contingenti absoluto (& quoad hoc idem est de propositionibus de futuro conditionato) constitui nunc veras adequate per suam entitatem, & entitatem objecti non existentis modo, praescindendo a quovis alio connexo cum eventu futuro.” For a discussion similar to Peinado’s, see Maximus Mangold, Philosophia recentior, vol. 1, Ontology, diss. 4, a. 1, s. 4, pp. 97ff.
proposition itself) existing at $t$ and connected with the future existence of $E$. For example, speaking about the proposition that Peter will sin tomorrow, Peinado says, “the future sin makes that proposition true today.”\textsuperscript{52} Peinado goes on to say,

But ‘truth’ conventionally signifies only the conjunction of an act that presently and physically exists and its object existing at the time implied by the copula, whether present, past, or future. Therefore, precisely because the act exists today and the object exists at the time assigned by the act, the act is determinately true today, setting aside everything else.\textsuperscript{53}

There are two ways to understand Peinado’s view as stated. First, he might be claiming that ‘$E$ will exist’ is made true at $t$ by $E$, which does not exist at $t$, but exists at a future time. On this reading, Peinado would be understood as saying that future objects such as lunar outposts and the Antichrist exist, even if they do not exist now, and they make future propositions true. On the second reading, Peinado is modifying Truthmaker by claiming that non-existent, future objects can make future propositions true. Let us call the set of all truthmakers the “truthmaking base,” on analogy with a supervenience base. Truthmaker says that the truthmaking base includes only existing objects; on the second reading of Peinado’s remarks above, Peinado is claiming that the truthmaking base includes past and future objects too, which do not exist. On this reading, Peinado is widening the truthmaking base. Which reading is correct?

Although there is no smoking gun passage in which Peinado unequivocally rejects eternalism, it is fairly clear that his intention is to widen the truthmaking base rather than to embrace eternalism. If Peinado intended to embrace

\textsuperscript{52} Peinado, \textit{De anima}, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4.1, n. 40, p. 386: “Peccatum futurum verificat hodie eam propositionem.”

\textsuperscript{53} Peinado, \textit{De anima}, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4.1, n. 42, p. 387: “At veritas ex placito hominum solum significat conjunctum ex actu existente de praesenti & physice & ex objecto existente tempore importato per copulam sive praesenti, sive praeterito, sive futuro. Ergo eo praecise, quod actus existat hodie & objectum existat tempore assignato ab actu, actus est hodie determinate verus quolibet alio secluso.”
eternalism, we would expect him to draw a distinction between existing at a time and existing *simpliciter*, as Molina does, but Peinado draws no such distinction. His failure to do so is especially salient in his responses to various objections. Most of the objections amount to the claim that future objects cannot be truthmakers because future objects do not exist now.\(^{54}\) If Peinado were an eternalist, he would have an easy response: truthmakers must exist, but not at the same time as the propositions which they make true. But Peinado does not avail himself of this solution. Instead, he simply says that truthmakers for future truths will exist. It is therefore very likely that Peinado was not an eternalist, but he intends to widen the truthmaking base to include past and future truthmakers, and I will proceed with this assumption. It is worth noting, however, that Peinado’s view is compatible with eternalism. So if Peinado ends up being an eternalist, the following interpretation of his account can stand. Eternalists might therefore read this section with some interest. But it is philosophically interesting to construe Peinado’s account as a presentist account, since contemporary truthmaker theorists widely agree that presentists have difficulty finding truthmakers for tensed truths. If Peinado’s account is successful, presentists need not find present truthmakers for tensed truths. This will become clear as we proceed.

If my presentist reading of Peinado is correct, he advances the following “wide-base” truthmaker principle with respect to tensed truths. For simplicity, I focus on atomic propositions:\(^{55}\)

**Peinado’s wide-base truthmaker principle**: Present atomic truths have present truthmakers; past atomic truths have past truthmakers; and future atomic truths have future truthmakers.

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\(^{54}\) See Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4, nn. 56ff, pp. 396ff.

\(^{55}\) I get the term ‘wide-base’ from Caplan and Sanson, “Presentism and Truthmaking,” 198. For defense of wide-base truthmaking, see Caplan and Sanson, “The Way Things Were”; Alex Baia, “Presentism and the Grounding of Truth.”
We can understand the notion of a past or future truthmaker as follows. T is a past truthmaker for ‘p’ if (i) ‘p’ is about T, and (ii) ‘p’ is true if and only if T existed prior to the existence of ‘p’. T is a future truthmaker for a proposition ‘p’ if and only if (i) ‘p’ is about T, and (ii) ‘p’ is true if and only if T will exist after ‘p’ exists. As Peinado says about the proposition that the Antichrist will sin, “the sin not existing now but going to exist later is the truthmaker for the act.”

Because the wide-base truthmaker principle admits non-existent truthmakers, it seems to admit truths that are not grounded in being. As we have already seen in connection with negative truths, some contemporary philosophers worry that if we allow some truths that are not grounded in being, we will have no reason not to allow further truths that are not grounded in being, and there will ultimately be no reason to think that any truths are grounded in being. Peinado therefore owes us a principled reason to endorse his wide-base truthmaker principle.

6.4.1 Peinado’s Motivation for the Wide-Base Truthmaker Principle

In chapter five we saw that Peinado endorses a truthmaker principle according to which positive truths have truthmakers in the positive sense and negative truths have truthmakers in the negative sense. His reason for endorsing this truthmaker principle comes from his analysis of what it is to be true for positive and negative propositions, which is, in turn, motivated by his intentional mode view of affirmation and negation. The same commitments motivate his wide-base truthmaker principle.

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56 For a slightly different treatment, see Alex Baia, “Presentism and the Grounding of Truth.” Peinado’s view of tensed truths is also friendly towards the suggestion of Caplan and Sanson (“The Way Things Were”) that past truths must be explained by what happened in the past, and future truths must be explained by what will happen.

57 Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4, n. 67, p. 401: “Peccatum non ut existens nunc sed ut postea exiturum est verificativum actus.”
Recall the analysis of truth entailed by the composite view of truth:

**The standard analysis of truth:** For a proposition ‘p’ to be true is for ‘p’ to exist and for the adequate intentional object of ‘p’ to exist.

We saw in chapter five that this analysis is not available to Peinado because he endorses the intentional mode view of negation. Peinado also endorses an intentional mode view of tense. According to this view, ‘Peter is running’ and ‘Peter will run’ have the same intentional object—Peter’s running—and they differ according to their tenses, which are encoded by the intentional mode. By way of contrast, it will be useful to return to Mauro’s object view of tense. Mauro agrees that ‘Peter is running’ is about Peter’s running, but he does not think that ‘Peter will run’ is about Peter’s running; rather, he thinks that ‘Peter will run’ is about the “futureness” of Peter’s running. That futureness, we have seen, he identifies with a divine decree. So according to Mauro, propositions of diverse tenses differ according to their object rather than their intentional mode. On Peinado’s view, propositions of diverse tenses differ according to their intentional mode rather than their object.

Because Peinado endorses the intentional mode view of tense, the standard analysis of truth is not available to him. Aware of this, Peinado often says that for a proposition to be true is for its object to exist at the time implied by the copula. This claim amounts to the following analyses of truth for tensed propositions:

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58 Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 5, s. 4, n. 49, p. 352: “Quodlibet judicium essentialiter ex suo modo tendendi significat tempus.” Peinado defends the *modus tenendi* view of tense at length in *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4, nn. 46-51, pp. 389-394.
**Past Truth:** For a past atomic proposition ‘p’ to be true at \( t \) is for ‘p’ to exist at \( t \) and for it to be the case at \( t \) that the object of ‘p’ existed.\(^{59}\)

**Present Truth:** For a present atomic proposition ‘p’ to be true at \( t \) is for ‘p’ to exist at \( t \) and for it to be the case at \( t \) that the object of ‘p’ exists.

**Future Truth:** For a future atomic proposition ‘p’ to be true at \( t \) is for ‘p’ to exist at \( t \) and for it to be the case at \( t \) that the object of ‘p’ will exist.\(^{60}\)

Given the above definition of a past truthmaker (\( T \) is a past truthmaker for ‘p’ =\(_{df} \) (i) ‘p’ is about \( T \), and (ii) ‘p’ is true if and only if \( T \) existed prior to the existence of ‘p’), Past Truth entails that past truths have past truthmakers. Given the above definition of a future truthmaker (\( T \) is a future truthmaker for a proposition ‘p’ =\(_{df} \) (i) ‘p’ is about \( T \), and (ii) ‘p’ is true if and only if \( T \) will exist after ‘p’ began to exist), Future Truth entails that future truths have future truthmakers. Peinado’s analyses truth for tensed propositions therefore entail his wide-base truthmaker principle, and his analyses of what it is for tensed propositions to be true are motivated in turn by his intentional mode view of tense. As with the discussion of negative truths, Peinado’s wide-base truthmaker principle raises questions about the viability and consistency of his theory of truth. I will return to these questions shortly, but first I want to make a further, important point about Peinado’s wide-base truthmaker principle.

The wide-base truthmaker principle, as stated above, makes a positive claim about what kinds of truthmakers tensed truths have. But it does not make the further, negative claim that tensed truths do not have present truthmakers.

\(^{59}\) Peinado, *Phys.*, lib. 1, d. 7, s. 2, n. 28, p. 184: “Si loquentes de proposotione de praeterito dicimus est vera, haec affirmatio aequivalet huic: datur de praesenti propositio enuntians de suo objecto praeterisse et objectum re ipsa praeterit.”

\(^{60}\) For simplicity, I assume that propositions are instantaneous. If we assume that propositions persist, Past Truth and Future Truth will have to be modified to account for a situation in which the object of a proposition exists at some but not all of the times at which the proposition exists.
Peinado endorses this further, negative claim, which is an important part of his account of truthmaking. Truthmaker theory has been leveraged against presentism in the contemporary literature. It is widely thought that presentists cannot provide present truthmakers for tensed truths. If Peinado can show that tensed truths do not have present truthmakers, then he will have given some hope to contemporary presentists. That is why the negative claim that tensed truths do not have present truthmakers is an important part of Peinado’s theory of truthmaking for past and future truths.

As Peinado notes several times, the intentional mode view of tense and the aboutness constraint on truthmaking together entail that tensed truths cannot have present truthmakers.\(^\text{61}\) To see why, consider a standard early modern scholastic example of a future truth:

\[
(A) \text{ ‘The Antichrist will sin.’}
\]

Peinado’s opponents maintain that (A) is made true by a “futureness”—something in the present that is “metaphysically connected” with the Antichrist’s future sin.\(^\text{62}\) But according to the intentional mode view of tense, (A) is not about something present that is metaphysically connected with the Antichrist’s future sinning. And according to the aboutness constraint, truths are about their truthmakers. It follows that (A) cannot be made true by something present that is metaphysically connected with the Antichrist’s future sinning. This argument generalizes. The only thing that can make (A) true is the Antichrist’s sinning. And according to the analysis of Future Truth, the Antichrist’s sinning makes (A)

\begin{itemize}
  \item \text{See, for example, Peinado, } De anima, \text{ lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4, n. 40, p. 386: “Peccatum futurum cras & non aliud est objectum propositionis, ut latius ostendam infra; sed objectum propositionis & nihil aliud ab objecto verificat propositionem; ergo peccatum futurum hodie verificat eam propositionem.” See ibid, n. 50, p. 393.}
  \item \text{Many contemporary presentists defend similar claims. See Caplan and Sanson, “Presentism and Truthmaking.”}
\end{itemize}

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true only by being future with respect to (A). It follows that (A)—and tensed truths generally—do not have present truthmakers.

In light of this argument, we can now modify the wide-base truthmaker principle to make explicit the claim that tensed truths do not have present truthmakers:

Peinado’s wide-base truthmaker principle: Present atomic truths have present truthmakers only; past atomic truths have past truthmakers only; and future atomic truths have future truthmakers only.

The wide-base truthmaker principle says that tensed truths do not have present truthmakers. As we have seen, this claim is motivated by Peinado’s aboutness constraint on truthmaking and his intentional mode view of tense. If Peinado can provide independent reason to endorse the latter claims, it seems he will have motivated the claim that tensed truths do not have present truthmakers, a philosophically important result. I have already discussed the motivation for the aboutness constraint in chapters four and five. What can be said for the intentional mode view of tense?

The important part of the intentional mode view is not the positive claim that tense is accounted for by an intentional mode; the important part of the view, for our purposes, is the negative claim that tense is not part of the intentional object of a proposition, that there is a distinction between a proposition’s object and its tense, just as there is a distinction between a proposition’s object and its force. Recall that in the debate about the intentional mode view of affirmation and negation, Peinado observes that his opponents are committed to the implausible

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63 Peinado makes a slightly stronger version of this point in Phys., lib. 2, d. 7, s. 1, subs. 2, n. 27, p. 184: “Quia propositio dici objectum praeteriisse, non esset vera, si objectum existeret dum ipsa est [...] Si objectum coexisteret propositioni, haec esset falsa.” The stronger version is warranted by the scholastic understanding of tense, according to which ‘a is past’ implies that a is not present.
claim that we can only ever affirm the object of a proposition, we cannot deny it. Similarly with respect to tense, he observes that his opponents are committed to the implausible view that we can only ever form propositions about the present:

If the proposition, ‘The Anti-Christ will sin’ has for its object something present connected with [the Anti-Christ’s] sin, and the proposition ‘Adam is past [praeteritillum]’ has for its object something present connected with Adam’s past years, there will be no proposition which is about the past or the future in its mode of expression. And therefore any sentence will be purely about the present, which is against the common sense of philosophers.64

“The common sense of philosophers” might be an oxymoron, but I think Peinado makes a good point here nonetheless. To understand Peinado’s objection to the object view of tense, it is useful to return to Mauro’s view, which Peinado appears to have in mind. Mauro thinks that a future proposition is about a present “futureness”. Hence, a proposition like ‘The Anti-Christ will sin’ is not about a future event, but it is about the present futureness of the Anti-Christ’s future sin. Hence, on Mauro’s view ‘The Anti-Christ will sin’ is not about what will happen in the future. On Mauro’s view, then, we cannot form propositions about the future. As Peinado remarks, the object view of tense does not accord with common sense, since we apparently can form propositions about the future. Peinado points out that if we can form propositions about the future, we must distinguish between a proposition’s intentional object on the one hand, and the proposition’s tense on the other hand. For what it’s worth, I think this argument also works against the contemporary view that future propositions are about tensed facts that are present. If ‘The Antichrist will sin’ is about the tensed fact

64 Peinado, *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4, n. 48, p. 391: “Si haec propositio Anti Christus peccabit habet pro objecto affirmato praesens connexum cum peccato, & haec Adamus praeteritillum, pro objecto affirmato habet praesens connexum cumannis elapsis Adami, nulla erit propositio quae in modo enuntiandi sit de praeterito aut de futuro; proindeque quaevis enuntiatio erit pure de praesenti, quod est contra communem Philosophorum sensum.” See also *De anima*, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4, n. 50, p. 393.
that the Antichrist will sin, and that fact is present, then ‘The Antichrist will sin’ is about the present rather than the future. This is against common sense.

At this point a defender of the object view of tense might object. On the object view of tense, ‘Peter is future’ is about Peter’s futureness (say). Mauro claims that Peter’s futureness is present, but that claim is not, strictly speaking, part of the object view of tense, for we may suppose that Peter’s futureness is future. In that case it would follow that ‘Peter is future’ is about the future.

Peinado appears to have in mind Mauro’s distinctive version of the object view of tense, and the above objection shows that Peinado has to do more work if his objection is to generalize. I think that what is at stake in Peinado’s objection to the object view of tense does generalize beyond Mauro’s version of the object view. Peinado seems to think that the object view of tense cannot account for the tense of a proposition. A present tense proposition purports to say something about the present, while a future tense proposition purports to say something about the future. The question is this: what part or feature of a proposition accounts for this difference? Peinado’s answer is that present and future tense propositions differ with respect to their intentional modes. In short, distinct tenses are distinct ways of thinking. But Peinado thinks the object view of tense cannot account for distinctions with respect to tense. This can be seen as follows. Suppose, as Mauro does, that ‘a is future’ is about a’s futureness, and that a’s futureness is something present—a divine decree, say. Now consider the proposition, ‘a’s futureness exists’. On Mauro’s view, ‘a’s futureness exists’ is about a’s futureness. Now ‘a is future’ is a future tense proposition, and ‘a’s futureness exists’ is a present tense proposition. But what accounts for the difference in tense? On the object view, the object accounts for the difference in tense. But because ‘a is future’ and ‘a’s futureness exists’ have the same intentional object, the intentional object is apparently not sufficient to account for

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65 Here ‘a is future’ is supposed to be a translation of the Latin ‘a futurum est’, which is future tense.
the difference in tense. This argument can also be run on the supposition that \(a\)’s futureness is future. Hence, the object view of tense cannot account for distinctions with respect to tense. In order to account for tense, it seems we must distinguish between a proposition’s object on the one hand and its tense on the other. That is why Peinado identifies the tense of a proposition with the intentional mode.

**Excursus on Oaklander’s Theory of Tense**

In his (2003), Oaklander also grapples with the question of how to account for the tense of a belief. His “A-beliefs” are tensed beliefs, and his “A-facts” are tensed facts. Oaklander writes: “Does the irreducibly tensed belief imply some irreducibly tensed constituent in the belief that accounts for the belief’s intending what seems to be an A-fact? If not, how is one to account for irreducible A-beliefs’ being about or intending what appear to be irreducible A-facts?” (290) Oaklander goes on to endorse an object view of tense: “The intentional meaning of an A-sentence or belief is the subjective tensed content that […] is contained in a conscious mental state or ‘mental act.’ A belief is irreducibly tensed […] because it has a certain content” (291). It is interesting that Oaklander goes on to say that tensed sentences are all false precisely because he endorses the object view of tense along with a B-theory of time. His argument is roughly as follows:

1. Tensed beliefs are about tensed facts.
2. There are no tensed facts.
3. So, tensed beliefs are false.

B-theorists should take this as a *reductio* on the object view of tense. By adopting the intentional mode view, they can reject premise (1) and thereby maintain the truth of tensed propositions. This is good news for the B-theorist because the
truth of tensed beliefs would help to explain why tensed beliefs can be useful for navigating the world. If tensed beliefs were all false, it would be prima facie difficult to explain why they are so useful and pervasive. Moreover, these remarks show that Peinado’s intentional mode view of tense is available to presentists and eternalists (and B-theorists) alike.

End Excursus

Peinado’s theory of truth for tensed truths, his intentional mode view of tense, and his aboutness constraint on truthmaking jointly entail the wide-base truthmaker principle. Because these views receive at least some independent support, it seems Peinado has given some reason for presentists to call off the search for present truthmakers for tensed truths.

6.4.2 Wide-Base Truthmaking and Peinado’s Theory of Truth

In chapter five we saw that Peinado’s treatment of negative truths conflicts with his endorsement of the composite theory of truth. According to the composite theory, truth is the mereological sum of a true proposition and its intentional object. But Peinado thinks that negative truths are such that their objects do not exist. Peinado faces a similar problem with respect to tensed truths. As we have just seen, Peinado thinks that past and future truths are such that their objects do not exist but did exist and will exist, respectively. But it is hard to see how Peinado could square this claim with the composite theory of truth, since it is hard to see how a mereological sum could have a non-existent, past or future part. This is a version of the missing part objection, which we considered in chapter five.

Surprisingly, Peinado’s position on tensed truths was fairly common among adherents of the composite view. Consequently, so was the missing part objection. For example, Rodrigo de Arriaga, who endorses the composite view of
truth, endorses the claim that past and future truths are true if and only if their objects existed and will exist, respectively. He then raises the missing part objection as follows:

Propositions about the future are actually true or false [...] but their objects do not exist now. Therefore, an object does not formally constitute an act as true, otherwise the proposition would be actually true without actual truth. This is confirmed: because whiteness partially constitutes the white thing, it would be contradictory for there to be a white thing now in virtue of a whiteness that will exist in the future [and does not exist now].

The idea here is fairly straightforward: the object of a future proposition cannot constitute the truth of that proposition if the object does not exist. Raising the same objection, Polizzi says of Arriaga’s view, “This is the same as saying that there is a human without an existing rational soul. What is more absurd than that?” Polizzi recognizes that a mereological sum cannot exist without its parts, just as a human being cannot exist without its essential parts: a body and soul. So on the composite view of truth, saying that a proposition is true although its intentional object does not exist is as absurd as saying that there is a human being without a rational soul. Because Peinado endorses the composite view of truth, he must answer the missing-part objection, which he considers several times.


67 Polizzi, Siculi platiensis tomus tertius, d. 25, s. 5, n. 49, p. 369: “Si est absurdum, quod Antichristus, cum nihil defacto sit, determinet propositionem tanquam terminus extrinsecus ad veritatem habendam; erit non minus absurdum, quod determinet tanquam pars intrinsec; imo maius, quatenus ponit Antichristum futurum, ut partem intrinsecam veritatis, quam docet dari a parte rei, quod idem est ac dicere dari homine sine anima rationali existente. Quo quid absurdus?”

68 He considers the missing part objection in several places, including De anima, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4, n. 59, pp. 397-398: “Actus non conjungitur nunc cum denominatione veri, nisi nunc sit tota veritas; sed nunc non est tota veritas; siquidem non est objectum; ergo idem, quod prius.”

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As is his wont, Peinado responds to this objection by appealing to his notion of alienation. For a proposition to be true now, its truth must exist now “partly per statum and partly per alienationem.”

Recall from our discussion of alienation in chapter five (§3.5) that alienation is a semantic phenomenon whereby a verb receives non-standard signification in virtue of other terms in the sentence in which the verb appears. In the present context, Peinado’s claim that the truth of a future proposition exists “partly per statum and partly per alienationem” amounts to the claim that the proposition exists and its object does not exist now but will exist in the future. Fair enough, but Peinado seems again to have missed the force of the objection. Peinado’s appeal to alienation does not explain how a composite entity can have a non-existent part.

However, I think that Peinado’s semantic response shows that Peinado is more concerned with truth conditions for ascriptions of truth than he is with the metaphysics of truth. And we can develop his response in a way that preserves the parts of his theory of truth that are most important to him.

In chapter five I suggested that Peinado fall back to the anti-realist, semi-extrinsic denomination (ARSED) view of truth. On this view, truth is not any sort of thing, but the predicate ‘true’ is governed by systematic application rules to be specified by the analysis of truth, according to which whether or not a proposition is true depends partly on features intrinsic to the proposition and partly on features extrinsic to the proposition.

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69 Peinado, De anima, lib. 2, d. 6, s. 4, n. 60, p. 398: “Distinguo majorem. Nisi nunc sit tota veritas per statum, nego majorem. Partim per statum, partimque per alienationem, concedo majorem.” Cf. Phys. Lib. 1, d. 7, s. 1, subs. 2, n. 27, p. 184: “Infertur quinto: cum veritas propositionis, iuxta dicta supra, audequate identificetur cum complexo ex propositione et obiecto, ut existente tempore importato per verbum propositionis, eo modo existet veritas, quo existat praejectum complexum. Unde, si propositio vera est de praeterito, eius veritas, qua parte includit propositionem, existit de praesenti, qua autem includit obiectum, existit de praeterito, id est, non existit sed extitit. Imo, quia propositio dicit obiectum praeterisse, non esset vera, si obiectum existeret, dum ipsa est. Si autem propositio vera est de futuro, eius veritas, qua parte includit propositionem, existit de praesenti et absolute, qua autem parte includit obiectum, existit de futuro, id est, non existit sed existet. Imo si obiectum coexisteret propositioni, haec esset falsa.”

70 Arriaga responds by pointing out that denominating forms generally need not be present to the subjects they denominate, but his response equally seems to miss the point, as Polizzi points out. See Arriaga, Cursus philosophicus, Logic, d. 14, s. 1, subs. 7, nn. 40-44, pp. 172-173. For Polizzi’s response, see Siculi platiensis tomus tertius, d. 25, s. 4, nn. 41-42, p. 367.
partly on features of the world extrinsic to the proposition. In the present case, we would say that the ‘true’ applies to the proposition

\[(A)\] ‘The Antichrist will sin’

partly because \(A\) says that the Antichrist will sin and partly because the Antichrist will sin. This suggestion preserves Peinado’s view that truth ascriptions have something to do with what a proposition says and something to do with the object of that proposition.

It is also preferable to give a unified analysis of truth. We can do so by extending the analysis given in chapter five. In order to do so, we need to introduce tense operators \textsc{Was} and \textsc{WILL}. I will say that ‘\textsc{Was}(p)’ is the past correlate of ‘p’, and ‘\textsc{WILL}(p)’ is the future correlate of ‘p’. We may now expand the recursive analysis given in chapter five as follows.

\textit{Analysis of Truth} 2.0:

\[p \text{ is true } =_{df} \begin{align*}
(i) & \text{ p is a present atomic proposition whose adequate object exists, or} \\
(ii) & \text{ p is the past correlate of q and q was true, or} \\
(iii) & \text{ p is the future correlate of q and q will be true, or} \\
(iv) & \text{ p is the negation of q and q is false, or} \\
(v) & \text{ p is a conjunction of two propositions q, r, and q is true and r is true}
\end{align*}\]

Assuming that ‘q’ is an atomic proposition, clauses (i) and (ii), together with the intentional mode view of tense, entail that the past correlate of ‘q’ has a past truthmaker. According to clause (ii), ‘\textsc{Was}(q)’ is true if and only if ‘q’ was true. According to clause (i), ‘q’ was true if and only if the object of ‘q’ existed. According to the intentional mode view of tense, the object of ‘\textsc{Was}(q)’ is the
object of ‘q’. Therefore, ‘WAS(q)’ is true if and only if its object existed. This is what Peinado says in Past Truth, his analysis of truth for past truths, and it also accords with his wide-base truthmaker principle. For similar reasons, it can be shown that ‘WILL(p)’ is true if and only if its object will exist, just as Peinado would have it. Because the above analysis is recursive, moreover, it also defines truth for molecular propositions with tensed propositions as constituents.

6.5 Conclusion

I want to end by returning to the inconsistent tetrad with which we began:

**Future**: Some future contingent propositions are true.

**Truthmaker**: Every true proposition has an existing truthmaker.

**Presentism**: Everything that exists is present.

**Independence**: Future truths are not made true by present things.

In this chapter we have seen that early modern scholastics were aware of the possibility of rejecting Future, but they universally (as far as I have seen) endorse Future for both theological and philosophical reasons. We have also seen that some early modern scholastics deny Presentism and endorse eternalism instead, but they tend not to appeal to eternalism in their theorizing about truthmakers for tensed truths. There were, therefore, two rival views in the 17th-century debate about truthmakers for tensed truths: the denial of Independence, and the denial of Truthmaker. As we have seen, the so-called Thomists, including Ribadeniera and his student Mauro, deny Independence and claim that future truths have present truthmakers. Others, including Peinado, endorse a wide-base truthmaker principle, according to which future truths have future truthmakers and past truths have past truthmakers. Peinado’s wide-base truthmaker principle is entailed by his intentional mode view of tense, his aboutness constraint on
truthmaking, and his theory of truth. Moreover, I have argued that the theory of truth developed to accommodate Peinado’s hybrid truthmaker principle in the last chapter can be expanded to accommodate his wide-base truthmaker principle. If Peinado’s account is successful, then he can account for past and future truths without appealing to anything that exists. It is also worth noting that Peinado’s view is consistent with eternalism. I argued in §2 that the problem of tensed truths is not trivial for eternalists, contrary to widespread contemporary opinion. Peinado’s view can also be paired with eternalism to solve the problem of tensed truths. I think it is a benefit of Peinado’s view that it solves the problem of tensed truths for both presentists and eternalists.
7

ETERNAL TRUTHS

Most Aristotelian scholastics thought that a human being is necessarily an animal. But it was also a tenent of Christian doctrine that everything other than God was contingently created in time. Accordingly, human beings are contingent and began to exist in time. But then it seems to follow that human beings, being contingent and temporal, cannot ground the necessary, eternal truth that a human being is an animal. Lots of scholastic philosophers as well as Descartes and Leibniz worried about what I shall call ‘the problem of eternal truths’, which is the problem of explaining what grounds necessary truths about contingent things.\(^1\) Note that the problem of eternal truths does not hinge on any dubious theological assumptions, since the claim that humans (for example) began to exist in time is not merely a theological assumption but seems to be verified by current science.

I have found eight solutions to the problem of eternal truths either mentioned or explicitly advocated in the early modern scholastic literature. I cannot discuss each of these views in detail. In this chapter I focus on the views that are most likely to interest contemporary scholars and that have clear advocates in the early modern scholastic literature. In particular, I explain and evaluate two varieties of Essentialism, according to which uninstantiated essences make eternal truths true (§§1-2), as well as a view I call ‘Truthmaker Theism’, according to which God makes eternal truths true (by being their

truthmaker, not by creating them, as Descartes thought) (§3) and Peinado’s distinctive view, according to which eternal truths of the form ‘Possibly, p’ have merely possible truthmakers (§4). There is a comparatively large secondary literature on Suárez’s treatment of the eternal truths, but I shall discuss Suárez only indirectly. I largely ignore Suárez in the present discussion because, although Suárez had a distinctive and philosophically interesting view of the eternal truths, he does not frame his discussion in terms of truthmaking. Instead he frames his discussion in terms of grounding, but Suárez’s notion of a ground is broader than the 17th-century notion of a truthmaker. I therefore treat Suárez’s discussion of the eternal truth elsewhere. However, Suárez’s discussion of the eternal truths was quite influential on the subsequent scholastic discussion, and it will be useful to bring Suárez into the discussion occasionally.

### 7.1 Realist Essentialism

In the Fifth Meditation, Descartes claims that some things “have their own true and immutable natures.” These natures do not depend on Descartes’s mind (and presumably not on your mind or my mind either). They also do not depend on the existence of any particular (finite) thing. Descartes posits these natures on the basis of the fact that some properties can be demonstrated of them. For example, it can be demonstrated of the triangle that its three angles equal two right angles. Hence, the triangle has a true and immutable nature that includes the property of being such that its three angles equal two right angles.

In the Fifth Set of Objections, Pierre Gassendi sees a certain scholastic view lurking behind Descartes’s remarks in the Fifth Meditation:

> You will say that all you are proposing is the scholastic point that the natures or essences of things are eternal, and that eternally true propositions can be asserted of

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2 “Suárez on Eternal Truths and Extrinsic Being,” in progress.
3 AT VII, 64; CSM II, 44-45.
them […] The schoolmen say that talking of the essence of things is one thing and
talking of their existence is another, and that although things do not exist from
eternity their essences are eternal.\(^4\)

In this passage, Gassendi describes Realist Essentialism. It is controversial
whether Descartes himself was a Realist Essentialist,\(^5\) but as I show in this
section, it is clear that some scholastics were card-carrying Realist Essentialists.

Realist Essentialism is traditionally attributed to Henry of Ghent (1217?-1293).\(^6\) Martin Meruisse reports in 1623 that the view was revived by
philosophers who were “otherwise learned and smart” at the University of
Paris.\(^7\) But in this section we shall focus on the development of Realist
Essentialism by an Italian, Francesco Albertini, (1552-1619), who published a
thorough defense of Realist Essentialism in 1616,\(^8\) after the publication of
Suárez’s 1597 critique of that view in his *Metaphysical Disputations*.

The title of the question in which Albertini advocates Realist Essentialism is,
“Whether the essence of a creature from eternity and before existence is,
according to essential being, some positive, real, actual thing.”\(^9\) Albertini answers
this question in the affirmative:

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\(^4\) AT VII, 319; CSM II, 222.

\(^5\) See Rozemond, “Descartes’s Ontology of the Eternal Truths.”

\(^6\) However, it is controversial whether Henry endorsed Realist Essentialism. For opposing
interpretations of Henry, see Wippel, “The Reality of Non-Existing Possibles According to
Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, and Godfrey of Fontain”; Cross, “Henry of Ghent on the
Reality of Non-Existing Possibles—Revisited.”

\(^7\) Meruisse, *Rerum Metaphysicarum libri tres*, lib. 1, q. 15, p. 173: “Haec sententia abhinc aliquot
annis revixit apud aliquos, alioquin doctos & subtiles, in Universitate Parisiensi, qui existimantes
realitatem essentiae non peti ab existentia, sed essentiam esse realem seclusa existentia;
consequenter docuerunt essentias esse reales ab aeterno, licet tantum in tempore coeperint
existere.” According to Jacob Schmutz, this is a jab at Charles Françoise d’Abra de Raconis
(Schmutz, “Les paradoxes métaphysiques d’Henri de Gand,” 95, fn. 14), but de Raconis actually
endorses Conceptualist Essentialism.

\(^8\) Albertini, *Corollaria, tomus secundus*, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1, pp. 1-10. Coombs briefly discusses
Albertini’s view in “The Ontological Source of Logical Possibility,” 219.

\(^9\) Albertini, *Corollaria, tomus secundus*, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1: “Utrum essentia creaturae ab aeterno
ante existentiam sit secundum esse essentiae aliquid positivum reale actuale”
The essences of creatures are not altogether nothing before existence, nor do they have merely potential being in a cause, but from eternity they have intrinsic, actual, absolute, quidditative being or essential being \([esse essentiae]\).\(^{10}\)

Much is going on in this brief statement of Realist Essentialism. Albertini is at once endorsing his own view and contrasting it with those of his opponents, chief of whom is Suárez. Very roughly, Suárez thought that eternal truths are grounded in potential beings, and he claimed that potential being is “being in a cause”—in other words, something has potential being just in case there is a cause that can produce it. What makes Suárez’s view distinctive is the claim that potential being is an extrinsic sort of being. I explain this idea in greater detail below. In the above passage Albertini defines his position largely in opposition to Suárez’s view when he says that essential being is not potential being in a cause and that it is an intrinsic sort of being. I explain Albertini’s essential being in greater detail below, but before doing so I need to clarify the relationship of truthmaking to Realist Essentialism.

### 7.1.1 Essentialism and Truthmaking

In favor of Essentialism Albertini employs a grounding argument well known to 17th-century scholastics. Albertini attributes this argument to Henry of Ghent. I will follow him in calling it ‘The Henrician argument’, although it is doubtful whether Henry actually made such an argument:

*The Henrician Argument:*

[Henry] says this proposition, ‘Man is a rational animal’, is a proposition of eternal truth. Therefore, from eternity man is an animal not according to potential being but according to actual being.\(^{11}\)

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\(^{10}\) Albertini, *Corollaria, tomus secundus*, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1, n. 12, p. 4: “Essentiae creaturarum non sunt omnino nihil ante existentiam, neque habent esse solum potentiæ in causa, sed ab aeterno habent esse intrinsecum actuale absolutum quidditativum seu essentiae.”
The first premise in this argument is,

(1) ‘Man is a rational animal’ is an eternal truth.

On the basis of this premise Albertini concludes that “man is an animal [...] according to actual being.” This argument is, of course, supposed to support Albertini’s main claim that essences have actual being before they exist. So it seems that Albertini understands the claim that man is an animal according to actual being to entail that the essence of man has actual being from eternity. Albertini’s conclusion, it seems, can be rendered as (2):

(2) The essence of man has actual being from eternity.

The fact that Albertini’s conclusion from the Henrician argument is correctly rendered by (2) is supported by several other texts, including the following:

‘Man is a rational animal’ is a proposition of eternal truth because the essence of man has actual, intrinsic, quidditative, absolute being from eternity.12

But how exactly is (2) supposed to follow from (1)? Many early modern scholastics formulate the Henrician argument as turning on a premise about grounding. Mastri, for example, presents the argument from eternal truths on behalf of his Realist opponent as follows:

They argue from the immutable, eternal truth of necessary propositions. Since essential propositions of the first and second mode of speaking per se are always

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11 Albertini, *Corollaria, tomus secundus*, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1, n. 22, p. 6. Although this sort of argument was almost universally attributed to Henry of Ghent, I have been unable to locate any such argument in Henry.

12 Albertini, *Corollaria, tomus secundus*, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1, n. 27, p. 7: “Homo est animal rationale est propositio aeternae veritatis, quia essentia hominis habet ab aeterno esse actuale intrinsecum quidditativum absolutum.”
true and necessary even before existence, therefore the essences of things, about which [eternal truths] are made true [verificantur], will be real before existence. The consequence is clear because every real truth is grounded [fundatur] in some being. It is confirmed because it was true from eternity to say that man was a rational animal, and hence the proposition that a man is a rational animal is said to be a proposition of eternal truth, and it does not depend on the actual existence of a man. But there seems to be no way it can be true unless man had some real being from eternity. [My emphasis.]\(^{13}\)

As Mastri presents it, the argument hinges on the assumption that every truth is grounded in some being. This assumption is also operative in Francisco Suárez’s rather terse presentation of the argument.

Essential predicates are or can be truly predicated of an essence from eternity. But every truth is grounded [fundatur] in some being [esse].\(^{14}\)

Suárez assumes that this argument is familiar to his readers and does not even bother to state the conclusion: that essences have being from eternity. Albertini himself appears to have thought of the Henrician argument as a grounding argument, since he repeats a variation of the argument as follows:

God does not know that man can be a rational animal, but that man is a rational animal. Therefore the ground [fundamentum] of this truth ought to be an actual being.\(^{15}\)

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13 Mastri, *Tomus quintus*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 4, n. 58, p. 31: “Argumenta deducunt ex aeterna veritate, ac immutabili propositionum necessariarum, quia propositiones essentiales primi, & secundi modi dicendi per se sunt semper verae, & necessariae etiam ante existentiam, ergo & ipsae rerum essentiae, de quibus verificantur, reales erunt ante existentiam, consequentia patet, quia omnis veritas realis in aliquo esse vero fundatur. Confirmatur quia ab aeterno verum erat dicere, quod homo erat animal rationale, & hinc propositio illa dicitur aeternae veritatis, & non dependere ab actuali existentia hominis, non videtur autem quo pacto possit esse vera, nisi homo haberet aliquod esse reale ab aeterno.” See also Suárez, DM 31.2.6, (XXVI, 230-231); 31.12.46, (XXVI, 297b).


15 Albertini, *Corollaria, tomus secundus*, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1, n. 25, p. 6: “Deus non cognoscit hominem posse esse animal rationale, sed esse animal rationale. Ergo fundamentum huius veritatis debet esse ens actuale.”
In light of these passages, it appears that the Henrician argument was widely understood as turning on the premise that every truth is grounded in some being. It is likely that this argument was so familiar to his readers that Albertini felt no need to make it explicit in his presentation of the Henrician argument.

It is perhaps natural to think of a ground in this context as a truthmaker. I think that such a reading would be a bit hasty because there is no evidence that Albertini or others who accept the grounding premise, such as Suárez and Mastri, had the notion of a truthmaker. Moreover, Suárez seems to have used the term ‘ground’ and its cognates to denote an explanatory reason, where the thing doing the explaining need not be something that exists. So the notion of a ground in Suárez seems to have been broader than the notion of a truthmaker. Hence, it would be hasty assume that the ground of a truth is a truthmaker in the technical sense.

Nonetheless, some early modern scholastics did understand the Henrician argument in terms of truthmaking. For example, in his disputation on essence and existence, Giuseppe Polizzi defends Realist Essentialism, citing Albertini as one source of his view.16 As is standard, Polizzi offers the Henrician argument, apparently lifted straight out of Albertini, as support for Realist Essentialism:

The conclusion is proven fourthly because this proposition is true from eternity [...] ‘Man is a rational animal’. Therefore, from eternity man actually has in himself essential being. For it does not say, ‘Man can be a rational animal’, but that man ‘is a rational animal’.17

Here Polizzi does not appeal to the notion of a truthmaker, but only a few lines later, he says, “But we are talking about the truth of a proposition that requires

16 Polizzi, Siculi platiensis tomus tertius, d. 49, s. 2, n. 11, p. 624.
17 Polizzi, Siculi platiensis tomus tertius, d. 49, s. 3, n. 26, p. 629: “Probatur denique quarto conclusio, quia vera est ab aeterno hoc propositio, [textus corruptus], ‘Homo est animal rationale’. Ergo ab aeterno homo habet actu in se esse essentiae; non enim dicitur ‘potest esse’, sed ‘est animal rationale’.”
its truthmaker on the part of man.”\textsuperscript{18} In light of this passage it seems clear that Polizzi understands the Henrician argument as a truthmaker argument and that he accordingly conceives of essences, which have being but do not exist, as truthmakers for eternal truths.

However, the claim that non-existent essences are truthmakers for eternal truths is problematic. For on the standard conception of truthmaking, both now and in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, truthmakers make propositions true by existing. As we saw in chapter three, in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century this standard conception of truthmaking is entailed by two prevalent theories of truth according to which a proposition is true if and only if its intentional object exists. Yet according to Realist Essentialism, eternal truths are made true by essences that do not exist but that have some other form of being. This raises the question what theory of truth, and what account of truthmaking, might be compatible with Realist Essentialism. It is unfortunately not obvious from the text how Polizzi would answer this question, but I will propose one option available to him.

I’ll begin my proposal with a proposal that will not quite work. One might think that Polizzi could fall back to the position that a proposition is true if and only if its intentional object has being. He might then say that there are two ways to have being: something might have being by existing or by having essential being. He might then stipulate that the only things that necessarily have essential being are essences. This stipulation leaves intact the distinction between contingent and necessary truths. The idea would be that contingent truths are made true by contingent existents, while necessary truths are made true by necessary essential beings.

This proposal will not work, however, because early modern scholastics standardly recognize a further kind of being: objective being. Every intentional object has objective being simply in virtue of being the object of thought. So if

\textsuperscript{18} Polizzi, \textit{Siculi platiensis tomus tertius}, d. 49, s. 3, n. 26, p. 629: “Nos autem loquimur de veritate propositionis, quae requirit ex parte hominis verificativum sui.”
Polizzi said that a proposition is true if and only if its object has being, it would follow that every proposition is trivially true, since the object of every proposition has objective being \textit{de facto}. What is needed, then, is a theory of truth that recognizes the distinction between objective being and essential being.

Albertini maintains that essential beings and existents both are \textit{actual}, but not all objective beings are actual. The distinction between actual being and non-actual being can help construct an account of truth consistent with Albertini’s brand of ontological pluralism. My suggestion is that Albertini should say that a proposition ‘p’ is true if and only if its intentional object has the kind of being attributed to it by ‘p’. Albertini would then want to say that an ordinary predication of the form ‘a is F’ attributes actual being to its object. Because objective being is not actual, we don’t get the triviality problem described above. This account would also preserve the distinction between necessary and contingent truths. To see this, consider some examples. ‘Peter is running’ is true on the present account just in case Peter’s running has actual being. There are two ways to have actual being: something can have actual being by having essential being or by existing. Peter’s running does not have essential being because only essences have essential being. Hence, ‘Peter is running’ is true just in case Peter’s running exists. Because Peter’s running contingently exists (if it does exist), ‘Peter is running’ is contingently true. Compare this with the truth of ‘A human is an animal’. This proposition is true just in case it’s intentional object—the essence of humanity—is actual. There are two ways of being actual, so there are two ways humanity can make ‘A human is an animal’ true: by existing or by having essential being. Because the essence of humanity necessarily has essential being, ‘A human is an animal’ is necessarily true. Of course, for this sort of account to be intelligible, more must be said about the nature of essential being, to which I now turn.
7.1.2 Essential Being

Recall the passage quoted above in which Albertini endorses Realist Essentialism:

The essences of creatures are not altogether nothing before existence, nor do they have merely potential being in a cause, but from eternity they have intrinsic, actual, absolute, quidditative being or essential being \(\text{esse essentiae}\).\(^{19}\)

According to this passage, essences have essential being before they exist. It follows straightforwardly that essential being is not existence. Albertini also lists four characteristics of essential being: (i) essential being is not potential being in a cause, (ii) it is intrinsic, and (iii) it is absolute, and (iv) it is actual. Later Albertini will also insist that essential being has a fifth characteristic: (v) it is not “in the divine intellect”.\(^{20}\) In this section I will explain the distinction between existence and essential being as well as the five characteristics of essential being.

Some of Albertini’s opponents allege that there is no coherent distinction between existence and essential being,\(^{21}\) but I think that more can be said for the distinction than Albertini’s opponents recognize. A number of contemporary philosophers, led by Kris McDaniel, have developed the thesis of ontological pluralism, according to which there are multiples ways of being. The contemporary development of ontological pluralism helps to get a grip on the existence/essential being distinction.\(^{22}\) Very roughly and very briefly, we can represent the thesis of ontological pluralism by introducing two semantically primitive, fundamental quantifiers: \(\exists_1\) and \(\exists_2\). Let \(\exists_2\) express existence, and let \(\exists_1\) express essential being, so that \(\exists_2 x \exists_2 y (x = y)\) means that something exists, and

\(^{19}\) Albertini, \textit{Corollaria, tomus secundus}, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1, n. 12, p. 4: “Essentiae creaturarum non sunt omnino nihil ante existentiam, neque habent esse solum potentiale in causa, sed ab aeterno habent esse intrinsecum actuale absolutum quidditativum seu essentiae.”

\(^{20}\) Albertini, \textit{Corollaria, tomus secundus}, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1, n. 28, p. 7. I discuss this passage below.

\(^{21}\) Ribadeniera, \textit{De scientia Dei}, d. 6, ch. 1, n. 5, p. 147: “Quia non est aliud existere, quam intrinsec actualiter esse in se ipsi: ergo si essentiae ab aeterno sunt actualiter in se ipsis, ab aeterno existunt.” Quine raises a similar objection against “Wyman” (“On What There Is,” 23).

∃x∃y(x = y) means that something has essential being. There is a sense in which these quantifiers are restricted insofar as, individually, they do not range over everything there is. But to say that these quantifiers are semantically primitive is to say that they are not defined in terms of an unrestricted quantifier. (Although the unrestricted quantifier can be defined in terms of the semantically primitive, restricted quantifiers.) To say that these quantifiers are fundamental is to say, roughly, that they carve reality at the joints, that they track fundamental types of being. Ontological pluralism can be understood as the claim that there are such semantically primitive, fundamental quantifiers.

Of course Albertini himself did not understand ontological pluralism in terms of a formal quantificational apparatus. Nonetheless, I think the formal quantificational apparatus does help us to appreciate one way to make sense of ontological pluralism. To facilitate understanding, I will occasionally explain the tenets of Realist Essentialism using the quantificational apparatus.23 We may now turn to the five characteristics of essential being listed by Albertini.

The first two characteristics of essential being—it is not potential being in a cause, and it is it intrinsic—represent Albertini’s departure from Francisco Suárez’s view of uninstantiated essences. Suárez claims that eternal truths are grounded in potential being, and he differentiates his view from Realist Essentialism by saying that potential being is an extrinsic form of being.24

Although the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic being is common in the early modern scholastic literature, I have not seen anyone explain it. Nor is there a contemporary analogue of this distinction. Nonetheless, I think we can make some sense of the distinction.

23 I fully realize that this practice opens me to the charge of anachronism. To satisfy chronistically fastidious readers, I will use the quantificational apparatus to explain how a Neo-Quinean Realist Essentialist might spell out her view nowadays. My hope is that, in addition to being philosophically interesting in its own right, the Neo-Quinean rendition of Realist Essentialism will help to illustrate the view held by Albertini.

24 DM 31.2.2, 7 (XVI, pp. 229, 231)
In one passage Suárez tells us that potential being is an extrinsic denomination.25 The early modern scholastic distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic denomination does the work of the contemporary distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic properties. To get a grip on the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic properties, it is best to begin with examples. Examples of intuitively intrinsic properties include being blue, being made of iron, and being a horse. Examples of intuitively extrinsic properties include being someone’s favorite color, being next to something made of iron, and being seen by a horse. There is a large contemporary literature attempting to analyze the intrinsic/extrinsic property distinction,26 but for our purposes a rough characterization, inspired by David Lewis,27 will do:

Rough characterization of intrinsic and extrinsic properties:

F is an intrinsic property iff necessarily, anything that is F is F in virtue of the way it itself, and nothing wholly distinct from it, is.

F is an extrinsic property iff F is a non-intrinsic property.

When Suárez says that potential being is an extrinsic denomination, he signals that he understands the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic being on the model of the contemporary distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic properties. To see this, consider the property, being producible. Following Suárez, let us say that x is producible wholly in virtue of a causal power that can produce x. Because the causal power that can produce x is extrinsic to x, x does not have the property, being producible, in virtue of how x and nothing else is. Rather x has the property, being producible, in virtue of how a causal power extrinsic to x is. Suárez

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25 DM 31.2.2 (XVI, 229). Cf. 31.1.2 (XVI, 225), 30.17.10 (XVI, 209)
26 See Francescotti, ed., Companion to Intrinsic Properties.
thinks that to be producible just is to have potential being. Hence, he thinks of potential being as what we would call an extrinsic property. Of course, being producible is a controversial example of an extrinsic property, since some of Suárez’s contemporaries argue that being producible is an intrinsic feature of things. Notably, both Realist and Conceptualist Essentialists take this line for reasons I discuss below. Even if Suárez is wrong, I think his position is intelligible, and we can makes sense of the idea that being producible is an extrinsic property. It is important to note, moreover, that on Suárez’s view something can have extrinsic being (or an extrinsic property) without existing. Being producible is one example of an extrinsic property that can be posessed by non-existents, and being thought about is another. Intuitively, I can think about things that do not exist, like the fountain of youth. If so, then the fountain of youth can have the extrinsic property being thought about, even if it does not exist. In Suárez’s terminology, the fountain of youth can have objective being—an extrinsic form of being—even if it does not exist.

Suárez sees his version of Essentialism as superior to Realist Essentialism for the following reason. Extrinsic being, like an extrinsic property, is not fundamental and is literally no addition in being to that in virtue of which something has extrinsic being. For example, if Pegasus has potential being in virtue of a cause that can produce Pegasus, Pegasus’s being is borrowed, as it were, from that cause, and it is therefore no addition in being to the cause. Indeed, this is how Albertini views the situation. He writes that if Suárez’s view were correct, then essences from eternity “would not have in reality any being besides the being of their cause, which is God himself.”²⁸ Based on this passage, we can spell out the idea of extrinsic being more precisely as follows:

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²⁸ Albertini, Corollaria, tomus secundus, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1, n. 3, p. 2: “Non enim haberet a parte rei aliud esse praeter esse causae quae est ipse Deus.”
**Extrinsic being**: $x$ has extrinsic being from $y =_{df} x$’s being is identical to $y$’s being, and $y \neq x$.

We can see how this works using the example of potential being. Suppose God can produce Pegasus, and so Pegasus has potential being. When Suárez says that Pegasus’s potential being is extrinsic, he means that Pegasus’s potential being is identical to the being of God’s causal power, but Pegasus is not identical to God’s causal power. That is why Pegasus’s potential being is literally no addition in being to God’s causal power. Suárez thinks that this helps him avoid the theological worries (to be discussed below) associated with Essentialism, since potential beings are no addition in being to God’s power.29

By contrast, when Albertini says that essential being is intrinsic, he is saying that essences have essential being wholly in virtue of how they are, that their having essential being cannot be explained in terms of how God or anything else is, and that their being is not identical to the being of God’s power. His reason for rejecting Suárez’s view is that the eternal truths say what *is* the case, not what *can be* the case. Hence, eternal truths must be grounded in something actual, not in something potential.30 It should be noted, however that early modern scholastics did not uniformly agree on the meanings of terms like ‘real’ and ‘actual’, and such terms are therefore not very helpful in mapping the dialectical space around early modern scholastic thought about eternal truths. The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic being is more useful in this regard.

I have explained the distinction between existence and essential being and characteristics (i), (ii), and (iv) of essential being: (i) essential being is not being in a cause, (ii) essential being is intrinsic, and (iv) essential being is actual. These characteristics of essential being signal Albertini’s disagreement with Suárez’s

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29 I think the notion of extrinsic being could potentially yield an interesting new conception of reducibility, but this is a topic to be explored elsewhere.

30 Albertini, *Corollaria, tomus secundus*, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1, n. 25, p. 6.
brand of Essentialism. I will now turn to the explanation of characteristic (iii)—essential being is absolute—and (v)—essential being is not “in the divine intellect”.

When Albertini says that essential being is absolute, he is contrasting his position with a position according to which essences have conditional being from eternity. I will return to the topic of conditional being when I discuss Peinado’s position below. But very briefly, something is said to have conditional being just in case it would exist under certain conditions. Hence, to have conditional being is not really to have any being at all. By rejecting this view, Albertini is saying that essential being is an irreducible, genuine form of being.

This brings us to (v), the claim that essential being is not in the divine mind. In order to distinguish Realist Essentialism from Conceptual Essentialism, Albertini also argues that the sort of being essences have from eternity is “outside of God”:

This essential being or quidditative, absolute, intrinsic being, which, as has been shown, creatures have before existence, is really outside of the divine intellect [a parte rei extra intellectum divinum]. This is against Scotus and the Scotists discussed in the second opinion.31

The inside/outside talk is metaphorical. To say that some being is “inside the divine intellect” is to say that its being is constituted entirely by being the object of divine thought. Hence, if per impossibile, God were to stop thinking about essences, they would lose their being according to the Scotist view. (More on the Scotist view below). Not so on the Realist account. For Albertini, essences have essential being independently of God’s thinking about them. God could turn a blind eye to Socrates’s essence, and it would go on having being all the same. According to Conceptualist Essentialism, God produces essences by thinking

31 Albertini, Corollaria, tomus secundus, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1, n. 28, p. 7: “Hoc esse essentiae seu quidditativum absolutum intrinsecum, quod ut probatum est, habet creatura ante existentiam, est a parte rei extra intellectum divinum, contra Scotum et Scotistas relatos in secunda sententia.”
about them. Albertini rejects this view because it has two theologically problematic consequences. First, because essences are necessary, Conceptualist Essentialism entails that God necessarily produces essences. This implies that God has no control over his own actions. Second, Conceptualist Essentialism entails that God does not know what he is going to do before he does it. Before he produces a certain essence, he cannot know anything about that essence. This is because one of the important jobs of essences before creation is to account for God’s knowledge of non-existents. The idea is that in order for God to have knowledge of things before they exist, they have to have some form of being. According to Conceptualist Essentialism, God can have knowledge of a certain essence insofar as that essence has \textit{objective} being. But this entails that before God produces essences in objective being, he cannot know what he is going to do. In short, Conceptualist Essentialism entails that some of God’s actions are prior to or simultaneous with his knowledge. It follows that some of God’s actions cannot be guided by knowledge, and in this respect God’s actions are no different from natural actions: “It would follow that God would produce merely naturally, like a fire.” \textsuperscript{32} By contrast, Albertini thinks that God’s knowledge is prior to his actions. This allows God to know what he is doing before he does it.\textsuperscript{33}

The Realist Essentialist now faces two choice points. First, are essences conceived of as individual or universal? I understand a universal essence to be indeterminate with respect to individuating factors so that distinct individuals can share a universal essence. For example, Socrates and Plato might both instantiate the essence of humanity. By contrast, individual essences are determinate with respect to individuals such that distinct individuals cannot have the same essence. We might say that Socrates has an individual essence, \textit{Socrateity}, and Plato has an individual essence, \textit{Platones}, and while these

\textsuperscript{32} Albertini, \textit{Corollaria, tomus secundus}, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1, n. 37, p. 8: “Sequeretur quod Deus produceret mere naturaliter, sicut igni”

\textsuperscript{33} See Albertini, \textit{Corollaria, tomus secundus}, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1, n. 41, p. 9.
essences share some features in common—e.g., they are both human essences—they are distinct essences. Are Albertini’s essences universal or individual? A second question is, what is the relationship between essences and existents? A slightly different but closely related way of putting this question: are instantiated essences identical to uninstantiated essences?

Throughout his disputation on the ontological status of essences, Albertini assumes that an essence has essential being just in case a creature has essential being. This can be seen from the way in which Albertini routinely moves from speaking of an essence’s having essential being to a creature’s having essential being. For example, in the first passage quoted above, Albertini states that essences have essential being from eternity, whereas in the second passage he states that creatures have essential being from eternity. Further, the title of the question in which Albertini defends Realist Essentialism is “whether essences have being from eternity”, but two paragraphs later, Albertini re-states the question as follows: “Whether a creature has actual essential being from eternity” (my emphasis). The fact that Albertini runs together the two claims—(i) essences have essential being from eternity and (ii) creatures have essential being from eternity—suggests that he thinks that essences just are individuals with essential being. This suggestion is supported by some of his examples. One of his favorite examples involves a rock before creation. This suggests that individual rocks have essential being before they exist. In a smoking gun passage, Albertini tells us that the Antichrist has essential being before existence: “The Antichrist, who is now in objective potency, will be the same man who will be in act, with this difference: that when he is in objective potency, he has actual essential being

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34 Others also speak this way. Cf. Suárez, DM 31.2.1, (XXVI, 229): “Principio statuendum est, essentiam creaturae, seu creaturam de se, & priusquam a Deo fiat, nullum habere in se verum esse reale, & in hoc sensu, praeciso esse existentiae, essentiam non esse rem aliquam, sed omnino esse nihil” (my emphasis).

35 Albertini, Corollaria, tomus secundus, princi. 1, d. 1, q. 1, n. 2, p. 2: “An creatura habeat esse actuale essentiae ab aeterno.”

36 Albertini, Corollaria, tomus secundus, princi. 1, d. 1, q. 1, nn. 3, 15, 16.
with the possibility of existing [...] but when he is in act, he has being simpliciter.” 37 Before existence, the Antichrist has essential being, and at creation God bestows existence upon the Antichrist. This strongly suggests that Albertini’s talk of essences having essential being before existence should be understood as talk about individuals like rocks and the Antichrist having essential being before existence. A Neo-Quinean might make these points by saying that his fundamental quantifiers range over a single domain. Before creation, the Antichrist’s ontological status is as follows:

**Before Creation:** $\exists_1 x \ (x = \text{the Antichrist}) \land \neg \exists_2 y (y = \text{the Antichrist})$

After the creation of the Antichrist, the ontological status of the Antichrist is as follows:

**After Creation:** $\exists_1 x \exists_2 y \ (x = \text{the Antichrist} \land x = y)$

Essential beings are supposed to account for modal truths such as ‘The Antichrist is possible’. The thought behind Realist Essentialism is that one’s essence constitutes one’s intrinsic possibility. When God creates the Antichrist, he does so by bestowing existence on the Antichrist, where he had previously enjoyed only essential being. Unlike the Antichrist, round square copulas do not have any sort of being, essential or otherwise, and that explains why God cannot bestow existence on a round square copula: a round square copula is not ‘there’ to bestow existence on. 38

37 Albertini, *Corollaria, tomus secundus*, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 3, n. 3, p. 12: “Antichristus, qui nunc est in potentia objectiva, erit ille idem, qui erit actu, cum hac differentia, quia ut est in potentia objectiva, habet esse essentiae actuale cum possibilitate ad existendum connotando negationem existentiae, ut vero est in actu, habet esse simpliciter.

38 Albertini, *Corollaria, tomus secundus*, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1, n. 18, p. 5ff; see also q. 3. John Punch, a Scotist who largely agrees with Albertini’s position, argues as follows: “Nisi creaturae haberent esse aliquod possibile a seipsis, independenter ab actu intellectus divini, non esset ratio quare
A Neo-Quinean Realist Essentialist who had theistic leanings (what are the odds?) might explain the extent of divine omnipotence as follows. First, God can make \( a \) if and only if \( a \) is intrinsically possible. Our Neo-Quinean will then define intrinsic possibility reductively along the following lines:

\[
a \text{is intrinsically possible } =_{df} \exists_1 x (x = a)
\]

Informally, \( a \) is intrinsically possible just in case \( a \) has essential being. Our Neo-Quinean might then add that \( a \) is possible *simpliciter* just in case it is intrinsically possible, and there exists a power to bring \( a \) into existence:

\[
a \text{is possible simpliciter } = \exists_1 x \exists_2 y (y \text{ is a power to bring } x \text{ into existence } \land x = a)
\]

We now know how Realist Essentialists thought about essential being. It is time to turn to objections.

### 7.1.3 Theological Objections

In spite of the work that essences can do, most early modern scholastics reject Realist Essentialism on theological grounds.\(^{39}\) According to Realist Essentialism, uninstantiated essences are necessary beings distinct from God, and this seems to conflict with classical theist orthodoxy, according to which “God alone is a necessary being.”\(^{40}\) In fact, the claim that “from eternity there were many truths

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\(^{39}\) For a thorough presentation of these objections, see Mastri, *Tomus quintus*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, p. 20-21.

\(^{40}\) Suárez, DM 31.2.3 (XXVI, 230). This and the following theological arguments are repeated by Albertini (Corollaria, *tomus secundus*, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1, n. 3, p. 1), who cites Scotus as their source. For others who endorse these theological objections to Realist Essentialism, see, e.g., Ribadeniera, *De scientia Dei*, d. 6, ch. 1, n. 4, p. 146; Peinado, *Phys.*, lib. 1, d. 7, n. 4, p. 173; and Mauro,
that were not God himself,” had been condemned several times starting in the 13th century. Further, real, uninstantiated essences are uncreated, and this seems to conflict with the orthodox view that everything other than God is a creature of God. And not only does God fail to create essences, but he also cannot annihilate them. He must simply put up with them, and this is an apparent violation of divine sovereignty. Realist Essentialism also suggests that what God does create is not created ex nihilo. According to Realist Essentialism, when God creates a horse, he does so by adding existence to a horse-essence. It begins to sound as if God makes a horse out of a pre-existing horse-essence rather than ex nihilo. So Realist Essentialism has the following theologically unacceptable implications:

(5) There are necessary beings other than God.
(6) There are uncreated beings other than God.
(7) There are some things other than God that God cannot annihilate.
(8) God does not create ex nihilo.

Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus, q. 47, pp. 160b-164b [pp. 160-168 appear twice, and ‘160b’ refers to the second instance of p. 160].

41 See De Libera La référence vide, 177-187. In this connection, many early modern scholastics cite Thomas Netter Waldensis, a 15th-century author. See Waldensis, Doctrinale antiquitatum fidei ecclesiae catholicae I, a. 1, ch. 9, p. 35.

42 On this problem see Plantinga, Does God Have a Nature? and Bergmann and Brower, “A Theistic Argument Against Platonism (and in Support of Truthmakers and Divine Simplicity).” Bergmann and Brower defend a view similar to Mauro’s, discussed in §4.

43 In addition to the theological objections, opponents of Realist Essentialism raised some philosophical objections. According to one popular objection, the motivation for Realist Essentialism overgenerates. As we have seen, the argument for Realist Essentialism turns on the claim that to every truth there corresponds some being. According to the Realist Essentialist, any eternal truth of the form ‘a is F’ corresponds to the essence of a. But now consider the proposition, (E) Existence is the formal cause of existing.

Intuitively, (E) is eternally true. So by the Realist Essentialist’s own lights, (E) must correspond with some being, the essence of existence perhaps. The point of this objection is that some eternal truths are about existence. If the argument from eternal truths is sound, it appears we must posit some form of eternal existence to account for such truths, which Realist Essentialists do not want to do, not least because objections (5)-(8) would come back with a vengeance.
Most early modern scholastics took these objections seriously; as a result, Realist Essentialism was a minority view.\(^{44}\)

Realist Essentialists respond to objections (5)-(8) by leaning on ontological pluralism.\(^{45}\) Since there are two kinds of being, (5)-(8) are ambiguous. Consider the claim that there are necessary beings other than God. (Henceforth I drop the qualification, “other than God”.) This can mean that some things necessarily have essential being, or it can mean that some things necessarily have existence. Realist Essentialism implies the former, but not the latter. And of course Albertini also maintains that orthodoxy demands the denial of the latter, but not the former. Albertini adds that the necessity of essences differs from God’s necessity in two ways: first, God necessarily has existence, whereas essences necessarily have essential being; second, God is independent, whereas essences are dependent on God as on an exemplar cause. The rough idea here is that finite essences are somehow images of the divine essence. Albertini thinks that images somehow depend on their exemplars.\(^{46}\) Accordingly, finite essences depend on God as on an exemplar.

Our Neo-Quinean would formulate Albertini’s response to (5) as follows. (5) is ambiguous between:

\[
(5a) \Box \exists_1 x \ (x \neq \text{God}) \\
(5b) \Box \exists_2 x \ (x \neq \text{God})
\]

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\(^{44}\) For a contemporary presentation of the theological problems associated with necessary truths, see Leftow, *God and Necessity*, 1-28, esp. 23-27.

\(^{45}\) Albertini, *Corollaria, tomus secundus*, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1, nn. 39-44, pp. 9-10.

\(^{46}\) It is not clear exactly what sort of dependence is involved in exemplar causation. After all, a painting of Caesar can exist without Caesar existing. However, a detailed exploration of exemplar causation would take us too far from the task at hand.
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The Neo-Quinean would then say that (5a) is true, while (5b) is false. The strategy here is to show that Realist Essentialism can accommodate the claims of theistic orthodoxy. The Realist Essentialist interprets the orthodox claim that God is the only necessary being as the claim that God is the only necessary *existent*, a claim Realist Essentialism can accommodate. Recall from chapter five that Carleton employs a similar strategy to defend the existence of necessary lacks.

From the foregoing it is clear how Albertini would respond to (6): there are no uncreated *existents* other than God, but there are uncreated *essences* other than God’s. Or, as our Neo-Quinean might say, (6a) is true, while (6b) is false:

\[(6a) \exists_1 x (x \text{ is uncreated } \land x \neq \text{God})\]
\[(6b) \exists_2 x (x \text{ is uncreated } \land x \neq \text{God})\]

Again, theistic orthodoxy requires the denial of (6b) but not of (6a).

Concerning objection (8), Albertini claims that the doctrine of creation should be understood to teach that God creates *ex nihilo in genere existentialium* — that is, God creates from nothing *that exists*, not from nothing *simpliciter*. As our Neo-Quinean might say, (8a) is false, while (8b) is true:

\[(8a) \forall_2 x (\text{God creates } x \rightarrow \neg \exists_1 y (\text{God creates } x \text{ out of } y))\]
\[(8b) \forall_2 x (\text{God creates } x \rightarrow \neg \exists_2 y (\text{God creates } x \text{ out of } y))\]

Again, orthodoxy requires the acceptance of (8b) but not of (8a).

Albertini treats (7) in similar fashion. Being able to annihilate something means being able to remove it *a genere existentialium*, to take existence away from it. And God can do that to any creature.\(^{47}\) Hence, (7a) is true and (7b) is false:

\(^{47}\) For Suárez’s response to these moves, see DM 31.2.4 (XXVI, 230).
(7a) ∀x (God can make it such that ¬∃y(x = y))
(7b) ∀x (God can make it such that ¬∃y(x = y))

Realist Essentialism does a good job of explaining the limits of God’s power, and it provides truthmakers for eternal truths, but in spite of Albertini’s efforts, opponents reject Albertini’s revisionist interpretation of the claims of orthodox theism, and they reject Realist Essentialism in light of the theological objections stated in (5)-(8). Philosophers tend to assume that moving eternal essences “into the mind of God” is an easy solution to the theological objections to Realist Essentialism. The result of moving essences into the mind of God is what I call Conceptualist Essentialism. After explaining a 17th-century version of Conceptualist Essentialism, I will argue that it does not solve the theological objections faced by Realist Essentialism.

7.2. Conceptualist Essentialism

Conceptualist Essentialism has its roots in the Scotist tradition. Roughly, Conceptualist Essentialism is the view that essences from eternity have the sort of being proper to being the objects of thought. This sort of being goes by a variety of names, including ‘cognized being’ (esse cognitum), ‘intelligible being’ (esse intelligibile), ‘intentional being’ (esse intentionale) and ‘diminished being’ (esse diminutum). Some of these terms receive various explications from various authors, but the differences in explication do not concern us here. I am interested in metaphysical differences between the sort of being 17th-century Scotists attribute to eternal essences on the one hand and the sort of being Albertini

48 Morriz and Menzel (“Absolute Creation”) argue for Conceptualist Essentialism, but I know from personal correspondence that philosophers more often than not assume that Conceptualist Essentialism solves the theological objections associated with Realist Essentialism.

49 For a relevant discussion of Scotus, see Hoffmann, Creatura Intellecta; Marilyn McCord Adams, William Ockham, 1042-1043.
attributes to eternal essences on the other. In what follows I label the relevant Scotist form of being ‘diminished being’, but nothing hangs on the label.50 Diminished beings are supposed to play the same role that Albertini’s real essences are supposed to play: they provide an account of possibility, and they ground the eternal truths.51

Although Conceptualist Essentialism has its roots in the Scotist tradition, among early modern scholastics there was a great deal of controversy (sometimes vitriolic controversy) over the proper interpretation of Scotus’s thought on diminished beings. Scotists and neutral parties alike accused Thomists of pushing misleading interpretations of Scotus.52 Martin Meruisse reports the situation as follows:

Innocent Scotus is impugned and ridiculed by those who do not know him, when they are the ones who deserve ridicule, since they can hardly understand the Scotist doctrine on account of their dim wits [crassum ingenium], which are too far immersed in matter [...] Others, who are endowed with the acumen of a far more perspicacious mind, grasp the mind of Scotus better and vindicate him from these calumnies.53

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50 Diminished being is so-called because of the effect that predicates such as ‘possible’ and ‘cognized’ have on the copula ‘is’. The short story is this. ‘Is’ standardly signifies existence. Hence, if I say that Peter is, I mean that Peter exists, and when I say that Peter is running I mean that Peter’s running exists. But when I say that Peter is possible or that Peter is cognized, I do not signify that Peter exists. It is therefore said that the term ‘possible’ and ‘cognize’ “diminish” the signification of the copula. Nonetheless, I do signify that Peter has some sort of being, and this sort of being is called “diminished” on account of the semantic effect of the relevant predicates on the copula. See Mastri Tomus quintus, d. 8, q. 1, a. 2, n. 20, p. 23.

51 Bartolomeo Mastri was perhaps the most important Scotist of the 17th century, and he has a thorough discussion of diminished beings. See Tomus quintus, d. 8, q. 1, pp. 19-34. For the relation of diminished beings to possibility, see a. 3, pp. 25-30. For the relationship between diminished beings and eternal truths, see a. 4, nn. 58-67, pp. 31-33. Mastri grounds eternal truths in potential beings, which happen also to be cognized or diminished beings. Leibniz also appears to have been a kind of Conceptualist Essentialist. See Newlands, “Leibniz and the Ground of Possibility.” According to Cesalli, Walter Burley and John Wyclif were what I am calling Conceptualist Essentialists. See Cesalli, “Intentionality and Truth-Making,” 283-297.

52 See, e.g., Mastri Tomus quintus, d. 8, q. 1, p. 19; Suárez, DM 31.2 (XVI, 229ff.); Martin Meruisse, Rerum metaphysicarum libri tres, lib. 1, q. 15, p. 170.

53 Martin Meruisse, Rerum metaphysicarum libri tres, lib. 1, q. 15, p. 170: “Innocens Scotus ab his qui eum ignorant, impugnatur & irridetur, cum ipsi potius risu digni sint, qui ob crassum suum ingenium & materiae nimis immersum, Scoticam disciplinam a materialibus conceptibus maxime
Even within the Scotist faction there was in-fighting about the theory of diminished being.\(^{54}\) As a result of all this controversy, the primary literature on Conceptualist Essentialism is large and complex; I cannot cover all the details of the debate over Conceptualist Essentialism. My plan is to give an adequate sense of how Conceptualist Essentialism differs from Realist Essentialism, and then focus on whether the former improves upon the latter with respect to the theological objections. I will argue that it does not. It is slightly misleading to speak of the Scotist view, but I will do so anyways for ease of exposition, with the understanding that there was disagreement over the proper interpretation of Scotus. I largely follow the exposition of Bartolomeo Mastri, one of the most important and influential Scotists of the 17th century.\(^{55}\)

There are two important points of difference between the two varieties of Essentialism. First, whereas Realist Essentialists place uninstantiated essences outside the divine intellect, Conceptualist Essentialists place uninstantiated essences inside the divine intellect.\(^{56}\) As indicated above, the inside/outside talk is metaphorical; to say that essences have being inside the divine intellect is just to say that they have the sort of being proper to being the objects of divine

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\(^{54}\) Mastri takes John Punch, another Scotist, severely to task for his improper handling of Scotus. This got Punch’s attention, as mentioned in the 1672 edition of his *Cursus integer*: “Doctrinam meam in hac quaestione non solum impugnat Mastrius disp. 8. suae Metaphysicae in secunda parte, quia ad me Parisisos cum instaret finis secundae mei cursus editionis pervenit; sed satis graviter censurat” (*Philosophiae cursus integer*, Metaphysics, d. 2, q. 5, p. 904). This is just one of many acrimonious disputes among Scotists. For more on these fascinating controversies, see Crowley, “The Life and Works of Bartholomew Mastri,” 118-124. For an explication of the dialectic between Mastri and Punch on the issue of possibility, see Coombs, “The Possibility of Created Entities in Seventeenth-Century Scotism”, and Hoffmann, *Creatura Intellecta*, 263-305. Aside from some terminological sloppiness, Coombs gets the dialectic correct. But he tends to ascribe existence to Mastri’s diminished beings, and he fails to recognize the distinction between creation and production. He also wrongly claims that God has a choice in which possibles are possible, when according to Mastri the divine will plays no part in making things possible.

\(^{55}\) For interesting biographical details on Mastri, see Crowley, “The Life and Works of Bartholomew Mastrius.” For more on Mastri’s theory of possibility, see Hoffmann, *Creatura Intellecta*.

\(^{56}\) Mastri *Tomus quintus*, d. 8, q. 1, a. 2, n. 16, p. 22; and especially n. 19, p. 23.
thought, and they depend on the divine intellect as objects of thought. It is because uninstantiated essences are “inside” the divine intellect in this way that they are said by Conceptualist Essentialists not to be real. It is important to note that for Conceptualist Essentialists, diminished being is intrinsic to essences and is therefore irreducible: diminished being is a genuine form of being, over and above God’s being.\textsuperscript{57} Conceptualist Essentialists have this view in common with Realist Essentialists.

Second, whereas for Realist Essentialists uninstantiated essences are unproduced, for Conceptualist Essentialists uninstantiated essences are necessarily produced by God.\textsuperscript{58} Scotists prefer the term ‘produced’ and its cognates \([\textit{producere, productio}]\) in this context because they reserve the term ‘created’ and its cognates \([\textit{creatura, creator, creatio}]\) for free acts of God’s will terminating in existing objects.\textsuperscript{59}

There was disagreement about how diminished beings get produced. Some Scotists claim that diminished beings are produced by God \textit{before} he thinks about them; others think that diminished beings are produced \textit{by} God’s thinking about them.\textsuperscript{60} (It is important to note that metaphysical priority rather than temporal priority is at issue here). But for our purposes we may pass over the details of this debate. The important point is that, according to Scotists, diminished beings “emanate from God like rays from the Sun,” to use Descartes’s imagery.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{57} Mastri, \textit{Tomus quintus}, d. 8, q. 1, a. 2, n. 19, p. 23; q. 1, a. 3, n. 27, p. 25. John Punch explicitly states, “Illud esse quod creatu rae habent ab aeterno, verbi gratia homo, non consistit in denominatione extrinseca…” (\textit{Philosophiae cursus integer}, Metaphysics, d. 2, q. 5, concl. 3, n. 50, p. 903).

\textsuperscript{58} John Punch is an exception. He is a Scotist, but his view resembles Realist Essentialism more than Conceptualist Essentialism. Punch argues that diminished beings are unproduced. See \textit{Philosophiae cursus integer}, Metaphysics, d. 2, q. 5, concl. 5, n. 53, p. 903. For discussion see Hoffmann, \textit{Creatura Intellecta}, 272ff.

\textsuperscript{59} Mastri, \textit{Tomus quintus}, d. 8, q. 1, a. 2, n. 24 (ad 1-3), p. 24.

\textsuperscript{60} Compare Albertini, \textit{Corrolaria, tomus secundus}, q. 1, n. 8, p. 3, with Mastri, \textit{Tomus quintus}, d. 8, q. 1, a. 2, n. 18, p. 23.

\textsuperscript{61} Letter to Mersenne, May 27, 1630 (AT I, 152; CSM III, 25). I suspect that Descartes is here distancing himself from the standard Scotist view.
According to Conceptualist Essentialism, essences are eternally and necessarily produced by God, and they have an intrinsic form of being. How does this sort of view fare with respect to the objections raised against Realist Essentialism? Recall that Realist Essentialism seems to entail the following theologically problematic claims:

(5) There are necessary beings other than God.
(6) There are uncreated beings other than God.
(7) There are some things other than God that God cannot annihilate.
(8) God does not create \textit{ex nihilo}.

How does Conceptualist Essentialism fare with respect to (5)-(8)?

Begin with the good news. Conceptualist Essentialism has a \textit{prima facie} advantage with respect to (6) and (8). To be sure, Conceptualist Essentialism entails (6), but this is largely an artifact of the Scotists’ technical use of the term of ‘created’. Realist Essentialism is committed to the more extreme version of (6),

(6!) There are some unproduced beings other than God,

but Conceptualist Essentialism is not so committed. Although God does not, strictly speaking, \textit{create} everything other than himself, he is causally responsible for everything other than himself. This seems to confer a slight advantage on Conceptualist Essentialism because it allows Conceptualist Essentialists to accommodate the claim that everything other than God is causally dependent on God.

Mastri explicitly addresses objection (8). The objection, remember, is that if essences are eternal, then God seems to make a horse (say) \textit{out of} a horse essence. Hence, God does not create a horse \textit{ex nihilo} but \textit{ex equitate}. In response to this objection, Mastri tells us,
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But it is false that a creature is produced in real being out of [diminished being], as if out of something positive. Rather, a creature is produced out of [diminished being] as from an exemplar. The Supreme Craftsman, looking at an exemplar, is said to produce a creature outside, in real being, as the Doctor teaches in 2 d. 1, q. 1.62

Here Mastri tells us that an eternal horse essence does not compose an actual horse. Rather, the actual horse is modeled after the eternal horse essence. By contrast, the Realist Essentialist claims that an eternal horse essence is a part of an actual horse: an actual horse is just the eternal horse essence plus existence and is accordingly not created *ex nihilo*. It seems Conceptualist Essentialism can do greater justice to the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* than Realist Essentialism can.

Now for the bad news. According to Conceptualist Essentialism, God necessarily produces diminished beings. Conceptualist Essentialism therefore seems to entail (5) and (7) just as much as Realist Essentialism does. Further, the advantages of Conceptualist Essentialism with respect to (6!) and (8) turn out to be illusory. While there is a slight advantage in saying that diminished beings are produced by God, it seems to come at the cost of saying that God necessarily produces beings distinct from himself. Not only does God have no control over beings other than himself, he has no control over his own actions. This is the feature of Conceptualist Essentialism Descartes probably had in mind when he denied that the eternal truths “emanate from God like rays from the Sun.”63 Not only does God necessarily produce diminished beings, but it seems he must produce them without even knowing what he is doing. After all, before God produces them, he does not have any ideas of what he is producing. (If he did, he would not need to produce diminished beings as objects of thought.) It therefore sounds like God produces diminished beings naturally, “as a fire produces

63 Letter to Mersenne, May 27, 1630 (AT I, 152; CSM III, 25).
The advantage of Conceptualist Essentialism over Realist Essentialism with respect to (6!) therefore seems to be offset by its cost.

Turning again to (8), recall that according to Conceptualist Essentialism, God does not create horses out of a horse essence, but he uses a horse essence as a model for an actual horse. Accordingly, the Conceptualist Essentialist may simply deny (8). But there is no reason why the Realist Essentialist may not help himself to the same solution. So although Realist Essentialism as spelled out by Albertini (say) is subject to objection (8), Realist Essentialism as such is not. Therefore, Conceptualist Essentialism does not have an advantage here over Realist Essentialism as such, only over Albertini’s variety of Realist Essentialism.

According to Marleen Rozemond, Descartes holds a view very close to what I have called Conceptualist Essentialism. On Rozemond’s reading of Descartes, Descartes thinks that essences (which Descartes identifies with eternal truths) are eternally created by God, and they have merely objective being in God’s mind. But, Rozemond claims, Descartes thinks that uninstantiated essences are merely rationally distinct from God. If Conceptualist Essentialism is construed as Rozemond’s Descartes construes it, then objections (5)-(7) are immediately solved: there is nothing objectionable in the claim that some things “other” than God (by a rational distinction only) are eternal, necessary, and the rest, for such a claim only amounts to saying that God himself is eternal, necessary, and the rest. Perhaps, then, we should construe Conceptualist Essentialism along the lines that Rozemond’s Descartes does.

Descartes’s version of Conceptualist Essentialism is not available to the 17th-century Scotists. Because Mastri, for example, thinks that God produces eternal essences, and he holds that nothing can produce itself, he must also hold that there is more than a rational distinction between God and eternal essences. Moreover, it seems to me that Mastri is correct in holding that there is a real

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64 Mastri, Tomus quintus, d. 8, q. 1, a. 2, n. 23 (Tum 7), p. 24.
65 Rozemond, “Descartes’s Ontology of the Eternal Truths.”
distinction between producer and produced, for it is hard to see how anything could produce itself. However, I concede that if one could make sense of the claim that God produces himself and that there is a merely rational distinction between God and essences, then Conceptual Essentialism would escape the theological worries in (5)-(8). However, on this reading Conceptual Essentialism would collapse into the view I call ‘Truthmaker Theism’, which I discuss at length in the next section. In short, to claim that there is a merely rational distinction between truthmakers for eternal truths on the one hand and God on the other hand is to claim that God makes the eternal truths true (by being their truthmaker).

I conclude that Conceptualist Essentialism as explained above enjoys no theological advantage over Realist Essentialism. Those who are moved by the theological objections must keep looking for the ground of eternal truths; simply moving essences into the mind of God will not do. It is worth noting that Thomas Compton Carleton comes to the same conclusion. Of Realist Essentialism he says, “In my view this opinion is the same as the preceding one [Conceptualist Essentialism], and is rejected for the same reasons.”

### 7.3 Truthmaker Theism

As we have just seen, both Realist Essentialists and Conceptualist Essentialists posit entities that are eternal, necessary, and distinct from God. Both varieties of Essentialism are therefore subject to theological objections alleging that God is the only eternal, necessary being. This dialectic led some philosophers to say that God is the truthmaker for the eternal truths. The resulting view is what I call ‘Truthmaker Theism.’ Truthmaker Theism was endorsed by Gaspar de

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66 Descartes does seem to think that there is a sense in which God causes himself, but he concedes that efficient causal language is perhaps not appropriate in the case of God. See *First Replies*, AT VII, 109-110; CSM II, 78-79.

Ribadeneira (1611-1675), Antonio Pérez (1599-1649), and Silvestro Mauro, among others. In this section I focus on Mauro’s defense of Truthmaker Theism because it is the latest and is the most developed of the three. I focus on Question 47 of Mauro’s *Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus*, the question being, “Whether a possible being is constituted by some diminished being?” The primary focus of this question is the ground of existential possibility—the possibility of something to exist. Mauro is interested in the question, what makes it possible for something to exist? He assumes, as is common among the early modern scholastics, that what makes something possible is its possibility. So another way to put the question is, what is possibility? As it turns out, what makes something possible—its possibility—is also what makes it true to say of something that it is possible. So the possibility of Peter (say) is the truthmaker for ‘Peter is possible’. And although Mauro’s focus in this question is on possibility, what he says about modal truths he also says about the eternal truths generally: God makes such truths true.

Everyone agrees that, in order for Peter to be possible, there must be a power that can produce Peter. Such a power is often called the “extrinsic possibility” of things. It is universally agreed that God’s power is the extrinsic possibility of all things possible. But God can produce some things and not others, and some philosophers think that this calls for an explanation. As they see it, the fact that


69 Note that this question is also printed in some editions of *Quaestionum philosophicarum liber primus*. See, e.g., the Rome, 1658 edition.
God can produce something does not fully explain why that thing is possible, for we must now explain why God can produce \textit{that thing}.

Many 17th-century scholastics say that there must be something intrinsic to the things God can produce that explains why God can produce those things and not others. Whatever it is that explains why God can produce some things is standardly called ‘intrinsic possibility’. The idea is that a full explanation of \(x\)’s being possible must provide an explanation both of extrinsic possibility—the cause that can bring \(x\) about—and of intrinsic possibility—why \(x\) falls within God’s power in the first place. I’ll call this ‘the hybrid view’ of possibility because it explains possibility \textit{simpliciter} in terms of both intrinsic and extrinsic possibility. Realist Essentialism provides an especially clear example of the hybrid view of possibility. According to Realist Essentialism, \(x\) is possible because (i) \(x\) has essential being, and (ii) God can bestow existence on \(x\).

There were numerous versions of the hybrid view of possibility, but according to Mauro, all versions of the hybrid view err on a crucial point: in order for Peter to be possible there must be something intrinsic to Peter in virtue of which he is possible. Mauro sees all of these views as agreeing insofar as they all posit some being other than God to account for existential possibility. Against all of these views Mauro raises the theological objections usually raised against Realist Essentialism: classical theists cannot endorse the existence of necessary beings distinct from God.\textsuperscript{70} Further, Mauro thinks that God is the first reason for everything else, and any attempt to explain God in terms of things that are distinct from God is simply wrong-headed and smacks of Paganism, insofar as it

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\textsuperscript{70} Albertini frames the debate the same way: “Sed punctus difficultatis est an hoc esse reale habeant creaturae per potentiam extrinsecam Creatoris, quatenus sunt in ipso tanquam in causa, an per potentiam intrinsecam in ipsis creaturis, ita ut esse essentiale creaturarum ab aeterno non tantum sit potentiale in causa, sed etiam actuale in se, in quo fundetur respectus possibilitatis sive ad potentiam activam Creatoris, si res est creabilis, sive etiam ad potentiam naturalem, si res est generabilis” (\textit{Corollaria}, \textit{tonus secundus} p. 1, d. 1, q. 1, n. 1, p. 2).
\end{flushright}
posits something non intellectual as an ultimate reason for things, and of Manichaeism, insofar as it posits something uncreated.\textsuperscript{71}

Mauro argues that in many cases a power alone is needed to make something possible. With respect to merely possible things, he argues that ‘possible’ is a purely extrinsic denomination: ‘possible’ can be predicated truly of Peter (say) solely in virtue of a power that is capable of producing Peter. Mauro’s statement of his view is worth quoting at length:

Creatures that do not exist at any time are possible in the third sense of actual possibility, which is merely extrinsic, in virtue of a denomination from a created or uncreated power for producing such creatures. This is proven because a power that is sufficient for something to exist is a certain possibility of that thing. And so it can denominate that thing as possible; for example, a power of illuminating is the possibility of illumination. But even when creatures do not exist, there is actually a complete power for producing them. For example, there is actually in God a complete power for producing another world that does not exist; there is in me a complete power for doing many actions that I will never perform. Therefore creatures that will never exist are possible in virtue of an actual possibility that is merely extrinsic, in virtue of a denomination from a created or uncreated power for producing them. Hence, we may gather that some non-existing things are extrinsically denominated as possible also from an active power belonging to actually existing creatures.\textsuperscript{72}

In this passage Mauro argues that ‘\( a \) is possible’ is true just in case there is some power that can produce \( a \). God is not the only such power: there are natural

\textsuperscript{71} Mauro, \textit{Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus}, p. 164, 166. Cf. Albertini, \textit{Corollaria, tomus secundus}, princ. 1, d. 1, q. 1, n. 20, p. 5: “Prima ratio et radix possibilitatis in creatura non est potentia activa efficientis, sed ratio formalis intrinseca ipsius creaturarum.”

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus}, q. 47, p. 159b [pp. 159-168 are erroneously numbered twice; 159b is the second instance of p. 159]: “Creaturae non existentes pro ulla differentia temporis sunt possibles in tertio sensu possibilitate actuali mere extrinseca per denominationem a potentia creada vel increata producendi illas. Probatur, nam potentia adaequata ut aliquid existit est quaedam possibilitas illius, adeoque potest illud denominare possibile: e.g. potentia illuminandi est possibilitas illuminationis. Sed etiam quando creaturae non existunt, datur actu potentia completa illas producendi: e.g. datur actu in Deo potentia completa producendi alterum mundum non existentem, datur in me potentia completa faciendi multas actiones, quas nunquam faciam. Ergo creaturae nunquam existentes sunt possibles possibilitate actuali mere extrinseca per denominationem a potentia creada vel increata ponendi illas. Hinc vero colligitur aliqua non existentia denominari possibilia extrinsece etiam a potentia activa creaturarum actu existentium.”
powers of illumination, for example, and I have a power to perform a variety of actions. Consider some action—raising my left hand, say. Let us name the action of raising my left hand on a particular occasion ‘LH.’ Mauro’s view is that LH is possible purely in virtue of my power to raise my left hand. I do not actualize an essence of left hand raising, nor do I augment some diminished raising of my left hand. So it is true that LH is possible—it is true that I can raise my left hand—solely in virtue of my power for left hand raising.73

Things that are eternally and necessarily possible require a power that is both eternal and necessary, and only God fits that bill. Accordingly, God is the possibility of every merely possible creature:

Creatures have been possible eternally and necessarily by a purely extrinsic denomination deriving from the divine power, but not from any other actual, necessary possibility distinct from God and consisting in some essential being or in something diminished.74

On Mauro’s view, God is the possibility of every possible creature. And for every proposition of the form ‘a is possible’, God makes it true that a is possible.

Thus far we have seen how Mauro provides truthmakers for truths of the form ‘a is possible’, but we have not yet seen how Mauro accounts for non-modal, eternal truths such as ‘Man is an animal’. I now want to argue that Mauro intends to extend his account of possibility to eternal truths generally. Mauro does not explicitly state his general account of eternal truths, but his account becomes clear in his responses to objections.

73 This view has gained adherence in the contemporary literature. For starters, see J. D. Jacobs, “A Powers Theory of Modality: or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Reject Possible Worlds.” Leftow attributes the view to Aquinas in “Aquinas on God and Modal Truth,” 180-181; Brower questions the correctness of this attribution in his response piece, “Aquinas’s Metaphysics of Modality: A Reply to Leftow,” §2.

74 Mauro, Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus, q. 47, p. 160b: “Creaturae ab aeterno et necessario fuerunt possibiles per denominationem pure extrinsecam a divina omnipotentia, non vero per ullam aliam possibilitatem actualem necessariam distinctam a Deo consistentem in aliquo esse essentiae, vel in aliquo diminuto.”
One of the objections Mauro considers is a statement of the Henrician argument for Essentialism:

A human being is necessarily and from eternity a rational animal in virtue of its intrinsic predicates. Therefore a human being has some being and some eternal, necessary possibility in virtue of its intrinsic predicates, prescinding from God’s omnipotence.\(^75\)

This argument begins with the premise that ‘A human being is a rational animal’ is necessarily true from eternity, and it concludes that a human being is intrinsically possible. The move from eternal truths to intrinsic possibility may seem abrupt, but Mauro has in mind here familiar versions of Essentialism, according to which essences are supposed to do the double duty of accounting for possibility and for the eternal truths. So the idea behind the objection is this: we need to posit essences to account for the eternal truths. Once we posit essences, we might as well use them to account for possibility too.

Mauro responds to the above version of the Henrician argument as follows:

Every proposition affirms some existence – namely, the ultimate, actual truthmaker of the proposition. For when I say that a thing exists, I affirm the thing’s being; when I say that a thing does not exist, I affirm the thing’s non-being; when I say that a thing is possible, I affirm that the thing’s possibility exists; when I say that a thing is impossible, I affirm that the thing’s impossibility exists; when I say that a thing is necessarily such-and-such, I affirm that there is a necessity that the thing be such-and-such.\(^76\)

\(^75\) Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus, q. 47, n. 5, p. 165 (The Henrician argument): “Homo est necessario & ab aeterno animal rationale per sua praedicata intrinseca; ergo habet aliquid esse & aliquam possibilitatem aeternam & necessariam per sua praedicata intrinseca, praescindendo ab omnipotentia Dei.”

\(^76\) Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus, q. 47, p. 170: “Homo est necessario & ab aeterno animal rationale pure potentialiter per sua praedicata intrinseca; at cum dico quod est necessario animal rationale, cognosco etiam quod datur actu aliqua necessitas, ut homo sit animal rationale. Hinc colligitur quod in omnibus propositionibus affirmatur aliqua existentia, sive ultima actualitas verificativa propositionis. Cum enim dico, rem esse, affirmatur esse rei; cum dico rem non esse, affirmatur non esse rei; cum dico rem esse possibilem, affirmatur dari possibilitatem rei; cum dico, rem esse impossibilem, affirmatur dari impossibilitatem rei; cum dico, rem esse necessario talem, affirmatur dari necessitatem ut sit talis.”
Here Mauro claims that every proposition affirms the existence of some actual thing in virtue of which that proposition is true. A proposition of the form ‘a is possible’ affirms the existence of a’s possibility and is true just in case a’s possibility exists; a proposition of the form ‘a is necessarily F’ affirms the existence of the necessity that a is F, and it is true just in case that necessity exists. It is not immediately clear how this is a response to the Henrician argument quoted above. Mauro maintains that human beings, before they exist, have no being whatsoever. Given the foregoing, it follows that ‘A human being is necessarily a rational animal’ is not made true by a non-existent essence, contrary to Essentialism. It is not yet clear what Mauro takes the truthmaker for ‘A human being is necessarily a rational animal’ to be, but that becomes clear in the next two objections.

Objection six reads as follows:

So when I say that another world is possible [...] I am affirming that God exists, since God is the possibility of another world. It would also follow [from Mauro’s view] that I would affirm the same thing when I say ‘man is possible’ and when I say ‘horse is possible’, since in both cases I would affirm the possibility of man and horse, each of which is God. That man is necessarily a rational animal would be the same as that horse is necessarily a hinnible animal, since for man to be a rational animal is for there to be a necessity such that, if there is a man, it is an animal; and for horse to be a hinnible animal is for there to be a necessity such that, if it is a horse, it is a hinnible animal; but this necessity is God himself. Therefore, for man to be a rational animal is for horse to be a hinnible animal.  

And objection seven reads as follows:

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77 Mauro, Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus, q. 47, n. 6, p. 165a: “Cum dico alter mundus est possibilis, [...] affirmo quod existit Deus, qui est possibilitas mundi. Rursus, sequeretur quod idem affirmarem, cum dico homo est possibilis, ac cum dico equus est possibilis. Affirmarem enim possibilitatem hominis, & equi, quae est idem Deus. Idem esset hominem esse necessario animal rationale, ac equum esse necessario animal hinnibile. Nam hominem esse animal rationale est dari necessitatem ut si sit homo, sit animal rationale; equum esse animal hinnibile est dari necessitatem ut si sit equus sit animal hinnible; sed haec necessitas est idem Deus. Ergo idem est hominem esse animal rationale, ac equum esse animal hinnibile.”
All scientific acts affirm some necessary and eternal truth. But every necessary and eternal truth is God. Therefore all scientific acts affirm God.78

According to these objections, every eternal truth affirms the existence of God. As we have already seen, Mauro thinks that every truth affirms the existence of its truthmaker. It follows that, according to the objection’s portrayal of Mauro’s view, every eternal truth is made true by God.

In his replies, Mauro concedes the way his view is portrayed by the objections: “I concede that all scientific acts affirm God as the ultimate actuality [in virtue of which they are true].”79 In fact, it seems that Mauro must concede this point. Mauro maintains that every truth is made true by an actual reality, that eternal truths have a necessary, eternal truthmaker, and that “God alone is necessary and eternal.”80 From these commitments it follows that God is the truthmaker for eternal truths.81

As the above objections point out, however, Mauro’s view seems to get the content of eternal truths wrong. According to Mauro, every truth affirms the existence of its truthmaker: if T makes ‘p’ true, then ‘p’ says that T exists. On Mauro’s view, then, every eternal truth says that God exists. But intuitively, ‘A

78 Mauro, Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus, q. 47, n. 7, p. 166a: “Omnes actus scientifici affirman Aristatam necessariam & aeternam. Sed omnis veritas necessaria, & aeterna est Deus. Ergo omnes actus scientici affirman Deum.”
79 Mauro, Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus, q. 47, ad 7, p. 172: “Concedo quod omnes actus scientifici affirmant Deum tanquam ultimam actualitatem.”
80 Mauro, Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus, q. 47, p. 161b: “Solus Deus est necessarius et aeternus.”
81 When he explains the view endorsed by Mauro, Nicholas Martinez corroborates the reading I have given. His report is worth quoting at length. This quotation is taken from a disputation in which Martinez is considering whether things have intrinsic as well as extrinsic possibility: “Aliqui etiam alii his adjungunt aliud principium universalium, videlicet omnum propositionem necessariam, seu necessario veram habere aliquid verificativum necessarium, seu necessario existens una parte rei. Hoc posito probant, non repugnantiam rerum, seu possibilitatem rerum esse aliquid divinum. Proposito haec: Petrus est possibile, est vera, & necessario vera, ergo per aliquid verificativum illius necessarium, nihil necessarium est creatum, & quidquid necessarium est Deus est. Ergo haec propositio vera est per verificativum illius, quem Deus est: atque verificativum illius est possibilitas, ergo aliqua perfectio Dei necessaria est ipsa non repugnantia creaturarum, seu possibilitas. Ex hoc inferunt, quod essentia rerum sunt Deus” (Martinez, Deus Scienis, contr. 3, d. 3, s. 1, p. 74).
human being is a rational animal’ is about human beings, not God. It might be helpful to think of this objection along the lines of a Frege problem. The task for Mauro is to account for the cognitive difference between propositions that, by his lights, say the same thing.

In his reply, Mauro maintains that every eternal truth is about God, but he also maintains that there is a sense in which eternal truths are about natural objects like human beings and horses:

You infer ‘Therefore, when I say that [another] world is possible I affirm God.’ But here I draw a distinction. I concede that when I say that another world is possible I affirm the existence of God in obliquo – that is, as the ultimate actuality in virtue of which the world is made possible. But I deny that when I say that another world is possible I am affirming the existence of God in recto – that is, as the primary subject or predicate of the proposition. I draw the same distinction with respect to the second argument. When I say that man is possible, that man is rational, that horse is possible, and that horse is hinnible, I do indeed affirm the same thing as the ultimate actuality [in virtue of which such propositions are true]. But I do not affirm the same thing formally, as the primary subject or predicate of the proposition.82

Here Mauro maintains that eternal truths are about God in obliquo and about natural objects such as horses and humans in recto. Mauro therefore maintains both of the following claims:

(1) There is a sense in which eternal truths are about God.

(2) There is a sense in which eternal truths are about natural objects.

The fact that Mauro is committed to these claims is further supported by the following passage:

82 Mauro, Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus, q. 47, ad 6, pp. 171-172: “Dum infertur ergo cum dico mundus est possibilis affirmo Deum, distinguish. Affirmo Deum in obliquo tanquam ultimam actualitatem qua mundus constituitur possibilis, concedo; affirmo Deum in recto, tanquam praedicatum aut subjectum principale propositionis, nego. Eodem pacto distinguo aliam propositionem. Idem affirmo, dum dico, homo est possibilis & rationalis, equus est possibilis, & hinnibilis identice & tanquam ultimam actualitatem, concedo; formaliter & tanquam praedicatum, aut subjectum principale propositionis, nego.”
I concede that all scientific acts affirm God as their ultimate actuality […] But I deny that God is the formal object of scientific acts […] For our intellect, by comparing man and rational animal, which are potential predicates, is moved to say that there is a necessary connection between them, which connection is God […] Therefore it is clear that sciences have for their formal object objective created terms, not God.83

Here Mauro maintains that the eternal truths affirm the existence of God, so there is a sense in which eternal truths are about God. But ordinary natural things, not God, are the “formal objects” of eternal truths. Hence, there is a sense in which eternal truths are about natural objects. But how can eternal truths be about both God and natural objects? And if eternal truths are about God, what explains the fact that they don’t seem to be about God? I will take these questions in reverse order.

Mauro claims that eternal truths represent God by way of diverse concepts. In one place he says that the proposition ‘Man is possible’ is about God “under the concept [sub ratione] of a necessary existing non-implication.”84 Considering the propositions ‘Man is possible’, ‘Man is rational’, ‘Horse is possible’, and ‘Horse is hinnible’, Mauro claims that by means of these propositions “I affirm as an ultimate actuality the first possibility of each, which is really the same but diverse formally and through a concept [per conceptum]” (my emphasis).85 According

83 Mauro, Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus, q. 47, ad 7, p. 172: “Concedo quod omnes actus scientifci affirmant Deum tanquam ultimam actualitatem, ita tamen ut affirment praedicata principalia potentialiter diversa, & creata. Nego tamen quod Deus sit obiectum formale actuum scientificorum, sed dico quod praedicata potentialiter diversa & creata sunt motivum affirmandi Deum sub conceptu necessariae connexionis talium praedicatorum. Intellectus enim noster comparando hominem & animal rationale, quae sunt praedicata potentialia movetur ad dicendum quod datur necessaria connexion inter illa, quae connexion est Deus. Termini scilicet apprehensi sunt motivum propositionis per se notae, qualis est haec, homo necessario est animal rationale. […] Ergo patet scientias habere pro objecto formali terminos objectivos creatos, non vero Deum.”
84 Mauro Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus, q. 47, ad 5, p. 170: “Considero Deum sub ratione non implicantiae necessario existentis.”
85 Mauro, Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus, q. 47, ad 6, pp. 171-172: “Dum infertur ‘ergo cum dico ‘mundus est possibilis’ affirmo Deum, distinguo. Affirmo Deum in obliquo tanquam ultimam actualitatem qua mundus constituitur possibilis, concedo; affirmo Deum in recto, tanquam praedicatum aut subjectum principale propositionis, nego. Eodem pacto distinguo aliam propositionem. Idem affirmo, dum dico, homo est possibilis & rationalis, equus est possibilis, &
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to this passage, distinct eternal truths are like distinct concepts of the same thing, just as my concept, ‘the morning star’ and my concept ‘the evening star’ are distinct concepts of the same thing. Mauro explains this as follows. Distinct eternal truths are like distinct concepts of the same thing insofar as they are formed by distinct subject and predicate terms. He writes:

When I say that man is possible, that man is rational, that horse is possible, and that horse is hinnible, I do indeed affirm the same thing as the ultimate actuality [in virtue of which such propositions are true]. But I do not affirm the same thing formally, as the primary subject or predicate of the proposition. [My emphasis]86

Here Mauro accounts for the distinction between distinct eternal truths by appeal to the subject and predicate terms of those truths. Mauro’s point therefore seems to be that ‘Man is rational’ and ‘Horse is hinnible’ both affirm that God exists, but they do so by means of different subject and predicate terms. Since propositions are mental acts, the subject and predicate terms from which propositions are composed are mental acts. Mauro is therefore making the plausible point that distinct eternal truths feel cognitively different because they are formed using distinct mental acts, even if they are ultimately about the same thing. Applying Mauro’s point to the case made famous by Frege, we could say that ‘The morning star shines brightly’ and ‘The evening star shines brightly’ are about the same thing, but they are formed using different subject terms, and so feel cognitively different because subject terms are mental acts. We can also illustrate Mauro’s point by applying it to the distinction between de re and de se

\[\text{hinnibilis identice & tanquam ultimam actualitatem, concedo; formaliter & tanquam praedicatum, aut subjectum principale propositionis, nego. Cum dico \(\text{homo est possibilis, \& rationalis,}\) affirmo tanquam praedicatum principale possibilitatem, \& rationalitatem potentialiter identificatam cum homine; at cum dico \(\text{equus est possibilis \& hinnibilis}\) affirmo possibilitatem, \& hinnibilitatem identificatam cum equo quae sunt potentialiter diverse; at affirmo tanquam ultimam actualitatem possibilitatem primam utriusque quae est realiter idem, sed formaliter, \& per conceptum diversa.}^{86}\]

86 Mauro, Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus, q. 47, ad 6, p. 172: “Idem affirmo, dum dico, \(\text{homo est possibilis \& rationalis, equus est possibilis, \& hinnibilis}\) identice \& tanquam ultimam actualitatem, concedo; formaliter \& tanquam praedicatum, aut subjectum principale propositionis, nego.”
predication. There is a cognitive difference between the *de re* proposition, ‘The shopper spilling the sugar is making a mess’, and the *de se* proposition, ‘I am making a mess’. I might know the former without knowing the latter, although if I am the one spilling the sugar, then both propositions say the same thing. Mauro would account for this difference by pointing out that ‘The shopper making a mess’ and ‘I’ are different concepts that represent the same thing in different ways. Accordingly, propositions formed by means of these concepts represent the same thing in different ways.\(^87\) To use Mauro’s own examples, ‘Man is rational’ and ‘Horse is hinnible’ are ultimately about the same thing, but because they are composed of different subject and predicate terms, and because subject and predicate terms are mental acts, they feel cognitively different.

The foregoing also helps to explain claim (1), that there is a sense in which eternal truths are about ordinary natural objects rather than God. As we have seen, Mauro identifies the sense in which eternal truths are about natural objects by saying that eternal truths are about natural objects “in recto” and that natural things are the “formal objects” of eternal truths. It is clear from the above passages and others that Mauro thinks that the direct or formal object of a proposition is purely a function of the subject and predicate terms of the proposition. For example, Mauro states,

> When I say that man is possible, that man is rational, that horse is possible, and that horse is hinnible [...] I do not affirm the same thing formally, *as the primary subject or predicate of the proposition.* When I say ‘Man is possible’ and ‘Man is rational’, I affirm *as a primary predicate* possibility and rationality potentially identified with a human. But when I say ‘Horse is possible’ [and ‘Horse is hinnible’] I affirm possibility and hinnibility identified with horse, which are potentially diverse. [My emphasis]\(^88\)


\(^88\) Mauro, *Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus*, q. 47, ad 6, pp. 171-172: “Cum dico *homo est possibilis,* & *rationalis,* affirmo tanquam praedicatum principale possibilitatem, & rationalitatem potentialiun identificatam cum homine; at cum dico *equus est possibilis* [& *hinnibilis*] affirmo possibilitatem, & hinnibilitatem identificatam cum equo quae sunt potentialiter diversae.”
Here Mauro claims that the formal object of a proposition is determined by the subject and predicate terms of the proposition. Elsewhere Mauro writes,

But I deny that God is the formal object of scientific acts, but I say that potentially diverse and created predicates are the motive for affirming God under the concept of a necessary connection of such predicates. For our intellect, by comparing man and rational animal, which are potential predicates, is moved to say that there is a necessary connection between them, which connection is God [...]. Therefore it is clear that sciences have for their formal object objective created terms, not God.  

Here Mauro tells us that the formal objects of the sciences are “created terms”. By ‘terms’ he apparently does not have in mind mental or linguistic terms but the intentional objects of those terms. He does not think that sciences are about the concepts, ‘human’ and ‘rational’, for example; as he states in the previous passage, the proposition ‘A human is rational’ is about a human and rationality. Because the objects of the terms of eternal truths are natural objects rather than God, it follows that the formal objects of eternal truths are natural objects rather than God. Mauro’s account of how eternal truths can have the same ultimate or indirect object and distinct formal or direct objects is illustrated in figure 3:

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89 Mauro, *Quaestionum philosophicarum liber secundus*, q. 47, ad 7, p. 172: “Nego tamen quod Deus sit objectum formale actum scientificorum, sed dico quod praedicata potentialiter diversa & creat a sunt motivum affirmandi Deum sub conceptu neccessariae connexionis talium praedicatorum. Intellectus enim noster comparando hominem & animal rationale, quae sunt praedicata potentialia movetur ad dicendum quod datur necessaria connexion inter illa, quae connexion est Deus. Termini scilicet apprehensi sunt motivum propositionis per se notae, qualis est haec, *homo necessario est animal rationale*. [...] Ergo patet scientias habere pro objecto formali terminos obiectivos creatos, non vero Deum.”
We can summarize Mauro’s response to the wrong-content objection as follows. Every eternal truth affirms the existence of God, but because distinct eternal truths are composed of distinct subject and predicate terms, and subject and predicate terms are mental acts, distinct eternal truths do not seem to affirm the same thing. Insofar as eternal truths are composed of terms that are not about God but about ordinary natural objects, there is a sense in which eternal truths are about ordinary natural objects. For example, ‘A human is a rational animal’ affirms the existence of God, but because it is composed of the term ‘a human’ there is a sense in which it is about human beings.

I now want to turn to a question that will help to clarify Mauro’s view: are things possible because God can make them, or can God make them because they are possible? How Mauro would answer this question turns on how we understand the term ‘because’. Suppose for now that ‘because’ indicates ontological priority, such that “P because Q” means that P obtains in virtue of Q, where Q is ontologically prior to P. (A rough, non-technical grasp of ontological priority is sufficient for present purposes.) If ‘because’ is understood to indicate such an ontological priority, Mauro would reject the above question on grounds of presupposition failure: it wrongly presupposes that either the possibility of things is ontologically prior to God, or God is ontologically prior to the possibility of things. According to Mauro, God is identical to the possibility of
things; consequently, God is neither ontologically prior to nor posterior to the possibility of things.

It might be objected at this point that in making possibility identical to God, Mauro cannot, in principle, explain why God can make some things (rocks and horses, for example) and not others (round square copulas, for example). It seems that the following is a legitimate question: why are horses the objects of God’s power, while round square copulas are not? And it seems that Mauro can give no answer to this question because, according to Mauro, it is a brute fact that God’s power extends so far and no further; to try to give a reason for that fact is to give a reason for “the first reason,” which Mauro thinks is Manichean, pagan, and generally wrong-headed. Mauro does not address this objection, but his predecessor Gaspar de Ribadeniera does, and his answer is worth reviewing.

Ribadeniera distinguishes between two kinds of explanatory priority: real priority and priority of reason or what I will call ‘rational priority’. Real priority is what we would call ontological priority; rational priority is priority with respect to how we think about something. There are two marks of rational priority: \( a \) is rationally prior to \( b \) if and only if (i) we can infer \( b \) from \( a \), and (ii) \( a \) appears more clearly to us than \( b \). These two notions of explanatory priority give rise to two notions of explanation: \( a \) might explain \( b \) in virtue of \( a \)’s being prior to \( b \) with real priority, or \( a \) might explain \( b \) in virtue of \( a \)’s being prior to \( b \) with rational priority. To illustrate, someone might create a mathematical model of a physical process which is such that, (i) from facts about the model we may infer facts about the physical process, and (ii) we have better epistemic access to the model than we do to the physical process. Ribadeniera would say that facts about the model are rationally prior to facts about the physical process and there is accordingly a sense in which facts about the model explain facts about the physical process. Nonetheless, he would resist the conclusion that the model is in any sense ontologically prior to the process.
Ribadeniera thinks, as Mauro does, that God is identical to the possibility of things, so God is not really prior to possibility, nor is possibility really prior to God. However, Ribadeniera maintains that something’s being possible is rationally prior to God’s ability to make it. Early modern scholastics commonly maintain that what it is for something to be possible is for its essential predicates not to imply a contradiction. Ribadeniera thinks that the fact that the essential predicates of Peter, for example, do not imply a contradiction is rationally prior to God’s ability to make Peter. This is clear from the two marks of rational priority: (i) from the fact that Peter’s predicates do not imply a contradiction we may infer that God can make Peter, and (ii) the fact that Peter’s predicates do not imply a contradiction appears more clearly to us than God’s power does. Accordingly, the fact that Peter’s predicates do not imply a contradiction explains (with rational priority) why God can make Peter; similarly, the fact that the predicates of a round square copula do imply a contradiction explains (with rational priority) why God cannot make a round square copula.

If Ribadeniera is correct, the debate about the ultimate ground of possibility only begins because of a mistaken conflation of explanatory priority with ontological priority. It is assumed that if $a$ explains $b$, then $a$ must be ontologically prior to $b$. Hence (it is assumed) if intrinsic possibility explains why God can make some things and not others, then intrinsic possibility must be ontologically prior to God’s being able to make some things and not others. By Ribadeniera’s lights, however, it is a mistake to conflate explanatory priority with ontological priority. Hence, we can explain why God can make some things and not others by appeal to a formal analysis of being possible—something is possible if and only if it does not imply a contradiction—but such an explanation says nothing about the metaphysical ground of possibility.

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90 This is a view that Descartes explicitly rejects in the Sixth Replies (AT VII 431-2; CSM II, 291).
Eternal Truths

From the standpoint of classical theism, Truthmaker Theism seems to be the most viable of the views so far discussed. In light of the aboutness constraint on truthmaking, the primary drawback of Truthmaker Theism consists in its commitment to the claim that ‘Another world is possible’ and ‘Horse is hinnible’ are in some sense about the same thing. Otherwise, Truthmaker Theism can do the same explanatory work as its Essentialist rivals without the untoward theological consequences. There is, however, one more view worth considering. Francisco Peinado thinks that eternal truths are not grounded in being. If his view can be defended, there may be no need to accept Truthmaker Theism.

7.4 Francisco Peinado on Merely Possible Truthmakers

Peinado’s discussion of eternal truths occurs in the context of his disputation on the relationship between essence and existence.\(^{91}\) As part of that disputation, Peinado addresses the question, “In what does the possibility of things consist?” As Peinado tells us, this question is ambiguous. First, we might be asking for an analysis of possibility: what is it to be possible? Second, we might be asking what we would call a metaphysical or ontological question about what sort of thing possibility is. Peinado poses this question in the guise of truthmaking:

What is that form […] in virtue of which [something] is rendered possible, and that makes true a proposition of eternal and necessary truth saying of a possible thing that it is possible?\(^{92}\)

\(^{91}\) Peinado, *Disputationes in octos libros physicorum Aristotelis*, lib. 1, d. 7. References to this disputation are to the critical edition prepared by Schmutz in *Le Querelle des Possibles*, vol. 2, pp. 1079-1097. For a view clearly influenced by Peinado, see Losada, *Cursus philosophici tertia pars*, Metaphysics, d. 2, pp. 341ff.

\(^{92}\) Peinado, *Phys.*, lib. 1, d. 7, n. 3, p. 172: “Quidnam sit physice seu cum quo identificetur realiter et ex parte rerum independenter a nostro modo concipiendi, forma illa per quam redditur possibilis, quaerque verificat propositionem aeternae et necessariae veritatis enuntiantis de re possibili, quod est possibilis?”
Here Peinado is interested in truthmakers for propositions of the form ‘a is possible’. These comprise only a subset of the eternal truths, and as far as I can tell Peinado’s treatment of such truths does not generalize to all eternal truths. However, his treatment of truths of the form ‘a is possible’ does generalize to the case of truths of the form ‘a is necessary’. In this section I will therefore focus on Peinado’s theory of modal truths, by which I mean true propositions that explicitly state that something is necessary or possible. These are to be distinguished from non-modal eternal truths such as ‘A human is an animal’. The latter is necessarily true, but it is non-modal because it does not make any claims about necessity or possibility.

Given Peinado’s treatment of negative truths and tensed truths, his view of modal truths of the form ‘a is possible’ will perhaps now appear unsurprising, for Peinado claims that truths of the form ‘a is possible’ are made true by a. After raising the standard theological objections to Essentialism, Peinado tells us,

\[\text{The immediate and formal truthmaker of the necessarily true proposition saying that Peter is possible is adequately identical to Peter.}\]

According to this passage, Peter makes it true that Peter is possible. In chapter five we saw that Peinado claims that Peter makes it true that Peter does not exist, and what Peinado means by this is that ‘Peter does not exist’ is true if and only if Peter does not exist. In chapter six we saw that Peinado claims that Peter makes it true that Peter will exist, and what he means by this is that ‘Peter will exist’ is true if and only if Peter will exist. Now we see that for Peinado, Peter makes it

true that Peter is possible. As with Peinado’s view of negative and tensed truths, this claim cannot be taken straightforwardly to mean that Peter, by existing, makes it true that ‘Peter is possible’. For Peinado assumes that Peter can make it true that Peter is possible even if Peter does not exist. Nor can Peinado be read as endorsing any form of Essentialism, since he explicitly rejects that view on theological grounds discussed above. Rather, Peinado can be read as endorsing what I will call a ‘super wide-base truthmaker principle’ for modal truths. In chapter six we saw that a wide-base truthmaker principle is one that accepts non-existent, past and future truthmakers into the truthmaking base. According to the super wide-base truthmaker principle, truths of the form ‘a is possible’ are made true by non-existent, possible objects. When Peinado says that ‘Peter is possible’ is made true by Peter (who does not exist), he may be read as endorsing a super wide-base truthmaker principle. The claim the Peter makes it true that Peter is possible amounts to the claim that ‘Peter is possible’ is true if and only if Peter can exist. The fact that Peinado does in fact endorse a super wide-base truthmaker principle for modal truths is clear from several texts, including the following:

In order for it to be true [that Peter is possible] it is not necessary that the truthmaker for that proposition should exist when the proposition exists, but it is enough that the truthmaker would exist given that Peter exists. [My emphasis]94

Here Peinado makes it clear that the truthmaker for a true proposition of the form, ‘a is possible’, does not exist but would exist if a existed.

We can develop the idea of a super wide-base truthmaker principle by extending the treatment of the wide-base truthmaker principle from chapter six (§4). The wide-base truthmaker principle was developed as follows. T is a past

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94 Peinado, Phys., lib. 1, d. 7, s. 1, subs. 3, n. 36, p. 188: “Ut ea propositio [sc. Petrus est possibilis] sit vera non est necesse quod eius verificativum detur quando datur ipsa, sed sat est quod daretur sub conditione quod daretur Petrus.” Maximus Mangold, a follower of Peinado, also endorses a super wide-base truthmaker principle with respect to subjunctive conditionals. See Mangold, Philosophia recentior, vol. 1, Ontology, diss. 4, a. 1, s. 6, n. 113, p. 104.
truthmaker for ‘p’ if and only if (i) ‘p’ is about T, and (ii) ‘p’ is true if and only if T existed prior to the existence of ‘p’. T is a future truthmaker for a proposition ‘p’ if and only if (i) ‘p’ is about T, and ‘p’ is true if and only if T will exist after ‘p’ exists. We can extend this line of thought as follows. T is a possible truthmaker for ‘p’ =df (i) ‘p’ is about T and (ii) ‘p’ is true if and only if T can exist. For the sake of completeness we can define the notion of a necessary truthmaker as follows. T is a necessary truthmaker for ‘p’ =df (i) ‘p’ is about T, and (ii) ‘p’ is true if and only if T necessarily exists.

Peinado explicitly states that truths of the form ‘a is possible’ have possible truthmakers. Although he does not explicitly say so (as far as I have seen), it seems likely that he would also say that truths of the form ‘a is necessary’ have necessary truthmakers. As a first pass, we can state Peinado’s truthmaker principle for modal truths as follows:

**Super wide-base truthmaker principle**: Truths of the form ‘a is possible’ have possible truthmakers. Truths of the form ‘a is necessary’ have necessary truthmakers.

This is a first pass because it needs to be modified in two ways. First, Peinado thinks that truths of the form ‘a is possible’ can have but do not require actual truthmakers. This is an important part of his view that needs to be made explicit. Second, the super wide-base truthmaker principle as stated is not very useful, since it has a narrow range of application: it applies only to truths of the form ‘a is possible (necessary)’. I will return to both of these points shortly, but first I want to turn to the motivation for the super wide-base truthmaker principle as stated above.

As with his view of truthmaking for negative and tensed truths, Peinado’s motivation for the super wide-base truthmaker principle comes from his analysis
of truth for modal truths, which, in turn, is partly motivated by his intentional mode view of modal operators. To begin, recall the standard analysis of truth:

**The standard analysis of truth:** For a proposition ‘p’ to be true is for ‘p’ to exist and for the adequate intentional object of ‘p’ to exist.

This analysis is not available to Peinado because Peinado endorses an intentional mode view of modality. Peinado thinks that modal terms like ‘possible’ and ‘necessary’ do not represent but express an intentional mode, a way of thinking about objects. That Peinado endorses this sort of view is clear from the following passage:

The proposition, ‘Peter is possible’ does not have an absolute intentional mode. It has a conditional intentional mode, which has the following sense: ‘If Peter existed, he would exclude a contradiction from his predicates’. Therefore, it is not distinguished with respect to its object but only with respect to its intentional mode from a proposition with an absolute intentional mode, namely this one: ‘Peter exists while excluding a contradiction from his predicates’. The consequence is clear, for just as love and hate, assent and dissent are not distinguished with respect to the object they are about but only with respect to diverse modes of being about one and the same object, so conditional and absolute assent are only distinguished according to diverse modes of being about the same object.95

As this passage makes clear, Peinado thinks that propositions of the form ‘a is possible’ are equivalent to subjunctive conditionals of the form ‘If a existed, it

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95 *Phys. Lib. 1, d. 7, s. 1, subs. 2, n. 15, p. 178: “Haec propositio Petrus est possibilis non habet modum tendendi absolutum, sed conditionatum exponibilem per hunc: Si Petrus existat, excludet contradiccionem a suis praedicatis. Ergo non distinguitur ex objecto, sed praecise in modo tendendi a propositione cum modo tendendi absoluto, quae preferri posset de Petro casu quo existeret absolute, nempe ab hac: Petrus existit excludendo contradiccionem a suis praedicatis. Patet consequentia, nam sicut amor et odium, assensus et dissensus non distinguuntur ex objecto quod respiciunt, sed solum ex diverso modo respiciendi unum et idem objectum, ita assensus conditionatus et absolutus solum distinguuntur penes diversum modum respiciendi idem objectum. Sed propositiones convenientes in objecto convenient etiam in verificativo formali. Si quidem quaevis propositio, ut dictum est, a sol suo objecto verificatur, ergo propositio haec conditionalis Petrus est possibilis idem verificativum formale habet ac haec propositio absoluta Petrus existit excludendo contradiccionem a suis praedicatis.”*
would exclude a contradiction from its predicates’. (The latter proposition amounts to this; ‘If a existed, it would not imply a contradiction’.)

Peinado’s claim that truths of the form ‘a is possible’ are equivalent to subjunctive conditionals is, as far as I can tell, not necessary to preserve the overall structure of his view, and going forward I will ignore it to the extent that I can. The important point is that Peinado accounts for the modality of a proposition by way of the intentional mode rather than the object of the proposition. By contrast, recall that Mauro accounts for modality in a proposition by way of the object of a proposition: he thinks that ‘Peter is possible’ is about Peter’s possibility rather than Peter. Peinado, on the other hand, says that ‘Peter is possible’ is about Peter.

Because Peinado thinks that ‘Peter is possible’ is about Peter, the standard analysis of truth is not available to him. On the standard analysis, ‘Peter is possible’ would be true just in case Peter exists. But this is too strict, for ‘Peter is possible’ can be true even if Peter does not exist. In light of this, Peinado again modifies the standard analysis with respect to modal propositions:

To say “The proposition ‘Peter is possible’ is true’ is to say ‘The proposition saying that Peter would exist without contradiction if Peter existed exists, and Peter really would exist without contradiction if he existed.”

Here Peinado makes the following equivalence claim:

‘Peter is possible’ is true = The proposition ‘Peter would exist without contradiction if he existed’ exists, and Peter would exist without contradiction if he existed.

As we have seen, Peinado thinks that ‘Peter would exist without contradiction if he existed’ is equivalent to ‘Peter is possible’. Substituting the latter for the former, we obtain the following equivalence claim:

‘Peter is possible’ is true = The proposition ‘Peter is possible’ exists and Peter is possible.

This equivalence claim tells us what it is for a proposition of the form ‘a is possible’ to be true, and it yields the following analysis of truth for such propositions:

**Possible Truth**: For a proposition of the form ‘a is possible’ to be true is for that proposition to exist and for its object to be possible.

Given the definition of a possible truthmaker (T is a possible truthmaker for ‘p’ =df (i) ‘p’ is about T and (ii) ‘p’ is true if and only if T can exist), Possible Truth* entails that truths of the form ‘a is possible’ have possible truthmakers. The first half of Peinado’s super wide-base trutmaker principle** is therefore entailed by his analysis of what it is to be true for propositions of the form ‘a is possible’. I assume Peinado would tell a similar story about necessity.

Now I want to modify Peinado’s super-wide base truthmaker principle in the two ways mentioned above. First, the super wide-base trutmaker principle** states that truths of the form ‘a is possible’ have possible truthmakers, but it does not make explicit the negative claim that such truths do not require actual truthmakers. To be sure, truths of the form ‘a is possible’ can have actual truthmakers. For example, ‘Peter is possible’ would have an actual truthmaker if Peter were actual. But such truths do not require actual truthmakers. As Peinado tells us,
In order for ‘Peter is possible’ to be always and necessarily true, it is not required that there be something positive now, always and necessarily existing absolutely [...] First, because nothing positive, now, always and necessarily existing is the truthmaker of the necessarily true proposition that Peter is possible.97

This is a philosophically important part of Peinado’s view, since it means that we can call off the search for actual portions of reality in virtue of which such truths are true. We can make it an explicit part of his truthmaker principle for modal truths as follows:

**Super wide-base truthmaker principle*: Truths of the form ‘a is possible’ have possible truthmakers and do not require actual truthmakers. Truths of the form ‘a is necessary’ have necessary truthmakers.

As with his treatment of negative truths (which do not have truthmakers in the positive sense) and tensed truths (which do not have present truthmakers), Peinado justifies the claim that truths of the form ‘a is possible’ do not require actual truthmakers by way of his intentional mode view of modality and his aboutness constraint on truthmaking:

For nothing distinct from the object of a proposition can be its formal truthmaker (and we are talking about formal truthmakers) [...] But nothing positive, now, always, and necessarily existing is the object of this necessarily true proposition: ‘Peter is possible’. Therefore, in order for this proposition to be true, nothing now, always, and necessarily existing is required.98

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97 *Phys.* Lib. 1, d. 7, s. 1, subs. 2, n. 17, p. 179: “Ut haec propositio *Petrus est possibilis* sit semper et necessario vera, non requiritur aliquid positivum nunc, semper at necessario existens absolute [...] Primo, quia nihil positivum nunc, semper et necessario existens est verificativum huius propositionis necessario verae *Petrus est possibilis*. Ergo, ut haec propositio sit necessario vera, non requiritur aliquid positivum nunc, semper et necessario existens.”

98 *Phys.* Lib. 1, d. 7, s. 1, subs. 2, n. 18, p. 179: “Nam nihil distinctum ab objecto propositionis potest esse eius verificativum formale, de quo est sermo [...] Sed nihil positivum nunc, semper et necessario existens est objectum huius propositionis necessario verae: *Petrus est possibilis*.”
In short, truths of the form ‘a is possible’ are not (necessarily) about something actual, so they do not require actual truthmakers. Peinado illustrates this claim by contrasting his view with his opponent’s (and here his opponent seems to be Mauro or someone who held Mauro’s view). Peinado’s opponent claims that ‘a is possible’ is made true by God or some feature of God, such as God’s power. But, Peinado claims, ‘a is possible’ is about a, not God (where a ≠ God). So, given the aboutness constraint, ‘a is possible’ cannot be made true by God, or anything other than a.

If Peinado can give independent reason to endorse the intentional mode view of modality, it seems he will have given a principled reason to deny that truths of the form ‘a is possible’ are, as a rule, made true by actual portions of reality. Peinado gives an argument for the intentional mode view of modality, which I will paraphrase as follows. ‘Peter is possible’ would be made true by Peter if Peter existed. From the aboutness constraint, it follows that ‘Peter is possible’ is about Peter. Hence, ‘Peter is possible’ and ‘Peter exists’ are both about Peter, and they differ only with respect to their intentional mode.99

I think there is also prima facie reason to accept the intentional mode view of modality based on parity with Peinado’s treatment of negation and tense. In chapter six we saw that Peinado thinks the object view of tense cannot account for the tense of a proposition. This is because propositions that differ with respect to tense might not differ with respect to their intentional object. The same consideration can be brought to bear on the intentional mode view of modality. What accounts for the difference between modal and non-modal propositions? On Peinado’s view modal and non-modal propositions differ with respect to their intentional modes. On what I will call ‘the object view of modality’, modal

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99 Peinado, Phys., lib. 1, d. 7, s. 1, subs. 1, nn. 4-5, pp. 173-174. This is a paraphrase because in Peinado’s formulation Peinado assumes that ‘a is possible’ is equivalent to a subjunctive conditional. This assumption is not necessary for the argument to go through, and I have dropped it in my paraphrase.
and non-modal propositions differ with respect to their objects. But here Peinado can point out, as he does in his discussion of tense, that propositions that differ with respect to modality might not differ with respect to their intentional object. To see this, consider Mauro’s view that ‘Peter is possible’ is about Peter’s possibility, which he identifies with God. On Mauro’s view ‘Peter is possible’ is about God, and so is ‘God exists’. Although the former proposition is modal and the latter is non-modal, they have the same intentional object. The intentional object of a proposition is therefore not sufficient to account for a proposition’s modality.

The super wide-base truthmaker principle as stated above is of limited import because of its narrow range of application. But it seems that Peinado’s view can be generalized to account for all modal truths of the form ‘◊p’ and ‘□p’, where ‘p’ is atomic. What is needed is the claim that the modal operators do not represent but express a unique intentional mode. Given that claim, it seems that Peinado would analyse truth for modal truths as follows:

**Possible Truth:** For a proposition of the form ‘◊p’ (where ‘p’ is atomic) to be true is for its object to be possible.

**Necessary Truth:** For a proposition of the form ‘□p’ (where ‘p’ is atomic) to be true is for its object to be necessary.

And these analyses entail the following more general version of the super wide-base truthmaker principle for modal truths:

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100 Although Soames entertains an intentional mode view of negation, he endorses something similar to an object view modality (“Cognitive Propositions,” 99, 101).
**Super wide-base truthmaker principle:** Truths of the form ‘◊p’ have possible truthmakers and do not require actual truthmakers. Truths of the form ‘□p’ have necessary truthmakers.

The super wide-base truthmaker principle is motivated jointly by Peinado’s analysis of truth for modal truths, his intentional mode view of modality, and his aboutness constraint on truthmaking.

Note that treating modality in propositions as a sentential operator provides a further reason to endorse the intentional mode view of modality. If we treat negation and tense as sentential operators and treat sentential operators expressing negation and tense as intentional modes rather than as informing the object of a proposition, then systematicity seems to push us in the direction of treating modal operators the same way.

It should be noted that truths of the form ‘◊p’ are only a subset of the eternal truths. Because Peinado is committed to the claim that positive, atomic truths have truthmakers, he seems committed to the claim that necessary atomic truths have necessary truthmakers. For example, just as ‘Peter is running’ has a truthmaker that exists, so does ‘A human is an animal’. Because Peinado thinks that God is the only necessary existent, it seems Peinado must either endorse Truthmaker Theism (§4) with respect to such truths or deny that there are any necessary atomic truths that are not about God. Which route Peinado would take is an interesting question that lies beyond the scope of this section.

### 7.4.1 Super Wide-Base Truthmaking and Peinado’s Theory of Truth

As we have seen, Peinado at least nominally endorses the composite theory of truth discussed in chapter four. According to that theory, the truth of a proposition is the mereological sum of a true proposition and its intentional object. But this theory entails that every true proposition is such that its
intentional object *exists*, a claim that Peinado denies. Peinado therefore must explain how his composite theory of truth is consistent with his super wide-base truthmaker principle. Peinado was aware of this problem, and he raised it in the form of an objection:

You will object [...] Because a proposition is constituted as being true from the constituents of truth (just as anything constituted is constituted by its constituents as being such-and-such), it is impossible that a proposition always be true unless the constituents of its truth always exist. This is confirmed and urged as follows. The truthmaker of the proposition, ‘Peter is possible’ is the possibility of Peter. But such a truthmaker is not Peter. Therefore neither is Peter his own possibility. The minor is proven. The truthmaker of a proposition ought to exist when the proposition is true. But this proposition is true from eternity, and Peter does not exist from eternity.101

This passage nicely lays out the dialectic in which, I have argued, Peinado is engaged. According to the objection, ‘Peter is possible’ is true only if the “things that constitute its truth” exist, and the truthmaker of true proposition is identified as one of the things that constitute that proposition’s truth. But because Peter does not exist when ‘Peter is possible’ is true, Peter cannot be the truthmaker for ‘Peter is possible’. This is clearly a form of the missing-part objection raised in chapters five and six. The objection, in short, highlights the tension between the super wide-base truthmaker principle on the one hand and

the composite theory of truth (and the account of truthmaking it entails) on the other.

We have seen versions of the missing-part objection in each of the previous two chapters, and we have also seen that Peinado typically responds to the missing part objection by appealing to his notion of alienation. In short, his response is that the truthmaker for ‘Peter is possible’ does exist if ‘exist’ is taken per alienationem—that is to say, in this case, that the truthmaker for ‘Peter is possible’ would exist if Peter existed.102 In previous chapters I pointed out that this sort of response seems to miss the point of the missing part objection: there is no mereological sum of a true proposition and its object if its object does not exist. The objection is metaphysical in nature, not semantic, so Peinado’s appeal to the semantics of ‘exist’ does not seem adequate to solve the solution. However, in previous chapters I also suggested that Peinado’s response shows that he is more concerned with the truth conditions of truth ascriptions than he is with the metaphysics of truth. In order to develop this reading, I argued that Peinado could endorse the anti-realist semi-extrinsic denomination (ARSED) view of truth. This view is metaphysically minimalistic. It claims that truth is not a thing, but that the predicate ‘true’ is governed by certain application conditions concerning (i) what a truth-bearer says, and (ii) the object of the truth-bearer. These application conditions are further spelled out by the recursive analysis of truth, which I offer as a systematization of (and improvement upon) Peinado’s piecemeal analyses of truth for various kinds of propositions.

To extend the recursive analysis of previous chapters, I’ll use modal operators ◻ and ◻. I’ll say that ‘ ◻ p’ is the ◻-correlate of ‘p’, and ‘ ◻ p’ is the ◻-correlate of ‘p’. The recursive analysis of previous chapters can be extended to account for modal truths as follows:

102 Peinado, Phys., lib. 1, d. 7, s. 1, subs. 3, nn. 35-36, p. 188.
The Analysis of Truth 3.0:

\[ p \text{ is true} =_{df} (i) \text{ p is a present atomic proposition whose adequate object exists, or} \]

(ii) p is the past correlate of q and q was true, or

(iii) p is the future correlate of q and q will be true, or

(iv) p is the \( \square \)-correlate of q and q is necessarily true, or

(v) p is the \( \Diamond \)-correlate of q and q is possibly true, or

(vi) p is the negation of q and q is false, or

(vii) p is a conjunction of two propositions q, r, and q is true and r is true.

Suppose that ‘q’ is a positive, atomic proposition. Clause (v) entails that ‘\( \Diamond q \)’ is true if and only if ‘q’ is possibly true. Because ‘q’ is a positive atomic proposition, clause (i) entails that ‘q’ is possibly true if and only if the object of ‘q’ can exist. Given the intentional mode view of modality, the object of ‘q’ is the object of ‘\( \Diamond q \)’. Hence (v) and (i) together entail that ‘\( \Diamond q \)’ is true if and only if the object of ‘q’ can exist. Since the object of ‘q’ is the object of ‘\( \Diamond q \)’, (v) and (i) together entail that ‘\( \Diamond q \)’ is true if and only if its object can exist. Accordingly (v) and (i) and the intentional mode view of modality entail that ‘\( \Diamond q \)’ has a possible truthmaker. Similar considerations show that ‘\( \square p \)’ has a necessary truthmaker. Because the above analysis is recursive, moreover, it defines truth for propositions other than just atomic propositions modified by sentential operators.

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have considered three views of the eternal truths, or of an important subset of eternal truths. According to Essentialism, eternal truths are made true by non-existent essences. Although these essences do not exist from eternity, they necessarily have some other form of being. In the 17th century
Essentialism was a minority view, widely rejected for theological reasons stemming from the fact that God is supposed to be the only necessary being. According to Truthmaker Theism, necessary truths have necessary truthmakers; because the only necessary being is God, necessary truths are all made true by God. Together with the aboutness constraint on truthmaking, this view entails that every necessary truth is about God. Mauro endorses this implausible claim, but others found it implausible enough to warrant rejection of Truthmaker Theism. In my discussion of Peinado I focused on modal truths, a subset of the eternal truths. I argued that Peinado endorses a super wide-base truthmaker principle according to which truths of the form ‘◊p’ have merely possible truthmakers. I also argued that this view can be paired with the anti-realist conception of the semi-extrinsic denomination view of truth, and that the recursive analysis of the previous chapters can be extended to accommodate the super wide-base truthmaker principle. In my view Peinado’s account of modal truths is more compelling than the Essentialist and Truthmaker Theist accounts, and it is motivated by views that seem defensible. If Peinado’s account is ultimately defensible, the implication is that we can call off the search for actual truthmakers for modal truths. This would be a philosophically important claim that is just as controversial today as it was in the 17th century. In spite of the controversy, I find Peinado’s view intuitively compelling. Everyone should agree that ‘Peter is possible’ is true because Peter is possible. Peinado would add that this is a full, not a partial, explanation of the truth of ‘Peter is possible’. Accordingly ‘Peter is possible’ requires a possible truthmaker but not an actual one.
EXCURSUS:
PEINADO’S ACCOUNT OF TRUTHMAKING

I have explained parts of Peinado’s account of truthmaking over the course of the last three chapters. In this *excursus* I want to show how the parts hang together, make some remarks about what Peinado’s view has going for it, and clarify its metaphysical implications.

The intentional mode view of negation, tense, and modality drives Peinado’s account of truthmaking. On the intentional mode view of negation, negation does not represent, but it is an intentional mode, a way of thinking about an intentional object. On this view, ‘Obama exists’ and ‘Obama does not exist’ are both about Obama, but the former is about Obama in a positive way, and the latter is about Obama in a negative way. Similarly, Peinado thinks that tense and the modal operators do not represent, but they are intentional modes or ways of thinking about intentional objects. Thus, ‘Caesar existed’ and ‘Caesar exists’ are both about Caesar—the former in a past way, the latter in a present way. And ‘Pegasus exists’ and ‘It is possible for Pegasus to exist’ are both about Pegasus but in different ways.

In chapters five through seven I explained Peinado’s reasons for endorsing the intentional mode view of negation, tense, and modality, and I will not repeat those details here. But the idea, roughly, is that the intentional mode view of affirmation and negation is the only view that accounts for the difference between syntactically positive and negative propositions; that the intentional mode view of tense is the only view that accounts for differences in tense; and that the intentional mode view of modality is the only view that accounts for differences between modal and non-modal propositions.

The distinctive feature of Peinado’s truthmaker principle is that it employs notions of several different kinds of truthmakers, including truthmakers in the positive sense, truthmakers in the negative sense, past and future truthmakers,
and merely possible truthmakers. Before stating Peinado’s truthmaker principle, it will therefore be useful to review these kinds of truthmakers. In chapter five I defined truthmakers in the positive and negative sense as follows:

**Truthmaker in the Positive Sense:** T is a truthmaker in the positive sense for a proposition ‘p’ =df (i) ‘p’ is about T, and (ii) ‘p’ is true if and only if T exists.

**Truthmaker in the Negative Sense:** T is a truthmaker in the negative sense for a proposition ‘p’ =df (i) ‘p’ is about T, and (ii) ‘p’ is true if and only if T does not exist.

To illustrate, Obama is a truthmaker in the positive sense for ‘Obama exists’, since ‘Obama exists’ is about Obama and is true if and only if Obama exists. Pegasus is a truthmaker in the negative sense for ‘Pegasus does not exist’, since ‘Pegasus does not exist’ is about Pegasus and is true if and only if Pegasus does not exist. In chapter five we saw that Peinado endorses a *hybrid* truthmaker principle insofar as it allows for truthmakers in both the positive and negative senses.

In chapter six I defined past and future truthmakers as follows:

**Past Truthmaker:** T is a past truthmaker for ‘p’ =df (i) ‘p’ is about T, and (ii) ‘p’ is true if and only if T existed prior to the existence of ‘p’.

**Future Truthmaker:** T is a future truthmaker for ‘p’ =df (i) ‘p’ is about T, and (ii) ‘p’ is true if and only if T will exist after ‘p’ exists.

To illustrate, Caesar is the past truthmaker for a present token of ‘Caesar existed’, since ‘Caesar existed’ is about Caesar and is true if and only if Caesar existed prior to the present token of ‘Caesar existed’. And the Antichrist is the future
truthmaker for a present token of ‘The Antichrist will exist’, since ‘The Antichrist will exist’ is about the Antichrist and is true if and only if the Antichrist will exist. In chapter six we saw that Peinado endorses a wide-base truthmaker principle insofar as it allows non-existent, past and future truthmakers.

In chapter seven I defined merely possible truthmakers as follows:

**Possible Truthmaker:** $T$ is a possible truthmaker for ‘$p$’ =df (i) ‘$p$’ is about $T$ and (ii) ‘$p$’ is true if and only if $T$ can exist.

To illustrate, Pegasus is a possible truthmaker for ‘It is possible for Pegasus to exist’, since ‘It is possible for Pegasus to exist’ is about Pegasus and is true if and only if Pegasus can exist. In chapter seven we saw that Peinado endorses a super wide-base truthmaker principle insofar as truths of the form ‘$\Diamond p$’ can have merely possible truthmakers.

Cobbling together all of Peinado’s truthmaker principles discussed in the previous three chapters, we obtain the following hybrid, super wide-base truthmaker principle:

**The hybrid, super wide-base truthmaker principle:** Atomic, present truths have truthmakers in the positive sense only; negative truths have truthmakers in the negative sense only; past truths have past truthmakers only; future truths have future truthmakers only; modal truths of the form ‘$\Diamond p$’ (where ‘$p$’ is atomic) have possible truthmakers only.

The striking upshot of Peinado’s truthmaker principle is that negative truths, past and future truths do not have existing truthmakers, and truths of the form ‘$\Diamond p$’ do not require existing truthmakers. Peinado’s truthmaker principle has some intuitive appeal. Intuitively, ‘Pegasus does not exist’ is true because
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Pegasus does not exist, and no other explanation is needed for this truth. Intuitively, ‘Peter will exist’ is true because Peter will exist, and no other explanation is needed for this truth. And ‘It is possible for Pegasus to exist’ is true because Pegasus can exist, and no other explanation is needed. This line of thought implies that negative existential truths have truthmakers in the negative sense only, that past (future) existential truths have past (future) truthmakers only, and that modal existential truth of the form ‘It is possible for \( x \) to exist’ have possible truthmakers only. Of the views discussed in this dissertation, only Peinado’s view can accommodate (and even explain) the above intuitions about the truth of various existential truths. Yet because it admits truths that are not grounded in being, Peinado’s truthmaker principle was controversial in the 17th-century, as it would be today.

Peinado arrives at his truthmaker principle by way of (i) his intentional mode view of negation, tense, and modality, (ii) his truth conditions for negative, tensed, and modal truths, and (iii) the aboutness constraint on truthmaking. Peinado argues that the negation of an atomic proposition is true if and only if its object does not exist, that a past atomic proposition is true if and only if its object did exist, that a future atomic proposition is true if and only if its object will exist, and that a proposition of the form ‘\( \Diamond p \)’ (where ‘\( p \)’ is atomic) is true if and only if its object can exist. These truth conditions, together with the intentional mode view of negation, tense, and modal operators, entail that negative truths have truthmakers in the negative sense, that past and future truths have past and future truthmakers, and that ‘\( \Diamond p \)’ has a possible truthmaker (when ‘\( p \)’ is atomic; henceforth I drop this qualification). The aboutness constraint on truthmaking gets Peinado the further, negative claim that negative truths do not have truthmakers in the positive sense, that past and future truths do not have present truthmakers, and that ‘\( \Diamond p \)’ does not need an actual truthmaker.
Although Peinado seems to offer piecemeal analyses of truth for a variety of truths, I have argued that we can systematize his analyses recursively as follows. In previous chapters I introduced the operators ¬, WAS, WILL, ◇, and □. I say that ‘¬p’ is the negation of ‘p’, that ‘WAS(p)’ is the past correlate of ‘p’, that ‘WILL(p)’ is the future correlate of ‘p’, that ‘◇p’ is the ◇-correlate of ‘p’, and that ‘□p’ is the □-correlate of p. Peinado’s theory of truth may now be systematized by the following recursive analysis:

*The Analysis of Truth 3.0:*

p is true =df (i) p is a present atomic proposition whose adequate object exists, or
(ii) p is the past correlate of q and q was true, or
(iii) p is the future correlate of q and q will be true, or
(iv) p is the □-correlate of q and q is necessarily true, or
(v) p is the ◇-correlate of q and q is possibly true, or
(vi) p is the negation of q and q is false, or
(vii) p is a conjunction of two propositions q, r, and q is true and r is true.

The recursive analysis, together with the intentional mode view of negation, tense, and modality, entails Peinado’s truthmaker principle. Peinado only talks about atomic propositions and the result of appending a single sentential operator to an atomic proposition, and in that respect his explicit account of truth and truthmaking is incomplete. One benefit of the recursive analysis is that, in addition to capturing Peinado’s views of negative, tensed, and modal truths, it also defines truth for more complex truths that Peinado does not explicitly discuss, truths such as ‘◇(WILL(p) ∨ ¬q)’.

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In chapter four I explained that some early modern scholastics, including Peinado, draw a distinction between formal and illative truthmakers. The main difference between formal and illative truthmakers is that formal truthmakers play a role in explaining what it is to be true, while illative truthmakers do not. Illative truthmakers are entities from which we may infer the truth of a proposition. For example, God’s knowledge that Peter will sin is an illative but not a formal truthmaker for ‘Peter will sin’. Peinado’s truthmaker principle entails that negative, tensed, and some modal truths do not have existing formal truthmakers, but it does not follow that such truths do not have existing illative truthmakers. Peinado is perfectly happy to admit that negative, tensed, and modal truths have illative truthmakers. This is because he thinks that God’s knowledge is “metaphysically connected” with every truth. What he is not willing to grant is that God’s knowledge is typically relevant to the account of what it is for a proposition to be true.

It is important for Peinado (or someone who holds Peinado’s view) to admit that truths can have illative truthmakers without having existing formal truthmakers. The claim that a particular truth ‘p’ does not have an existing formal truthmaker amounts to the claim that no existing thing plays a role in accounting for that proposition’s being true. But from this it does not follow that there is nothing from which we can infer the truth of ‘p’ or, more generally, that there is nothing whose existence somehow guarantees the truth of ‘p’, or that there is nothing in any way required for the truth of ‘p’. We might want to allow for such things without admitting that they play any role in explaining the truth of ‘p’. For example, a physical determinist with Peinadian sympathies might maintain that any state of the world, together with the laws of nature, physically determines every other state of the world. From this sort of view it would follow that a state of the world \( S_n \), together with the laws of nature, is an illative truthmaker for a truth about another state \( S_m \). But, the Peinadian will insist, \( S_n \) does not play a role in explaining the truth of the proposition about \( S_m \).
and so it is merely an illative, not a formal truthmaker for that truth. The
distinction between formal and illative truthmakers is important because it opens
up conceptual space for this sort of deterministic view without committing the
determinist to the claim that tensed truths have present (formal) truthmakers.
More generally, it leaves open the possibility of jointly endorsing claims of the
following sort:

(i) Some proposition ‘p’ is true.
(ii) ‘p’ does not have an existing formal truthmaker.
(iii) There is something that necessitates the truth of ‘p’.

At this point someone might worry that the notion of an illative truthmaker
takes us back to the drawing board: why think that truths have illative
truthmakers? Which truths have illative truthmakers, and which do not? How
shall we draw the distinction? And so on. I agree that these are important
questions, but it doesn’t follow that we are back to the drawing board. Merely
recognizing the distinction between formal and illative truthmakers is progress.
Moreover, the notion of an illative truthmaker cannot be used to regiment
metaphysical inquiry, and it is therefore less philosophically interesting than the
notion of a formal truthmaker. The claim that illative truthmakers cannot be used
to regiment metaphysical inquiry is based on a general methodological
assumption: for any property F, we must posit F-making entities only insofar as
F-making entities are required to account for something’s having the property F.
Consider the property, being red. We should posit red-making entities only
insofar as they are required to account for something’s being red. Once we have
given a complete account of being red, there is no reason to posit red-making
entities that are not required by the account of being red. Similarly, if I can give a
complete account of being true without systematic appeal to illative truthmakers,
there is no reason systematically to posit illative truthmakers. We should
systematically posit illative truthmakers only insofar as they are required to account for truth. Because Peinado accounts for truth without appealing to illative truthmakers at all, there is no systematic reason to posit illative truthmakers for any truth.

To this line of thought someone might reply: Peinado does systematically posit illative truthmakers, since he endorses a brand of theism according to which God knows everything, and God’s knowledge states are illative truthmakers for every truth. So even if we can give a complete account of truth without appeal to illative truthmakers, we might still have systematic reasons to posit illative truthmakers for some or all truths.

I respond by pointing out that this line of thought supports my main claim that the notion of an illative truthmaker cannot be used to regiment metaphysical inquiry. Peinado thinks truths have illative truthmakers because he has a prior commitment to a certain kind of theism, not because he has a prior commitment to a general account of illative truthmakers. Hence, Peinado’s illative truthmakers reflect his prior ontological commitments rather than regimenting his ontological inquiry. This is also the case in the above example of the Peinadian determinist. The Peinadian determinist is committed to illative truthmakers for tensed truths because he has an antecedent commitment to determinism, not because he has an antecedent commitment to an illative truthmaker principle. So even if there are systematic reasons to posit illative truthmakers, those reasons will be derived from antecedent ontological commitments. The notion of an illative truthmaker therefore cannot be used to regiment ontological inquiry, and it is less philosophically interesting than the notion of a formal truthmaker. For these reasons, I do not think that the admission of illative truthmakers takes us back to the drawing board with respect to the question of which truths have truthmakers and which do not.
CONCLUSION

There have been several attempts to locate the notion of a truthmaker in Aristotle, in various medieval philosophers, and even in Leibniz. But there is also skepticism about such claims. In his entry on truthmakers in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Fraser MacBride reports, “but it has also been disputed whether these authors are really deploying the concept of truth-making with which we are familiar rather than employing, perhaps for reasons of grammatical convenience, superficially similar turns of phrase that make it sound as if they are expressing our concept.”¹ MacBride’s comment is not entirely off base. In chapter two I argued that many late medieval logicians use phrases that are “superficially similar” to our ‘truthmaking’—namely, ‘verificare’ and its cognates—but these phrases had little or nothing to do with what we call truthmaking. Yet MacBride’s remarks on the history of truthmaking are also incorrect in a significant respect. In light of the foregoing, there can now be little doubt that 17th-century scholastics did employ the concept of a truthmaker with which we are familiar. 17th-century scholastics standardly conceive of a truthmaker as a portion of reality in virtue of which a true proposition is true, and they use the notion of a truthmaker to “regiment metaphysical inquiry.” These claims can no longer be in doubt. To be sure, some early modern scholastics, such as Francisco Peinado, introduce novel conceptions of truthmaking—truthmaking in the negative sense, as well as past, future, and merely possible truthmakers. But this should be seen not as an aberration from the genuine concept of a truthmaker but as a development of that concept.

We have now covered much of the ground of the 17th-century scholastic debates about truthmaking. I have argued that the standard account of truthmaking is entailed by two theories of truth, one of which was prevalent

¹ MacBride, “Truthmakers”.
among 17th-century Jesuit philosophers. On the composite view, truth is the mereological sum of a true proposition and its intentional object (where propositions are conceived of as token mental acts). On the connotation view, truth is identical to a true proposition and “connotes” the existence of that proposition’s object. Both theories entail what I have called the standard analysis of truth, according to which a proposition ‘p’ is true if and only if ‘p’ exists and the object of ‘p’ exists. The standard analysis entails that every truth has a truthmaker—its intentional object.

The idea that every truth has a truthmaker led to debates about truthmakers for negative, tensed, and eternal truths. As we have seen, many early modern scholastics posit exotic entities, including lacks and uninstantiated essences, as truthmakers for negative truths and eternal truths. Others try to identify less exotic entities, such as God or God’s decrees, as truthmakers for negative, tensed, and eternal truths. Some interesting ideas have emerged from the discussion of these views. Thomas Compton Carleton’s theory of lacks as spatially extended simples is historically unprecedented and offers an account of lacks unlike anything on the market today. Yet it reveals a difficulty for the hypothesis of negative entities generally. It is hard to see how a theory of negative entities could simultaneously satisfy two desiderata for a theory of negative entities. The first desideratum is Localization, according to which the negative entities that account for something’s not being in a place ought to be in the place where that thing is not; the second desideratum is Generalization, according to which negative entities ought to be able to account for negative existential truths. The discussion of eternalism in chapter six revealed that while some early modern scholastics endorse a version of eternalism, finding truthmakers for tensed truths is not trivial for eternalists, contrary to widespread contemporary opinion. The discussion of uninstantiated essences in chapter seven revealed an interesting development of the idea that contingent existents necessarily have essential being before they exist. The resulting view, which I have called Realist
Essentialism, was subject to serious theological objections in the 17th-century, and I argued that there is no theological advantage to moving eternal, essential beings “into the mind of God”. Again, this claim is contrary to widespread opinion.

Interesting as they are, efforts to provide truthmakers for problematic truths are not all successful. I argued in chapter five that lacks cannot account for negative existential truths because lacks are located in space and time, and nothing located in space and time is intrinsically such that something else does not exist. The effort to locate truthmakers in God is problematic insofar as typical negative, tensed, and modal truths do not seem to be about God. And I showed that reconciling truthmaker theory with ontological pluralism is not trivial, although it is possible.

Peinado’s approach to truthmaking avoids these problems. Peinado agrees that every truth has a truthmaker, but he interprets this claim in non-standard ways, by introducing truthmakers in the negative sense, past and future truthmakers, and merely possible truthmakers. The upshot of Peinado’s view is that negative, tensed, and some modal truths are not made true by existing truthmakers. If we restrict application of the term ‘truthmaker’ to those things that make a proposition true by existing, then Peinado’s view amounts to a significant restriction of the truthmaker principle. Only positive, present tense truths have truthmakers. Such a restriction of the truthmaker principle would be controversial today, widely viewed as ad hoc. But I have argued that Peinado’s account of truthmaking is independently motivated by (i) his intentional mode view of negation, tense, and modal operators, (ii) his truth conditions for negative, tensed, and modal truths, and (iii) the aboutness constraint on truthmaking. There might be good reasons for positing negative entities, tensed entities, or uninstantiated essences, but if Peinado is right, the need to find truthmakers is no such reason.
There are many philosophically interesting points to take away from the foregoing explanation of the concept of a truthmaker in the 17th-century, but I want to end by highlighting one insight that I take to be potentially fruitful for contemporary thinking about truthmaking. In chapter one I argued that the truthmaker principle—the claim that every truth has a truthmaker—goes largely unmotivated in the contemporary literature. The main efforts to motivate the truthmaker principle come from (i) the desire to catch cheaters, and (ii) the intuition that truth is grounded in being. But I argued that (i) is question-begging against the alleged cheaters and that the truthmaker principle intuitively overgenerates truth’s grounding in being. This is because negative existential truths intuitively do not have truthmakers, whereas the truthmaker principle entails that negative truths do have truthmakers. In light of problem cases such as negative existentials, some contemporary philosophers have proposed restricting the truthmaker principle. But this prospect raises questions about how to restrict the truthmaker principle in a way that is not *ad hoc*. In short, the contemporary literature offers no independent grounds on which to establish the scope of the truthmaker principle.

As I see it, the 17th-century discussion makes some progress on this front. The standard account of truthmaking is entailed by a particular theory of truth, which entails that every truth has a truthmaker. The name of the game is therefore to provide a theory of truth. If one can provide a theory of truth that does not entail a fully general truthmaker principle or (better yet) a theory of truth that entails a restricted truthmaker principle, then one earns the right to restrict the truthmaker principle. Rather than relying merely on intuitions about truth’s groundedness in being, early modern scholastic theories of truthmaking derive their justification from theories of truth. In my view, the debate about truth is more tractable than a debate about the scope of the truthmaker principle, divorced from theorizing about truth. The early modern scholastic debate about truthmaking is therefore more tractable than the contemporary debate (in at least
one respect). I think this is one of several areas in which contemporary philosophers can learn from the early modern scholastics.

I began this project with two conflicting intuitions. On the one hand, I thought that truth was grounded in being; on the other hand, I thought that negative truths did not need truthmakers. I wanted to see whether the early modern scholastic discussion of truthmaking could help resolve this conflict in my web of beliefs. Perhaps other philosophers are torn by the same or similar conflicting intuitions. I think that Peinado’s account of truthmaking resolves the conflict. On my development of Peinado’s account, atomic, present tense truths have existing truthmakers. The truth of negative, tensed, and modal propositions is defined recursively in terms of the truth of atomic propositions. On this account, truth is grounded in being because atomic, present tense truths are grounded in being, and truths of other sorts are defined in terms of atomic, present tense truths. In other words, the base clause of the recursive analysis grounds truth in being. But the recursive analysis also allows us to say that negative, tensed, and some modal truths are not grounded in being. This is not an *ad hoc* distinction; it is entailed by Peinado’s theory of truth, his theory of truth bearers, and his aboutness constraint on truthmaking. These elements of Peinado’s account of truthmaking all receive some independent support. I therefore find Peinado’s account of truthmaking very attractive. Of course I have not even attempted a full defense of Peinado’s account. Such a defense would require a development and defense of the key features of his account of truth bearers, as well as the recursive analysis of truth and the aboutness constraint on truthmaking. Although I have not attempted such a defense here, I have argued that Peinado provides an idea of how such a defense could go. And in my view, such a defense is worth pursuing.
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