Extended Modal Meinongianism

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Outline

Defining Modal Meinongianism

Challenging Modal Meinongianism

Defending Modal Meinongianism

Extending Modal Meinongianism

Some Final Thoughts
(Nonexistence Thesis) Some objects don’t exist.

(Existence-as-a-Property Thesis) To exist is to instantiate existence.

(Distinctness Thesis) For some nonexistent object \( o \) and some nonexistent object \( o' \), \( o \neq o' \).

(So-Being Thesis) Distinct nonexistent objects are distinct in virtue of differing in terms of what they’re like.

(Actuality Thesis) Nonexistent objects are actually something.

(Concreteness Thesis) Nonexistent objects are concrete.
A Meinongian Account of Intentionality

In seemingly thinking about something that doesn’t exist, one needn’t in fact be thinking about nothing, but might be thinking about a particular nonexistent object.

In seemingly thinking about distinct objects that don’t exist, one needn’t in fact be thinking about one and the same nonexistent object, but might be thinking about distinct nonexistent objects.

In thinking about a particular nonexistent object, one can principally tell which object it is that one is thinking about.

What is the intended object like such that it, but no other object, is intended?
Intentional objects are typically associated with certain characterisations.

Given a thought involving a characterisation C, it is whatever satisfies C that is thereby intended, and vice versa.

C-Satisfaction is grounded in being just as C says.
Characterisation Principles

▲ A CP yields, for every characterisation C, a C-compliant condition of so-being.

▲ Whatever uniquely satisfies C does so in virtue of fulfilling this condition.
A First Attempt

\((\text{CP}_N)\) For every characterisation \(C\), whatever uniquely satisfies \(C\) uniquely \textit{actually instantiates all properties represented by} \(C\), and vice versa.
But...  

▲ What about the characterisation of being golden, a mountain and existent (Russell, 1905, 483)?

→ Whatever satisfies it actually instantiates goldenness, mountainhood and existence.

▲ But nothing actually instantiates these properties!

→ Nothing satisfies the characterisation!

▲ Is the characterisation illegitimate for directed thought?
(Intentionality Thesis)

(i) *Every* characterisation is uniquely satisfied by some object; and

(ii) *distinct* characterisations are uniquely satisfied by *distinct* objects.
What to Do?

Meinongians must formulate a different CP!

- Path of Restriction (Parsons, 1980)
- Path of Disambiguation (Zalta, 1983)
- Path of Relocation (Priest, 2005; Berto, 2012)
Modal Meinongianism

\((CP_M)\) For every characterisation C, whatever uniquely satisfies C uniquely instantiates all C-represented properties in all and only C-imagination-realising worlds, and vice versa (see Priest, 2005).

▲ In @, nonexistent objects instantiate only properties that aren’t existence-entailing.

▲ In imagination-realising worlds, nonexistent objects instantiate their characterising properties.

→ Whatever satisfies the characterisation of being a golden mountain instantiates golden-mountainhood (and thus existence) in all and only imagination-realising worlds. √
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But...

What about the characterisation $GM_{act}$: being an object such that, actually, it’s a golden mountain (Beall, 2006; Sauchelli, 2012)?

For every world $w$, \( \Box \text{actually, } \phi \Box \) is true in $w$ iff \( \Box \phi \Box \) is true in $\Theta$.

→ Argument:

(1) Whichever properties $GM_{act}$ represents are such that whatever instantiates them in any $GM_{act}$-imagination-realising world instantiates golden-mountainhood in $\Theta$.

(2) Nothing instantiates golden-mountainhood in $\Theta$.

∴ Nothing satisfies $GM_{act}$—against IT$_{(i)}$. 
Premise 1?

▲ Which properties does $GM_{act}$ represent?

▲ @-indexed properties, perhaps (see Plantinga, 1974, 63)?

▲ A property $P$ is @-indexed if for some property $Q$, we have: For every object $o$ and world $w'$, $o$ is $P$ in $w'$ iff $o$ is $Q$ in @.

→ Premise 1 becomes:

(A) $GM_{act}$ represents golden-mountainhood-$in@$ and

(B) golden-mountainhood-$in@$ is such that whatever instantiates it in any world instantiates golden-mountainhood $in@$.
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If $\text{GM}_{\text{act}}$ represents properties that “bleed back from an arbitrary world to the actual world” (Priest, 2011, 251; emphasis added), then Modal Meinongianism is in trouble.

Priest: Don’t forget *impossible* worlds!

$\rightarrow$ For every *possible* world $w$, $\diamondsuit$ actually, $\varphi$ is true in $w$ iff $\neg \varphi$ is true in $\@$.

$\rightarrow$ A property $P$ is $\@$-indexed if for some property $Q$, we have: for every object $o$ and *possible* world $w'$, $o$ is $P$ in $w'$ iff $o$ is $Q$ in $\@$.

$\rightarrow$ $\text{GM}_{\text{act}}$-imagination-realising worlds are *impossible*. 
Against Priest’s Defence

▲ @ realises the situation about the object characterised as being such that, actually, it’s a granitic mountain.

▲ But no nonactual world in which something instantiates granitic-mountainhood-in-@ does.

▲ Otherwise: @ would be imagination-realising in the case of the characterisation of being a wizard in a *Harry-Potter*-world.

→ Given a characterisation of being such that, actually, *P*,

  if no nonactual world in which something instantiates *P*-in-@ is imagination-realising although something instantiates *P* in @,

  then a fortiori, no nonactual world in which something instantiates *P*-in-@ is imagination-realising if nothing instantiates *P* in @.
Actually (≡ in the actual world) is context-sensitive.

“[W]hen an agent characterizes an object as \([GM_{act}]\), she imagines herself at centre stage, surrounded by [golden mountains]” (Barz, 2015, 5-6)

\[\rightarrow \quad GM_{act}\text{-imagination-realising worlds are } \text{considered as actual},\]

with the imaginer at its centre.
But then, which properties does $GM_{act}$ represent, such that whatever satisfies $GM_{act}$ does so in the right worlds?

Perhaps: Given an imaginer $i$:

- $bearing$-$R$-$to$-$i$, where $R$ is existence-entailing for both relata (such as $being$-$spatiotemporally$-$related$-$to$)
- $being$-$such$-$that$-$i$-$experiences$-$her$-$surroundings$-$from$-$within$
- $golden$-$mountainhood$
Against Barz’ Defence

In imagining something as $GM_{\text{act}}$, an imaginer $i$ needn’t imagine a golden mountain as instantiating a doubly-existence-entailing relation to $i$ herself, or as being experienced by $i$ herself from within.

$i$ might just imagine this world, $\@$, as being such that a golden mountain exists in it, perhaps even while $i$ herself does not.

→ Such an imagination is de re, where $\@$ is the relevant res, but not necessarily de se.

→ As such, it isn’t realised by any world other than $\@$. 
→ $GM_{act}$ is a modal characterisation that represents properties and a world, @ (i.e., instantiating-in-@ golden-mountainhood)

▲ The worlds represented by modal characterisations are those from which the ones relevant for world-relative property instantiation are to be drawn in the first place.

▲ But modal characterisations can’t even be handled by $CP_M$. 
What to Do?

▲ \( \text{CP}_M \): For every (non-modal) characterisation \( C \), whatever satisfies \( C \) does so in virtue of being related to certain worlds in a special way.

▲ These worlds aren’t antecedently given.

▲ But satisfaction conditions for modal characterisations must be knitted around antecedently given properties and worlds.

\[ \rightarrow (\text{CP}_M^? ) \quad \text{For every modal characterisation} \ C, \text{ whatever uniquely satisfies} \ C \text{ uniquely instantiates all} \ C\text{-represented properties in exactly those of the} \ C\text{-represented worlds that realise the situation about the object so envisaged, and vice versa.} \]
Enter the Philosophising Cat

→ (CP_M[G_{M_{act}}]) Whatever uniquely satisfies G_{M_{act}} uniquely instantiates golden-moutainhood in exactly those worlds of \{@\} that realise the situation about the object so envisaged, and vice versa.

But consider the characterisation P_{C_{act}}: being an object such that, actually, it’s a philosophising cat:

→ (CP_M[P_{C_{act}}]) Whatever uniquely satisfies P_{C_{act}} uniquely instantiates philosophising-felinity in exactly those worlds of \{@\} that realise the situation about the object so envisaged, and vice versa.
A New Problem

▲ Of \{@\}, no world is imagination-realising in either case of characterisation-induced imagination.

→ Each of these $CP_M^?$-yielded conditions of so-being is such that whatever fulfils it, fulfils it vacuously.

→ Given $CP_M^?$, whatever uniquely fulfils the $GM_{act}$-compliant condition of so-being also fulfils the $PC_{act}$-compliant condition, and vice versa.

→ Given $CP_M^?$, whatever uniquely satisfies $GM_{act}$ also uniquely satisfies $PC_{act}$, and vice versa.

→ Given $CP_M^?$, IT(ii) turns out to be false!
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(Realisation Thesis) For every characterisation $C$, only worlds can be $C$-imagination-realising.

But consider:

- being an object such that, necessarily, it's a golden mountain
- being an object such that, possibly, it's a round square
- being an object such that, in most dogless worlds, it's a philosophising cat

→ These characterisations trigger modal imaginations, none of which is realised by any world or other, taken individually!
What else might play the role of imagination-realisers?

→ whole pluralities of worlds (pows)!

Recall: For whatever satisfies the characterisation of being a golden mountain, Modal Meinongians relocate its instantiation of its characterising properties, including existence, to certain nonactual worlds.

→ Now: For whatever satisfies $GM_{act}$, Modal Meinongians can just relocate its instantiation of its characterising properties in (some of) its characterising worlds, including its instantiation of golden-mountainhood in $\circ$, to certain nonactual pows.
Extended Modal Meinongianism

→ Extended Modal Meinongianism incorporates:

$$(\text{CP}^+_M) \quad \text{For every modal characterisation } C, \text{ whatever uniquely satisfies } C \text{ instantiates all } C\text{-represented properties in some or all } C\text{-represented worlds in exactly those } \text{pows} \text{ that realise the situation about the object so envisaged, and vice versa.}$$
Crazy?

But: $\text{CP}_M^+$ is compatible with IT only if the following satisfaction conditions are non-vacuously fulfilled:

$$(\text{CP}_M^+[\text{GM}_{act}])$$ Whatever uniquely satisfies $\text{GM}_{act}$ uniquely instantiates golden-mountainhood in @ in exactly those pows that realise the situation about the object so envisaged, and vice versa.

$$(\text{CP}_M^+[\text{PC}_{act}])$$ Whatever uniquely satisfies $\text{PC}_{act}$ uniquely instantiates philosophising-felinity in @ in exactly those pows that realise the situation about the object so envisaged, and vice versa.

$\rightarrow$ But then some things must be nonactual pows!
To constitute a genuine kind of Meinongianism, the (pluralities of) worlds invoked in $\text{CP}_M^{(+)}$ must be regarded as:

- *Concrete*; otherwise: non-CT
- *Nonexistent*; otherwise: non-NT (and perhaps: non-AT)

Moreover, worlds are to be regarded as *trans-pow-objects*. 
A Picture
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▲ According to EMM, a nonexistent object \( o \) uniquely satisfies a modal characterisation \( C \), if it does, in virtue of uniquely being just as \( C \) says.

▲ EMM can even deal with the sophisticated modal characterisation given by Kroon (2012).

▲ What about the characterisation of being an object such that, *in the actual pow*, it instantiates-in-@ golden-mountainhood?

→ The question is: What is one imagining? Then: Extend EMM!

▲ Adding ((pluralities of ...) pluralities of) worlds requires giving up an assumption that all Meinongians so far shared: that *all* nonexistent objects are individuated solely on the basis of existent entities (in particular, properties).
Thank you very much! 🐱
References


