

A world of truthmakers?

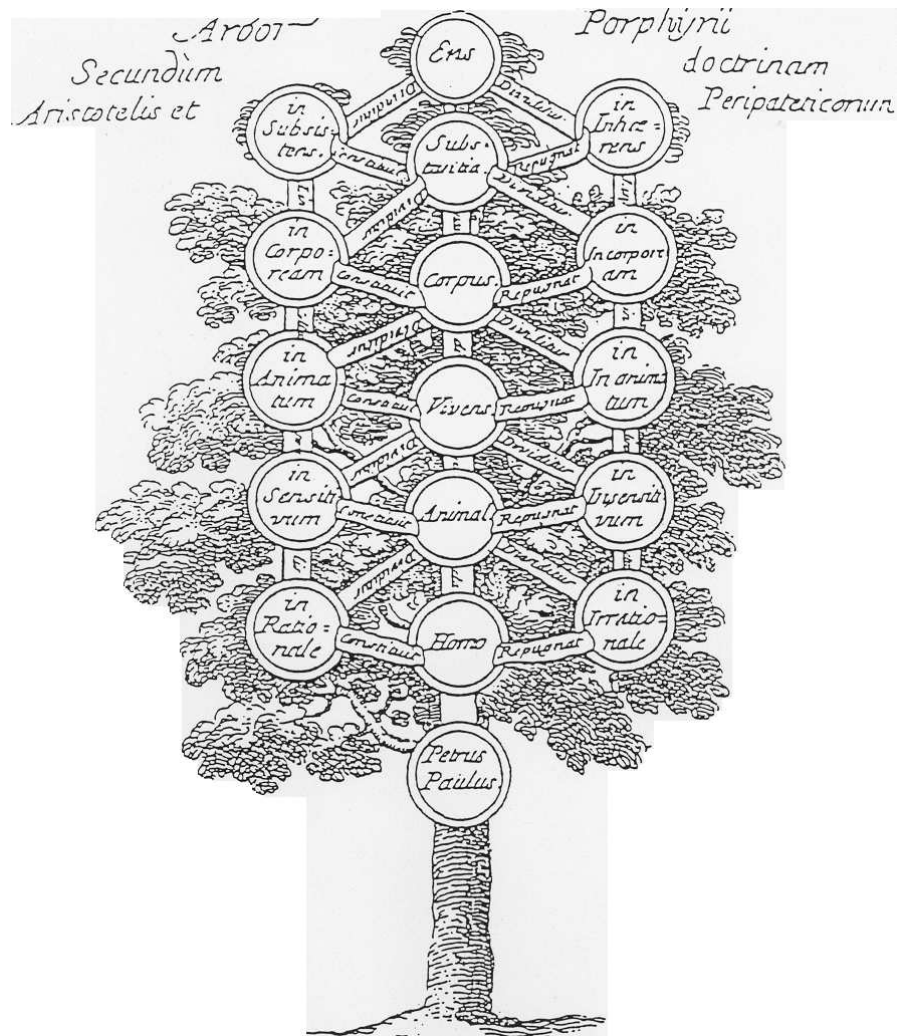
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The Plan

1. Truthmaker realism
2. Thick particulars
3. Allness
4. Aspectival truthmaking
5. The riddle of exemplification
6. Thick universals

Truthmaker realism

Two basic tenets:

1. Truth is relational: being true is being *made* true by something.
2. Truth is grounded: some truthbearers are true *because* the world is how it is.

Armstrong 1978

The world is a world of particulars and universals, held together by a non-relational tie:

“I take it that the Realist ought to allow that two “numerically diverse” particulars which have the same property are not wholly diverse. They are partially identical in nature and so are partially identical.” (Armstrong 1978a: 112)

Armstrong 1997

The world is world of states of affairs, which are necessitating the truth of all true propositions:

“If it is said that the truthmaker for a truth could have failed to make the truth true, then we will surely think that the alleged truthmaker was insufficient by itself and requires to be supplemented in some way. A contingently sufficient truthmaker will be true only *in circumstances that obtain in this world*. But then these circumstances, whatever they are, must be added to give the full truthmaker.” (Armstrong 1997: 116)

Truthmaker Necessitarianism: The determining of a truth by a truthmaker is an absolute necessitation.

Factualism

Truthmaker Necessitarianism violates combinatorialism. So why believe in it?

Armstrong (1997: 115): Because truthmaking is an internal relation. What does he mean by that?

Armstrong (1978b: 85): A relation is internal iff it supervenes on the intrinsic properties of its relata.

Armstrong (2004: 9): "I mean by calling a relation internal that, given just the terms of the relation, the relation between them is necessitated."

Truthmaker internalism: Truthmaking is an internal relation.

Through thick and thin

Minimality in different respects:

1. Though every state of affairs involving horses is a truthmaker for the truth that at least one horse exists, only the individual horses are minimal truthmakers (Armstrong 2004: 55)
2. Though $Venus + Mars$ is a truthmaker for the truth that Venus is greater in size than Mars, the minimal truthmaker is *Venus's being of size m + Mars's being of size n* (Armstrong 2004: 50)

Distinguish the thin particular – the particular “taken apart from its properties” (Armstrong 1989: 95), “the particularity of a particular, abstracted from its properties” (Armstrong 2004: 105) – from the thick particular, the “particular taken along with all and only the particular’s non-relational properties” (Armstrong 1997: 124).

How can the thin particular exemplify non-essential properties? This seems “the most puzzling unity of all” (Armstrong 2004: 267).

How can the thick particular exemplify non-essential properties? It has all its properties necessarily (Armstrong 1997: 125).

Totality facts

“If it is true that a certain conjunction of states of affairs is all the states of affairs, then this is only true because there are no more of them. [...] That there are no more of them must then somehow be brought into the truthmaker. [...] The truthmaker must be the fact or state of affairs that the great conjunction *is* all the states of affairs.” (Armstrong 1997: 198)

Armstrong’s account: every fusion of states of affairs which are of the same ‘sort’ F is an object which may stand in a relation T to some ‘unit-property’ G that Armstrong (1997: 199) calls “alling” or “totalling”.

A first problem: How many totality facts are there?

“These states of affairs [i.e. the fusion of all states of affairs totalling both *being a state of affairs* and its totalling *being any existent at all*] are the biggest states of affairs of all. Given these huge states of affairs, each positive, all the lesser totality or limit states of affairs are also given. In the great catalogue of being, as it were, you need neither have any of the lesser *allings* nor, I have claimed, any other negative state of affairs.” (Armstrong 2004: 74)

But how does it contain the totality state of affairs that *these* are all of Theatetus’ properties? It entails it, but it does not include it, for it only includes positive states of affairs.

But how can it include *any* state of affairs? In the way in which it is “included” in the truthmaker of “This is Armstrong’s favourite state of affairs”.

Paradox

A totality state of affair is of the form $\text{Tot}(X, F)$.

Consider the state of affairs that these are all the totality states of affairs. It is of the form $Y = \text{Tot}(X, F)$.

1. If $F = \textit{being a totality state of affairs}$, then it is not *totalling* the fusion of totality states of affairs, because Y is not in X .
2. If $F \neq \textit{being a totality state of affairs}$, then it is not totalling the fusion of *totality* states of affairs.

Define X as the totality state of affairs of these being all the totality states of affairs such that the property totalled does not also occur as a component in the fusion totalling the property (= the non-self-predicative states of affairs). Is X self-predicative?

1. If so, then the property of being a non-self-predicative state of affairs occurs in some state of affairs in the fusion that is totalled by X . So it is the property totalled by at least one of the state of affairs in this fusion. But what fusion is totalling it? It cannot be X , for otherwise X would contain itself as a proper part. So it must be non-self-predicative.
2. If not, then X belongs to the fusion totalling the property, so the property of being a non-self-predicative state of affairs is a component of a state of affairs in the fusion. So it is self-predicative after all.

Spinozism

Consider “All ravens are black”:

“There are, *prima facie*, two totalities: the mereological whole of the black ravens and the mereological whole of the ravens. [...] It then becomes clear that if and only if the two totalities are identical, then the proposition is true, and this one totality is its (minimal) truthmaker. If there are two distinct totalities, with the totality of the black ravens no more than a proper part of the totality of ravens, then the proposition is made false...” (Armstrong 2004: 74)

The fusion of all states of affairs, “*W*, the whole world, the whole that contains absolutely every thing that exists”, that “greater than which nothing exists” (Armstrong 2004: 122–123) cannot occur in any state of affairs:

“States of affairs are ampliative, that is, they *embed* their subjects in something further. But if *W* really is *everything*, then there is nothing further, not just no further particulars, but no further properties or relations or anything else.” (Armstrong 2004: 123)

W cannot have any property and cannot stand in any relation. So, in particular, it cannot stand in the totalling relation to the property *being a state of affairs*.

If totalling is not a universal, it is a minimal truthmaker for all negative and general truths.

“[T]he candidates for unique minimal truthmakers that a particular philosopher upholds take us into the heart of that thinker’s metaphysical position” (Armstrong 2004: 22)

Baxter

“What is contingent might not have existed. Suppose a to be F , with F a universal. If this state of affairs is contingent, then it might not have existed. Suppose it had not existed. The particular a , the particular with all its non-relational properties, what I have in the past called the ‘thick particular’, would not then have existed. Something quite like it could have existed instead: a particular with all of a ’s properties except F . But that would have been only a *close counterpart* of a , because the intersection with F , the partial identity with F , would be lacking. *Equally, it now seems to me, the universal F would not have existed.* A universal very like F could have existed: a universal that had the same instantiations as F except for instantiating a . But that would have only been a close counterpart of F , because the intersection with a , the partial identity with a , would not have existed. So, strictly, if a and F exist, then they *must* ‘intersect’. They themselves can be, and I think are, contingent beings. But if a exists and F exists, then a must be F : a necessary connection between contingent beings.” (Armstrong 2004: 47)

Not only are the particulars and universals fixed given the states of affairs, but the states of affairs are fixed given the particulars and universals (Armstrong 2004: 84). No need then to postulate them as truthmakers: they come as a supervenient free lunch.

Partial identity is not identity of a part.

“... a universal insofar as it is in one location, is not in another. Insofar as it is in one location, it is separate from (spatially discontinuous from) itself insofar as it is in the other.” (Baxter 2001: 451)

The universal insofar as it is there and the universal insofar as it is here are loosely identical to one universal, of which they are aspects. The universal is located there under some aspect (insofar as it is exemplified by one particular), but located here under some other aspect (insofar as it is exemplified by a different particular). Partial identity is a kind of identity “that holds between distinct things (counted on a strict standard) and a single thing (counted on a looser standard). It is identity because the several things (counting strictly) are identical with each other (counting loosely)” (Baxter 1988: 576). An aspect is not a proper part of the thing of which it is an aspect, but it is numerically identical with it.

Necessitarianism about predication

“Here is the proposal in brief: the non-relational tie is the identity of an aspect of a universal with an aspect of a particular. If you think of aspects as parts, then the non-relational tie is the ‘partial identity’ of particular and universals. That’s putting it Armstrong’s suggestive way [reference to (Armstrong 1997: 17)]. The aspect is the part they have in common.” (Baxter 2001: 453)

“Here is an example. Suppose Hume is a particular, Benevolence is a universal, and Hume is benevolent. Then Hume has an aspect, Hume insofar as he is benevolent. Also Benevolence has an aspect, Benevolence insofar as Hume has it. These are the same aspect – Hume’s benevolence.” (Baxter 2001: 454)

Hume’s benevolence is not a state of affairs. Both Hume and Hume insofar as he is benevolent and Benevolence and Benevolence insofar as Hume has it are numerically identical. So Hume’s benevolence is both numerically identical to Hume and to Benevolence!

But Benevolence, if it is multiply exemplifiable, is also numerically identical to, say, Mill. Hume and Mill are identical insofar as they are the same universal, Benevolence.

Necessitarianism about predication does not follow from the necessity of (partial) identity. It is a substantive thesis about what universals are.

Baxter’s aspects are contingent beings. Baxter is not a necessitarian about predication. Armstrong is, because he has *both* thick particulars and thick universals.

With Baxterianism, no totality states of affairs are needed and everything is necessarily connected to everything else. Just the state of affairs making it true that *a* exists gives us the super-thick universal, which, in turn, gives us everything else. Anything makes true everything; the whole world is mirrored in every a single monad.

The riddle of exemplification

Can exemplification be a relation? Armstrong's false dilemma:

1. If it were external, we would run into Bradley's regress.
2. If it were internal, it would hold necessarily.

"If you believe in universals and particulars, and you believe that neither are simply bundles of the other, then you need to make sense of instantiation...[...] It needs to be a 'non-relational tie [...]' That is, it can be neither an internal nor an external relation, as Armstrong construes them [...]. Internal relations are always necessary – the relata can't exist without them ...[...] External relations are or involve additional entities..." (Baxter 2001: 449)

If exemplification is a relation, what kind of relation is it? Partial identity. If a contingently has the intrinsic property F , it is contingent that a has an F -part – a could have lacked it and still be F . It is even possible to define:

"' Fa ' is an intrinsic predication of a if its truthmaker is or inheres in a .'" (Fox 1987: 198)

For any particular a and any of a 's intrinsic properties F there is an object, a qua F , which is identical to a and essentially F . This means that the gloss "qua F " selects a counterpart relation R_F which is such that any R_F -counterpart of a is F .

"Thanks to the multiplicity of counterpart relations, we have no need to multiply entities. [...] One identical thing can have different potentialities and different essences if it has them relative to different counterpart relations." (Lewis 2003: 28)

"... [Long] has different essences under different counterpart relations. The name 'Long' evokes one counterpart relation; the (novel) name "Long qua black" evokes another. The counterparts of Long qua black / Long under the second counterpart relation are just those of his counterparts under the first counterpart relation that are black." (Lewis 2003: 31)

Thick universals

1. That a must be F if it exists is only a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for a 's being essentially F .
2. If a relation obtains, some monadic relational properties are exemplified.

Baxter's insight: properties do not have counterparts.

If a exemplifies F , a exemplifies the property (of) *having F as a property* and F exemplifies the property (of) *being a property of a* . While the first is essential to a iff F is, the latter is always essential to F .

- Aquinas: it is essential to the world to have been created by God, but it is not essential to God to have created the world.
- Kripke: it is essential to me to have the parents I have, but it is not essential to my parents to have begotten me.
- Fine: it is essential to the set $\{a, b\}$ that a is a member of it, but it is not essential to a to be a member of the set.

An argument that *being exemplified by a* is exemplified essentially by F :

- (Some) properties make for similarity across possibilia.
- If a and b are similar, they (literally) share a property.
- So (some) properties are strictly identical across possible worlds.
- So they cannot differ in properties which are not implicitly relational.
- The property of being exemplified by a is not implicitly relational.
- So if it is had in some world by some of these properties, it is had in all in which it exists.

Truthmaking by parts

The truthmaker of a contingent intrinsic predication that a is F is a , having an F part. a could have lacked that part. Given a (and hence given its parts), however, the truth is necessitated.

That all ravens are black is made true by the fusion of the ravens, including their common blackness and raven parts. The property *being a raven* could not exist without being exemplified by just these black ravens.

What about the all-inclusive totality, the world? The world could, of course, have contained more or less things. But *existence* would not have been the same.



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