Commentary

Exploring Meinong's Jungle and Beyond: an Investigation of Noneism and the Theory of Items

by R. Routley
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Michele Paolini Paoletti [†]
michele.paolinip@gmail.com

Richard Routley's *Exploring Meinong's Jungle and Beyond* is perhaps the most comprehensive and representative work in Neo-Meinongianism. It covers several topics: theory of items,[1] ontology, logics, aesthetics, theory of knowledge, philosophy of mathematics, philosophy of time. Routley aims at presenting a Meinong-inspired theory of items and at showing the advantages of such a theory within several fields. This book includes some articles published from the '60s and it partly inspired modal Neo-Meinongianism, even though Routley seems to accept the property-centered Neo-Meinongianism (see the Foreword).

I cannot give here an exhaustive account of Routley's whole investigation of noneism (i.e., the theory according to which, roughly, there are items that do not exist, or, in other words, that not all the items exist). Considering the structure of the book, it is possible to individuate: a brief presentation and defense of noneist theses (pp. 1–73); a critique of classical logic and the introduction of a revised, neutral (i.e., not existentially committed) logic grounded on the theory of items (this long part includes, among other things, some important remarks on the Characterisation Postulate, on identity, existence, possible worlds, inconsistency, definite descriptions, intensional contexts) (pp. 73–360); a defense of a Meinongian and presentist metaphysical theory of time (pp. 361–409); some replies to Quine's article *On what there is* (in the short paper *On what there isn't*) and to other objections

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[†] University of Macerata, Italy.
[1] I shall use Routley's term "item" instead of "object", in order to respect the author's terminology and to clarify that even properties, states of affairs, facts, and so on, can be considered items, even if they are not ordinary existent or non-existent objects.

(pp. 411–488); the contiguity between noneism and common sense (pp. 519–536); noneist theories of fiction (pp. 537–606), of existence (pp. 697–768), of mathematical and theoretical knowledge (pp. 769–832) and of other topics (e.g., universals and perception) (pp. 607–696); Routley's interpretation of Meinong's work (pp. 489–518) and the differences between Routley's noneism and other theories of items (pp. 833–890); the paper *Ultralogic as universal* in the Appendix (pp. 892–959).

In this brief commentary, I shall focus on Routley's denial of the Ontological Assumption and on some theses, such as the Characterisation Postulate and the distinction between characterising and non-characterising properties. Furthermore, I shall present and discuss Routley's Meinongian Presentism and his theory of fictional items.

1. A Dialogue between a Noneist and an Actualist

In his review of Routley's book[2], W. J. Rapaport finds out four different formulations of the Ontological Assumption:

(OA1) no (genuine) statements about what does not exist are true (p. 22);

(OA2) a non-denoting expression cannot be the proper (i.e., logical, according to Rapaport) subject of a true statement (p. 22);

(OA3) nonentities are featureless, only what exists can truly have properties (p. 22);

(OA4) it is not true that nonentities ever have properties (p. 23).

It seems to me legitimate to summarize the idea behind the Ontological Assumption as follows:

(actualism) there are no items that do not exist, i.e., every item exists.

The thesis (actualism) is accepted by many philosophers and it implies, among other things, that statements about what does not exist are literally false (OA1), that they should be paraphrased in order to reveal the propositions that they express (or the facts that make them true), so that non-existent items are not their proper logical subjects (or non-existent objects are not involved in their truth conditions) (OA2), that non-existent items cannot instantiate properties,

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[2] See (Rapaport, 1984). For other interesting critical commentaries of Routley's work, see (Griffin, 1982), (Parsons, 1983), (Jacquette, 1996a).

since they are not items at all (OA3–OA4). One of the major consequences of the acceptance of (actualism) (or, in Routley's terms, of the Ontological Assumption) is the acceptance of the framework defined by the Reference Theory, according to which «all (primary) truth-valued discourse is referential» (p. 52), where the adjective "referential" implies a restriction of reference only to existing items.

One could argue against the truth of (actualism) in several ways. Routley considers many seemingly true statements that seem to imply that we can refer to non-existent items:

(1) Sherlock Holmes is a detective;
(2) Sherlock Holmes is more beloved than Moriarty;
(3) Sherlock Holmes is taller than Frodo Baggins;

and so on. Routley argues to a large extent that, even if such statements can be paraphrased into other true statements that do not involve any reference to nonentities, such paraphrases (i) do not preserve the meanings of the original statements; (ii) even if they preserve their meanings, they do not always preserve their truth-conditions and truth-values. It seems to me legitimate to add that (iii) such paraphrases, even if they *do* preserve the meanings and the truth-conditions and truth-values of the original statements, are required only if we accept (actualism). Yet, why do we have to accept (actualism)?

Routley's strategy against (actualism) consists in showing that, if we accept (actualism), then we run into serious difficulties, which I have summarized as (i) and (ii). However, it seems to me that, if we want to provide an adequate defense of noneism, we should first consider the problem of the truth of (actualism). In turn, if we wish to consider such a problem, we should provide a terminology that is acceptable for both actualists and noneists.

For example, D. Lewis argues that Routley is not a noneist (i.e., someone who accepts that there are items that do not exist), but that he is an allist (i.e., someone who accepts that there are/exist more items than the ones commonly accepted as existent, that there are/exist some existentially controversial items)[3]. In Lewis' perspective, Routley does not deny (actualism), but simply claims that there exist round squares, fictional objects, and so on. Yet, Routley would obviously not accept this interpretation of his noneism. In fact, it is true for Routley that

[3] See (Lewis, 1990).

(non-actualism) there are items that do not exist.

How should Lewis and Routley define their disagreement? Routley introduces two neutral quantifiers (a particular and a universal one) that are not existentially committing (pp. 79–83). Thus, it is legitimate for him to distinguish between the neutral particular quantifier "there is$_n$" and the existentially loaded quantifier "there is$_e$". If we use neutral quantifiers, we can claim that, since it is true that (1), then it is true that

(1n) there is$_n$ an item, such that it is identical with Sherlock Holmes and it is a detective,

while it is false that

(1e) there is$_e$ an item, such that is identical with Sherlock Holmes and it is a detective,

since it is true that

(4)   Sherlock Holmes does not exist.

So far, so good. Yet, Lewis could reply that what he means by "there is" when he accepts (actualism) is the same as what he means by "exists" and that, furthermore, it is the same as what is expressed by the neutral quantifier. In sum, Lewis could introduce a property P (perhaps, a non-natural property) that is instantiated by all the items over which it is legitimate to quantify in a neutral way and he could call such a property "existence". Thus, it would turn out that Routley is not a noneist. It would be true for Lewis that

(actualism-1) there are$_n$ no items that do not have P

and it would be true for Routley too. Actualists win. Yet, is this the end of the story? I do not think. Noneists could reply that it is not legitimate to introduce such a property, i.e., that there is no property such as P. They could invoke the Characterisation Postulate (see below), according to which items have all and only their characterising properties, and they could argue that P is not a characterising property. However, actualists could reply that P should be considered a non-characterising property, which is nevertheless instantiated by every item. P could be necessarily coextensive with the non-characterising property of *being an item*, which is instantiated by all items. There are$_n$ no items that are not items. If there are contradictory items that are not items (i.e.,

that have within their characterising properties the negative property of *being a non-item*), they nevertheless have the non-characterising property of *being an item*. Since P is necessarily coextensive with the non-characterising property of *being an item*, they have P too. What could noneists reply? They cannot reply that, even if P is necessarily coextensive with the property of *being an item*, there are items (e.g., impossible ones) that do not obey such a law of necessary coextension, so that they do not have P, even if they are items. In fact, actualists could introduce a further non-characterising property P*, that both such latter items and the former items have (e.g., the property of *being an item that obeys the law of necessary coextension of the non-characterising property P and the non-characterising property of being an item* or *that does not obey it*), and they could call it "existence".

On the other hand, noneists could argue that it is not legitimate to introduce whatever non-characterising property one can conceive of. Yet, I do not see any reason for accepting such a thesis. In fact, if properties are items, why cannot we claim that there is a property, such as the property P*, that has the characterising (second-order) property of *being the non-characterising property of being at item that obeys*, etc.? In order to deny such a conclusion, we should deny that properties are items or that they are items for which the Characterisation Postulate holds or we should affirm that it is not possible to introduce non-characterising properties in such a way. However, I do not see any good argument to support such replies. If, after this discussion, actualists are right, then it is true that

(actualism-2) there are$_n$ no items that do not have P*.

This strategy is a really powerful one. However, I think that noneists could reply that, even if (actualism-2) is true, actualists' P*-existence is not what is part of the truth-conditions of

(5)   Obama exists.

Let me recall the Quinean paraphrase of (5):

(5Quine) there is an item that obamizes (i.e., that is identical with Obama)[4].

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[4]See (Quine, 1948).

More generally, at least according to an ontology inspired by Quine's paraphrase, whenever we truly claim that something exists, as in (5), our statement is made true by the fact that there is something that has the property of being identical with that thing. Existence is not simply the property of *being identical with* i (where *i* is a variable ranging over items), but it is a property of that property. In fact, if now turn to true singular negative existentials about something (i.e., to statements which truly deny the existence of something, which have the form of the negation of statements such as (5)), it seems that they are made true by the fact that there is nothing that has the property of being identical with that thing, i.e., that the property of being identical with that thing is not instantiated. Otherwise, true negative existentials would be false or meaningless. Thus, according to this ontology, existence turns out to be a higher-order property: it is the property of *being instantiated*, which is instantiated by the property *of being identical with* i. Let me call such a property P**. If actualists are right (i.e., if every item exists) and if actualists' existence P* is identical with P**, then actualists run into serious difficulties. In fact, there are items that are not properties (so that they do not have P**), even if, following (actualism-2), they have P*. Thus, since it is a necessary condition for two properties to be identical that they are necessarily coextensive, P** is not identical with P*. Noneists (partly) win. On the one hand, it could be legitimate to introduce a property P* that is instantiated by anything. Yet, on the other hand, that property is not part of the truth-conditions of true ordinary singular negative existentials (and of true positive ones). This problem affects every actualist who wishes to maintain that everything exists *and* that there are true singular negative existentials (or at least true paraphrases of seemingly true singular negative existentials). Yet, actualists could reply that we cannot introduce P** into our ontology. Why? I do not see any valid reason to deny that there are properties such as P**. Perhaps, it is not a natural property. Yet, if P* is not a natural property and it is acceptable, why cannot we accept P** too? On the other hand, if the existential actualist quantifier did not express a property, how could we make (actualism) intelligible?

2. Characterising Noneism

Routley's noneism is grounded on eight Meinong-inspired theses (see pp. 2–3):

(M1) everything whatever is an object (or an item);

(M2) very many items do not exist and in many cases they do not have any form of being;

(M3) nonentities are constituted in one way or another, thus they have properties;

(M3*) properties can be subdivided into characterising and non-characterising;

(M4) existence (as well as many other ontological properties) is a non-characterising property;

(M5) every item has the characteristics it has irrespective of whether it exists or not (or of whether or not it has any other ontological status);

(M6) an item has the characterising properties used to characterise it;

(M7) important quantifiers of common occurrence in natural language neither conform to the existence nor to the identity and enumeration requirements imposed by classical logicians.

Furthermore, Routley accepts other theses that seem to be implied by the truth of (M1)–(M7):

(significance) «very many sentences the subjects of which refer to nonentities (...) are significant» and «the significance of sentences whose subjects are about (or purport to be about) singular items is independent of the existence, or possibility, of the items they are about» (p. 14);

(content) «many different sorts of statements about non-existent items, including many of those yielded by single subject-predicate sentences, are truth-valued, i.e., have truth-values true or false. Hence, in particular, many declarative sentences containing subjects which are about nonentities yield statements in their contexts. More generally, many sentences about nonentities have content-values in their contexts»(p.14);

(basic-independence) «that an item has properties need not, and commonly does not, imply, or presuppose, that it exists or has being» (p. 24);

(advanced-independence) «nonentities can (and commonly do) have a more or less determinate nature» (p. 24)

and the Characterisation Postulate, according to which

(char.post.) «nonentities have their characterising properties» (p. 24).

Finally, we should add one further thesis, concerning the nature of negation (see pp. 88–89):

(double-neg.) considering all items, propositional negation (e.g., it is not the case that Sherlock Holmes is a detective) is neither identical with, nor equivalent to predicate negation (e.g., Sherlock Holmes is a non-detective).

I cannot dwell here on each thesis. Let me only consider the distinction between characterising and non-characterising properties. Characterising properties are the ones that can be assumed to characterise an item, according to (char.post.). On the other hand, non-characterising properties cannot be assumed and are somehow "external" to an item. This distinction was suggested by one of Meinong's pupils, E. Mally, in order to deal with the famous Russellian paradox of the existent golden mountain, that both exists (since the property of existence is one of its characterising properties) and does not exist (since there exists no golden mountain in the actual world)[5]. In brief, according to this solution, the existent golden mountain does not exist (since existence is a non-characterising property), even if some property of existing* (some watered-down property of existing, in T. Parsons' terms[6]) can be considered a characterising property of some items *or* even if, in order to constitute an item, we are only allowed to consider its characterising properties (as it is claimed by Routley).

Yet, one of the major problems of such a distinction is that there is no clear criterion to distinguish characterising from non-characterising properties. This is true only in part. It is true that Routley considers at least five classes of non-characterising properties (or, better, in his terms, of non-characterising predicates, since the use of the term "properties" seems to imply for him the existence of such items): ontic, logical, intensional, evaluative, theoretical ones

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[5] See (Russell, 1973, p. 80–81), and (Russell, 2003, p. 81–84).
[6] See (Parsons, 1980). For a critical commentary of Parsons' work, see (Fine, 1984).

(see p. 266). T. Parsons makes a similar distinction[7]. However, Routley claims that non-characterising properties, such as existence, seem to be logically supervenient on characterising ones: «items which exist are fully determinate in all extensional respect» and «this full determinacy can be explicated logically in terms of the coincidence of sentence and predicate negation» (p.244). In fact, recalling the distinction between propositional and predicate negation, he adds that

> (existence) by definition, an item exists = for every extensional property P, it is necessary that, if that item has non-P, then it is not true that it has P and it is contingently true that, if it is not true that it has P, then it has non-P (see p. 244).

According to D. Jacquette, non-characterising properties can be defined in purely logical terms: he claims that some property P is nuclear (or characteristic) iff it is *not* true that, for every item that instantiates it, that item does not have P iff it has non-P. On the other hand, according to Jacquette, some property P is extra-nuclear (or non-characteristic) iff it is true that, for every item that instantiates it, that item does not have P iff it has non-P[8].

Yet, it seems reasonable to assume that it is true, *at least according to Conan Doyle's stories*, that

(6) Sherlock Holmes exists,

even though it is also true that (4), i.e., that he does not exist. How should we deal with the paradox that Sherlock Holmes exists and does not exist in Routley's perspective? As we will see, Routley maintains that only characterising properties constitute fictional objects. He does not introduce any watered-down property of existing. Thus, Sherlock Holmes simply does not exist, i.e., he does not have the non-characterising property of existing. Yet, what does it make it true that (6), according to Conan Doyle's stories, if neither existence, nor watered-down existence* constitute Sherlock Holmes as an item? Routley talks of "full objects", in order to maintain that fictional items such as Sherlock Holmes do not only have characterising features that are ascribed to them by their stories, but also some non-characterising features that are ascribed by the same stories (perhaps existence too) (see pp. 596–

[7] See, for example, (Parsons, 1980, p. 42–44 and p. 52–57).
[8] See (Jacquette, 1996b, pp. 114–116).

597). Yet, it is worth asking: is Sherlock Holmes as a full object identical with or distinct from Sherlock Holmes as a non-full object? If they are distinct, then it is not true that (6), at least with regard to Sherlock Holmes as a non-full object. If they are identical, then we should change Routley's criterion of identity for fictional items (see below).

3. Being Sherlock – with a Little Help from his Source

According to Routley, fictional items are not reducible to other kinds of items (e.g., properties, propositions, and so on): they are nonentities, i.e., non-existent items (see p. 538). Fiction is an «authored discourse or communication which consists of imagined or invented statements or narrative, which conveys a story as contrasted with factual or reportative discourse» (p. 539). It is not properly true that fictional objects "live" in stories: stories depict fictional worlds, i.e., classes of statements that hold according to stories (see p. 540), and fictional worlds are not possible worlds (they are sometimes logically inconsistent and physically impossible and always incomplete) (see p. 545). Fictional worlds do not only comprehend what is explicitly determined as true within stories: it is legitimate to add to these worlds, by principles of material elaboration and formal closure, other truths (e.g., it is legitimate to claim that the statement "London is near to Oxford" is true within Sherlock Holmes' fictional world). Yet, since there is no uniform logic of fiction (inconsistency and incompleteness hold or might hold in fictional worlds) and since some material elaborations are useless in order to comprehend works of fiction, it seems unavoidable to restrict such additions.

After having defined fiction and fictional worlds, it is now time to define fictional characters. Routley explores several criteria for fictional items' individuation. He accepts the following one:

> (fic.char.) a fictional item *d* has *just* those characterising features its source S(*d*) ascribes to it (see p. 576).

A fictional item has some work of fiction as its source iff it is native to that work, i.e., it is "created" within that work (see p. 573). Thus, Sherlock Holmes has all and only those characterising features its source (i.e., Conan Doyle's stories) attributes to him. However, Routley's account immediately has to face at least one problem. If there were two fictional characters with all and only the same characterising features their sources attribute to them but with different

sources, would they be identical or not?[9] For example: if some author different from Conan Doyle had written stories that are completely similar to Conan Doyle's stories (without having read such stories) and if he had "created" some fictional item e with all and only Sherlock Holmes' characterising features, would that item be identical with or distinct from Sherlock Holmes? Following Routley's criterion, it seems that it would be identical with Sherlock Holmes. Yet, let me assume that Sherlock Holmes and e respectively have S_1 (Conan Doyle's stories) and S_2 as their sources. This argument shows that Sherlock Holmes and e turn out to be both identical with and distinct from one another:

(a) Sherlock Holmes has the non-characterising property of *having S_1 as its source*;

(b) e has the non-characterising property of *having S_2 as its source*;

(c) if e has the non-characterising property of *having S_2 as its source*, then it does *not* have the non-characterising property of *having S_1 as its source*[10];

(d) for any two fictional items, they are identical iff they have all and only the same characterising features ascribed to them by their respective sources;

(e) Sherlock Holmes and e have all and only the same characterising features ascribed to them by their sources;

(f) for any two items, if they are identical, then, for every property, the former item has that property iff the latter item has it too (indiscernibility of identical);

(g) (from (b) and (c), by MP) e does not have the non-characterising property of *having S_1 as its source*;

(h) (from (a), (f) and (g)) Sherlock Holmes and e are not identical;

(i) (from (d) and (e)) Sherlock Holmes and e are identical;

(j) (from (h) and (i)) Sherlock Holmes and e are both identical and not identical.

How can a Meinongian deal with this argument? At first, one could notice that it is quite implausible that (e) obtains. Yet, it is *only* implausible: it is not

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[9] This case is somehow similar to Pierre Menard's Don Quixote's case. See (Sainsbury, 2010, p. 74).

[10] One could argue that one and the same story-type is produced by Conan Doyle and the other author, even though they produce two different tokens of it. However, the same problem could arise with regard to story-tokens: Sherlock Holmes and e would have different non-characterising properties with regard to their story-tokens.

[10] See (Fine, 1984, pp. 103–104).

impossible and, if a criterion of identity for fictional items should be given in modal terms, it has to deal with such a possibility. Secondly, one could accept the argument and its conclusion, by claiming that there are true inconsistencies. Yet, I think that it would be better to question the premises or the general validity of the argument, before claiming that there are true inconsistencies (at least in the actual world). Thirdly, it is possible to weaken (d) by claiming that (d) is a true criterion of identity for most fictional items, even if it is sometimes not determined whether two fictional items are identical or not. Yet, I think that it would be better to exclude such cases of undetermined identity.

Are there ways to avoid (j)? Perhaps, one could try to change (a) and (b), by denying that there are such specific non-characterising properties as the property of *having S_1 as its source*. In fact, these non-characterising properties are not logically supervenient on their characterising properties: it is only a matter of fact that S_1 is Sherlock Holmes' source. Yet, this implies that we have to give some reason to exclude that there are such non-characterising properties instantiated by items *or* it implies that we have to change our criterion to distinguish characterising from non-characterising properties, since there are (at least in this case) non-characterising properties that are *not* logically supervenient on characterising ones. On the other hand, if we deny (c), we have to admit that some fictional items can have more than one source and this seems to be rejected by Routley. We could try with (e), by claiming that it is not true that Sherlock Holmes and *e* have all and only the same characterising properties. In fact, as it could be argued accepting Parsons' watered-down properties, Sherlock Holmes has the watered-down characterising property of *having S_1 as its source**, that is not had by *e*, while *e* has the watered-down characterising property of *having S_2 as its source**, that is not had by Sherlock Holmes. However, since such watered-down characterising properties are neither explicitly, nor implicitly ascribed to fictional items by their sources (it is not claimed within Conan Doyle's stories that Sherlock Holmes has those stories as his source and nothing seems to involve it), criterion (d) needs to be changed. Finally, one could try to restrict (f) to characterising properties. However, this solution seems to be highly counterintuitive: if two items are identical, then one might expect that they share *all* and *only* the same properties. In sum, at least according to my perspective, we should change (d), i.e., Routley's criterion to identify two fictional items.

A similar problem arises with two fictional items that have the same story as their source and that are indistinguishable with regard to their characterizing properties[11]. If one does not postulate that there is some kind of bare numerical distinction between fictional items, how can we avoid to identify them, given (d)?

Furthermore, there is another problem. Let me consider the following statement:

(7)   Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes is identical with *Sherlock*'s Sherlock Holmes,

where *Sherlock* is a recent TV show whose major character is a detective named Sherlock Holmes, who lives in the 21st Century London, who has a friend named John Watson and who has adventures that are somehow similar to the ones narrated by Conan Doyle. Is it true that (7)? It is implied by the TV show that Sherlock Holmes did not live in the 19th Century, so that they do not seem to be identical. Yet, one could try to use the distinction between native and immigrant characters in order to deal with (7): it is perhaps the case that *Sherlock*'s Sherlock Holmes is the same fictional character as Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, since he migrates from Conan Doyle's stories to that TV show (he is not "created" within that TV show). However, if we consider (d) and if we accept that such fictional characters are identical, *Sherlock*'s Sherlock Holmes (the immigrant Sherlock Holmes) does not acquire any characterising property attributed to him by *Sherlock*, since *Sherlock* is not his source. Thus, how does Sherlock Holmes have the properties attributed to him within *Sherlock*? I do not know. Perhaps both Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and *Sherlock*'s Sherlock Holmes are part of one more comprehensive trans-fictional Sherlock Holmes. Yet, first, this latter Sherlock Holmes would have inconsistent characterising properties, such as the properties of *living in the 19th Century* and of *not living in the 19th Century*. Secondly, he would be different both from *Sherlock*'s Sherlock Holmes and from Conan Doyle's one. There is a vast critical literature on this problem[12].

I cannot examine here other theses of Routley's concerning fictional items (see, for example, with regard to relational puzzles, pp. 577–588).

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[11] See (Fine, 1984, pp. 103–104).
[12] See, for example, (Voltolini, 2006).

Furthermore, there are other problems connected with his account, in particular with regard to the definition of fictional characters' "creation"[13]. However, as I have tried to argue (and as other authors have already argued following different strategies[14]), if we accept (d), we run into several difficulties.

4. The Difficulty of Not Existing Now

Routley defends a version of Meinongian Presentism according to which

> (mein.presentism) whatever exists exists now *and* there are items that do not exist (i.e., that do not exist now).

This does not exclude that there are merely past or merely future items, that have properties and that are distinct from one another. Furthermore, Routley deals with many problems concerning diachronic identity, substantial change, the definition of Prior's operators, of times and of the nature of time (see pp. 368–409). However, it is worth considering here his justification of (mein.presentism).

According to Routley, noneist presentists do not have any difficulty in grounding the truth of many statements about merely future and merely past items, even if they do not consider such items existent. On the other hand, actualist presentists are in trouble when they have to ground the truth of statements such as

(8)   Aristotle was born in Stagira.

This happens because they are both committed to

> (presentism) whatever exists exists now,

and to

> (actualism) there are no items that do not exist,

so that they accept a version of presentism according to which

> (act.presentism) there are no items that do not exist now.

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[13] See the so-called "selection problem" in (Sainsbury, 2010, pp. 57–63).
[14] See, for example, (Orilia, 2005², pp. 161–167), (Voltolini, 2006, pp. 3–36), and (Berto, 2012, pp. 125–128).

On the other hand, if (8) is truly about Aristotle, it turns out that

> (8a) there is an item that does not exist now, that is identical with Aristotle and that was born in Stagira.

This contradicts (act. presentism), according to which there are no items that do not exist now. Thus, Meinongian Presentism seems to work better than Actualist Presentism, at least if we wish to maintain that (8) is truly about Aristotle. However, according to Routley, the acceptance of Meinongian Presentism implies a revision of temporal logic and, more generally, of classical logic, in order to avoid its commitment to the Ontological Assumption and to the Reference Theory.

How could an Actualist Presentist reply to Routley? It is possible to follow different strategies that are characterisable as follows:

> (a.p.1) (8) is not truly about Aristotle, but about something else that exists now;
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> (a.p.2) even though Aristotle does not exist now, he has some tenseless existence that is expressed by the quantifier "there is" in (8a), since he existed, so that it is now true that Aristotle existed and that he was born in Stagira;
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> (a.p.3) even though it is not now true that (8a) (since Aristotle does not exist now), it is true that (8), since it *was* true that Aristotle exists and that he has the property of being born in Stagira.

These are only examples of strategies connected with (act. presentism). Such strategies could commit to the existence (now) of entities different from Aristotle that make it true that (8) or they could imply that there are two kinds of existence. However, Meinongian Presentism has at least one advantage: by affirming that *there is now* an item such as Aristotle, even if he does *not exist now* (so that he does not exist at all), it can avoid such complications.

Yet, if we accept the following equivalence concerning existence (and existence now):

> (existence-1) for every item, that item exists (and exists now) iff, for any extensional property P, it has non-P iff it is not the case that it has P (see p. 362),

it turns out that merely past and merely future items are indeterminate with regard to at least one extensional property. Namely, as Routley claims, it is *not* the case that Aristotle (that is a purely past item) has the property of *having present baldness*, but it is *not* the case that he has the property of *not having present baldness*, so that Aristotle is undetermined with regard to the extensional property of *having present baldness*. However, Routley maintains that an item is negation-indeterminate with regard to some extensional property P iff it both has P and non-P (see p. 362). Thus, it seems to me that there are two ways in which a merely past or a merely future item does not exist:

> (indeterminate-1) for every item, that item is indeterminate-1 iff, for some extensional property P, it is *not* the case that it has P *and* it is *not* the case that it has non-P;

> (indeterminate-2) for every item, that item is indeterminate-2 iff, for some extensional property P, it is both the case that it has P *and* that it has non-P.

These two definitions of indetermination (even if (indeterminate-2) actually seems to be a definition of overdetermination) are not equivalent. Thus, one could ask: under which respect can a merely past or merely future item be indeterminate? Finally, one might introduce one further case of indetermination:

> (indeterminate-3) for every item, that item is indeterminate-3 iff it is indeterminate-1 or indeterminate-2.

Let me now consider Aristotle and the property of *having present baldness*. Aristotle is indeterminate-1 with regard to this property, at least according to Routley. In fact, it is *not* the case that Aristotle has the property of *not having present baldness* and it is *not* the case that he has the property of *having present baldness*. Yet, it does not seem to be true that Aristotle does *not* have the property of *not having present baldness*! In fact, he does *not* have that property only if we presuppose – as Routley does – that he does not exist, i.e., that he does not exist now, following (existence-1). However, it seems acceptable to argue that, if Aristotle does *not* have the property of *having present baldness*, he has the negative property of *not having present baldness*: he does not exist now and he is not now bald! Routley accepts that

> (non-ex.) nonentities are indeterminate-1, since they do not exist.

Yet, is there any reason to accept (non-ex.), since Aristotle seems not to be now bald?

Provided our second definition of indetermination, it is possible to reply that Aristotle is indeterminate-2. Yet, at least with regard to the property of *having present baldness*, it does not seem that he has it. If we do not want to consider him an inconsistent item, it should be conceded that he does not have that property, so that he is not indeterminate-2 with regard to that property, and it seems that there is no tensed extensional property (i.e., no property such as the one of *presently having baldness*, or of *having had baldness*, or of *going to have baldness*) and no other kind of property for which he is indeterminate-2. Since Aristotle is neither indeterminate-1, nor indeterminate-2, he is not indeterminate-3.

In sum, it seems to me that, given (existence-1), it is not possible to justify the thesis that a merely past item does not exist, so that it does not exist now[15].

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[15] Different attempts to defend Meinongian Presentism (or, better, some version of Presentism that accepts that there are objects that do not exist and that do not exist now, even not accepting some typical Meinongian theses) have been made, for example, by (Hinchliff, 1988), (Yourgrau, 1987 and 2000) and (Connolly, 2011).

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