

Conceivability Arguments for Haecceitism

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According to haecceitism, some maximal possibilities differ even while they are qualitatively indiscernible. Since haecceitism is a modal thesis, it is typically defended by appeal to conceivability arguments. These arguments require us to conceive of qualitatively indiscernible possibilities that differ only with respect to the identity of the individuals involved. This paper examines a series of conceivability arguments for haecceitism and a variety of anti-haecceitist responses. It concludes that there is no irresistible conceivability argument for haecceitism even while anti-haecceitist responses do come with certain notable commitments.

§1. Introduction

This paper aims to provide a systematic taxonomy of various conceivability arguments for haecceitism, an evaluation of their respective merits, and an assessment of anti-haecceitist options. In this section, I begin by introducing the relevant thesis of haecceitism.

Possibilities can be distinguished in several ways. Our first distinction separates *qualitative* possibilities from *non-qualitative* ones. Non-qualitative possibilities like the possibility that Napoleon flies depend upon specific individuals like Napoleon. In contrast, *qualitative* possibilities like the possibility that something—anything at all—flies do not depend upon specific individuals.¹ So, while non-qualitative possibilities are typically held to require the instantiation of haecceities like *being Napoleon* or non-qualitative properties like *being next to Obama*, qualitative possibilities are typically held to involve only qualitative properties like *electronhood* or *roundness*.²

A second distinction separates *maximal* possibilities from *non-maximal* possibilities. While maximal possibilities are total ways the world could be, non-maximal possibilities like the possibility that some pigs fly are less than total ways things could be.³ Maximal possibilities *include* both qualitative and non-qualitative possibilities.⁴ For example, the actualized maximal possibility includes the qualitative

¹ The distinction between qualitative and non-qualitative possibilities is closely aligned with the *de re/de dicto* distinction. I leave open their precise relationship and focus on the former in what follows. For discussion, see Plantinga (1969) and Kaplan (1967).

² On the distinction between qualitative and non-qualitative properties, see Adams (1979) and Cowling (2015). In what follows, I assume haecceities exist. Some views might draw the distinction between qualitative and non-qualitative possibilities without appeal to haecceities (e.g., by relying on some notion of individual-dependent possibilities).

³ On maximal possibilities, see Stalnaker (1987).

⁴ On some views, the relation of *inclusion* is entailment, since possibilities are identical with propositions. On a nearby view, *inclusion* is understood set-theoretically, since possibilities are just sets of propositions. In what follows, we can remain neutral between these frameworks, but, on ersatzism and its varieties, see Lewis (1986), Adams (1981), Forrest (1986), and Sider (2002).

possibility that someone smokes as well as the non-qualitative possibility that Obama smokes. Actuality therefore differs from various non-actual maximal possibilities where other non-maximal possibilities obtain (e.g., the possibility that no one smokes, the possibility that Obama does not smoke, or the possibility that Obama fails to exist).

Having distinguished these kinds of possibilities, we can formulate the following thesis:

Possibility Haecceitism: Some maximal possibilities differ only with respect to the non-qualitative possibilities they include.

If possibility haecceitism is true, there are ways the world could be that include the same qualitative possibilities but different non-qualitative possibilities. Call this kind of difference between maximal possibilities a “haecceitistic difference.”

To get a better sense of haecceitistic differences, consider a scenario according to which you and Obama swap all of your actual qualitative properties and relations (e.g., where Obama reads this paper while you are the President). If this scenario is a genuine maximal possibility, it differs only haecceitistically from actuality, since it includes the very same qualitative possibilities as the actualized maximal possibility. So, while *possibility anti-haecceitists* deny maximal possibilities ever differ haecceitistically, *possibility haecceitists* admit haecceitistic differences between some possibilities.⁵

Whether some maximal possibilities differ haecceitistically is, on its own, an interesting question about modal reality. But, as recent discussions have shown, the status of haecceitism has implications for a broad range of metaphysical debates.⁶ Here, I focus on a familiar strategy for defending possibility haecceitism: conceivability arguments. These arguments aim to establish haecceitism by exploiting the apparent link between what is conceivable and what is possible. In examining these arguments, my project is twofold.

First, I aim to provide a partial taxonomy of arguments for haecceitism with a particular focus on what we might call direct conceivability arguments. These arguments share a common structure, consisting of a direct appeal to the conceivability of scenarios that seem to differ haecceitistically. While other arguments for haecceitism might also appeal to conceivability, I take the arguments surveyed here to form a useful

⁵ Possibility anti-haecceitists include Dasgupta, (2002), Forbes (1985) and Robinson (1989), while possible world anti-Haecceitism, introduced below, is more widespread and endorsed by Lewis (1986) and Sider (2002). In defining haecceitism and anti-haecceitism, I follow Cowling (2015), but go beyond Cowling (2015) by considering their merits and the space of anti-haecceitist responses and the specifics of the various conceivability arguments for haecceitism.

⁶ A few examples: on the role of haecceitism in the metaphysics of probability, see Kment (2012); on haecceitism, determinism, and the metaphysics of spacetime, see Melia (1999) and Russell (2014); on haecceitism and the metaphysics of content, see Stalnaker (2008).

taxonomic kind.⁷ In addition, attention to this family of arguments allows us to clarify which of their features make them more or less likely to establish haecceitism.⁸

Second, I aim to assess the strength of these direct conceivability arguments and the prospects for defending anti-haecceitism. In doing so, my survey will proceed from what I take to be the weakest of the direct conceivability arguments to the strongest of these arguments. As I'll suggest, anti-haecceitists can use a "modal delusion" response to meet some haecceitist arguments and a different "modal disassociation" response to counter others. Ultimately, I'll argue that the anti-haecceitist can respond to any argument available to the haecceitist, but the anti-haecceitist's responses require increasingly contentious commitments. In my survey of direct conceivability arguments, I begin by assuming a fairly simplistic account of imaginative content. But, as we examine progressively stronger arguments, I'll complicate matters by taking on increasingly strong assumptions about imaginative content.

Throughout, my attention will be focused on a limited class of anti-haecceitists. Specifically, I will assume that anti-haecceitists are committed to a substantive evidential connection between conceivability and possibility, according to which a certain class of conceivings *must* have possibilities as their contents. Such a view upholds a robust evidential connection between conceivability and possibility and parts company from those who would resist haecceitism by simply denying conceivability is a guide to possibility. For anti-haecceitists who aim to uphold the conceivability-possibility connection, a response to these direct conceivability arguments must therefore explain away the conceivability evidence without violating their anti-haecceitist scruples. But, as I will argue, resisting these conceivability arguments while sustaining the link between conceivability and possibilities is an increasingly difficult and costly undertaking.

Before getting under way, it will be helpful to briefly mark some simplifying assumptions that provide a neutral and serviceable framework for what follows. Unsurprisingly, there is far more to be said about each of these assumptions, but my aim here is to provide a general backdrop for assessing the haecceitism debate and the arguments to be considered.

First, I will aim at neutrality with respect to issues about whether conceivability or imagination is at the center of modal epistemology.⁹ I will therefore use

⁷ I leave open broader issues about the general taxonomy of arguments for haecceitism. For example, "Chisholm's Paradox," which is discussed but not endorsed in Chisholm (1978), might reasonably be counted as a conceivability argument. That said, its *sortes*-driven structure makes it worth treating as a somewhat separate case. For discussion, see Salmon (1986) and Lewis (1986: 220-247). Since my focus will be on direct conceivability arguments, I leave open whether certain arguments that appeal to the nature of content, probability, or other notions are properly counted as conceivability arguments. See, e.g., Stalnaker (2008: 69-71) and Kment (2012).

⁸ While I draw on several of the arguments briefly mentioned in Cowling (2015), this discussion considerably expands upon the details and structure of these arguments. Unlike Cowling (2015), this discussion also evaluates the merits of these arguments, the nature of imagination involved, and the prospects for a comprehensive anti-haecceitist response.

‘conceivability’ and ‘imaginability’ (and their cognates) interchangeably.¹⁰ While there is reason to distinguish certain notions of conceivability from imagination, the kind of conceivability usually taken as a guide to modality is quite close to familiar notions of imaginability. For instance, I take the relevant notion of conceivability to be *positive* rather than *negative*, since it involves forming a representation of a scenario rather than requiring only that a scenario is not ruled out by some body of knowledge (e.g., what one knows).¹¹ Additionally, I take the relevant notion of conceivability to involve more than *prima facie* conceivability, but less than the *ideal* conceivability undertaken by an ideally rational agent. For this reason, the modally relevant notion of conceivability requires that one detect nothing contradictory to what is taken to be necessary on other grounds (e.g., the laws of logic), upon sustained reflection, within a positive representation of a scenario.¹² To this end, I employ ‘conceivability’ and ‘imagination’ interchangeably while holding various background disputes in check.

Second, it will be useful to distinguish possibility haecceitism from a related thesis that travels under the name ‘haecceitism.’ This additional thesis, which outstrips possibility haecceitism, involves not only maximal possibilities, but also *possible worlds*—the entities often held to represent maximal possibilities:

Possible World Haecceitism: There are distinct possible worlds that represent maximal possibilities that differ haecceitistically.

Possible world haecceitism is a thesis about the relationship between maximal possibilities and possible worlds.¹³ It holds that maximal possibilities—some of which differ haecceitistically—uniquely correspond with (or are identical to) possible worlds. Possible world haecceitism therefore entails possibility haecceitism, but not *vice versa*. For this reason, possibility haecceitists are free to reject possible world haecceitism or

⁹ On the Cartesian distinction between conceivability as a kind of pure understanding and imaginability as a sort of degenerate internal sense, see Gendler and Hawthorne (2006).

¹⁰ On the various senses of imagination, see Ryle (1949) and Kind (2013). On the various senses of conceivability, see Chalmers (2002) and Yablo (1993).

¹¹ These rough distinctions follow those drawn in Chalmers (2002), but, unlike Chalmers, I leave aside issues regarding primary and secondary conceivability. These issues come into play in accounting for the singular content of our imaginings, but we can usefully hold the descriptivist/anti-descriptivist debate in check here.

¹² Thanks here to anonymous referee for a useful point of clarification.

¹³ Lewis’ rejection of possible world haecceitism is a complicated matter and owes largely to his commitment to the supervenience of *de re* representation upon qualitative character. That said, since Lewis endorses possibility haecceitism, he allows that a given world represents a plurality of maximal possibilities that differ only haecceitistically from one another. Notably, such a view does not require possible world haecceitism. Additionally, Lewis is agnostic about whether there are qualitatively indiscernible worlds. On Lewisian haecceitism, see Fara (2009), Russell (2012), Skow (2009), and Sider (2002).

even the broader framework of possible worlds.¹⁴ But, since possibility haecceitism is our focus here, I will simply set aside possible world haecceitism and other complications raised by the metaphysics of possible worlds. I will therefore use ‘haecceitism’ to pick out possibility haecceitism and use ‘maximal possibility’ as a stand-in for more familiar but more contentious talk of possible worlds. (Where context disambiguates, I sometimes use ‘possibility’ for ‘maximal possibility.’)

§2. Outside Arguments

We can now turn to our first direct conceivability argument for haecceitism: Let ‘Lois’ name an actual particle. Let ‘Lana’ name a distinct but (let us suppose) duplicate particle.¹⁵ Now, imagine a maximal possibility in which the only thing that exists is Lois and that Lois has all of its actual intrinsic properties. Then imagine a maximal possibility in which the only thing that exists is Lana and that Lana has all of its actual intrinsic properties. Since these maximal possibilities differ without differing qualitatively, haecceitism follows.¹⁶ Put more formally, the Particle Argument runs as follows:

The Particle Argument

- P1. It is conceivable that only Lois exists and is intrinsically just as it actually is.
- P2. It is conceivable that only Lana exists and is intrinsically just as it actually is.
- P3. If P1 is true, there is a maximal possibility that includes only Lois.¹⁷
- P4. If P2 is true, there is a maximal possibility that includes only Lana.
- P5. If there is a maximal possibility that includes only Lois and there is a maximal possibility that includes only Lana, haecceitism is true.
- C1. Therefore, haecceitism is true.

For committed anti-haecceitists, some response to this and comparable arguments is needed. It is to the task of responding to such arguments I now turn.

Responses to the Particle Argument divide into two general kinds. According to the first kind, conceivability is not a guide to possibility. Anti-haecceitists who take this route can therefore reject one or both of P3 and P4 and maintain that that, while we seem to imagine the Lois-maximal possibility (or the Lana-maximal possibility), we really imagine one or more maximal *impossibilities*.

This is a powerful line of response. In fact, it allows anti-haecceitists to resist most conceivability arguments by denying the relevant connection between

¹⁴ I have in mind here modalists who reject possible worlds but hold that some total ways things could have been are distinct yet qualitatively indiscernible. On modalism, see Melia (2003).

¹⁵ I assume duplicates share all of their intrinsic qualitative properties, while qualitatively indiscernible individuals share all of their intrinsic *and* extrinsic qualitative properties.

¹⁶ Jubien (1993: 41-42) considers a similar argument involving qualitatively indiscernible spheres swapping locations. Melia (2003: 162) also considers a similar argument, which involves a homogenous cylinder falling upon on a homogenous plane.

¹⁷ For simplicity’s sake, I assume that maximal possibilities can “include” individuals by way of including the possibility that they exist.

conceivability and possibility. Let's call this the *Blanket Response*. In what follows, I will say very little about the Blanket Response and its prospects. Indeed, if one is content to dismiss evidence from conceivability in adjudicating tough cases, there is often very little that can be said to alter one's modal commitments. So, given the near-immediate dialectical standstill between proponents of the Blanket Response and those who uphold conceivability as a robust guide to possibility, my focus will instead be on anti-haecceitists who hope to uphold the evidential connection between conceivability and possibility. I will therefore use "anti-haecceitist" to pick out only those anti-haecceitists who reject the Blanket Response. For these anti-haecceitists, P3 and P4 are in good shape. And, since P5 follows from the definition of haecceitism, the premises to deny are P1 and P2. In this way, the anti-haecceitist hopes to deny the conceivability claims needed to get the argument off the ground. Broadly speaking, these anti-haecceitists hope to explain away the apparent conceivability in question by alleging that haecceitists are subject to a kind of "modal illusion" regarding the content of their imagination.

In pursuing this alternate route, anti-haecceitists take their inspiration from Kripke's explanation of why some individuals mistakenly believe that Hesperus and Phosphorus are possibly distinct even while they are necessarily identical. According to the Kripkean story, agents mistake the possible scenario in which there are two Venus-like planets for the impossible scenario in which Hesperus and Phosphorus are distinct. Crucially, this Kripkean story holds that agents can be mistaken about certain contents of their own imaginings. For example, individuals can err by imagining two non-Venusian planets even while they believe themselves to imagine Venus. This is because imaginings typically include two kinds of content: *singular content*, which is determined by the identity of the individuals an imagining is about, and *general content*, which is determined by the distribution of imagined qualitative properties. Here, we can assume that general content is separable from singular content. And, in cases of modal illusion, individuals form mistaken beliefs about the *singular* but not the general content of their imaginings.

By denying that individuals have perfect access to the singular content of their imaginings, the Kripkean story allows us to preserve the evidential link between conceivability and possibility and to explain certain errant modal beliefs. Things go wrong, not in the inference from conceivability to possibility, but in discerning the true contents of what is imagined.

For anti-haecceitists who hope to resist the Particle Argument, a similar strategy can be deployed. According to this strategy, when we seem to conceive of maximal possibilities that differ haecceitistically, this is not because we successfully conceive of impossibilities. On the contrary, we imagine a single possibility, but we form mistaken beliefs about the content of our imagining. Specifically, we errantly *believe* ourselves to imagine what are, in fact, impossible scenarios.

In cases like the Particle Argument, the anti-haecceitist claims we are subject to a "modal delusion," which occurs when we form mistaken beliefs about the content of

what we imagine.¹⁸ So, according to the anti-haecceitist, the haecceitist's mistaken belief that the Lois and Lana scenarios are each conceivable, owes to haecceitists mistaking the genuine content of their imagining for some other scenario.

It will be useful to make explicit the mechanics of this *Modal Delusion Response*, which aims to explain both the appeal of the Particle Argument and where it goes wrong: (i) Step One: the haecceitist engages in two imaginative acts. She forms the belief that she has imagined the Lois-maximal possibility and then a distinct Lana-maximal possibility. But her beliefs are mistaken: she imagines only a single maximal possibility (perhaps the Lana-maximal possibility, perhaps the Lois-maximal possibility, or perhaps another one altogether); (ii) Step Two: the haecceitist's mistake is explained by the fact that allegedly distinct Lois and Lana imaginings would differ only in their singular content, which is precisely the kind of content about which we can be mistaken as, for example, happens in Kripkean cases of modal illusion. Accordingly, the haecceitist's mistake is a natural one. It owes to our fallibility in identifying imagined scenarios with a common general content but different singular contents.

So, according to the Modal Delusion Response, the haecceitist's mistake occurs when she forms the belief that the imaginings corresponding to P1 and P2 differ in their singular content. While it may *seem* to the haecceitist as though she imagines distinct maximal possibilities, she is modally deluded: she imagines the same possibility twice over. Armed with this explanation of the apparent conceivability of the Lois-scenario and the distinct Lana-scenario, the anti-haecceitist can comfortably deny one or both of P1 and P2 by denying that the Lois and Lana scenarios are each genuinely conceivable.¹⁹

The Modal Delusion Response clearly requires some controversial assumptions about the content of our imaginings. It also raises some tough questions for anti-haecceitists. Perhaps most notably, while the Modal Delusion Response explains how the relevant haecceitist error might occur, the anti-haecceitist hasn't yet provided an explanation of why haecceitists are so susceptible to this particular error. Rather than pursuing this question, we can usefully assume that this is an explanatory burden that

¹⁸ See Kripke (1980: 103-104, 141-150). For Kripke, modal illusion occurs, roughly, when an individual imagines a "qualitatively identical epistemic situation" to her actual one, where the meanings of terms fixed by description pick out different individuals or properties than they actually do. The precise features of modal illusion are a matter of some controversy, but, as with the present notion of "modal delusion," it shows a kind of epistemic insensitivity to singular content and the primary role that qualitative (or, as I discuss later, experiential content) plays in forming our modal beliefs. For discussion of "textbook Kripkeanism", see Yablo (2005). For a dissenting interpretation, see Byrne (2006). See also Soames (2006), Gendler and Hawthorne (2002), and Bealer (1994) on the nature of modal illusion.

¹⁹ Haecceitists might object that anti-haecceitists violate plausible principles about plenitude. One such principle holds that, for any actual individual, there is a maximal possibility that contains only that individual. As a result, we should be able to "subtract" the rest of actuality and be left with different maximal possibilities—e.g., one involving Lois and another involving Lana. Against this response, anti-haecceitists can claim such principles are guides only to *qualitative* possibility and claim that, for any actual individual, there is indeed a maximal possibility that contains only a *qualitative duplicate* of that individual.

the anti-haecceitist can successfully discharge. And, even while we grant this much, the question still remains of whether anti-haecceitists can plausibly respond to the entire range of conceivability arguments. Here, I will assume that the Modal Delusion Response is successful in rebutting the Particle Argument as well as other direct conceivability arguments that share its core imaginative features (e.g., involving the *outside* imagination of qualitatively indiscernible scenarios). For this reason, we can now turn to a different kind of conceivability argument, which exploits a different kind of *inside* imagination. In doing so, we can consider whether arguments of this different sort can avoid the anti-haecceitist's Modal Delusion Response, which crucially turns upon certain theses about singular and general content.

§3. Inside Arguments

Imagination comes in different kinds. One common distinction divides *inside* imagination, which issues from the distinctive perspective of an experiencing subject, from *outside* imagination, which issues from no particular perspective.²⁰

Consider, for example, the difference between inside imagining yourself running a marathon and outside imagining the same event. The first act of *inside imagination*, issues from a particular perspective. It likely involves you imagining the feeling of exhaustion, the burning sensation in your legs, and the appearance of the finish line in your field of vision. As an episode of inside imagination, it requires that we place ourselves within an imaginary situation and occupy a particular perspective within that situation. The second act of *outside imagination* does not issue from a particular perspective. You might, for example, visualize yourself “from above” wearing a racing number, leading the pack, and collapsing at the end.²¹ Alternatively, you might imagine this possibility without visualizing it and merely consider its various entailments. Outside imagination is, then, a general kind of imagination that involves representing a situation while abstracting away any particular perspective from which the situation is imagined. In contrast, inside imagination is inherently perspectival, requiring us to imagine being someone who is undergoing certain experiences.

Since inside imagination differs from outside imagination, it will be useful to introduce a modest framework for talking about the contents of inside imagination. For the moment, we can take episodes of inside imagination to have two kinds of content. (Crucially, this leaves aside whether there are additional contents of inside imagination—e.g., the agent of the imagining—but we'll return to this issue in Section Five.) We can call the first kind of content *experiential content*—i.e., the content that determines how things *seem* from an imaginative perspective—and the second kind of

²⁰ On the nature and significance of the distinction between inside and outside imagination, see Kung (MS), Nichols (2008), Nagel (2003), Ninan (2008), and Peacocke (1985).

²¹ A natural way to clarify the inside-outside distinction is to identify inside contents with sets of centered possible worlds and outside contents with sets of (uncentered) possible worlds. While this is a helpful heuristic, it is unavailable at the moment, since the question of haecceitism is closely connected with whether we need to model inside contents as sets of worlds or as sets of centered worlds. On centered worlds, see Liao (2012). On centered contents, see Stalnaker (2008).

content *singular content*, which, as with outside imagination, is the content determined by the identity of the individuals imagined. Intuitively, the experiential content is the “image” presented in inside imagining, while the singular content concerns which specific individuals the image depicts.²²

We can get a better grip on this distinction between kinds of content by considering a case where someone inside imagines experientially indiscernible scenarios, but where the objects imagined are numerically distinct (e.g., when one imagines seeing an apple and then seeing a duplicate apple swapped in place of the former apple). Scenarios of this sort would be alike in experiential content, but differ in their singular content. As we’ll now see, the prospect of applying the Modal Delusion Response to inside arguments turns upon our potential fallibility in discerning differences in imagined singular content.

Above, we considered the Particle Argument, which involves outside imagination since there is no inside perspective to adopt within the alleged Particle-worlds. We can now consider a structurally similar argument, which relies upon inside rather than outside imagination. Although these arguments will differ in the kind of imagination they involve, the Modal Delusion Response, suitably extended, can still provide the means for a plausible anti-haecceitist escape.

To illustrate, consider a slightly revised version of an argument offered in Lewis (1986) and Fara (2009), which concerns a world of one-way eternal recurrence in which the history of the universe has an initial segment repeated infinitely many times over. In such a world, you inhabit a certain “epoch,” but have an infinite plurality of duplicate doppelgangers in other epochs, occupying lives experientially indiscernible from your own.²³ Now, rather than present the argument as an outside case, we can offer it as an argument to be imagined from the inside:

Imagine the experience as of living only in the 17th epoch in a world of one-way eternal recurrence. In such a world, the experiences you undergo are the very same as you experience in the actual world. But, in such a world, these events are replayed *ad nauseum* for a vast plurality of doppelgangers. And, while, at that world, you occupy the 17th epoch, you might have occupied another—e.g., you

²² The connection between singular content and experiential content is a matter of no small controversy. On some views, sameness of experiential content will require sameness of singular content. Here, I assume that singular content can come apart from experiential content in various ways. I will also assume that experiential content is exhausted by qualitative content and, as such, our experiential content does not include the experience of haecceities or non-qualitative features. While contentious, our present project is to offer the best available defense of anti-haecceitism and, since these assumptions bolster the anti-haecceitist position, I take these assumptions to be dialectically appropriate here.

²³ In a world of one-way eternal recurrence, your doppelgangers are duplicates of you, but not qualitatively indiscernible from you, since you differ regarding your distance from the first epoch. We could equally well focus on a world of two-way recurrence where your doppelgangers are qualitatively indiscernible from you, but this would incur technicalities about naming epochs.

could have occupied the 333rd epoch—but, in such a world, your experiences would seem the very same.

Taking WORLD as the qualitative description of the above scenario, we can present our second direct conceivability argument as follows:

The Eternal Recurrence Argument

- P1. It is conceivable that WORLD is satisfied and you live in the 17th epoch.
 P2. It is conceivable that WORLD is satisfied and you live in the 333rd epoch.
 P3. If P1 is true, it is possible that WORLD is satisfied and you live in the 17th epoch.
 P4. If P2 is true, it is possible that WORLD is satisfied and you live in the 333rd epoch.
 P5. If it is possible that WORLD is satisfied and you live in the 17th epoch and it is possible that WORLD is satisfied and you live in the 333rd epoch, haecceitism is true.
 C1. Therefore, haecceitism is true.²⁴

Having set aside the Blanket Response that denies premises like P3 and P4, the anti-haecceitist must reject the conceivability premises, P1 and P2, which are supported by the inside imaginability of the relevant scenarios. The anti-haecceitist's challenge is therefore to explain away the apparent plausibility of P1 and P2 without allowing for the conceivability of impossibilities. Notice, however, that the relevant episodes of inside imagination are indiscriminable in their experiential character, since the experience of occupying the 17th and 333rd epochs is the very same. For this reason, inside imaginings of these possibilities, if genuine, have the same experiential content.

For the anti-haecceitist to undermine this argument, the notion of modal delusion, previously applied to outside imagination, need only be extended to inside imagination.²⁵ And, granted the distinction between experiential and singular content of inside imagination, the anti-haecceitist's response to the Eternal Recurrence Argument invokes an "inside" Modal Delusion Response.

This response is a bit easier to present in the second person, so here goes: While you believe you have inside imagined distinct maximal possibilities that differ with respect to which epoch you occupy, there is only a single maximal possibility. Moreover, you have formed the mistaken belief that there are two qualitatively indiscernible

²⁴ A similar case might draw upon a revised version of the Two Gods case from Lewis (1979). But, where Lewis' gods differ qualitatively, an analogue of the present cases requires the gods to be qualitatively indiscernible and to have qualitatively indiscernible experiences.

²⁵ Any argument that invokes inside imagination has a corresponding version that invokes outside imagination, but not conversely. Perhaps, however, one might accept the possibility of idealist worlds of "pure subjectivity" that have no imaginable general content and can therefore be imagined exclusively from the inside. But, then again, perhaps not. On idealism and inside imagination, see Peacocke (1985).

maximal possibilities because you believe that your inside imaginings differ in their singular content (i.e., in one case, you believe you inside imagine living in the 17th epoch and, in the other case, you believe you inside imagine living throughout the 333rd epoch). But you are mistaken. There is only one possibility for you and it is this possibility that you have imagined twice over. Perhaps it is living in the 17th epoch, perhaps it is living in the 333rd, or perhaps it is living in some other epoch.²⁶ But, regardless, you go wrong in forming beliefs about what you've imagined, since you conflate the imagined possibility for (at least one) scenario that is, in fact, impossible. Moreover, this mistake owes to a general fallibility in determining the singular content of your inside imaginings.

The anti-haecceitist's Modal Delusion Response to the Eternal Recurrence Argument directly parallels her response to the Particle Argument. In each case, the anti-haecceitist offers a *prima facie* plausible explanation of how haecceitists might mistakenly endorse one (or both) of P1 and P2. And, just as it seems the anti-haecceitist can reasonably resist the Particle Argument, it seems that she can reasonably resist the Eternal Recurrence Argument and other inside arguments like it—i.e., inside arguments that involve imagining experientially indiscriminable scenarios. It looks, then, like the move from outside to inside imagination does not, on its own, thwart anti-haecceitism. Some further feature of direct conceivability arguments is therefore required. To this end, we can now consider a different kind of inside argument aimed at circumventing the Modal Delusion Response and providing a more compelling argument for haecceitism.

The Modal Delusion Response exploits the fact that the imaginings crucial to the preceding arguments are indiscriminable with respect to their general or experiential content. Moreover, it looks as though the Modal Delusion Response can undermine any argument like the Particle Argument that relies entirely upon outside imagination. In order to avoid this response, haecceitists need an argument that appeals to inside imagination, but that, unlike the Eternal Recurrence Argument, involves imaginings that are discriminable in their experiential content. (Let's call such arguments *experientially discriminable*.) Fortunately for haecceitists, there are several arguments of this kind.

One kind of experientially discriminable argument is a sort of limit case, since it requires an imagining with no qualitative character whatsoever—i.e., a scenario according to which you fail to exist. Bricker (2006) considers a scenario of this sort, which is readily turned into a direct conceivability argument for haecceitism:

Indeed, it is perfectly legitimate to say: consider a possibility qualitatively indiscernible from actuality but in which I do not exist. In the possibility envisaged, I have a doppelganger, a person exactly like me in every qualitative respect, intrinsic and extrinsic; but that person isn't me. I find this intuition

²⁶ Essentialists of an especially strict sort might deny that you could possibly inhabit eternal recurrence worlds in the first place. Such views will, of course, require strict and difficult to motivate constraints on essence, but faced with the lurking arbitrariness, they look more plausible here than elsewhere. On this point, thanks to an anonymous referee.

compelling, and think that any account of modality *de re* must find a way to accommodate it.²⁷

The resulting argument runs as follows. (Let ACTUAL be the purely qualitative description of the actual world.)

The Replacement Argument

P1. It is conceivable that ACTUAL be satisfied but that you fail to exist.

P2. If P1 is true, it is possible that ACTUAL be satisfied but that you fail to exist.

P3. If it is possible that ACTUAL be satisfied but that you fail to exist, then haecceitism is true.

C1. Therefore, haecceitism is true.

Does this argument succeed where the Eternal Recurrence Argument failed? Not really. The imagined scenario that supports P1 is indeed experientially discriminable from your actual experiences and therefore rules out recourse to the Modal Delusion Response. But the anti-haecceitist can still plausibly deny P1 by claiming that we cannot successfully inside imagine being a nonexistent individual.²⁸ Of course, the anti-haecceitist has no interest in maintaining that we are necessary existents and will likely grant that we can conceive of our nonexistence from the outside. But, she can plausibly reject P1 by holding that you cannot successfully imagine *being yourself* in a world in which you do not exist. (As we'll see below, some views distinguish this imagining from the act of imagining *being someone else* in a world in which you do not exist.)²⁹

Given the peculiar nature of the imagining it requires, the Replacement Argument won't convince committed anti-haecceitists. It does, however, point toward the kind of argument haecceitists ought to offer: an inside argument that involves experientially discriminable but still contentful imaginings. To this end, we can turn to another case offered in Lewis (1986):

Consider the thought that I might have been someone else. Here am I, there goes poor Fred; there but for the grace of God go I; how lucky I am to be me, not him. Where there is luck there must be contingency. I am contemplating the possibility of my being poor Fred, and rejoicing that is unrealised. I am not

²⁷ Bricker (2007: 130)

²⁸ On the impossibility of imagining our own nonexistence from the inside, see Nichols (2007).

²⁹ As will be discussed below, there are competing views about the structure of the content of inside imagination. If we opt for a tripartite view, which distinguishes singular and experiential content as well as *subject-centered content*—i.e., whom one imagines being—this anti-haecceitist response to the Replacement Argument does presuppose that we can *only* imagine being ourselves. But, as I argue below, if we grant that we can imagine ourselves being some else altogether, anti-haecceitists can use the Modal Disassociation Strategy to undermine the Replacement Argument.

contemplating a possibility that involves any qualitative difference in the world... Rather, I am contemplating the possibility of being poor Fred in a world just like this one.³⁰

Suppose that the qualitative role that you inside imagine occupying is the one actually occupied by Fred. When you inside imagine occupying Fred's qualitative role, you might imagine experiencing the misfortunes that befall him: his broken toe, the death of his dog, the theft of his dentures, and so on. The experiential content of this inside imagining is (hopefully) very different from the experiential content of your lived experience. But, for the Modal Delusion Response to be applicable here, the experiential content of your imagining your own life would have to be the very same as the content of imagining occupying Fred's qualitative role. But, since the experiential contents of these two imaginings differ, the anti-haecceitist cannot employ the Modal Delusion Response. Taking ACTUAL as the qualitative description of the actual world, the Swapping Argument runs as follows:

The Swapping Argument

P1. It is conceivable that ACTUAL is satisfied and that you occupy a qualitative role that you do not actually occupy (e.g., Fred's).

P2. If P1 is true, it is possible that ACTUAL is satisfied and that you occupy a qualitative role that you do not actually occupy (e.g., Fred's).

P3. If it is possible that ACTUAL is satisfied and that you occupy a qualitative role that you do not actually occupy (e.g., Fred's), then haecceitism is true.

C1. Therefore, haecceitism is true.

While the Replacement Argument required us to imagine the unimaginable, no comparable problems arise in the present argument. Indeed, we seem perfectly capable of imagining the experiences Fred undergoes. For this reason, the Swapping Argument is immune to the Modal Delusion Response.³¹

Despite this advantage, the Swapping Argument raises a different sort of problem for would-be haecceitists, since it requires contentious violations of individuals'

³⁰ Lewis (1986: 231). Skow (2009) uses a similar case to diagnose haecceitistic tendencies. Here, I assume our interest to be in possibilities that do not involve contingent identity, but, rather, Lewis "replacing" Fred altogether.

³¹ One might worry here that, since the relevant inside arguments involve imaginings from one's own perspective, such arguments can succeed only in establishing haecceitistic possibilities for one's self and not for others. For haecceitists, the natural response is that, if haecceitistic possibilities of any sort can be established, we can reason, on the basis of the non-arbitrary nature of modality, to other comparable haecceitistic possibilities. Alternatively, as we'll see below, haecceitists can endorse a view of imagination that allow us to inside imagine being other individuals altogether. If that's right, then there is no barrier to inside imagining haecceitistic scenarios concerning other individuals (though, as we'll also see, this view of imagination opens the door to a powerful anti-haecceitistic response). Thanks to an anonymous referee here.

essential properties. Most notably, since origin essentialists hold that individuals have their biological origins essentially, they are antecedently committed to denying that there is a possibility according to which you and Fred—provided that you are not twins of the relevant sort—swap roles.³² Since some haecceitists reject origin essentialism and others endorse it, a stronger direct conceivability argument for haecceitism would avoid violating familiar versions of essentialism. And, on this front, at least two arguments of this kind are available.

The first of these arguments allows us to skirt worries about origin essentialism by considering pairs of twins who share the same biological origins:

To illustrate, consider these two possibilities for me. I might have been one of a pair of twins. I might have been the firstborn one, or the secondborn one. These two possibilities involve no qualitative difference in the way the world is.... I say: two possibilities, sure enough.... Each twin is a possible way for a person to be, and in fact is a possible way for me to be. I might have been one, or I might have been the other. These are two distinct possibilities for me.³³

This Twins Argument parallels the Swapping Argument, but concerns individuals with a common biological origin. In this way, it avoids violating the modal constraints of origin essentialism. At the same time the Twins Argument is no longer perfectly general in that it expressly concerns only individuals with twins. And, while most are willing to allow that any individual might have been one of a pair of twins, it would be better to omit this particular complication. Fortunately, then, there is another kind of inside argument that neither violates origin essentialism nor requires twins as a special case. The most striking example of a inside argument of this kind owes to Adams (1979):

Consider, again, a possible world w_1 , in which there are two qualitatively indiscernible globes; call them Castor and Pollux. Being indiscernible, they have of course the same duration; in w_1 both of them have always existed and always will exist... Let w_2 , then, be a possible world just like w_1 up to a certain time t at which in w_2 Castor ceases to exist while Pollux goes on forever; and let w_3 be a possible world just like w_2 except that in w_3 it is Pollux that ceases to exist at t while Castor goes on forever. That the difference between w_2 and w_3 is real, and could be important, becomes vividly clear if we consider that, from the point of view of a person living on Castor before t in w_1 and having (of course) an indiscernible twin on Pollux, it can be seen as the difference between being annihilated and somebody else being annihilated instead. But there is no qualitative difference between w_2 and w_3 .

It is especially noteworthy that Adams marks the efficacy of moving from outside to inside imagination in making the difference between the relevant possibilities “vividly

³² On the relevant forms of essentialism, see Kripke (1980) and Roca-Royes (2011).

³³ Lewis (1986: 231).

clear.” And, if we take GLOBES to be the qualitative description of worlds w_2 and w_3 , we can present the argument as follows:

The Global Destruction Argument

P1. It is conceivable that you occupy a world that satisfies GLOBES and that you are eventually annihilated.

P2. It is conceivable that you occupy a world that satisfies GLOBES and that you are not eventually annihilated.

P3. If P1 is true, it is possible that you occupy a world that satisfies GLOBES and that you are eventually annihilated.

P4. If P2 is true, it is possible that you occupy a world that satisfies GLOBES and that you are not eventually annihilated.

P5. If it is possible that you occupy a world that satisfies GLOBES and that you are eventually annihilated and it is possible that you occupy a world that satisfies GLOBES and that you are not eventually annihilated, then haecceitism is true.

C1. Therefore, haecceitism is true.³⁴

The Global Destruction Argument does not require that your origin properties differ across maximal possibilities. And, like preceding conceivability arguments, it requires that you undertake two episodes of inside imagining that support P1 and P2. In the first, you have a duplicate twin whose fate is far worse than your own. In the second, you have a duplicate twin whose fate is considerably better than your own. Moreover, the qualitative features of the world do not differ between cases; the difference resides entirely in which qualitative role you occupy.³⁵

The Twins and Global Destruction Argument are discriminable inside arguments. And, unlike the Swapping Argument, neither requires a violation of the properties plausibly taken to be essential to the individuals involved nor are these arguments is susceptible to the Modal Delusion Response, since they are experientially discriminable. They are therefore the strongest direct conceivability arguments available to the haecceitist. The question that arises for anti-haecceitists is, then, whether any other line of response might retain the link between conceivability and possibility while still avoiding commitment to haecceitism. In the next section, I outline what seems to be the most natural option for sustaining anti-haecceitism.

³⁴ See Adams (1979: 22). This presentation follows Cowling (2015).

³⁵ One might reasonably worry about the kind and origin properties of individuals on Adams’ globes, but it’s not hard to fill out the details of the Global Destruction Argument to address these concerns (e.g., by locating these events on a single highly symmetric planet with common biological origins). Alternatively, we could consider an inside imagined version of a case owing to Melia (1999: 650): “We could imagine a collection of bald philosophers, sitting in a circle. It is a law that one of them will grow a single hair. But, by the symmetry of the situation, any of the philosophers could be the lucky one. Again, our intuition is that there are many qualitatively isomorphic but distinct possibilities...”

§4. The Modal Disassociation Strategy

In this section, I outline a anti-haecceitist strategy for undermining arguments like the Swapping Argument. As we'll see, this *Modal Disassociation Strategy* is similar in aim to the Modal Delusion Response, but importantly different in structure. It also allows for a response to these direct conceivability arguments that the Modal Delusion Response cannot address.

The Modal Disassociation Strategy begins by adopting a controversial tripartite view about the content of inside imagination. Consequently, it requires far richer assumptions about the nature of imaginative content than the Modal Delusion Response.³⁶ According to this *tripartite view*, the content of an episode of inside imagination has three components. Two of these have been discussed above: singular content and experiential content. The third component is what we can call the *subject-centered content*. This content is distinct from experiential and singular content and, instead, concerns the identity of the individual who is the subject of the imagined experience.

To get a sense of this content, it is useful to consider two episodes of inside imagination that might be distinguished once we take on the tripartite view: (i) the act of imagining *being Napoleon* looking out over Waterloo and (ii) the act of imagining *being yourself* having precisely Napoleon's experience as of looking out over Waterloo. So understood, subject-centered content is not "in the image" of our imagining but determines whom we imagine as the subject of the imagined experience.³⁷ Velleman (1996: 40) distinguishes this notion of subject-centered content by marking how it might differ between certain imaginative episodes and how it is not "in the image":

If my approach to imagining that I am Napoleon, for example, is to imagine *being Napoleon*, then I simply imagine a particular situation as experienced *by Napoleon*... Although Napoleon doesn't appear in the resulting mental image, he does appear in the content of my imagining, since I am imagining Austerlitz specifically as experienced by him. But I, David Velleman, am absent both from the image and from the content of the imagining: I'm not imagining anything about the person who I actually am.

The tripartite view and the distinctions it admits are controversial. One might hold, for example, that the putative distinction between the episodes of imagining drawn above is spurious or fabricated. Note, however, that even within the tripartite view, there are two available views about the nature of subject-centered content and, according to one of these views, the just-drawn distinction is indeed spurious.

³⁶ On competing models of inside imagination and the distinction between imagining yourself being otherwise and imagining replacing someone altogether, see Kung (MS).

³⁷ If you take it to be metaphysically impossible that you have a twin, it will turn out that the present argument for haecceitistic possibilities gives a notable pride of place to those with actual biological twins.

According to what we can call the *fixed view*, any episode of inside imagination has the agent of the imaginative act as its subject-centered content. On this view, you simply cannot imagine *being* Napoleon; you can, at best, imagine having experiences experientially discriminable from Napoleon's.³⁸ This is because, for any inside imagining you undertake, you are the subject-centered content by virtue of being the agent who undertakes the imagining.

According to what we can call the *unfixed view*, the subject-centered content of inside imagination can change. So, in some cases, you are the subject-centered content of your inside imaginings, but, in other cases, a different individual—e.g., Napoleon—is the subject-centered content of your imagining. Notice that if the fixed view is correct, the distinction above cannot be drawn, since there is no imaginative episode that you can undertake that has Napoleon rather than you as its subject-centered content.

The anti-haecceitist's Modal Disassociation Strategy requires not only this tripartite view of content, but also the unfixed view about subject-centered content. It therefore admits the possibility of our inside imaginings having different subject-centered contents. By way of illustration, consider how the anti-haecceitist's Modal Disassociation Strategy blocks the Swapping Argument.

First, the anti-haecceitist concedes that your "Fred-imagining" and your actual life experience differ in their experiential and singular content. Even so, the anti-haecceitist denies that the content of these discriminable imaginings are what the haecceitist believes them to be. Specifically, the anti-haecceitist denies that, in imagining Fred's life, you successfully imagine *yourself* having Fred's experiences. Rather, the anti-haecceitist holds that you are subject to an especially devious kind of modal illusion: *modal disassociation*, according to which you have merely imagined Fred having Fred's experiences. (The same story is applied to the Twins and Global Destruction Arguments, but, for ease of presentation, I'll stick with the Swapping Argument here and in much of what follows.)

Modal disassociation does not concern mistaken beliefs about the experiential or singular content of imaginings. Instead, it involves mistaken beliefs about the *subject-centered content* of our inside imaginings.³⁹ Roughly speaking, modal disassociation occurs when we mistakenly believe ourselves to imagine that we ourselves are the

³⁸ Russell (1912) defends a constraint on acquaintance and, in turn, propositional constituency that rules out individuals having other individuals—indeed, anything other than one's self, sense data, or universals—as the contents of one's thoughts. Such a constraint, applied to this tripartite view, would seem to require the fixed view in question. Here, I assume anti-haecceitists reject the constraint in question.

³⁹ Here, I follow Velleman (1996) in drawing a distinction between the imaginer who undertakes the cognitive act and the individual who is the subject of the inside imagining. In some case, where I imagine my last birthday going better, I am the subject of the inside imagining. In other cases, when I imagine my friend's last birthday going better, I undertake the cognitive act but my friend—not me—is the imagined subject of experience. For Velleman, this distinguishes the actual and notional subjects of inside imagination. I take subject-centered content to concern the identity of what Velleman calls the "notional subject."

subjects of certain experiential states when, in fact, someone else is the subject-centered content of our imagining.

In cases like the Swapping Argument, modal disassociation leads us to conflate two imaginative acts that would differ only in their subject-centered content. The first act involves imagining that *you* have the experiences Fred actually has, and the second act involves imagining that *Fred* has the experiences Fred actually has. But, according to the Modal Disassociation Strategy, when you engage in the imaginative act that supports P1, you fail to imagine *yourself* being otherwise. Instead, you imagine an experience belonging to someone else—in this case, you imagine the ways things actually are for Fred—and you mistakenly come to believe that you have imagined yourself occupying Fred’s qualitative role. More directly: you mistake the act of imagining *being Fred and having Fred’s experiences* for the act of imagining *yourself being otherwise*. As a consequence, modal disassociation leads haecceitists to form mistaken beliefs about what they imagine.

If the anti-haecceitist is right, the Modal Disassociation Strategy provides a powerful response to discriminable inside arguments like the Twins, Global Destruction, and Swapping Arguments. It holds that you are mistaken about the subject-centered content of your imagining. But, where the Modal Delusion Response requires indiscriminable qualitative or experiential contents, the Modal Disassociation Strategy requires no such indiscriminability. This is because it locates the haecceitist’s mistake at the level of subject-centered content. The anti-haecceitist therefore denies that you have evidence for believing that you could occupy Fred’s qualitative role since you have not successfully imagined this putative possibility. Granted this model of imaginative content and the possibility of modal disassociation, the anti-haecceitist seems able to preserve the link between conceivability and possibility while avoiding haecceitism. Having outlined the Modal Disassociation Strategy, I now conclude by assessing the prospects for this anti-haecceitist line of response.

§6. Conclusion

A potential burden of the Modal Disassociation Strategy traces back to the epistemological worries it might generate.⁴⁰ In particular, once we admit the possibility of modal disassociation, we face the threat of skepticism about the content of our imagination. And, if we are forced into skepticism about the content of our imagination, we would seem to be in no position to draw justified conclusions about *de re* possibility on the basis of what we imagine. Given the Modal Disassociation Strategy, the threat of skepticism concerns the subject-centered content of imagination, since it is unclear how we can determine, for any inside imagining, whether we imagine *ourselves* occupying a certain qualitative role rather than imagining how things are for *someone else*. Notice, however, that fallibility regarding our imaginative content is not unique to the Modal Disassociation Strategy; it is also an obvious consequence of the Modal Delusion

⁴⁰ The weight of skeptical worries in evaluating metaphysical theories is controversial. See Hawthorne (2002: 365), Lewis (2009), and Schaffer (2005) for discussion.

Response, which holds haecceitists to be systematically mistaken about the singular content of their imaginings. The lurking concern is, then, that the fallibility ascribed to haecceitists requires that anti-haecceitists admit we cannot know the singular or subject-centered contents of our imaginative acts.

In addressing this threat of skepticism about imaginative content, it is useful to begin by noting that our fallibility in determining the singular content of imaginings is nothing new to those who accept the Kripkean apparatus of modal illusion to explain mistaken belief in contingent identities. If fallibility in determining the content of our imagination were to invariably lead to skepticism, this would guarantee that Kripke and others who posit instances of modal illusion are also saddled with skepticism. It looks, however, like the jump from fallibility to skepticism is overly hasty. As anti-haecceitists ought to point out, skeptical concerns are remarkably widespread. And, to the extent that we take ourselves to have a viable response to external world skepticism, we seem to have the epistemic means for showing that mere fallibility does not invariably lead to skepticism.⁴¹ So, absent compelling reason to think that modal delusion and modal disassociation saddle the anti-haecceitist with irremediable ignorance rather than mere fallibility when it comes to imaginative content, we have no good reason to think skepticism follows. Moreover, since anti-haecceitists posit only a very specific kind of error in determining imaginative content—namely, a disposition to form mistaken beliefs when qualitatively indiscernible scenarios are involved—there is no ground to question our general access to imaginative content. Anti-haecceitists can therefore take themselves in good company with Kripke and others who admit fallibility without surrendering to skepticism about imaginative content.

A second anti-haecceitist response offers a *tu quoque* to moderate haecceitists. This response points out that, unless one endorses an extreme version of haecceitism, which admits radical haecceitistic “swaps”—e.g., alternative possibilities where you swap qualitative roles with a bicycle or a blackhole—the challenge of explaining away the apparent conceivability of certain haecceitistic scenarios remains. And, in order for moderate haecceitists to undercut the conceivability arguments for this extreme haecceitist swaps without severing the conceivability-possibility connection, a response along the lines of modal delusion or modal disassociation is almost certainly required.⁴² So, if moderate haecceitists must employ either modal delusion or modal disassociation to explain why extreme haecceitists are mistaken in positing such extreme haecceitistic swaps, they must also admit fallible access to our imaginative content and face down the threat of skepticism about imaginative content as well. So, if moderate haecceitists hope to reject outré haecceitist possibilities, they must themselves grant that other

⁴¹ Anti-haecceitists of this sort take their inspiration from the assessment of Ramseyan Humility in Schaffer (2005), who holds Ramseyan Humility to be “external world skepticism writ small.”

⁴² Mackie (2009) accepts haecceitism and endorses a minimal essentialism that admits certain extreme haecceitist possibilities but holds that individuals have certain metaphysical features like their ontological category essentially. Kripke (1980) seems to accept haecceitism along with origin essentialism.

haecceitistics can be systematically mistaken about imaginative content without incurring skepticism.

Ultimately, the epistemic costs that come with the systematic fallibility required by Modal Delusion Response and Modal Disassociation Strategy are limited. For, while they require that anti-haecceitists reject infallibility about imaginative content, the mere admission of fallibility is no reason to think that skepticism has to follow. For this reason, the most significant consequence of Modal Disassociation is the prerequisite of adopting the tripartite view of imaginative content and rejecting the fixed view of subject-centered content. For those who endorse views of imaginative content that clash with these proposals, the cost of the anti-haecceitist response will be significant. But, absent good reason to think there is something objectionable about the tripartite view or the denial of the fixed view, there is no compelling reason to reject the anti-haecceitist responses set out above.

We've now examined a number of direct conceivability arguments for haecceitism. In each case, some anti-haecceitist response is available. Outside arguments like the Particle Argument and indiscriminable inside arguments like the Eternal Recurrence Argument were plausibly resisted by appeal to the Modal Delusion Response. In contrast, discriminable inside arguments like the Swapping, Twins, and Global Destruction Arguments were plausibly resisted by appeal to the Modal Disassociation Strategy.⁴³

Although anti-haecceitists can resist these arguments, doing so requires a rich view of imaginative content and the attribution of systematic errors in haecceitists' beliefs about the content of their imaginative acts. These views are plausibly thought to come at some theoretical cost, but no cost so great as to undermine the anti-haecceitist line of response. In some ways, this result is unsurprising given how few (if any) philosophical arguments are altogether irresistible. That said, the diversity of conceivability arguments, the resources needed to address them, and the costs of doing so should now be in considerably sharper relief.⁴⁴

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⁴³ For those who find haecceitism more intuitively plausible than its property-theoretic analogue, quidditism, these findings offer a natural explanation of the difference in plausibility: the most compelling conceivability arguments for haecceitism are inside arguments, but no inside arguments can be offered in defense of quidditism, since only individuals but not properties can be imagined from the inside. On quidditism, see Black (2000) and Schaffer (2005).

⁴⁴ For helpful discussion and comments, thanks to Phil Bricker, Jonathan Livingstone-Banks, Amy Kind, three anonymous referees, and audiences at the Junior Metaphysics Workshop at Western Michigan and Issues on the Impossible III in Bratislava.

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