

Recombining Non-Qualitative Reality

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Penultimate Draft | Forthcoming in *Synthese*

Haecceitism and Hume's Dictum are each controversial theses about necessity and possibility. According to haecceitism, there are qualitatively indiscernible possible worlds that differ only with respect to which individuals occupy which qualitative roles. According to Hume's Dictum, there are no necessary connections between distinct entities or, as Humeans sometimes put it, reality admits of "free recombination" so any entities can co-exist or fail to co-exist. This paper introduces a puzzle that results from the combination of haecceitism and Hume's Dictum. This puzzle revolves around the free recombination of non-qualitative properties like *being Socrates*. After considering several responses to this puzzle, I defend an ideology-driven solution, which dispenses with non-qualitative properties like *being Socrates* in favour of primitive theoretical ideology while, at the same time, preserving a commitment to both haecceitism and Hume's Dictum.

§1. Introduction

This paper examines a puzzle that arises from the combination of two theses that I will argue follow from haecceitism and Hume's Dictum. According to the first thesis, at least some non-qualitative haecceities like *being Socrates* are fundamental properties.¹ According to the second thesis, there are no necessary connections among fundamental properties or, as Humeans sometimes put it, fundamental properties admit of "free recombination."² In this brief introduction, I'll outline the case for these two theses and then present the puzzle they generate. In Section Two, I discuss the views of David Lewis on haecceitism and Hume's Dictum and then defend the relevant conditional claims: (i) if haecceitism is true, there are fundamental non-qualitative properties, and (ii) if one

¹ Paradigmatic qualitative properties and relations include *redness*, *being hexagonal*, and *is five feet from*. Paradigmatic non-qualitative properties include haecceities like *being Socrates* and other properties and relations that are intuitively dependent upon specific individuals like *being five feet from Socrates*. Despite much agreement on these paradigm cases, there is considerable disagreement over the precise distinction between qualitative and non-qualitative properties. On the qualitative/non-qualitative distinction, see Adams (1979), Cowling (2015a), and Simmons (forthcoming).

² The most influential contemporary statement of Hume's Dictum is Lewis (1986a: 86-91). For subsequent appeals to Hume's Dictum in Lewis, see Lewis (1986b, 1992, 2009). On Lewis' Humeanism, see Beebe and MacBride (2015), Cowling (2015b), and Wilson (2015). Representative appeals to Hume's Dictum or recombination after Lewis include Bricker (1991, 2017), Schaffer (2005), and Saucedo (2011). Critical examinations of the consequences and potential formulations of Hume's Dictum include Forrest (2001), Nolan (1996), Hofmann (2006), Efid and Stoneham (2008), Stoljar (2008), and, more recently, a series of papers by Wilson (2010, 2014, 2015). Wilson (2015) notes a variety of worries about recombination principles under-generating possibilities. The puzzle set out below might naturally be taken to supplement Wilson's case by showing how the interaction of Hume's Dictum and haecceitism leads to the systematic over-generation of possibilities.

accepts Hume’s Dictum, one ought to accept the free recombination of fundamental properties. In Section Three, I investigate some options for reconciling haecceitism with Hume’s Dictum. Finally, I defend a novel view about what we might call “non-qualitative reality”—roughly, the metaphysical structure associated with non-qualitative facts like those concerning the identity of specific individuals. I conclude by arguing that a novel, “ideological” version of haecceitism is the best option for would-be haecceitist Humeans.

1.1. Haecceitism

Haecceitism is a difficult thesis to pin down. Since it concerns subtle aspects of modal metaphysics, proposed definitions are liable to presuppose contentious background commitments. For present purposes, we can usefully take haecceitism to be a thesis about the variation between possible worlds or maximal possibilities. When put in terms of possible worlds, it is the thesis that some possible worlds differ without differing in their distribution of qualitative properties and relations.³ So, for example, if there is a possible world qualitatively indiscernible from the actual one, but where you occupy my qualitative role and I occupy yours, haecceitism is true, as such worlds *differ haecceitistically*—i.e., they differ in solely non-qualitative terms. More generally, if there are two worlds alike in all qualitative respects but differ with respect to which individuals exist or with respect to which qualitative roles specific individuals occupy, haecceitism follows.

The variety of haecceitistic differences among possible worlds is a matter of controversy even among haecceitists.⁴ Note, however, that nothing in what follows hangs on the specific kinds of haecceitistic differences one admits. For the purposes of generating the puzzle below, all that’s required is that *at least some* worlds differ without differing qualitatively.

A commitment to haecceitism has consequences regarding the metaphysics of fundamental properties. Most notably, it seems to require that, along with whatever qualitative properties like *mass* and *charge* are fundamental, there are also fundamental

³ Complications regarding the distinction between possible worlds and maximal possibilities abound once we take into account Lewis’ modal realist version of haecceitism. I omit these complications for the moment and speak with some deliberate looseness, but see Section Two for discussion. See Lewis (1986a: 220-247, 2009) on Lewis’ haecceitism. For critical responses to Lewis’ haecceitism, see Graff Fara (2009), Baltimore (2014), Cowling (2012, 2015b), Skow (2011), Kment (2012), and Russell (2013).

⁴ For example, some *anti-essentialist* haecceitists will accept worlds that differ from actuality in that you “swap” qualitative roles with a poached egg. Other *essentialist* haecceitists will reject such possibilities on account of, say, the essentiality of kindhood, even while they accept other haecceitistic differences—e.g., ones where you swap qualitative roles with another human. For discussion, see Mackie (2006). Entity-specific debates about the legitimacy of haecceitist differences notably include disagreement over whether worlds might differ solely concerning the non-qualitative properties of spacetime points and spatiotemporal regions. For discussion, see Brighouse (1994), Pooley (2006), Melia (1999), and Dasgupta (2011). As noted above, precisely which haecceitistic differences one accepts between worlds is orthogonal to the puzzle at hand.

non-qualitative properties.⁵ This commitment is a consequence of a plausible thesis regarding the theoretical role of fundamental properties. According to this thesis, our stock of fundamental properties suffices to exhaustively characterize each possible world or, put somewhat differently, the distribution of fundamental properties determines the total distribution of properties.⁶

Now, if haecceitism is true, then any stock of *solely qualitative* properties—no matter how expansive—will fail to exhaustively characterize each possible world. This is because some possible worlds differ haecceitistically despite being exactly alike in their distribution of qualitative properties. Our plausible constraint on fundamental properties therefore requires that, along with whatever qualitative properties are fundamental, haecceitists must posit at least some fundamental non-qualitative properties. Precisely which non-qualitative properties are fundamental is therefore a pressing question for haecceitists, but it is not our primary concern (though see Section Three for some theoretical options). For this reason, we will start by taking the most familiar kinds of non-qualitative properties—haecceities like *being Socrates* and *being Napoleon*—as our placeholder examples of fundamental non-qualitative properties. Not only are these haecceities plausible candidates for being fundamental non-qualitative properties, they allow for a straightforward presentation of the puzzle introduced below. We can therefore proceed under the assumption that, if possible worlds can differ haecceitistically, properties of this sort are fundamental although they are non-qualitative in nature.⁷

1.2. Hume's Dictum

Hume's Dictum, as Lewis and others have articulated it, concerns the modal ties between entities.⁸ It holds that there are no relations of necessary connection or exclusion between mereologically disjoint entities. Along with the consequences of Hume's Dictum for views about the laws of nature and a host of other metaphysical domains, this thesis has been held up as providing a way to account for our modal knowledge.⁹ This is because many Humeans hold that we are able to determine which possibilities there are by reasoning through the possible ways of "recombining" actual entities (or some base of antecedently

⁵ Throughout, I take talk of "properties" to include both monadic properties and n -place relations.

⁶ I assume in what follows that fundamentality is incompatible with redundancy, so that the stock of fundamental properties constitutes a minimal supervenience base. Depending on one's views regarding fundamentality, this might prove to be a dispensable constraint. See Lewis (2009: 205) and Schaffer (2004) for discussion of minimality and fundamental properties.

⁷ At least some non-qualitative properties will depend upon other qualitative or non-qualitative properties—e.g., *being between Socrates and Xenophon* depends upon the instantiation of *being Socrates*, *being Xenophon* and various qualitative spatial properties. See Simmons (forthcoming) for discussion.

⁸ While the name points back to Hume, I make no assumption that this specific thesis is rightly drawn from Hume's philosophy. On the disconnect between Hume's empiricist case against necessary connections and contemporary arguments for Hume's Dictum, see Wilson (2010).

⁹ On the consequences of Hume's Dictum for laws, see Schaffer (2005), Lewis (2009), and Wilson (2014).

given merely possible entities). Recombination is therefore the linchpin of any modal epistemology premised upon Hume's Dictum.¹⁰ The staunchest defender of Hume's Dictum, Lewis (1986: 87), summarizes and applies the Humean stricture against necessary connections as follows:

Roughly speaking, the principle is that anything can coexist with anything else, at least provided they occupy distinct spatiotemporal positions. Likewise, anything can fail to coexist with anything else. Thus, if there could be a dragon, and there could be a unicorn, but there couldn't be a dragon and a unicorn side by side, that would be an unacceptable gap in logical space, a failure of plenitude.

According to Lewis and others sympathetic to Hume's Dictum, once principles governing the recombination of entities are suitably understood and paired with some base of combinatorial elements drawn from actuality (and perhaps some nearby worlds), reasoning via recombination principles furnishes us with a means for discovering what is and what isn't possible.¹¹

The prospects for the Humean brand of combinatorialism depend, in no small part, on the proper formulation of one or more "recombination principles" that specify precisely which kinds of necessary connections are inadmissible.¹² Among other things, such principles must single out which entities are to be recombined, what it means for entities to be genuinely distinct, and how these entities might be "cut and pasted" back together. Harder still, these questions must be answered in a way that generates no impossible worlds (e.g., by deeming possible a world with exactly five giraffes *and* exactly seven giraffes) and leaves no "unacceptable gaps in logical space" (e.g., by deeming impossible any world with exactly nine giraffes). This is a formidable task and Lewis himself offered no especially sustained or systematic efforts on this front.

Notice, however, that Lewis' illustrative case above concerns merely the recombination of objects like dragons and unicorns, but a suitable recombination principle must be stronger than the one implicit in Lewis' remarks. Such a principle would need to ensure, along with the worlds Lewis notes, that if there is a world with a red dragon and a black unicorn, there is also a possible world with a black dragon and a red unicorn (and so on). In order to plug this apparent gap in logical space, Humeans owe some story about how recombination delivers possibilities that exhaust the space of propertied arrangements of things. To a first approximation, the most straightforward way to do so is to extend recombination to, not only objects like dragons and unicorns, but to properties

¹⁰ On the role of Humeanism in modal epistemology, see Evnine (2008) and Lewis (1986a). For a related view, see Forrest (2001) who argues that a Humean presumption against necessary connections underwrites our modal knowledge.

¹¹ Bricker (MS) argues that a satisfactory treatment of plenitude requires three principles concerning recombinations, world-structures, and world-contents, respectively. On the plenitude of world-structures, see Bricker (1991).

¹² Combinatorialism comes in a variety of forms, some of which depart considerably from Lewis' implementation of Hume's Dictum, especially with regard to the base entities recombined. See Armstrong (1989), (2005), and Wang (2013).

like *being red* and *being a dragon*. As Stoljar (2008: 263) puts it, “According to a standard view in contemporary metaphysics, there are no necessary connections between distinct properties.” Once the recombination of properties is admitted Humeans can ensure that for any way properties could be distributed, there is a possible world that is that way.¹³

Spelling out a principle that is both strong enough to fill any “unacceptable gaps in logical space” but that avoids collapsing into inconsistency or incoherence is arguably *the* central task for would-be Humeans. This task is made considerably harder once we note that it requires the recombination of properties rather than objects. Not only is the metaphysical status of properties a matter of substantive debate, it is controversial whether we can reconcile the structure of certain kinds of properties with the letter of Hume’s Dictum.¹⁴ Even so, applications of Hume’s Dictum in recent metaphysics have typically proceeded by formulating Humean recombination in terms of *fundamental* properties rather than in terms of objects or in terms of properties abundantly conceived. In this way, those deploying Hume’s Dictum in metaphysics standardly extend its reach to the case of properties and relations (including Lewis himself).¹⁵ This paper follows suit and takes on a conception of recombination that extends beyond objects (or regions and the objects occupying them) to the domain of properties. Presenting the case for the theoretical necessity of doing so is no small undertaking, and it is a project set aside here. On this view—one commonly taken on with little argument—for any way of distributing fundamental properties and relations, there is a possible world where properties are so distributed.¹⁶ And, given the plausible requirement noted above that fundamental properties suffice to fully characterize possible worlds, recombining fundamental properties serves as means for characterizing the entirety of logical space. This is because fixing the possible ways of distributing fundamental properties suffices to fix the distribution of all properties at any given world.

In what follows, we will take on board the assumption that, if Hume’s Dictum is true, then we ought to endorse a Humean principle on which fundamental properties admit of free recombination. Precisely how the resulting principle ought to be formulated remains an open challenge for Humeans, but, as we’ll see in a moment, the details are of limited concern here. This is because the puzzle we’ll now turn to requires quite modest assumptions about what it is for a fundamental property to be freely recombinable.

¹³ It is difficult to understand the complexities that arise in connecting ontological categories and modal freedom. Since my primary aim here is marking a puzzle regarding recombination for properties and haecceitism, some key questions are set aside here including how alternative combinatorialism frameworks bear upon this issue. See, e.g., Wang (forthcoming).

¹⁴ Hofman (2006), Wilson (2010, 2015), and Bricker (2017) each take up challenges to the Humean treatment of seemingly troublesome metaphysical posits—e.g., states of affairs, determinables, quantities—though with quite different assessments of the ultimate fate of Humeanism.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Saucedo (2011), Sider (2007), Eagle (2016), McDaniel (2007), and Bricker (2017).

¹⁶ Those unmoved by the problem set out below might at least point to the discussion that follows as a cautionary tale of what happens when we “soup up” recombination principles and apply them to properties rather than intrinsically-typed entities.

1.3. A Puzzle for Humean Haecceitists

We're now in a position to present the puzzle that arises from the combination of haecceitism and Hume's Dictum, which we can call the *Multiple Socrates Problem*. As argued above, proponents of Hume's Dictum who accept haecceitism ought to conclude that fundamental properties admit of free recombination. Coupled with the further commitment to fundamental non-qualitative properties like *being Socrates*, this gives rise to a worrisome puzzle for would-be Humean haecceitists: if *being Socrates* admits of free recombination, then there are possible worlds in which *being Socrates* is multiply instantiated. For, just as Hume's Dictum guarantees a world with thirty-three electrons given the free recombination of *being an electron*, Hume's Dictum similarly guarantees a world with thirty-three Socrateses given the free recombination of *being Socrates*. But, of course, there are no such worlds. *Being Socrates* cannot be multiply instantiated given that, upon pain of absurdity, there cannot be distinct individuals identical with Socrates.¹⁷ For this reason, haecceitists who accept Hume's Dictum owe some account of why these absurd possibilities do not follow from their view or, absent such an account, they are obliged to abandon either haecceitism or Hume's Dictum.¹⁸

It is worth noting here that the Multiple Socrates Problem does not arise merely because of a commitment to the possibility of thirty-three qualitative *duplicates* of Socrates. That's a possibility Humeans will happily accept. And, provided one rejects the Identity of Indiscernibles, Humeans will also accept possible worlds with thirty-three individuals that are qualitatively indiscernible from one another. In contrast to these exotic albeit unproblematic possibilities, a commitment to the thirty-three distinct yet numerically identical Socrateses is patently absurd.

Notice, also, that the Multiple Socrates Problem does not arise because of a commitment to a single object, Socrates, that overlaps thirty-three seemingly ordinary people. Such a commitment is, of course, a striking one with anti-essentialist consequences for Socrates' *de re* modal profile, but it is a scenario quite different from the manifestly impossible one according to which there are thirty-three, mutually distinct individuals that bear the very same haecceity, *being Socrates*, and must therefore be one and the same. (As I'll suggest in Section Four, there's a solution to the Multiple Socrates Problem that provides a means for avoiding this anti-essentialist consequence as well.)

¹⁷ A parallel puzzle regarding the co-instantiation of *being Socrates* and *being Xenophon* arises, since Humeans must explain why no individual can instantiate both haecceities. Note, however, that this puzzle is of a piece with the general puzzle of property incompatibilities that arises for Humeans—i.e., explaining why all fundamental properties are possibly co-instantiated or, if not, how their incompatibility is consistent with Humeanism. The ideological solution I consider below addresses both puzzles regarding haecceities (if successful), but it remains silent on the general issue of property incompatibility as it concerns qualitative properties.

¹⁸ As I'll discuss below, this isn't the only puzzle in the neighbourhood: Humeans who are not anti-essentialists owe some account of how Hume's Dictum and haecceitism might be true without requiring bizarre *de re* possibilities according to which you could be a waterfall or woodchuck. Notably, Lewis (1986a) relies on counterpart theory to accommodate our inconstant modal intuitions via counterpart theory. See Section Five.

Before proceeding, let me offer one rough aid for understanding the Multiple Socrates Problem. Suppose that Humean recombination *without* haecceities provides a means for generating purely qualitative descriptions of all possible ways for fundamental properties to be distributed. So, for any possible world, there is a corresponding Ramsey sentence that exhaustively and exclusively describes the qualitative character of the world in question.¹⁹ The resulting Ramsey sentence specifies the number of individuals in a world and the qualitative roles occupied by whatever individuals exist at that world; however, it leaves unspecified the identity of the individuals that exist and which qualitative roles they occupy. Roughly put, the sentence is an arbitrarily long string of quantified qualitative claims, saying “There is something with such-and-such a qualitative role and there is a distinct with such-and-such a qualitative role and so on...”

Viewed through this lens, the Multiple Socrates Problem arises because the fundamentality of haecceities like *being Socrates* requires that haecceities can be distributed willy-nilly across these myriad qualitative roles without turning the resulting sentences into descriptions of impossible worlds. For, if haecceities are freely recombinable, any way of replacing existential quantifiers with individual constants in these world-describing Ramsey sentences must yield a genuine possibility *even if such constants are inserted multiple times over*.²⁰ Many bizarre world-descriptions result from doing so. Among them is a sentence describing a world according to which Socrates occupies thirty-three mutually distinct qualitative roles.

To be clear, we ought not take the present metaphysical concern to be one inextricably tied to the artifice of Ramsey sentences, but this is offered as one way to grasp why treating haecceities as recombinable properties saddles haecceitists with worrisome results.

§2. Lewisian Haecceitism and Humeanism

Before turning to potential responses, let’s first consider how Lewis seeks to avoid the Multiple Socrates Problem in the face of his commitment to both haecceitism and Hume’s Dictum. As we’ll see, Lewis’ specific treatment of haecceitism and Hume’s Dictum play a critical role here. At first glance, they afford him a way to avoid the commitments that give rise to the Multiple Socrates Problem—namely, a commitment to the fundamentality of non-qualitative properties and their free recombination. But, as I’ll argue, there are problems with both his preferred version of haecceitism and his proposed implementation of Hume’s Dictum.

It will be useful to begin by considering how Lewis’ distinctive brand of haecceitism avoids a commitment to fundamental haecceities. Unsurprisingly, Lewis’ version of haecceitism is bound up with his commitment to modal realism and his more

¹⁹ Details regarding Ramsification are set aside for present purposes. See Lewis (1970, 2009) for discussion.

²⁰ The present appeal to Ramsification is intended only as an aid to grasping the problem at hand. Note, for example, that it describes the recombination of non-qualitative matters in terms of the individual constants when one might do so via haecceitistic predicates instead. In this way, the artifact of representation should not be mistaken for the metaphysical structure at issue.

general project of using counterpart theory to analyze *de re* modal discourse.²¹ Since counterpart theory relies upon relations of qualitative resemblance rather than transworld identity to make sense of *de re* representation, a problem arises in accommodating haecceitistic differences. (Very roughly: nothing will qualitatively resemble a distinct entity more than it resembles itself, so it's unclear how to capture possibilities wherein you occupy a qualitative role other than your own.) Despite this, Lewis revised the formulation of counterpart theory given in Lewis (1968) with an eye towards accommodating haecceitistic possibilities.

According to Lewis (1986a), the *de re* possibilities represented by a world supervene upon that world's qualitative character.²² So, if there are any qualitatively indiscernible worlds, such worlds would represent the very same *de re* possibilities.²³ For this reason, positing additional qualitatively indiscernible worlds provides Lewis' counterpart theory with no additional means of accounting for haecceitistic possibilities. Instead, Lewis admits counterpart relations among various individuals within the same world and takes one and the same resemblance relation to deliver multiple counterparts. To accommodate the truth of haecceitistic claims such as "You and I could have swapped qualitative roles," Lewis permits individuals to have multiple counterparts within a given world and, in turn, posits counterpart relations among individuals within the same world.²⁴ Lewis therefore denies that the truth of haecceitistic claims requires a commitment to possible worlds qualitatively indiscernible from one another. Instead, the actual world does the work of representing the haecceitistic possibility according to which you and I swap our actual qualitative roles. (More carefully: various parts of the actual world represent various *de re* possibilities for other parts of the actual world.)

Suitably generalized, Lewis' proposal holds that *maximal* possibilities—roughly, total ways things could be—can differ haecceitistically from one another despite being represented by one and the same concrete possible world. And, while Lewis' version of haecceitism thereby accommodates haecceitistic possibilities, it requires that we sever the intuitive one-one correspondence between possible worlds and unique maximal possibilities.²⁵ This is because there are many maximal possibilities that differ haecceitistically from one another although qualitatively indiscernible maximal possibilities are represented by the very same world. For this reason, the argument sketched in Section One for the fundamentality of non-qualitative properties (e.g., haecceities like *being Socrates*) cannot proceed as presented above. Specifically, that

²¹ See Lewis (1968 and 1983 reprinting postscript, 1986a).

²² See Lewis (1986a: 223).

²³ Lewis (1986a: 224) is agnostic about whether there are qualitatively indiscernible worlds. If, however, one posited such entities and held that numerical distinctness must be grounded in fundamental differences, there would be reason to take them as differing in their fundamental properties. I set this complication aside here.

²⁴ Lewis (1986a: 231).

²⁵ On the costs of severing this correspondence with modal realism, see Graff Fara (2009). On competing definitions and implications of Lewisian haecceitism, see Cowling (2015b).

argument is blocked since Lewis is not committed to *possible worlds* that differ only with respect to the distribution of non-qualitative properties.

Lewis avoids the challenge of reconciling the fundamentality of haecceities with the free recombination of fundamental properties, in the first place, by denying that haecceities are fundamental.²⁶ But, there is reason to be dissatisfied with Lewis' stance in this regard. For, while Lewis can deny that qualitatively indiscernible worlds differ solely with respect to the distribution of haecceities, he remains committed to *maximal possibilities* that differ haecceitistically. For example, Lewis will grant the truth of claims like "Things could have been just as they actually are, but differ only in that you and I swap qualitative roles." In taking on this commitment, Lewis requires quantification over maximal possibilities—in particular, maximal possibilities that differ haecceitistically. But, since the truth of our modal claims is concerned, not merely with what possible worlds there are, but with the maximal possibilities they represent, we ought to reformulate our previous platitude about fundamental properties. Specifically, our platitude should be reformulated to link the modal and the fundamental by holding that the stock of fundamental properties suffices to characterize any maximal possibility, not merely any possible world. Once we take the space of maximal possibilities rather than the space of possible worlds as our proper guide to the stock of fundamental properties, a commitment to fundamental non-qualitative properties follows from the acceptance of haecceitistic possibilities regardless of one's views about possible worlds.

Lewis' remarks on the distinction between possible worlds and maximal possibilities are surprisingly limited. Even so, his efforts to address haecceitism illustrate that our modal claims are ultimately concerned with the space of maximal possibilities rather than the hunks of concrete stuff that represent them. And, once our platitudes about fundamentality are properly recast, the fact that some *maximal possibilities* differ haecceitistically is grounds for holding that at least some non-qualitative properties are fundamental. This is because the relevant platitude concerning modality and fundamentality holds that the stock of fundamental properties must suffice to fully characterize each maximal possibility regardless of whether or not any *possible worlds* differ only non-qualitatively.²⁷

Contrary to Lewis' preferred view, haecceitists should therefore hold that some non-qualitative properties are fundamental. But, even granting this point, Lewis' modal metaphysics provides another potential option for escaping the Multiple Socrates Problem. This option owes to Lewis' view that Humean recombination is an exclusively qualitative affair. He makes clear, for example, that talk about "recombining individuals"

²⁶ Within a modal realist treatment of properties as sets of possibilia, Lewis takes our talk of haecceities to be ambiguous between singletons of objects and sets of transworld individuals suitably counterpart-related. See Lewis (1986a: 225).

²⁷ This point cuts deeper into Lewis' metaphysics of properties since it requires that, if propositions are to be identified with sets of ways things could have been, then, since there are more maximal possibilities than possible worlds, propositions must ultimately be identified with sets of maximal possibilities. Given Lewis' interest in the reduction of properties to sets, a similar point generalizes to the case of properties. See Cowling (2012).

is to be treated as shorthand for talk of recombining intrinsic *duplicates* of individuals.²⁸ As a consequence, Lewis' account of Humean recombination is entirely silent on matters regarding *de re* possibility.²⁹ It is only *after* counterpart theory enters the picture that the Lewisian can extract any truths regarding *de re* modality from the plurality of concrete possible worlds and the relations of qualitative resemblance among their parts.³⁰ Since Lewis' brand of Humean recombination is formulated entirely in terms of qualitative duplication, once it is divorced from counterpart theory, it proves eerily quiet on matters of *de re* modality. In contrast, if Lewis permitted the recombination of non-qualitative haecceities like *being Socrates*, recombination would immediately yield verdicts on the truth of *de re* modal claims. Such a view, which we'll discuss in Section Four, would, without any recourse to counterpart theory, settle the various ways that things like Socrates could be.

Despite Lewis' insistence that specific individuals and, in turn, their non-qualitative haecceities are exempt from recombination, proponents of Hume's Dictum should be wary of limiting the scope of Hume's Dictum in the manner Lewis assumes. Concerns in this regard stem from a few sources. Notice, first, that Lewis himself readily applies Hume's Dictum to cases that concern properties and relations as when he mounts his case against structural universals and states of affairs.³¹ More strikingly, a key Lewisian application of Humean recombination—Lewis' theorizing about the *selection* relation of the magical ersatzist—is very plausibly thought to concern a relation that is non-qualitative in nature.³² Lewis' impulse to prevent Hume's Dictum from lapsing into absurdity is natural enough, but we should be worried about charges of ad hocery when tinkering with this principle in order to address the Multiple Socrates Problem. More generally, we should aim to uphold a recombination principle that is minimally restricted. To simply declare that non-qualitative properties fall outside of the scope of Hume's Dictum despite their fundamentality is to surrender the generality of Hume's Dictum that makes it such a powerful metaphysical lever in the first place. For this reason, Humeans are best served to provisionally reject Lewis' restriction of Hume's Dictum to qualitative matters and see what can be said for the strongest available principle—namely, one that recombines fundamental properties regardless of their qualitative or non-qualitative status.

²⁸ The particular notion of intrinsic duplicate does considerable work in the Humean picture here. See Wilson (2015: 141) for some complications.

²⁹ On the Lewisian interpretation of our talk of recombination, see Lewis (1986a: 89).

³⁰ Depending upon how one conceives of the *de dicto/de re* distinction, this is controversial as there will be *de re* modal claims regarding properties, which Lewis treats without the help of counterpart theory. See, however, Heller (1998).

³¹ See Lewis (1986b, 1992, 2009). On Lewis' Humean argument against structural universals and magical ersatzism, see Hawley (2010) and Nolan (forthcoming). To be clear, while Lewis argues against admitting such a relation, his argument for doing so presumes that we can rightly apply the Humean stricture to non-qualitative relations rather than, say, merely regions of spacetime.

³² Lewis (1986a: 174).

Importantly, this stance does not oblige us to stomach Hume's Dictum without any restrictions whatsoever. Some "restrictions"—if they're even rightly called "restrictions"—are unavoidable and are bound up with some comparatively modest logical commitments. Most obviously, recombination ought to be restricted to non-logical properties and so exclude properties and relations like identity, distinctness, and entailment. There is little to like about any version of Humean recombination that purports to recombine identity and distinctness to yield manifestly impossible self-distinct objects. Having noted this, one might hope that the restriction of recombination to non-logical relations might actually help address the Multiple Socrates Problem. And, indeed, it would, if *being Socrates* were correctly viewed as a logical property. Unfortunately, there is little to be said for such a view. For, while the property of *being self-identical* is plausibly logical in kind, haecceities are not rightly mistaken for topic neutral properties like *being self-identical*. Haecceities are surely not "topic neutral" in the way logic is standardly claimed to be. Additionally, their existence and instantiation depends upon features of the world that seem decidedly non-logical and manifestly contingent in their instantiation. So, while such properties are bound up with identity in certain respects, limiting the scope of recombination to non-logical matters still leaves the Humean haecceitist without a principled means of addressing the Multiple Socrates Problem.³³

As should be clear, Lewis' modal metaphysics is carefully tailored to avoid the puzzle set out above (and many others), but it provides no satisfactory solution to the Multiple Socrates Problem. One source of potential dissatisfaction which I haven't yet noted is, of course, Lewis' highly contentious modal realism. Lewis' version of haecceitism is difficult to uncouple from his view of possible worlds.³⁴ And, since haecceitists and proponents of Hume's Dictum are not usually inclined to follow Lewis in his commitment modal realism, most will find his response to the Multiple Socrates Problem a non-starter. But, even setting this concern aside, I contend that is there good reason to believe that some haecceities are fundamental and no compelling reason to exempt fundamental non-qualitative properties from recombination. What, then, can be done to reconcile haecceitism with Hume's Dictum?

³³ There are a variety of ways to pursue "restrictions" on recombination some of which import rich or distinctive ideological or modal commitments. Vetting these options is critical for the broader assessment of Humeanism. One prospective view holds recombination to concern exclusively "wordly" matters, in the sense of Fine (2005). Such a view would apply recombination to matters regarding, say, Socrates' height and location, but not to "transcendental" matters like Socrates' self-identity. Whether haecceitistic truths are worldly or transcendent is uncertain and, more generally, work is needed to see whether this distinction can be reconciled with the core tenets of Humeanism. I hope to say more about the interaction of this distinction and Humeanism elsewhere. My thanks here to an anonymous referee.

³⁴ That's not to say that it couldn't be replicated with the right package of ersatzist views about possible worlds and a revised version of counterpart theory relies upon something other than qualitative resemblance to make sense of *de re* representation. See Heller (1989) and Cowling (2012) for discussion.

Before proceeding, it is worth pausing to consider whether we might dissolve our puzzle by attending, not to the nature of non-qualitative haecceities, but to the general properties and relations bound up with identity such as *being self-identical*, *is identical with*, or *is distinct from*. Above, I noted why haecceitists ought to take *being Socrates* to be fundamental, but what about the perfectly general identity relation? Disagreement about the status of identity and cognate properties (e.g., distinctness and parthood) is plentiful. For, while typically held to be non-qualitative, their generality makes them notably unlike non-qualitative properties like *being Socrates* which are tied to particulars.³⁵ Assuming, however, that these properties are indeed non-qualitative, should we take them to be fundamental or derivative in nature?³⁶ There is, as just noted, little appeal in holding *distinctness* or a nearby relation like *is a proper part of* to admit of recombination upon pain of self-distinct things or things that bear the proper part relation to themselves. Worries of this sort are liable to push most Humeans away from taking this species of non-qualitative properties as fundamental.³⁷ If, however, identity is a derivative property, might Humeans invoke the admissibility of necessary connections between the fundamental and the derivative to dissolve our puzzle? After all, there are certain necessary connections between the fundamental and derivative that Humeans do not banish. Put differently: might the derivativeness of the identity relation adequately explain necessary connections between haecceities like *being Socrates* and thereby solve the Multiple Socrates Problem?³⁸

To see how this might go, notice that *being blue* is such that, if something instantiates it, then, if anything else exists, that thing instantiates the highly derivative property *coexisting with something blue*.³⁹ Similarly, any fundamental property will trivially

³⁵ Bricker (2008) notes the qualitative does not depend upon particular individuals and so general identity properties and relations would be disqualified from the non-qualitative. As I note in Cowling (2015a: 285), the status of *being self-identical* and relevantly similar properties is an open and difficult question for accounts of this distinction.

³⁶ The metaphysical waters run deeper than space here permits. See, e.g., Bueno (2014) and Krause and Arenhart (2019). Along with the options of taking identity facts (or properties) to be derivative or fundamental, we might also hold them to be “zero-grounded” rather than “ungrounded.” For discussion, see Shumener (2017).

³⁷ If the identity relation were a part of the property *being Socrates*, the fact that necessary connections among the non-mereologically disjoint are permissible might be used to block the Multiple Socrates Problem. For non-Humeans, this seems to be the best available explanation, but, for would-be Humeans, such a solution is acceptable only if our metaphysics of properties is exhaustively mereological. But, following Lewis (1986b), there seems to be purely mereological means of building properties including non-qualitative ones like *not being identical with Socrates* and *being identical with non-Socrates*. For Humeans content to broaden the means for constructing properties beyond the mereological, this looks to be an especially promising route, but, given our pursuit of strict Humeanism, I set it aside here. Thanks here to an anonymous referee.

³⁸ My thanks to a referee for pressing this line of response.

³⁹ For the hardcore Humean who is not content to restrict recombination to the fundamental, the natural option is a radically sparse conception of properties that denies the reality of any abundant properties that would be implicated in necessary connections.

necessitate the co-instantiation of the derivative property, *being co-instantiated with something distinct from a round square*. So, if *being Socrates* necessitates the instantiation of suitable derivative identity and distinctness properties, the Humean might insist that the instantiation of certain derivative properties preclude anything else from instantiating *being Socrates*—e.g., if a derivative property necessitated by *being Socrates* were *being such that no other thing is Socrates*, we would have the kind exclusion that would ward off multiple Socrateses.

If this response were acceptable by Humean lights it would surely be attractive, but notice that, where the property like *coexisting with something blue* leaves possibilities for the intrinsic nature of the remainder of reality unconstrained, the property *being such that no other thing is Socrates* “points outwards”; it constrains possibilities for the rest of reality. In effect, this proposed dissolution of the puzzle is a non-qualitative analogue of holding the blueness of my mug to “crowd out” the blueness of your mug: it constrains the intrinsic nature of other entities in a manner contrary to Humeanism. In keeping with the Humean stricture against dispositions and other outward-pointing necessitation relations, Humeans cannot permit the derivative to necessarily connect or exclude *other* fundamental properties without sliding into what are effectively non-qualitative or haecceitistic dispositions. Just as the instantiation of *being blue* leaves the color properties of other objects entirely open, a Humean-friendly conception of *being Socrates* must leave the non-qualitative properties of other objects open.

Absent a worked out ontology of identity properties, our puzzle still stands. Let us therefore turn to two alternative options for addressing our puzzle. The first option seeks to avoid the puzzle by replacing a plurality of recombinable haecceities with a unique, monistic non-qualitative property. The second option relies upon primitive non-qualitative ideology to uphold haecceitism, while, at the same time, seeking to avoid the absurd consequences of the puzzle above.

§3. Exotic Non-Qualitative Properties

The Multiple Socrates Problem results, in part, from a commitment to the fundamentality of haecceities like *being Socrates*. It is natural, then, to look for a solution that retains a commitment to the fundamentality of non-qualitative properties but reconfigures the structure of such properties in a way that avoids the Multiple Socrates Problem.⁴⁰ This kind of solution finds no fault with the recombination of fundamental non-qualitative properties *per se*, but, instead, takes issue with the assumption that the properties in question are haecceities like *being Socrates*. But, if these aren’t the fundamental non-qualitative properties, what fundamental non-qualitative properties might we posit in their place? And how exactly would these replacement properties avoid the Multiple Socrates Problem?

⁴⁰ Throughout, I assume that there is a stock of fundamental properties and so set aside the possibility of infinite non-qualitative descent. I therefore set aside the threat of non-qualitative “onion worlds.” For discussion, see Williams (2007).

Importantly, any viable solution to the Multiple Socrates Problem must deliver a metaphysics of fundamental non-qualitative properties that satisfies a constraint set out above: the fundamental non-qualitative properties must provide a supervenience base that fixes the distribution of all other non-qualitative properties.⁴¹ (More carefully, fundamental non-qualitative properties must, along with the stock of fundamental qualitative properties, suffice to fix the distribution of all other properties.) Candidate non-qualitative properties that satisfy these dual demands aren't easy to come by, but one option looks to "monistic" views for inspiration and posits a "cosmic thisness"—a lone fundamental non-qualitative property that is instantiated by the entire cosmos.⁴²

How would such a property help us dodge the Multiple Socrates Problem? Crucially, the cosmic thisness is not a "structural universal"—i.e., a universal or property built up from other universals or properties.⁴³ It is, instead, a *distributional* property, where such properties account for the heterogeneous nature of their bearers without being reducible to some complex distribution of more basic properties.⁴⁴ The property of *being polka-dotted* is a standard example of distributional properties, since such a property is alleged to resist reduction to any complex disjunction of myriad ways of being coloured and patterned. (The metaphysical pedigree of such properties and the limits on the work they can do is controversial, but I leave these concerns aside for present purposes.) Even so, monists and other have pointed to distributional properties as metaphysical alternatives to more familiar views on which the properties of complex entities are determined wholly by the fundamental properties of their atomic parts.⁴⁵

For our purposes, we can think of the cosmic thisness as distributing the heterogeneous non-qualitative character of the world but doing so without having more basic non-qualitative properties like *being Socrates* as parts. Pressed to characterize the nature of the cosmic thisness, we should, then, avoid describing in a way that requires it to have other properties as parts. In order to do so, we might therefore help ourselves to something like the "feature-placing" language invoked by Strawson and others.⁴⁶ We would, then, describe the actually instantiated cosmic thisness as the property of *being such that it is Socrates-ish here-ishly and Xenophanes-ish there-ishly and so on...* On the resulting view, each possible world instantiates a unique cosmic thisness. The instantiation of the cosmic thisness, in turn, necessitates the distribution of myriad derivative non-qualitative properties including, among many others, *being Socrates*. Since *being Socrates* is a non-fundamental property, neither it nor any other ordinary haecceity will give rise to the Multiple Socrates Problem (or its variations) as derivative properties need not be freely recombinable. Moreover, since cosmic thisnesses are maximal properties, proponents of this solution would likely claim that there is no issue regarding

⁴¹ I set aside complications regarding the possibility of fundamental properties of fundamental properties. For discussion, see Eddon (2013).

⁴² On fundamental properties and monism, see Schaffer (2009), Trogon (2009), and Skiles (2009).

⁴³ See Lewis' case against structural universals in Lewis (1986b).

⁴⁴ On distributional properties, see Parsons (2004), McDaniel (2009), and Trogon (2009).

⁴⁵ On (qualitative) heterogeneity and extended simples, see Spencer (2010).

⁴⁶ For discussion, see Cortens and O'Leary-Hawthorne (1995) and Strawson (1959).

their recombination, since cosmic thisnesses are both maximal and unique to a single possible world.

This sort of irreducibly monistic conception of non-qualitative properties warrants closer scrutiny. But it doesn't take much to see that this proposal will leave proponents of Hume's Dictum unsatisfied. Setting aside general reservations about distributional properties, this proposed solution fails on at least two fronts.

First, the assumption that each possible world instantiates a unique cosmic thisness builds in precisely the kind of necessary connection between fundamental properties that Humean recombination prohibits. Even if cosmic thisnesses are maximal properties, the prohibition against a single world instantiating two such properties runs contrary to the free recombination of fundamental properties. Consider an analogy: suppose that there are two maximal, fundamental qualitative properties—one maximal *F*-ness property, and one maximal *G*-ness property. To hold that one fundamental maximal qualitative property somehow "crowds out" the other and excludes it from being possibly instantiated is to abide precisely the necessary exclusions Hume's Dictum cautions us against.

A second concern: along with the anti-Humean requirement that there is a unique cosmic thisness for each possible world, the requirement that cosmic thisnesses are maximal—roughly, that, when such properties are instantiated, there can be nothing disjoint from their bearer—is similarly anti-Humean. To insist that a property is maximal is to posit a property with an "outward looking" essential nature: one that rules out the possibility of it being instantiated by anything less than all that there is. (Here, I take the "cosmos" to be the totality of concrete entities.) To see why this runs contrary to the free recombination of fundamental properties, suppose that the actual world instantiates a specific cosmic thisness. Now, suppose that there is a possible world, qualitatively conceived, that comprises infinitely many epochs that are each qualitatively indiscernible from one another and each of which is a qualitative duplicate of the actual world. Intuitively, the cosmic thisness in question is of the "right size" to be instantiated by any one of these epochs, but, as a maximal property, it is necessarily excluded from being instantiated by any part of the latter world of two-way eternal recurrence.⁴⁷ In a similar vein, consider a world with only a single individual, Edie. Now consider a vast and qualitatively heterogeneous world with a duplicate of Edie. Since the cosmic thisness borne by our first world is essentially maximal, it cannot be instantiated anywhere in the second world. But why not? Pretty clearly, Humeans will find this appeal to the essential maximality of cosmic thisnesses unintelligible. So, again, it looks like the conditions placed upon cosmic thisnesses that would allow them to avoid the Multiple Socrates Problem are conditions that Humeans hold to be unsatisfiable. For this reason, the cosmic thisness—a fundamental non-qualitative distributional property—is of no help in reconciling Hume's Dictum with haecceitism.

A related proposal abandons the cosmic thisness and opts for a different revision to the metaphysics of fundamental non-qualitative properties. This proposal denies that

⁴⁷ On worlds of two-way eternal recurrence, see Lewis (1986a: 227).

haecceities like *being Socrates* are fundamental and holds, instead, that “part-haecceities” like *being part of Socrates* are fundamental non-qualitative properties.⁴⁸ The intended solution seeks to avoid generating multiple Socrates by contending that, no matter how wildly we might distribute part-haecceities like *being part of Socrates*, we’ll still end up with exactly one Socrates since any bearer of the part-haecceity cannot be distinct from Socrates.

As with the appeal to cosmic thisnesses, the general merit of this proposal must be distinguished from its success in meeting the demands of Hume’s Dictum. And, unfortunately, it seems this proposal fails in that regard. To see why, note, first, that we are required to clarify the notion of part-haecceity. One route takes the relevant notion of parthood to be proper parthood. The fundamental non-qualitative properties would therefore be *proper* part-haecceities like *being a proper part of Socrates*. This proves unacceptable, however. For, if there are simple objects, they will have haecceities in the absence of any proper parts. Moreover, given classical mereological assumptions, if something instantiates *being a proper part of Socrates*, then there must be a distinct entity with the very same property, which issues an immediate demand for illicit necessary connections between entities—namely, nothing can exist in isolation while instantiating *being a proper part of Socrates*.

It looks, then, like our fundamental part-haecceities are not to be understood in terms of proper parthood. And, since improper parthood entails identity and so merely reinstates the problem at hand, the remaining option holds the fundamental non-qualitative properties like *being part of Socrates* is somehow disjunctive or determinable with respect to proper and improper parthood. Properties of this sort—in light of their indeterminacy—are already questionable candidates for being fundamental in nature, but the real problem here for Humeans consists in their modal profile.⁴⁹ Roughly speaking, this proposal requires that, for any object that instantiates *being part of Socrates*, that object is identical to Socrates except in case some other object instantiates *being part of Socrates* in which case, each are numerically distinct from Socrates yet still proper parts of Socrates. Importantly, the worry here isn’t whether these claims follow from one another. It is whether Humeans can admit fundamental non-qualitative properties of just this sort. And, unfortunately for Humeans, these modal connections among fundamental properties are inadmissible in the same way that fundamental qualitative dispositional properties are inadmissible. As a diagnostic for Humean acceptability, notice that the identity of a simple object that instantiates *being a part of Socrates* would, on this proposal, be “sensitive” to matters extrinsic to that object. This is because the object in question would be identical to Socrates if no other object instantiates the fundamental property *being a part of Socrates*, but it would be merely a proper part (and so numerically distinct from Socrates) if some other object instantiates *being a part of Socrates*. The indeterminacy between proper and improper parthood that the relevant fundamental property would

⁴⁸ Thanks to Ranpal Dosanjh for the part-haecceity proposal considered here.

⁴⁹ The prospects of determinable fundamental properties remain controversial. See, for example, Wilson (2012) and Bricker (2017). Here, I follow Lewis (2009: 204) in assuming that fundamental properties are “not at all disjunctive, or determinable...”

have to evince is a kind of modal-cum-dispositional connection among properties, but, for Humeans, these are precisely the sorts of connections banished from the metaphysical ground floor.

As should be clear, a resolution to the Multiple Socrates Problem that satisfies the demands of Hume's Dictum is not easy to come by. At this point, those on the fence about Hume's Dictum are likely growing impatient with the (increasingly daunting) task of trying to snuff out any and all necessary connections. And, although the metaphysical proposals just advanced regarding fundamental non-qualitative properties might be unobjectionable (though perhaps unattractive) to non-Humeans, it should now be clear that reconciling haecceitism with Hume's Dictum requires extreme measures. With that in mind, I'll now turn to a final, radical proposal that requires a very different view of non-qualitative reality.

§4. Non-Qualitative Ideology

If haecceities are fundamental properties and therefore subject to recombination, there seems to be no way to avoid absurd possibilities for Socrates without, at the same time, violating Hume's Dictum. For would-be Humean haecceitists, this is bad news, but it leaves one remaining option, which requires a heterodox metaphysics of the non-qualitative. On this heterodox view, a commitment to haecceitism does not involve any *ontological* commitment to fundamental non-qualitative properties. In fact, it disavows a commitment to haecceities as universals, tropes, classes, or entities of any kind. Instead, this metaphysics of the non-qualitative repurposes the Quinean or "ostrich nominalist" view of predication in order to dispense with an ontology of properties in favor of an expansion in primitive non-qualitative ideology.⁵⁰ Roughly put, instead of positing haecceities like *being Socrates*, the *ideological haecceitist* holds that certain primitive non-qualitative predicates such as 'is Socrates' are needed to state truths about individuals.⁵¹ So, just as some maintain that the predicate 'instantiates' is needed to aptly and exhaustively describe the world but corresponds to no genuine relation "out there" in the world, primitive non-qualitative predicates like 'is Socrates' are indispensable components of our best metaphysical theories but not genuine ontological commitments.

The ideological haecceitist proposal is undergirded by a view of theoretical ideology on which the ideological commitments of a theory consist in the metaphysical structure it posits in addition to ontology. For example, along with primitive predicates, operators—e.g., temporal and modal operators—are ideological rather than ontological commitments even while they are no less objective or mind-dependent than ontological

⁵⁰ Cf. the discussion of "redness" in Quine (1948). On ideology and ideological structure, see Sider (2011), Cowling (2013), and Turner (2011).

⁵¹ As I argue in Cowling (2013), it remains uncertain how to compare the cost of ideological commitments across ideological categories and when compared to ontological costs. In the present context, at least one central concern is whether introducing non-qualitative ideology constitutes a commitment over and above a commitment to purely qualitative primitive predicates. Sorting out this delicate matter is critical for the ultimate evaluation this view, but not for the project of explicating and motivating it, which is my aim here.

commitments.⁵² In effect, the ideological haecceitist holds that the non-qualitative structure of the world is akin to its modal structure; it is a purely *ideological* rather than *ontological* matter and not rightly understood by introducing a novel category of properties—in this case, haecceities. To paraphrase, Quine (1948), there is a Socrates and there are many truths about Socrates, but there is no further thing, *being Socrates*, that exists in addition to Socrates and accounts for why something is, in fact, Socrates. For the ideological haecceitist, primitive non-qualitative ideology applies to objects and “fixes” the relevant facts concerning the identity of objects. A full inventory of ideological commitments concerning the actual world will therefore include “is Socrates” and “is Napoleon,” which, like other primitive predicates or operators, are objective and mind-independent albeit non-ontological features of the world.

Metaphysicians are often under theoretical pressure to admit special treatment for certain predicates—e.g., “is identical with,” “is a member of,” “is located at,” “instantiates”—and, in many cases, metaphysicians have held these or other predicates to be markedly unlike ordinary predicates like “is five feet from.”⁵³ For, while ordinary predicates express properties and relations, there is no ontological assay appropriate for notions like instantiation, identity, membership, and certain other elements of basic ideology. It is this idea (or a comparable) one that some philosophers give voice to when they suggest that “instantiation” is a kind of “non-relational tie” between entities.⁵⁴ And, on the present proposal, the non-qualitative aspect of the world is assimilated to this special category by holding that non-qualitative reality is irreducibly ideological in nature.⁵⁵ Such a view therefore denies that, as some haecceitists contend, the fact that Socrates is Socrates owes to the fact that some entity instantiates a distinct entity, *being Socrates*.⁵⁶ To the contrary, the ideological haecceitist holds the fact that Socrates is Socrates to be the end of any metaphysical explanation of the identity of Socrates precisely because it involves the application of a primitive non-qualitative predicate.

⁵² To see that ideological commitments are importantly different from ontological ones, consider the debate between the nominalist modalist and the nominalist modal eliminativist. The parties are—let’s suppose—in ontological agreement, but disagree over whether the world has any modal aspect as only one holds that certain truths about the world are expressible only via modal notions. Kment (2014: 150) describes a version of ideological realism along the following lines: “It shouldn’t be assumed that all ingredients of reality must be individuals, properties, or relations—or entities of any kind, for that matter. For example, it’s possible that in order to describe reality completely, we need to use some primitive piece of ideology that relates to some aspect of reality that doesn’t belong to one of these three ontological categories, and which may not be an entity at all.”

⁵³ On the ideological gambit of dispensing with these and other relations, see Melia (2008).

⁵⁴ On the “tie” of instantiation, see Armstrong (1978: 109-11) and Nolan (forthcoming).

⁵⁵ The prospects of exempting ideological notions for Humean demands upon modality have been considered before. See, in particular, Nolan (forthcoming), who considers precisely such an option in addressing Lewis’ argument against magical ersatzism.

⁵⁶ This, of course, falls short of an argument against competing views about the metaphysics of identity, haecceities, and individuation absent an examination of their compatibility with Hume’s Dictum. For some metaphysical options regarding haecceities, see Diekemper (2015).

Ideological haecceitism and its “ostrich nominalism” about haecceities provides a direct way out of the Multiple Socrates Problem. This is because Humeanism prohibits necessary connections only between distinct entities but ideological structure is not ontological structure and so ideological primitives are not *entities* at all. Primitive predicates are not, for example, to be confused with properties nor are modal operators rightly taken to be merely disguised quantifiers over possible worlds (or, at least, not without considerable argument). For this reason, ideological structure is not subject to the modal demands of Humeanism. Put metaphorically, the Humean stricture can’t “see” ideological commitments and so offers no verdict on their admissibility or their modal interconnections. Humeans can, for example, consistently admit necessary connections between logical, modal, and temporal operators. On the resulting view, the world’s non-qualitative structure—the totality of facts about which individuals exist—is not fixed by the distribution of an ontology of universals, tropes, or classes. Instead, it is an ideological matter, settled by the interaction of primitive predicates, in a manner akin to matters concerning the interaction of modal operators. There is, then, no principled reason why Humeans must admit possible worlds with thirty-three Socrateses or possible worlds where Socrates and Napoleon are one and the same. To be sure, Hume’s Dictum requires that, for any way a world could be qualitatively, there is a possible world that is that way. But Hume’s Dictum remains silent on what follows from this regarding *de re* possibility and facts about Socrates, since the application of a primitive predicate like ‘is Socrates’ is not hostage to any principle governing the modal ties between entities.

There is, I think, much to be said for the ideological haecceitist’s way of reconciling haecceitism with Hume’s Dictum. Let’s consider, though, some likely objections. The first of these simply denies that this view delivers what it promises: it hasn’t reconciled haecceitism and Hume’s Dictum, but, rather, abandoned haecceitism since it has dispensed with not only *fundamental* haecceities but any haecceities whatsoever. If one takes realism about haecceities as a non-negotiable theoretical commitment, this is a fair complaint, but, surely, such a commitment is one properly settled by comparing our global metaphysical options. And, in this regard, ideological haecceitism seems to do right by would-be haecceitists. It preserves haecceitistic possibilities and facts about individuals. And, while haecceities are not among the world’s fundamental properties, we get the next best thing: haecceitistic facts—i.e., facts concerning the identity of specific individuals—are metaphysically basic and analyzable in no more basic terms, given the primitive status of non-qualitative predicates. So, if we are interested in accommodating the haecceitistic intuition that non-qualitative matters are somehow ultimate or basic, this proposal makes good on such an intuition even without fundamental non-qualitative properties.

A more serious objection takes issue with the overall coherence of the present appeal to primitive ideology. In responding, it is important to mark that there is little to no consensus regarding the metaphysics of properties, but, if nominalism of familiar kinds are intelligible, then we should be wary of calling the coherence of ideological haecceitism into question. Notice, after all, that this is effectively what ostrich nominalists and others

like Quine take to be the proper view of qualitative “properties” like redness.⁵⁷ On the view proposed here, the only difference is that it applies this treatment solely to the non-qualitative features of the world.⁵⁸ Importantly, any number of views about the metaphysics of qualitative properties as universals or tropes can be appended to ideological haecceitism.⁵⁹ For this reason, ideological haecceitism is rightly viewed as a live (though, of course, contentious) competitor regarding the metaphysics of non-qualitative properties just as Quinean nominalism is a live (though, of course, contentious) competitor regarding the metaphysics of properties *simpliciter*.⁶⁰

More narrowly targeted objections to ideological haecceitism are even more serious. According to the most urgent, this proposal falls short of adequacy, since, in denying that non-qualitative reality is subject to recombination, it fails to provide answers to our questions about what is possible for Socrates and about *de re* modality more generally. In taking up this objection, notice that is a complaint that can equally be leveled against Lewis’ account of recombination, which provides a metaphysics of *de re* modality only once counterpart theory is applied to the space of concrete possible worlds and the resemblance relations that criss-cross it.

Both the ideological haecceitist and Lewis hold that recombination will furnish us with a logical space exhausting qualitative possibilities—e.g., worlds with infinitely many houndstooth butterflies. But, where Lewis then turns to counterpart theory to settle whether Socrates could have been a houndstooth butterfly, the ideological haecceitist has a range of options, none of which we need to settle upon here. She might hold, for example, that an additional principle of plenitude for non-qualitative matters is required, but deny that such a principle is itself grounded in Hume’s Dictum and its prohibitions against necessary connections.⁶¹ She might hold, instead, that *de re* modality issues from

⁵⁷ Curiously, such a view affords a direct way to make good on the implementation of Russell’s theory of description in Quine (1948) without requiring the assumption that a predicate like “Socratizes” is analyzable in terms of some unique qualitative profile.

⁵⁸ Note that this is not put forward as anything like an account of the qualitative/non-qualitative distinction. There is nothing on this view that requires all primitive predicates to be non-qualitative.

⁵⁹ There is room here for an interesting debate over the modal constancy of ideological structure—e.g., whether the “stock” of ideology is invariant across worlds. This debate has a parallel in debates regarding the necessary existence of non-qualitative properties. See, for example, Adams (1981), Bennett (2006), and Plantinga (1974).

⁶⁰ I assume here that Humeans ought to be realists about qualitative properties. In the event that Humeans incline towards a broader “ostrich nominalism,” the interface between Hume’s Dictum and the metaphysics of properties plays out quite differently. Since these Humeans will not abide necessary connections among certain qualitative features of the world, their view will require a worked account of which ideology is subject to recombination. One proposal on this score might draw this line precisely at the qualitative/non-qualitative distinction, though it is by no means obvious that this is the uniquely best option.

⁶¹ Would-be anti-essentialist might, for example, put forward a principle of plenitude that takes qualitative maximal possibilities as in puts and outputs a space of maximal possibilities in accord with a “consistent predication principle”—roughly, for any consistent way of attaching primitive

the nature of ideological structure in a manner radically unlike the way in which qualitative possibility is given.

The comparative silence of the ideological haecceitist on the limits of *de re* possibility is a feature, not a bug. This should be clear enough once we recognize that this solution to the Multiple Socrates Problem does not mandate haecceitists to accept anti-essentialist haecceitistic differences (e.g., the difference between actuality and a qualitative indiscernible world where you occupy the qualitative profile of my coffee mug) nor does it mandate any strong version of essentialism. What it does require is the recognition that the epistemology of *de re* modality might run along rather different lines than the epistemology of qualitative possibility. And this is something Humeans shouldn't find all that surprising. Notice that certain strains of modal knowledge—e.g., regarding the correct axioms of modal logic or the basic principles of mereology—flow, not from recombination, but from our grasp of primitive ideology like modal operators and mereological primitives. This is because Hume's Dictum isn't rightly treated as the wellspring from which absolutely all our modal knowledge flows, but as a negative principle that can be put to clever use via recombination. The present variety of ideological haecceitism assimilates the epistemology of *de re* modality to a comparable category just as it seeks to avoid positing ontology that corresponds to modal operators or primitive predicates. Ideological haecceitism is therefore a solution to the Multiple Socrates Problem but, on its own, only part of what must be a more comprehensive story about the metaphysics and epistemology of modality.

§5. Taking Stock

The ideological haecceitist makes good on the modal commitments of haecceitism. And, while the resulting view does not take haecceities to be fundamental, it nevertheless holds up non-qualitative features of the world to be primitive, admitting of no further metaphysical explanation. There is, then, an important commonality between the fundamentality of haecceities and the primitive status of non-qualitative predicates: each ties non-qualitative reality to the ground floor of metaphysical explanation—the former by way of fundamentality, the latter by way of indefinability.

Despite the positive prospects of ideological haecceitism for addressing the Multiple Socrates Problem, some will surely be skeptical of such a view—perhaps out of fear of ideological realism. For those who find the view untenable, options for resolving the Multiple Socrates Problem should now seem quite limited. Retreating to a version of Hume's Dictum that applies solely to the qualitative domain will, I suspect, seem more and more appealing.

Here, it is worth concluding by noting that concerns and puzzles similar to the Multiple Socrates Problems arise for other properties or features of the world that some

predicates to qualitative roles, there is a maximal possibility according to which the relevant individuals occupy the relevant qualitative roles. Such a principle would bake in restrictions like the impossibility of Socrates and Xenophanes being identical and multiple qualitative roles being occupied by Socrates. Since the relevant constraints pertain to ideology, no Humean stricture is violated.

might hold to be non-qualitative. Suppose, for example, there is a fundamental temporal property of *being present*—posited in keeping with potential versions of the moving spotlight view—or a fundamental modal property of *being actual*, which singles out our world from the rest of the plurality of concrete possible worlds.⁶² Notably, if these properties are to play their intended metaphysical roles, they must obey special, decidedly anti-Humean strictures. Most obviously, each must be, in some sense, maximal. No mere proper part of a world can instantiate *being actual* and no mere proper part of a time-slice can instantiate *being present*. Hume’s Dictum squares awkwardly with such views much as Hume’s Dictum squares awkwardly with a commitment to haecceitism. And, in those other cases, a similar choice-point emerges: we might hold that certain features of reality—non-qualitative properties like *being present* and *being actual*—are special exemptions beyond the reach of Hume’s Dictum and are therefore essence-laden features of the world radically unlike the rest of the qualitative mosaic of properties. Alternatively, we might reject a metaphysical picture that assimilates these commitments to “just more ontology” and take them to be yet more primitive ideology and so treat them much as the ideological haecceitist proposes to treat haecceities.

Each of the Humean’s options for dealing with non-qualitative properties—whether haecceities, *being present*, or *being actual*—comes at a cost. But the case for fundamental non-qualitative haecceities is markedly stronger than the case for positing these comparable properties in the first place. And, if we take the need to resolve the Multiple Socrates Problem to result from our rough equal confidence in haecceitism and Hume’s Dictum, ideological haecceitism should, in spite of the required expansion in primitive ideology, seem like a promising resolution. That said, those who incline to treat Hume’s Dictum as a metaphysical first principle—one that warrants far greater confidence than haecceitism—might hope to extract from the preceding a novel argument against haecceitism and haecceities. This argument, if successful, pivots on the inevitability of admitting necessary connections when making sense of non-qualitative reality and it concludes that reality must be wholly general or exhaustively qualitative in nature.⁶³ If that’s right, Hume’s Dictum carries with it a revisionary metaphysics far more heterodox than Lewis and other Humeans have been willing to acknowledge.⁶⁴

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⁶² I make no claim that a view on which *being present* is a fundamental non-qualitative is the natural or most defensible variety of the moving spotlight view, though it is at least one way to make good on the notion of a privileged present. On the moving spotlight view, see Cameron (2015). On modal realism supplemented with absolute actuality, see Bricker (2006).

⁶³ On generalist and qualitativist options, see Dasgupta (2009, 2017) and Turner (2017).

⁶⁴ For comments and helpful discussion, my thanks to Phil Bricker, Ben Caplan, Wesley Cray, Ranpal Dosanjh, Boris Kment, Maria Scarpati, Byron Simmons, Kelly Trogdon, and audiences at Hong Kong University, Lingnan, Neufchâtel, and Wisconsin-Madison.

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