

Kleinschmidt, Shieva (ed.), *Mereology & Location*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Theories of location have become a bit of a hot topic in metaphysics and, in a sense, *Mereology & Location* represents the “State of the Literature.” This volume is a collection of ten new papers by leading experts in metaphysics. The included articles cover an impressive variety of themes and loosely related topics which connect up with issues from mereology or the nature of location relations in one way or another. And while there is some overlap in content between these articles, they largely stand apart from one another – one need not read them all or read them in the presented order. That said, there’s a natural interplay between mereology and the ways in which an object may be located at different regions. As such, those with an interest in mereology, location relations, or the ways other issues interact with these topics will profit from this entire collection – whether they are familiar with the existing literature or not. For those metaphysicians looking to enter these areas, Shieva Kleinschmidt provides a clear and accessible overview of the salient core concepts in the Introduction.

The contributions to this volume are divided into three parts: (I) ‘Mereology’, (II) ‘Mereology and Location’, and (III) ‘Interaction with other Topics’. The approach taken by the contributing authors is diverse. For instance, the contributions in part I make heavy use of formal methods, much more so than those found in the later parts. The paper from Josh Parsons, the shortest in the volume, is the most technical and readers not accustomed to such presentations may find the task of parsing this material daunting (but ultimately rewarding). In his contribution, Parsons explores the consequences of taking parthood, overlap, or proper parthood as primitive in a mereological theory. Part I also includes contributions from Kris McDaniel and Gabriel Uzquiano. McDaniel defends the thesis that a whole is identical to each of its individual parts, and argues that we can analyse parthood in terms of identity. He ends the paper by addressing several pressing objections, including what some might take to be the natural objection – i.e. the objection from the fact that this view is *prima facie* crazy. In the final contribution to part I, Uzquiano explores whether or not we should think, according to classical mereology, that mereological fusions have their parts necessarily or essentially.

There are four contributions in part II, ‘Mereology and Location.’ In the first, Peter Simons argues that we should take occurrents (e.g. events and processes) to be the basic constituents of the world, and take everything else – like continuants (e.g. ordinary objects) and universals (e.g. colours) – to be derivative. In a particularly interesting chapter, Ned Markosian presents a commonsensical account of the mereology of physical objects. He argues that if we want a non-crazy sounding mereological view – one without bizarre consequence – we should start by asking *Under what circumstances is one object part of another?* rather than *Under what circumstances do several objects compose a further object?* He argues that, according to the correct answer to that first question, the mereological features of an object will be determined by the mereological

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features of the region that that object occupies. In the following article, Daniel Nolan presents a unique account of objects and spacetime according to which, roughly, all regions can be broken down into non-point size ball-shaped regions. This view is a supersubstantialist one (i.e. objects are identical to the regions at which they exist), yet not a perdurantist one. Nolan doesn't endorse this view, though. Instead he argues that it's philosophically useful: it illustrates, for instance, that certain theses can be coherently endorsed without being committed to others. Peter Forrest, in his contribution, presents eleven seemingly intuitive premises which concern spacetime and weak supplementation, and derives a contradiction from them – concluding that we have inconsistent intuitions about the nature of spacetime.

The contribution from Hud Hudson is the first entry in part III, 'Interaction with other Topics,' and in it he examines how we ought to understand persistence in a world with hypertime. Here he articulates versions of the prominent theories of persistence, adapted for such a world. Ultimately, he argues in favour of a view according to which persisting objects are diachronically composite but not hyper-temporally composite. Some might struggle to get a precise picture of the world he considers, and this is one of those instances where a figure would have proved illustrative. Cody Gilmore's article, the longest in the volume, builds on his earlier work regarding parthood as a four-place relation (i.e.  $x$  at  $y$  is a part of  $z$  at  $w$ ). Familiarity with this prior work of his isn't required, but rather those who are already familiar with it may find his contribution to this volume especially interesting. Those concerned with the nature of propositions would likely also find his contribution to this volume especially worthwhile: he argues that with four-place parthood we can respond to certain worries for a Russellian account of propositions. In the final contribution to the book, Kathrin Koslicki argues against the Lewisian proposal that a distinction between natural and non-natural properties can be invoked to avoid the problem of Quinean indeterminacy for singular terms. While Koslicki may ultimately be right here – that such a Lewisian may require additional tools to make sense of how we naturally talk about the world – the way the world is isn't determined by how we might naturally speak about the objects we ordinarily interact with. If there is tension with our ordinary usage of singular terms, and if objects are best viewed as mereological sums (according to what we might consider to be the best account of the nature of objects), so much the worse for the way we speak about objects – even if singular terms are useful. So, while the cost she points out may be a previously unnoticed one for the Lewisian, this may be a cost the Lewisian is prepared to bear. These comments shouldn't distract us, though. Koslicki's conclusion is well argued for and she addresses an otherwise overlooked question. This is a feature found throughout this entire collection, and it makes this an important book.

Ultimately, *Mereology & Location* offers detailed discussions of a wide range of topics which have been approached with an eye on connections to locative or mereological concerns. The

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bibliography at the end provides a good guide to the literature for further study across the topics covered. One underlying theme which arises in many of the contributions is persistence. But this should be unsurprising: mereological concerns have long featured prominently in the persistence debate (e.g. temporal parthood), and in recent years the different ways in which objects can be located at different regions has garnered more and more attention from those interested in persistence. As such, those engaged in the debate over persistence may be especially likely to find many of the discussions in this volume valuable. The book is well edited and without exception the articles are clear, lively, and elegantly written – these features make the book all the more engaging.

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