Becoming a Statue

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1   Phasalism

I'm going to offer a novel defense of a commonsense but rarely championed solution to the notorious puzzle of the statue and the piece of clay. The puzzle itself is familiar. An artist takes a single piece of clay and moulds it into a statue. Later, she decides she is unhappy with her work, and squashes the statue back into an amorphous lump. During the time when the statue exists, it is located in exactly the same place as the piece of clay from which it is made. But the statue and the piece of clay seem to have different properties. For example, the piece of clay was around before the statue was, and it remains even after the statue is gone. So we begin to feel pressure to say something bizarre: that the statue and the piece of clay are distinct objects even though they occupy the same place at once.

Here is a commonsense - almost naive - solution to this puzzle. When the artist works on the piece of clay, it *becomes* a statue rather than becoming colocated with a (distinct) statue. That is, it begins to instantiate the sortal property *being a statue*. And when it is squashed, it ceases to instantiate that property and goes back to being a humble, amorphous lump. On this view, *being a statue* is a phase sortal property that can be temporarily instantiated by things like pieces of clay.[1]

This approach to the puzzle of the statue and the piece of clay, which Korman [2015: 204-5] has dubbed *phasalism*, does not require colocation, four-dimensionalism, eliminativism about ordinary objects, deflationism about ordinary objects, or unorthodox theses about classical identity. Yet it has only very occasionally been endorsed in the literature (for example, see Ayers [1974: 128-129], Jubien [2001: 6-7], and Schwartz [2009: 613-15]), and it isn't even represented in some prominent surveys of available solutions to the puzzle (for example, Rea [1999] and Wasserman [2018]). Nevertheless, I believe it is a promising solution.

In section 2 I will sketch a novel version of phasalism, and in section 3 I will show how my version of phasalism can be used to answer some of the objections to phasalism that have appeared in the literature. In section 4 I will sketch a broader metaphysical picture in which the phasalist approach to the statue puzzle finds a home, and I will consider the extent to which this broader picture helps solve other puzzles of material coincidence.

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[1] The term 'phase sortal' is due to Wiggins [1967: 7].

2   A New Phasalist Metaphysics

The basic commitment of the phasalist solution to the statue puzzle is that *being a statue* is a phase sortal property, but we will need more than that basic commitment to rebut common objections to the view. Markosian [2010] has developed an account of identity under a sortal – that is, an account of what it is for an object at one time to be the same φ as an object at another time - which he suggests in passing could be used in the service of a phasalist solution to the statue puzzle [ibid.: 144]. I think he's on to something, so I will sketch a similar account of identity under a sortal, but one which draws heavily on elements of stage theory, resulting in a kind of stage theory for endurantists.[2]

The stage theorist believes that ordinary objects are, in a certain sense, instantaneous objects. Each ordinary object is present at only a single moment of time, but persists in virtue of having counterparts, called stages, at other times (see Hawley [2001] and Sider [2001: 188-208]). So a statue is present at a single moment of time but persists by having statue-counterparts at other times. The endurantist can make similar use of a notion analogous to a stage, namely, an ordinary object state.

An *ordinary object state* is any state of affairs that consists of a particular ordinary object instantiating all of the properties it instantiates at

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[2] By contrast, Markosian's account could be aptly characterized as perdurantism for endurantists.

a particular instant in its career.[3] For example, at any particular instant in the career of a statue, Athena, there is an ordinary object state that consists of Athena instantiating all of the properties it instantiates at that instant, such as a certain size, shape, mass, spatiotemporal location, and so forth. Let's call the object which instantiates the properties in a given ordinary object state the *instantiator* of that state.

With this terminology, we can reformulate the question of what it means for objects to be the same φ as the question of what it means for the instantiators of ordinary object states to be the same φ. I suggest a counterpart-theoretic answer: what it means for the instantiator of an ordinary object state, s_1, to be the same φ as the instantiator of an ordinary object state, s_2, is for s_1 to be a φ-counterpart of s_2.[4] But of course this doesn't tell us much until we know something about the conditions under which ordinary object states qualify as φ-counterparts. Minimally, they must be φ-states, that is, states in which the instantiator instantiates φ-ness. But what else?

Here we can take another cue from stage theory, which claims that stages are φ-counterparts only if they satisfy standard sortalist[5] conditions on sameness for φs. Many philosophers believe that there are conditions of

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[3] This notion of an ordinary object state is based on similar notions that appear in, e.g., Hirsch [1982].

[4] This parallels Markosian's [2010: 137] episodic account of identity under a sortal.

[5] I borrow this term from Goldwater [2018].

sameness associated with each sortal property such that x is the same φ as y if and only if x and y satisfy the sameness conditions for φs. These sameness conditions often require a certain kind of continuity over time. For example, the conditions associated with *being a statue* might require continuity of shape; the conditions associated with *being a person* might require psychological continuity; and so on.

Most philosophers construe these sortalist continuity conditions as conditions on the persistence of objects which instantiate the relevant sortal property. So if an object which is a statue ceases to satisfy the same-statue conditions, it ceases to persist altogether - contrary to the phasalist view that an object, such as a piece of clay, can persist through ceasing to be a statue. But I will instead take these sortalist conditions on sameness for φs as merely conditions on being the same φ, where this is understood in the counterpart-theoretic way formulated above. A pair of ordinary object states are φ-counterparts, and therefore states of the same φ, if and only if they are continuous in the way appropriate for φs. I will sometimes speak of the sameness or identity associated with a sortal, φ, as sortal identity with respect to φ, or simply sortal identity, where the context makes it clear which sortal is in view.

This account reconciles the phasalist and sortalist identity conditions for objects by taking the phasalist conditions to be conditions on classical identity, while taking the sortalist conditions as conditions on identity of another kind. This allows us to say that both the phasalist and the sortalist have been getting something right. And as we will see, we can make sense

of cases where the phasalist and the sortalist claims about persistence come apart by suggesting that, in those cases, classical identity and identity of another kind are coming apart.

The phasalist may also wish to supplement this account with a semantics modelled on the stage theorist's semantics. According to stage theory, the truth conditions of ordinary language sentences feature stages. Consider the sentence 'Athena is statue-shaped.' The stage theorist claims that 'Athena' refers to a certain stage, and the sentence is true if and only if that stage is statue-shaped. Whereas 'Athena was statue-shaped yesterday', where 'Athena' refers to a present stage, is true if and only if that stage has a counterpart yesterday that is statue-shaped. If Athena is destroyed and becomes a merely past object, then a sentence like 'Athena was statue-shaped' is true if and only if, at some past time, there is an Athena stage that is statue-shaped. And so on. With sufficient ingenuity, the stage theorist can supply truth conditions for the wide variety of ordinary language sentences about persisting objects [Sider 2006: 108-11].[6]

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[6] I take the stage theorist's semantics to be what Sider [2011] calls a *metaphysical semantics*. A metaphysical semantics differs from a linguistic semantics in that it tries to give fundamental truth conditions for ordinary language sentences which may not fill all the same roles that meanings in the traditional linguistic sense do. For example, they may not mirror the syntax of the sentences that express them, and they may not be transparent to competent speakers. A referee wonders whether the use of a metaphysical semantics counts against my claim to be defending a commonsense solution to the statue puzzle. Perhaps it does to some extent. But, following Sattig [2015], I aim to use metaphysical

The endurantist can supply analogous truth conditions featuring ordinary object states in place of stages. Let's say that an object x has property P *at* an ordinary object state s if and only if x is the instantiator of s, and P is one of the properties P_1-P_n such that s consists of x instantiating P_1-P_n. Then 'Athena is statue-shaped' is true if and only if Athena is statue-shaped at its present ordinary object state; 'Athena was statue-shaped yesterday' is true if and only if Athena has an ordinary object state yesterday at which Athena is statue-shaped; 'Athena was statue-shaped' is true if and only if, at some past time, there is an ordinary object state at which Athena is statue-shaped; and so on.

But there is an important twist in the stage theorist's semantics that the phasalist should emulate. The stage theorist claims that singular terms are associated with certain corresponding sortal terms, and so with certain counterpart relations. For example, the name 'Athena' might be associated with the sortal term 'statue', and so with the statue counterpart relation. Therefore, 'Athena was statue-shaped yesterday' is true if and only if the stage which 'Athena' denotes has a *statue* counterpart at a past time that is statue-shaped.

In a similar vein, I propose that a singular term is associated, not merely with a sortal, φ, but with what I will call a *family* of φ-states. A family of φ-states is a maximal set, S, of φ-counterparts, by which I mean that each

semantics in a conservative way that preserves as much of folk metaphysics as I reasonably can.

member of S is a φ-counterpart of every member of S, and no state that is not a member of S is a φ-counterpart of every member of S.[7] This includes not merely temporal counterparts, but also modal counterparts in other possible worlds. So the name 'Athena' might be associated with a family of statue-states, S, in which case 'Athena is statue-shaped' is true if and only if Athena is statue-shaped at the current member of S; 'Athena was statue-shaped yesterday' is true if and only if, yesterday, there was a member of S at which Athena was statue-shaped; 'Athena was statue-shaped' is true if and only if, at some past time, there is a member of S at which Athena is statue-shaped; and so on.

3   Answering Objections to Phasalism

Having sketched a phasalist account of identity under a sortal and a supplementary semantics, we are now in a position to see how it can be used to defend phasalism against some of the objections that have been raised against it in the literature.

Part of what motivates the thought that the piece of clay both precedes and outlives the statue is the intuition that, when the artist forms the statue, she *creates* it, that is, causes it to come into existence; and when she squashes the statue, she *destroys* it, that is, causes it to go out of existence. I will call this the creation/destruction intuition. It doesn't sit

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[7] This is modelled on Lewis's [1976] characterization of a maximal series of person stages and Markosian's [2010] parallel characterization of an episode.

well with phasalism because creation and destruction are not mere phase sortal changes. This worry is voiced, for example, by Burke [1994: 592], Sider [2006: 103-4], and Korman [2015: 204-6]. In what follows, I will focus mostly on creation, though my remarks will have obvious parallels for destruction.

I'll begin by casting a seed of doubt on the idea that a new object begins to exist at the point when a pre-existing piece of clay is moulded statue-wise. It sounds natural to say that the artist who moulds the piece of clay into a statue creates the statue, but it also sounds natural to speak of these cases as if they are cases of an object gaining or losing a phase sortal property. For example, in ordinary conversation someone might say that the piece of clay sitting in the artist's studio will soon be a beautiful statue, or that the statue in the artist's studio was once nothing but a humble piece of clay. This is how we talk about objects gaining and losing phase sortal properties. We say, for example, that adults used to be children and that children will one day be adults.

It also sounds natural to my ear to say that the artist is going to make the piece of clay into a statue. At face value, locutions of the form 'making an F into a G' or even just 'making an F a G' seem to describe causing an F to *be* a G, as in a phase sortal transition. In fact, we sometimes use locutions of this form to describe changes that nearly everyone will grant are phase sortal transitions. For example, I might speak of making an inexperienced athlete into a champion, or of making a house a home. Other interpretations of these expressions are possible of course. Perhaps when we say that the artist makes the lump of clay into a statue, we mean that she causes the

lump of clay to *constitute* a statue. But this interpretation has its costs. For example, the existence of an 'is' of constitution has been challenged on the grounds that it fails standard linguistic tests for semantic ambiguity [Pickel 2010].

So we are inclined to talk about cases like the statue and lump of clay in two different ways. We sometimes speak about cases like this in the way we speak about cases where a new object is brought into existence, and we sometimes speak about them in the way we speak about phase sortal changes. This ambivalence is a sign that perhaps what is going on when a lump is moulded statue-wise is not creation as we normally conceive it, but some other phenomenon that merely resembles genuine creation. My version of phasalism delivers exactly that.

Creation as we normally conceive it is bringing a new object into existence, that is, causing there to be an object which is not classically identical to any previously existing objects. But on my version of phasalism there is a similar phenomenon that I will call creation under a sortal, or more simply, sortal creation. Sortal creation is (roughly) initiating a new family of φ states, that is, causing there to be a φ that is not the same φ as any previously existing object. An artist who moulds a pre-existing piece of clay into a statue sortally creates the statue, because she initiates a new family of statue states. This is true even if the instantiator of the statue states is classically identical to the instantiator of the prior piece-of-clay states. So I suggest that the creation/destruction intuition is tracking sortal creation rather than creation as we normally conceive it.

If this is right, then we might be mistaken when speak of the statue as though its career began when it was sortally created. But alternatively, we could apply the phasalist semantics I sketched in section 2 to vindicate this way of talking. A singular term like 'the statue' is associated with a family of statue states, so normally, when we refer to the statue as a statue, our claims should be evaluated relative to a family of statue states. Then it will be true to say 'The statue did not exist yesterday' if there was only an amorphous lump on the artist's desk at that time.

But there are also two ways that the family of piece-of-clay states, which includes but is not exhausted by the statue states, might become truth-conditionally relevant instead. One way it might become relevant is by using singular terms like 'the piece of clay', which are associated with that family. But there is also room to suppose that the association between a family and a singular term is defeasible. Maybe in some contexts, such as contexts where it is salient that the referent of 'the statue' persists through a sortal change from statue to mere piece of clay or vice versa, a family of piece-of-clay states rather than statue states becomes relevant. Then 'the statue used to be nothing but an amorphous piece of clay' is true, because it was an amorphous piece of clay at earlier piece-of-clay-states.

Finally, what about terms like 'create' and 'make', when used in cases of sortal creation? I am sympathetic to the view that we are speaking falsely when we use those terms in cases of sortal creation because we mistake sortal creation for genuine creation.[8] But alternatively, we could

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[8] Ayers [1974: 128] suggests that we are speaking loosely.

extend the phasalist semantics to terms like 'create' and 'make' in the following way. We normally think that creating means (roughly) causing something to begin existing. So if x is created at t, then x exists after t but not before t. But given that 'the statue' is associated with a certain family of statue states, S, 'the statue exists after t but not before' is true according to the phasalist semantics if and only if members of S occur after t but not before. So I suggest that 'the statue is created at t' is true if and only if members of S occur after t but not before. That is, it's true if and only if S is initiated at t.[9]

So much for the creation/destruction intuition. There is another intuition that seems to clash with phasalism. Suppose that our artist first moulds the piece of clay into a statue of a cat, which she names 'Cat', and later squashes it. And suppose that after Cat has been squashed, another artist comes along and moulds that same piece of clay into a statue of a hippo, dubbing it 'Hippo'. Some of us have the intuition that Cat and Hippo are not the same statue. Just like many philosophers think psychological change which is too discontinuous or simply too extensive disrupts personal identity,[10] one might also think that the changes in form in the Cat/Hippo case are too discontinuous or too extensive for Cat and Hippo to be the same statue. Call this the non-sameness intuition. Cases like this

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[9] All of these suggestions have straightforward parallels for 'destruction'. However, the parallel suggestions may be unnecessary if, as a referee suggests, destruction does not entail ceasing to exist like elimination and annihilation do.

[10] For example, see Parfit [1975] and Lewis [1976].

are used to motivate non-phasalist views by, for example, Myro [1999: 148ff), Hawley [2001: ch. 5), and Korman [2015: 206]. Phasalism identifies both Cat and Hippo with the piece of clay, but if both Cat and Hippo are identical to the piece of clay, then they are classically identical to each other, so how can they fail to be the same statue?

The phasalist should say that the piece of clay begins to instantiate the sortal property *being a statue* when it is moulded into a cat shape, it ceases to instantiate that property when it is squashed, and then it begins to instantiate that property a second time when it is moulded into a hippo shape. And the phasalist can also say that the piece of clay's ordinary object states during its cat phase are not continuous in the right way with its ordinary object states during its hippo phase to qualify as statue-counterparts of those states. In that case, even though the instantiator of the cat states is identical to the instantiator of the hippo states, and even though it is a statue at both sets of states, nevertheless it is not the *same statue* across both sets of states.

But we want to be able to say more than just that the statue is not the same statue at its hippo states as it was at its cat states. We also want to be able to endorse certain sentences using the names 'Hippo' and 'Cat', like the following:

(Hp)   Hippo is not the same statue as Cat.
(Ct)   Cat is the same statue as Cat.

Moreover, we want to be able to say both of these things without being forced by Leibniz's Law to deny that Cat and Hippo are classically identical.[11] I believe there are a number of ways to do this,[12] but I will illustrate how it can be done with the phasalist semantics I sketched in section 2.

The phasalist could say that the name 'Hippo' is associated with the family of statue states whose members are the statue-states that occur during the part of the piece of clay's career when it is hippo-shaped, both in the actual world and in nearby possible worlds. Call this family of statue states H. Similarly, 'Cat' is associated with the family of statue states whose members occur during the part of the piece of clay's career when it is cat-shaped, both in the actual world and in nearby possible worlds. Call this family C. Then the phasalist can say that (Hp) attributes to Hippo a property that it instantiates if and only if the members of H are not statue-counterparts of the members of C; whereas (Ct) attributes to Cat a property

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[11] Thanks to a referee for this objection.

[12] Jubien (2001) handles this problem by endorsing the view that names have descriptive content. And I am sympathetic to the view that (Hp) and (Ct) are under-specified because they are not indexed to different times in Cat/Hippo's career. Perhaps the nearest truth to (Hp) is something like this: when it is hippo-shaped, Hippo is not the same statue as Cat is when it is cat-shaped. And perhaps the nearest truth to (Ct) is something like this: when it is cat-shaped, Cat is the same statue as Cat is when it is cat-shaped. Once the indexing to specific parts of Cat/Hippo's career is added, it is clear that the two sentences are not attributing incompatible properties to Cat and Hippo, and so the Leibniz's Law worry dissolves.

that it instantiates if and only if the members of C are statue-counterparts of the members of C. Then (Hp) and (Ct) both turn out to be true. Moreover, (Hp) does not entail that Hippo lacks any property that (Ct) entails that Cat has, so Leibniz's Law does not force us to deny that Hippo and Cat are classically identical.

Finally, my phasalist account of identity under a sortal can help with one further objection to phasalism in the literature. The objection claims that the statue could survive losing at least some of the clay that it is made of, but the piece of clay could not, because the piece of clay is mereologically constant, or at least less mereologically flexible than the statue. Versions of this objection appear in Thomson [1998: 152ff] and Korman [2015: 205]. See also Sidelle [1998: 427]. But if *being a statue* is a phase sortal property of the piece of clay, then the statue is classically identical to the piece of clay, and so can't differ from it mereologically.

By way of response, I think the phasalist should reject the prevailing view that the piece of clay is mereologically constant. On one way of developing this thought, the piece of clay is distinct from the clay that it is made of, the latter being the plurality of various bits of clay that compose the piece of clay. The piece of clay can survive gaining and losing those bits, so it can be made of different clay at different times. Ayers [1974: 125-7] seems to endorse this view. This is not the place to undertake a full defence of this view about the piece of clay and the clay it is made of.[13] For present

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[13] But see Carmichael [2020: sec. 4] for a recent defense of the view that talk of the matter an object is made of can be paraphrased as talk about pluralities of bits of matter.

purposes I only wish to point out that the phasalist could account for the intuition that the statue is not made of the same piece of clay anymore after it loses some of its original clay by suggesting that this intuition is tracking identity under the sortal *being a piece of clay*, not classical identity.

More precisely, the phasalist could say that the instantiator of the piece-of-clay-states that occur before the statue loses some clay is classically identical to the instantiator of the piece-of-clay-states that occur after it loses some clay, without being the same piece of clay. This would be the case if the former states were not piece-of-clay-counterparts of the latter states. And that would be true if the instantiators of closely neighboring piece-of-clay states must share all the same clay parts in order to be piece-of-clay counterparts.

4   The Bigger Picture

What I have said about the statue and the piece of clay is representative of a bigger metaphysical picture. It is standard to claim that, while some sortal properties, like *being a child*, are phase sortal properties, others are so-called substance sortal properties. A substance sortal property is one that an object has permanently and is (or is similar to) an Aristotelian kind [Wiggins 2001]. But following Marjorie Price [1977], I reject the view that there are substance sortal properties. Rather, on my view, all of the

sortal properties instantiated by ordinary objects are phase sortal properties.[14]

What then instantiates phase sortal properties? Though I think there are a few ways the phasalist could go here, I am inclined to the view that phase sortal properties are instantiated by what Armstrong [1997: 123] calls 'thin particulars', where a thin particular is 'the particular in abstraction from its properties'. For Armstrong, properties are 'ways things are', and thin particulars are the things that are those ways [ibid.: 30]. So the thin particular instantiates properties, but those properties are not parts or constituents of it. For example, a statue is a thin particular that instantiates the sortal property *being a statue*, but it doesn't have that property (or any other property) as a part or constituent.

It's plausible that a given thin particular must always instantiate some sortal property or other, but of course it doesn't follow that there is some sortal property or other that a given thin particular must always instantiate. My view is that thin particulars are always objects of some sort, but *which* sort of object they are may vary across the course of their careers. Relatedly, objects are never destroyed by mere sortal changes; they are only destroyed by events which suffice to terminate all the forms of sortal

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[14] There will be trivial exceptions if we are generous about what counts as a sortal property. For example, let's say an object instantiates *being a lifelong statue* if and only if it is a statue for the entirety of its career. An object cannot instantiate this property for only a temporary phase of its career like it can with a phase sortal property. But I doubt anyone would want to say that this somewhat gerrymandered sortal is a substance sortal either.

continuity an object exhibits. Candidates for events of this sort include breaking apart, decomposing, being annihilated, and so forth.

On this ambitious version of phasalism, not only is *being a statue* a phase sortal property that can be temporarily instantiated by a thin particular that is also a piece of clay; even *being a piece of clay* is a phase sortal property that can be temporarily instantiated by that thin particular. Having rejected the view that pieces of clay are mereologically constant, a thin particular that is a piece of clay might become, for example, a piece of wax by gradually replacing tiny bits of its clay with tiny bits of wax, or perhaps by using sophisticated futuristic technology to manipulate its chemical structure. So a thin particular which is both a statue and a piece of clay need not be either of those things permanently.[15]

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[15] A referee worries that phasalism will turn out, contrary to my intentions, to be an eliminativist view. For one thing, the position that *being a statue* is a phase sortal property of (a thin particular that is also) a piece of clay entails that the statue is not a further thing in the world in addition to the piece of clay. That might sound like an eliminativist view of statues. And if all other sortal properties are phase sortal properties too, one might wonder if sortal properties will turn out, at bottom, to be phase sortal properties of pluralities of atoms, which would entail that ordinary objects are not further things in the world in addition to those atoms. That sounds even more like eliminativism. But something has gone wrong, because I do not eliminate children from my ontology by believing, as most of us do, that *being a child* is a phase sortal property of human beings. Here's what I think is going on. Statues could fail to be further objects in the world in addition to things like pieces of clay either because (i) they don't exist at all or because (ii) they exist but are identical to pieces of clay. Option (i) is eliminativist because it entails that there are no statues. But (ii) is non-eliminativist because it does not entail that there are no

Because my ambitious phasalism is so profligate with phase sortal properties, it is well-equipped to handle other coincidence puzzles that are structurally parallel to the statue puzzle. For example, consider the well-worn puzzle about the sweater and the thread.[16] Suppose someone knits a single, long thread into a sweater. Then a sweater and a thread are located in exactly the same place at the same time. But they seem to have different properties. For example, the thread was around before the sweater was. And if the sweater is torn in such a way that it retains its integrity as a sweater, but is no longer made of a single thread, then the sweater will outlive the thread. If the sweater is unraveled instead of torn, then the thread will outlive the sweater. And if the thread is later knitted into a scarf, it seems like the scarf is not the same garment as the sweater. So there is pressure to say something bizarre: that the sweater and the thread are distinct objects even though they occupy the same place at once.

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statues. To the contrary, it entails that there *are* statues, because it entails that some things (namely, pieces of clay) instantiate *being a statue*. And phasalism is a version of this latter, non-eliminativist view. This is true even if *being a statue* is a phase sortal property of some atoms. Speaking for myself, I deny that it is possible for some atoms to instantiate *being a statue* as opposed to merely *being arranged statue-wise*, and I do not see why even my extreme version of phasalism would require me to say otherwise. But even if a phasalist were to endorse the view that *being a statue* is a phase sortal property of some atoms, this would still be a non-eliminativist view, since it entails that there are statues.

[16] The case first appears in a footnote in Wiggins [1968], but for a more detailed version see Hawley [2001: ch. 5].

For the most part, the phasalist can say the same things about this case that she says about the statue case. A single thin particular, p, begins as a thread and, when it is knitted, it begins to be a sweater as well. If p is unravelled, it may cease to be a sweater without ceasing to be a thread, and it might later begin to be something else, like a scarf. And given their differences and the discontinuity between them, the sweater states and scarf states are not garment-counterparts. So as the instantiator of the sweater states, p, is not the same garment as it was when it was the instantiator of the scarf states. What about the case where the sweater is torn? On my ambitious version of phasalism, *being a thread* is a phase sortal just as *being a sweater* is. So when p is torn, p ceases to instantiate *being a thread* without ceasing to instantiate *being a sweater*.

That said, the intuition that a new object is created when the thread is knitted into a garment seems stronger in this case than the statue case. But that isn't surprising, as the resemblance to genuine creation and destruction is greater too. Knitting a single thread into a sweater is a very similar process to knitting multiple threads into a sweater - a genuine case of creation. It also involves causing the parts which compose the thread to satisfy the conditions for composing something, but in a new way that is independent of whether they compose a thread.[17] And to accomplish this, the knitter manipulates the thread in a way that resembles assembling a new object: they bring parts of the thread closer together, secure them to

[17] This adapts Ayers's [1974: 132-3] point about the sweater satisfying two principles of unity at once.

one another, etc. So the resemblance to genuine creation is enormous, but for the phasalist the key difference remains: the sweater is made from a single object. It looks like genuine creation, but it isn't. (Parallel points apply to unravelling and destruction.)

Similar moves can be made to handle coincidence between a flag and a piece of cloth, [Baker 2007: 35], or between a drivers' license and a piece of plastic [ibid.: 27], or between a tree and a hunk of wood [Wiggins 1968], and so forth. And others have argued that *being a person* is a phase sortal property of an organism or a body (for example, Olson [1997] and Markosian [2010]). But phasalism is less helpful for solving coincidence puzzles that have a different structure than the statue puzzle. I am thinking in particular of cases where an object seems to become coincident with one of its proper parts. One famous representative of this sort of coincidence is the case of Tibbles and Tib [Wiggins 1968]. Tibbles is a cat and Tib is the proper part of Tibbles that includes all of her except her tail. Suppose Tibbles loses her tail. Cats can survive losing their tails, so Tibbles survives this change. And presumably Tib can survive ceasing to be attached to a tail, so Tib survives too. But now Tibbles is coincident with Tib.

Can the phasalist solve this puzzle simply by saying that *being a cat* is a phase sortal property of arbitrary undetached parts like Tib? That would allow the phasalist to say that Tib simply begins instantiating the property *being a cat* when Tibbles loses her tail. But that doesn't fully solve the puzzle, for Tib does not merely seem to become coincident with a cat; she seems to become coincident with Tibbles in particular. And Tibbles once had a tail, while Tib never did, so Tibbles and Tib are distinct.

The phasalist could address this by allowing that ordinary object states with classically distinct instantiators can nevertheless be counterparts. Then she can say that the instantiator of the cat states after the tail is lost is the same cat as the instantiator of the cat states before the tail is lost, despite being classically distinct from it.[18] But once we allow that ordinary object states with classically distinct instantiators can be counterparts, phasalism begins to look a lot more like standard stage theory – perhaps too much so for some endurantists. Speaking for myself, I prefer to solve the Tibbles puzzle by appealing to a version of the view that there is no such object as Tib.[19]

Some will regard it as a weakness of the phasalist approach that it works best for some coincidence puzzles, like the statue, but must step aside and allow a different story to be told about others, like Tibbles [Burke 1994: 592]. But it is not a crippling weakness, and it is at least partly compensated by the fact that the phasalist approach is more unified than many rival views in a different respect. For the phasalist says that all sortal changes are phase sortal changes, while (non-eliminativist) rivals classify some sortal changes, like a child growing into an adult, as phase sortal changes, while telling a different story about cases like the statue and the piece of clay.[20]

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[18] This solution mimics the stage-theoretic solution to the Tibbles puzzle [Sider 2001: 142-3, 152-3]. The notion of sameness relations between classically distinct objects appears in a number of authors, including Markosian [2010].

[19] For two different versions of this view see van Inwagen [1981] and Carmichael [2020].

[20] Thanks to Ned Markosian for this point.

5   Conclusion

I have argued that my phasalist account of identity under a sortal can be used to rebut certain objections to the phasalist approach to the puzzle of the statue and the piece of clay. I have also briefly indicated what a more general phasalist metaphysics might look like, and how it could be used to solve other coincidence puzzles that are structurally similar to the puzzle of the statue and the piece of clay. There is much more to say about phasalism, but I hope that what I have managed to say here is enough to bring more attention to the unduly neglected phasalist approach to puzzles of material coincidence.

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