

THE MODAL (REALIST) ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

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Abstract: This article aims to provide a new ontological argument for the existence of God. A specific ‘modal’ version of the ontological argument—termed the Modal Realist Ontological Argument—is formulated within the modal realist metaphysical framework of David K. Lewis, Kris McDaniel and Philip Bricker. Formulating this argument within this specific framework will enable the plausibility of its central premise (i.e., the ‘Possibility Premise’) to be established, and allow one to affirm the soundness of the argument—whilst warding off two oft-raised objections against this type of natural theological argument.

1. Introduction

1.1 *The Modal Ontological Argument*

According to Alvin Plantinga (1974a, b), a ‘victorious’ ontological argument can be constructed by utilising certain concepts from modal logic—such that one can obtain *a priori* knowledge concerning the existence of God. More specifically, Plantinga (1974a, 216) sees it to be the case that ‘if it is even possible that God, so thought of, exists, then it is true and necessarily true that he does.’¹ That is, on the basis of the possibility of God existing, one can also affirm, from an *a priori* standpoint—namely, a standpoint that is independent of experience—that God exists in actuality as well. At a more precise level, as it is plausibly *a priori* that the property of ‘maximal greatness’ (an ‘essential’ property of God) is instantiated in a ‘possible world’ (i.e., a maximal possible state of affairs), then, on the basis of the working of a specific standard system of modal logic, one can reach the conclusion that maximal greatness is instantiated in the ‘actual world’ as well—in short, God, identified as a maximally great being, necessarily exists in the actual world. This

particular ontological argument—termed, more formally, the *Modal Ontological Argument*—can be stated succinctly as follows:²

- (1) (Modal OA) (ME) Maximal Excellence =_{df} The possession of omnipotence, omniscience and perfect goodness by a being.
 (MG) Maximal Greatness =_{df} The possession of omnipotence, omniscience and perfect goodness by a being necessarily.
 (i) There is a possible world in which a being is maximally great.
 (ii) Therefore, there is a being that is maximally excellent in every possible world.
 (iii) Therefore, there is a being (i.e., God) that is maximally excellent in the actual world.

The Modal Ontological Argument (hereafter, MOA), as expressed by (1), centres on two defined notions: *maximal excellence* and *maximal greatness*, and the application of a specific system of modal logic: S5. For the two defined notions, Plantinga (1974b, 107) notes that, a distinction can be drawn between a ‘being’s excellence in a given world W . . . [which] depends only upon the properties it has in W . . . [and] its greatness in W depends upon these properties but also upon what it is like in other worlds.’ Thus, a ‘maximally excellent being’ is one that possesses properties that render it as excellent in a particular possible world—namely, the properties of omnipotence, omniscience and perfect goodness.³ And a ‘maximally great being’ is one that *necessarily* possesses these properties—which is to say that it possesses these properties in *every possible world*. Hence, if it is merely possible that a maximally great being exists (i.e., that it exists in a single possible world), then—on the assumption of the truth of S5 (namely, in this specific context, what is ‘possibly necessary is necessary’ [or what is ‘necessary in one possible world is necessary in all possible world’s]), and the fact that necessity (or impossibility) are fixed across worlds, and maximal greatness is the necessitation of maximal excellence—there is a maximally excellent being (i.e., a being that is omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good) in every possible world, including the actual world. And, as God is to be identified as that specific being—namely, the maximally great being (or, a necessary maximally excellent being), God can be taken to exist in the actual world. Hence, at the heart of the MOA is the fact that if the existence

of a maximally great being (i.e., God) is possible, then it is necessary that there is such a being, which is to say that it is actual. If one accepts the possibility of God, then, according to the MOA, they must also affirm his actuality as well.

Given the validity of this argument, questions concerning its soundness (i.e., the truth of its premise(s), and thus conclusion) centre on (i) of (1)—which has been termed the ‘Possibility Premise’—as Plantinga (1974, 112) writes, ‘The only question of interest, it seems to me, is whether its main premise—that maximal greatness is possibly instantiated—is true. I think it is true; hence I think this version of the ontological argument is sound.’ Plantinga does not himself provide reasons in support of the position that there is some possible world in which a being has maximal greatness. And so, one might believe that the correct position for one to adopt concerning this argument is not one of acceptance but that of withholding judgement in regards to its veracity. This position of withholding judgement is underwritten by a key objection—let’s term this the *Begging the Question Objection*, and state it succinctly as follows:

- (2) (BQ Objection) An individual should withhold judgment concerning the veracity of the conclusion of the Modal Ontological Argument as the central premise of the argument assumes the truth of the conclusion.

The Begging the Question Objection (hereafter, BQ Objection) raises the issue of the MOA committing one to affirm the (informal) fallacy of ‘begging the question,’ which occurs when an argument’s premise assumes the truth of its conclusion, rather than providing support for it. Peter van Inwagen (2018, 243) raises this charge against all versions of the MOA when he writes:⁴

The modal ontological argument—in any of its versions, for they all have a “possibility” premise, a premise of the same sort as “It is possible for there to be a necessarily existent being that has all perfections essentially”—suffers from only one defect: there seems to be no a priori reason, or none accessible to the human intellect . . . to think that it is possible for there to be a necessarily existent being that has all perfections essentially. I myself think this premise is true—but only because I think there in fact is a necessarily existent being who has all perfections essentially. And my reason for thinking that are by no means a priori.

According to a proponent of the BQ Objection, the acceptance of the Possibility Premise—that there is a possible world in which a maximally great being (i.e., a necessarily existing maximally excellent being) exists—depends on the acceptance of the conclusion that this being does in fact exist. That is, an individual that does not already affirm the necessary existence of God would not affirm the possibility of the necessary existence of God, given that, within system S5, something being ‘possibly necessary’ is logically equivalent to it being ‘necessary’ (i.e., one is required to shave off the term ‘possibly’ within this system)—and thus, if one is committed to this state of affairs being a real possibility, then one is also committed to the necessity of it as well. In other words, as the possibility of maximal greatness is really that of the possibility of a maximally excellent *necessary being*—which entails its existence in the actual world—a detractor of the MOA would not sign up to an affirmation of this possibility from the onset. Thus, an individual (such as an atheist) might affirm the possibility of a maximally excellent being—namely, that there is a single possible world in which an omnipotent, omniscient, and perfectly good being exists (with this single world not being identified as the actual world)—yet, they would surely not affirm the possibility of a maximally great being, given the close link between the possibility of this being and its actuality. William Rowe (2009, 89) states this issue clearly when he writes:

What then do we have to know in order to know that God (a maximally great being) is a possible being? At a minimum . . . we have to know that an omniscient, omnipotent, morally perfect being exists in the actual world. For, putting aside other possible worlds, if such a being doesn’t exist in the possible world that is actual, he isn’t what Plantinga defines him to be: a maximally great being. Indeed, if he doesn’t exist in the possible world that is actual, he is an impossible being.

The Possibility Premise is indeed *semantically different* from the conclusion of the MOA (i.e., it does not explicitly state that God exists); however, the link between premise and conclusion is so close that one accepting this premise (i.e., that God exists in one possible world) would depend on them also having a prior acceptance of the conclusion (i.e., that God exists in the actual world)—and thus

the argument ultimately begs the question (Goldschmidt, 2020). Hence, in the absence of an independent argument concerning the veracity of the Possibility Premise, one is saddled with an argument that seemingly can't achieve its end of convincing others of the truth of its conclusion. Thus, the important question to be faced now is: is there independent reason to believe the veracity of the Possibility Premise of the MOA—namely, that it is possible that there is a maximally great being? A number of individuals have 'attempted' to provide this needed support;⁵ however, I believe that another way to approach this issue is not to attempt to find a reason to support Plantinga's formulation of the argument; rather, instead, the focus will be on re-situating and re-formulating the MOA within a new modal framework. That is, our focus will be on turning our attention away from *modal logic*—which has been frequently assumed by proponents and detractors of the MOA—and toward that of *modal metaphysics*. More specifically, the central focus of this article will be to utilise a modal realist framework provided by David K. Lewis (as modified by Kris McDaniel and Philip Bricker), which will provide a means to deal with the BQ Objection, and provide an overall reformulation of the MOA—which we can term the 'Modal Realist Ontological Argument.' The Modal Realist Ontological Argument (hereafter, MROA), can be stated more precisely as follows:

- (3) (Modal Realist OA) (MG) Maximal Greatness =_{df} The possession of a maximally consistent set of great-making attributes by a being (i.e., a maximal power trope) that renders it as extensively and intensively superior to any other possible being.
- (i) There is a concrete possible world, within the pluriverse, in which a being is maximally great.
 - (ii) Therefore, there is a being that is maximally great in every concrete possible world within the pluriverse.
 - (iii) Therefore, there is a being (i.e., God) that is maximally great that is present (i.e., 'exists') in the actual world within the pluriverse.

This specific ontological argument: the MROA, differs from the MOA, in two specific ways: first, the MROA focuses on the notion of maximal excellence—re-defining it as the possession of a 'maximally consistent set of great-making attributes' and re-termining it 'maximal greatness'—and does away with the notion of 'maximal greatness,' as

it was originally conceived of within the MOA—namely, as that of necessarily existing maximally excellent being. Hence, there is only one definition that the MROA utilises in formulating the argument, and takes as its *a priori* starting point—rather than that of there being two defined notions: maximal excellence and maximal greatness, which are both featured in the MOA. That is, the MROA focuses on providing a precisification of the nature of maximal excellence, which enables one, within the current modal framework, to move from the existence of a maximally great being in one possible world to that of it being present in all possible worlds, without, however, one having to rely on any systems of modal logic to achieve this end. Second, the MROA centres on establishing the ‘immensity’ (and thus ‘repletive presence’) of God rather than the ‘necessary existence’ of him—thus, God is not assumed to be an entity that is necessary (i.e., a being that exists in every possible world), but is instead a being whose presence/existence has no (spatial) limits, and thus one can take him to be present/exist within the actual world on the basis of this.⁶ Thus, the MROA is not constructed by utilising certain concepts and systems from modal *logic*—rather, it focuses on employing certain concepts from modal *metaphysics*. More specifically, the MOA focuses on establishing the existence of God (i.e., a maximally great being) by utilising the modal logic system S5 and the *semantics* of possible worlds—without, however, there being any assumption made concerning their nature and existence. Whereas the MROA, as noted previously, focuses on establishing the immensity/repletive presence of a maximally great being in the actual world by not relying on any axioms of modal logic, and, instead, utilising the semantics of possible worlds with an assumption being made concerning their specific nature and their existence—in short, the MROA focuses on utilising a specific modal realist metaphysic to establish the soundness of the MROA. These two ways thus ground the veracity of the MROA, allow it to be clearly distinguished from the MOA and, most importantly, provide a means for one to ward off the BQ Objection—that is, the MROA does *not* ‘beg the question.’⁷ To achieve this end, we will proceed in a stepwise manner over two phases: phase-one focusing on introducing the central metaphysical notions of a powerful trope and a specific theory of location, and applying them within a theological context in

order to provide a particular conception of maximal greatness. And phase-two focusing on detailing the modal metaphysical framework of Concretism (i.e., Leibnizian Realism with Overlap), and then, by explicating the notion of maximal greatness within the current metaphysical framework provided, we will have a successful ontological argument that is not plagued by the BQ Objection. Moreover, we will also be able to see that the MRO is also not subject to a further problem that has been raised frequently against the MOA in the current literature—namely, that of the possibility of one formulating a ‘reverse argument’ against the MOA.

Thus the plan of action is as follows: in section 2 (‘Constructing the Modal Realist Ontological Argument (i): Elucidating Maximal Greatness’), I detail the notion of a powerful trope and a specific theory of location, which will allow us to further elucidate the concept of maximal greatness that will be used in formulating the MROA. Then, in section 2 (‘Constructing the Modal Realist Ontological Argument (ii): Precising the Possibility Premise’), I unpack a specific construal of Concretism provided by a combination of the work of David K. Lewis, Kris McDaniel and Philip Bricker, and focus on applying it to the task at hand, which will provide a means of showing how the possibility of a maximally great being leads to the actuality of this being (i.e., its presence/existence in the actual world). With these concepts and framework in hand, the MROA will be shown to be a sound argument, and the BQ Objection will be shown to be inapplicable to this version of the ontological argument—with the possibility of one formulating a reverse argument against being warded off as well. Finally, there will be a concluding section (‘Conclusion’) that will summarise the position that has been argued for in this article.

2. Constructing the Modal Realist Ontological Argument (i): Elucidating Maximal Greatness

The first phase of our constructive task focuses on the notion of *maximal greatness* utilised within the MROA, which we can re-state as follows:

- (1) (Maximal Greatness) The possession of a maximally consistent set of great-making attributes by a being (i.e., a maximal power trope) that renders it as extensively and intensively superior to any other possible being.

For (4), which expresses the central aspects of the nature of the maximal greatness of a being, as conceptualised within the MROA, a maximally great being is one that possesses a maximally consistent range of ‘characteristics’ or ‘attributes’—known as ‘great-making’ attributes—that make this entity great, and overall (i.e., extensively and intensively) superior to any other possible entity.⁸ At a general level, entities from different ontological categories could potentially possess maximal greatness. However, it will be assumed here that the entity under question is one that falls into the category of ‘trope’—and thus, the maximally great being is to be identified as a ‘maximal power trope,’ existing in a specific possible world. To further elucidate this conceptualisation of maximal greatness, we will now turn our attention to detail the nature of a ‘powerful trope’ and a specific ‘theory of location,’ which, when applied to the task at hand, will provide the needed precisification of this important notion within the MROA.

2.1 *The Nature of Powerful Tropes & Location*

The notion of maximal greatness is taken here to centre on two metaphysical accounts/theories: a ‘trope theoretic’ account—that focuses on the notion of a ‘powerful trope’—and a ‘theory of location’—that focuses on the notion of (fundamental/derivative) ‘exact’ and ‘weak’ location. The concepts at the heart of these two theories can be stated more succinctly as follows:

(5) (Powerful Trope)	(6) (Location)
An entity is a powerful trope if it is a powerful abstract particular nature, which can be of a modifier or modular kind.	An entity is exactly or weakly located (or present at a region that it is entirely and pervasively located at, or a region that is not completely free of it, which can be in a fundamental or derivative manner.

First, the notion of a powerful trope has been introduced and defended by various ‘trope theorists’ such as D.C. Williams (1953), Keith Campbell (1990), Anna Sofia-Maurin (2002) and George Molnar (2003), among others. In breaking this concept down in a stepwise manner, we can understand that: first, a trope is *abstract*, not in the sense that it lacks spatio-temporality, but in the sense that it is ‘less than its content’ and does not ‘exhaust its plime’—in short, multiple tropes can be co-located together to form a compresent bundle. For example, a shape- trope that a table possesses is abstract because it does

not exhaust its content, as other tropes, such as a colour-trope and a mass-trope, are also collocated with the shape-trope by occupying the same content (i.e., the table). However, in contrast, the table would be *concrete* by itself *exhausting its content* and thus not allowing another table (or object) to also occupy this content (Williams, 1953). Second, a trope is particular in the sense that it can have a distinct duplicate—in other words, Leibniz's Law (i.e., the identity of indiscernibles) fails to hold for it.⁹ That is, for properties as universals, the Law holds, in that exactly similar entities (i.e., universals) are identical (i.e., if universal x and universal y are indiscernible, then $x = y$). Whereas for particulars (e.g. tropes), the principle does not hold, as exactly similar entities can be distinct (i.e., if trope x and trope y are indiscernible, then $x \neq y$). For example, a shape-trope is particular because it is possible that there is a duplicate of this shape, that is, an entity that is exactly similar, but also distinct from this shape. In short, a trope is particular if it can have a duplicate. Third, a trope is its *intrinsic (qualitative) nature*, in that it does not have, or possess, a nature of its own; rather, it is combinatorially intrinsic in the sense that the nature of a trope is invariant under the scenarios in which the given trope is alone or accompanied (Alvarado, 2019, 554). However, the modal invariance of a trope, unlike other entities, is not grounded upon the possession of an intrinsic nature, but that of it *being* its intrinsic nature—it is numerically identical to it. There is nothing more to a trope than its nature, and thus, as noted by Anna-Sofia Maurin (2018, §2.2), tropes, at a general level, 'have no constituents, in the sense that they are not 'made up' or 'built' from entities belonging to some other category.' Tropes are thus primitively qualitative and irreducible entities—they lack proper parts, and thus are metaphysically simple entities. Fourth, a trope can come in two forms: as a modifier or as a module trope. The central difference between a modifier trope and a module trope is that of the former being a singly (or minimally) *characterising property*, whilst the latter is a singly (or minimally) *charactered* property in a 'stretched' (or analogical) sense—it is a 'propertied thing or object,' where an object is a countable, property-bearing particular that has determinate existence and identity conditions and is not borne or possessed by anything else.¹⁰ In other words, a modifier trope is a *property* that does not *exemplify* this character, but simply bestows it

upon (i.e., ‘makes’) something else to be characterized in that specific way. Thus, for example, a particular object is spherical in virtue of its modifier trope, which ‘spherises’ that object by simply making *it* spherical without it sharing in that character as well. The character grounding provided by a modifier trope is thus *de novo* (or *sui generis*) (Garcia, 2015a). Whilst, a module trope is an object that *exemplifies* the character that it grounds (i.e., is self-exemplifying). Thus, for example, a particular (thickly-charactered) object is spherical and red in virtue of its module tropes, which are themselves spherical and red (i.e., exemplify sphericity and redness), and together (complementarily) are *parts* (or constituents) of that object. A module tropes’ character grounding, rather than being *de novo*, can thus be taken to be some type of parthood (or constitution) relation (Garcia, 2015b). Furthermore, an additional distinction between modifier and module tropes is the role played by these types of tropes in causation. At a more specific level, it is solely module tropes, rather than modifier tropes, that can play any direct role in causation. As, for example, a modifier hotness trope cannot fulfil the role of being the direct cause of a burn mark that an individual has, as it is not itself hot; something else must thus be the direct cause of the burn mark (Garcia, 2015a, 643. Modifier tropes, in a similar manner to universals, are thus *causally inert*. However, the modular view does not have this issue, given that module tropes are self-exemplifying entities, resulting, in our example above, in a modular hotness trope being able to be the direct cause of the burn mark. Therefore, it is module tropes, and not modifier tropes, that are uniquely suited to be the basic terms of causation (Garcia, 2015b). Lastly, a trope, following Molnar (2003), is powerful in at least five ways: it is, first, *directed*—in that a powerful trope is directed towards some characteristic and distinctive manifestation.¹¹ Second, it is *independent*—in that, a powerful trope is ontologically independent of its manifestations; that is, it can exist when it is not being manifested. Third, it is *actual*—in that a powerful trope is an occurrent feature of the object that possesses it. Fourth, it is *intrinsic*—in that, a powerful trope is intrinsic to its bearer.¹² Fifth, it is *objective*—in that the existence of a powerful trope is not dependent on the existence of any conscious, observing minds. A trope, of a modifier or modular kind, is thus powerful in that it fulfils the roles of *directedness*, *independence*,

actuality, intrinsicity and objectivity. We can now turn our attention to explicating a specific theory of location.

Location. A ‘chorological system’ is a system concerning location. Following Josh Parsons (2007),¹³ one can adopt a specific chorological system that takes there to be certain location relations that are expressed by the synonymous terms ‘located at,’ ‘present at,’ ‘occupies,’ ‘exists at.’¹⁴ Moreover, this system takes the relation of ‘exact location’ and ‘weak location’ as the central relations within this system. For the former notion: exact location, according to Parsons (2007), this location relation expresses the fact of an entity being ‘entirely’ and ‘pervasively’ located (or present) at a specific region. An entity is *entirely located* at a region if that region *is not completely free of that entity, and all the regions that are disjoint from that specific region are completely free of that entity.* Thus, for example, a person is entirely located in their office if they are in their office and they are not located in any region that is outside of their office—that is, if they are in their office and everywhere that is outside of their office is completely free of them—thus, an individual would be entirely in their office when they are sitting at their desk, but they would not be when they are reaching their arm out of their window (Parsons, 2007, 203). Whereas an entity is *pervasively located* at a region if *that entity completely fills that region.* Thus, for example, a person is pervasively located at a region (or place) none of which is free of them, such as a person pervading the region that is exactly occupied by their right arm but they do not pervade the region exactly occupied by their office. For the latter notion: weak location, in Parsons’ (2007, 203) thought, this location relation is one in which an entity is located at a region in the *weakest sense* possible—which is simply that of a specific region not being *completely free of that entity.* Thus, for example, a person is weakly located in their office if their office is not completely free of them, which can be had when they are sitting at their desk, reaching their arm out of the window, or reaching their arm through the window into the office whilst standing in the street outside (Parsons, 2007).

At a general level, an entity that is (exactly and/or weakly) located at a region can, according to Ross Inman (2017, 2021), be so located in a *fundamental* or a *derivative* sense.¹⁵ More specifically, an entity that is present at a certain region *fundamentally* is exactly or weakly

located at that region *in its own right*. The locative facts about where the entity is located, as Inman (2017, 169) notes, ‘obtain in virtue of facts about the entity itself, together with the places and the primitive ‘is located at’ relation that ties them to those places.’ Thus, for the notion of fundamental location, an entity—such as that of an office worker—is fundamentally located (or present) at a place—such as their office—if its presence *cannot* be reduced to it standing in a causal or epistemic relation to another distinct entity that is itself at that place in a fundamental manner (Inman, 2021). This, however, can be so in an *exact* or *weak* sense—where, for our example, the person in their office is exactly located at their desk, and, if their standing outside of their office, their arm is weakly located in the office in virtue of themselves being so located in this way—and, for both of these cases, this is not on the basis of them standing in a causal or epistemic relation to an individual who is located in these ways. In contrast, for an entity to be located derivatively at a region is that of them being solely weakly located at that region—as the entity is exactly located at another region, but, through their causal or epistemic capacities, another region is not completely free of them.¹⁶ That is, they are located at that other region in virtue of them standing in a causal and/or epistemic relation(s) to another, distinct entity—where this entity is itself fundamentally exactly located (i.e., is entirely and pervasively located) at the region. Hence, as Inman (2017, 169) notes, ‘the locative facts concerning where the entity is located obtain in virtue of the locative facts about where some distinct entity is located fundamentally, together with the various relations it bears to the entity in question.’ Thus, an entity—such as a security guard—is derivatively located (or present) at a place—such as a car park—if its presence at a particular place is nothing more than it standing in some causal and/or epistemic relation to a distinct entity—such as that of a CCTV camera—that is itself exactly located at that place (namely, the parking lot) in a fundamental manner. Thus, a thing’s being present at a place in the fundamental sense amounts to the claim that it being present somewhere cannot be reduced to its standing in a causal and/or epistemic relation to a distinct thing that is present at a place in the fundamental sense—it is present at a specific place in this sense if their presence at that place is not had in virtue of them being causally or cognitively (epistemically) related to

something else that is present in that place. And thus, it can be had by that entity being exactly located at that place or by it being weakly located at that place. In contrast, a thing's being derivatively present at a particular place is nothing more than its standing in some causal and/or epistemic relation(s) to a distinct thing that is itself present at a place in the fundamental sense—it is present at a place in this sense by it being casually in contact or cognitively aware of things and/or events that exist or are occurring at that place (Inman, 2017). And thus, it can only be had by that entity being weakly located at that place (i.e., it's located in the weakest sense possible).

In summary, a trope is an abstract particular nature that either can be modular—a self-exemplifying, maximally-thinly characterized property* (i.e., an object)—or, it can be a modifier—a non-self-exemplifying, maximally-thinly characterising property, that is powerful through being direct, independent, actual, intrinsic and objective. Moreover, an entity can be exactly located at a region by it being entirely and pervasively located at that region, and it can be weakly located at a certain region by that region not being completely free of it—with both of these forms of location being able to be had fundamentality (i.e., by the entity having being located at this region in its own right) and the latter also being able to be had derivatively (i.e., by it standing in causal and/or epistemic relations to a distinct entity that is located at a region fundamentally). Taking all these things into account, we can now turn our attention to utilising these notions to further elucidate the concept of maximal greatness that will be employed in this argument.

2.2. Elucidated Maximal Greatness:

God as a Maximally Great Being

God is identified within the MROA (as in the MOA) as a 'maximally great being.'¹⁷ In following Yujin Nagasawa (2017),¹⁸ we can conceive of a maximally great being (hereafter MGB) as an entity that possesses a *maximally consistent set of great-making attributes* and thus *is extensively and intensively superior to all other possible entities*. A great-making attribute, as noted by Nagasawa (2017, 65), is one that 'if, all else being equal . . . contributes to the greatness of its possessor.' A great-making attribute is thus an intrinsic attribute that improves (and thus in no way diminishes) the greatness of its possessor. In other words, a great-making attribute is whatever attribute that is intrinsically better

for one to possess than not—which would be that of the attributes of power, knowledge, freedom, goodness, personhood etc. By possessing these great-making attributes, an MGB would have them in such a manner that it is ‘extensively superior’ and ‘intensively superior’ to all other possible beings. A being x is extensively superior to some being y , according to Nagasawa (2017, 56), if x has all the great-making attributes that y has, and ‘ x has some great-making properties that y does not have.’ And a being x is intensively superior to some being y , as also noted by Nagasawa (2017, 57), if x has some of the attributes that y has, but they are ‘present in x at a higher degree of intensity than in y .’ The extensive superiority of a being thus centres on the possession of a *wide range* of great-making attributes, and the intensive superiority of a being centres on the *degree of intensity* of each of the great-making attributes. Thus, in the case of an MGB, this type of entity has *all* of the compossible great-making attributes to a *maximal* degree of intensity (i.e., each of the attributes is at an *intrinsic maximum*)—thus, given this, an MGB is extensively and intensively superior to any other possible being. An MGB thus has its attributes in a manner that forms a ‘maximally consistent set’—which thus enables one to affirm the fact of these attributes, and the set itself, to not be subject to charges of incoherence (e.g. the ‘omnipotence paradox’),¹⁹ mutual inconsistency (e.g. the attributes conflicting with each other) and inconsistency with reality (e.g. evil),²⁰ given the fact that, if a particular definition of the attributes turns out to be incoherent, or if the set of attributes is inconsistent with each other or with reality, then—on the basis of the requirement for the attributes to form a *maximally* consistent set—an MGB would possess a nature that has attributes with a coherent conception and one that avoids inconsistency. The nature had by an MGB is thus one that is mutually coherent, internally coherent and unified.

In further identifying the *type* of entity that an MGB could be, one conception that can be adopted is that of the MGB being a *powerful trope of a modular kind*. The MGB is a trope in the sense of him first, being abstract in that he has the trait of being ‘less than the including whole’—the MGB does not exhaust his ‘content’ or ‘plime’ (or is less than his ‘content’ or ‘plime’)—as its content or plime also includes the possibility of other tropes being collocated with him,

which results in him not exhausting either of these things—in short, wherever the MGB is located there are other tropes that are located there with him—which could be tropes of a similar nature.²¹ Second, the MGB is *particular* by him failing to abide by Leibniz's Law—as, in assuming Christian Theism again—there is the possibility of the existence of entities—duplicates—that are exactly similar in their intrinsic properties (i.e., their nature) to him, yet are numerically distinct from him.²² Third, the MGB is identical to his qualitative nature—he *is* the specific character that he has. The MGB's nature is thus intrinsic to him, not in the sense of him possessing a further intrinsic 'property,' but simply that of him being numerically identical to this nature. Fourth, the MGB is a *module trope*, rather than a modifier trope, which is that of him being a maximally-thinly characterized object—a property in an analogous sense (i.e., a property*)—that is self-exemplifying. The specific character that this module trope has is that of *maximal* power—and thus, we can take this maximally excellent being to be a *maximal power trope*.²³ As a maximal power trope, this trope has a 'maximal range of power' in that it is *the power (or ability) to cause any event that is logically possible for it to cause*. On the basis of this trope being construed in this way, we can follow Richard Swinburne (2016), and take the various other great-making attributes that are rightly predicated of the MGB (such as personhood, maximal knowledge, freedom and goodness etc.) to be *entailed* by this trope having the attribute of *being maximally powerful*—that is, this characteristic is such that it could not be had unless the other attributes were had as well. The holding of an entailment relation between the attribute of maximal power and the other attributes centre on the manner in which the former and latter are defined,²⁴ which we can construe in a precise form as follows:²⁵

	Great Making Attributes
Power	x is maximally powerful =df x is able to cause any event M that it is logically possible that he could cause.
Personhood	x is personal =df x is a substance that essentially has a mental attribute (i.e., an attribute in which one has privileged access to its instantiation)
Knowledge	x is maximally knowledgeable =df x knows of all true propositions that they are true.
Freedom	x is maximally free at = _{df} x does not have any non-rational causal influence determining the formation of their purposes.
Goodness	x is maximally good = _{df} x performs the best action/kind of action, if there is one, many good actions and no bad actions.
Eternality	x is eternal = _{df} x exists without beginning and without end, and either has or lacks temporal location, succession and duration.
Immensity	x is immense = _{df} x is not conditioned or bound by any spatial limitations or boundaries and thus is repletively present in the sense of being fundamentally/derivatively present at every place.

Table 1. Property Definition and Entailment

One can understand the manner in which these attributes form a (coherent) and maximally consistent set by us focusing now on detailing the intimate relationship that the great-making attributes have to the attribute of maximal power—which we are taking here to be the ‘definitional’ attribute of an MGB. That is, as a maximal power trope, the MGB is, first, a personal entity—a *personal* module trope—due to the fact that for him to exercise his power, he must be an entity that has a rich form of consciousness that enables him to perform a range of actions that are solely limited by logic.²⁶ Furthermore, given his power, the MGB would be an entity that is unlimited in knowledge, freedom and goodness. That is, it follows from his maximal power that the MGB would, second, possess *maximal knowledge*—he would know of all true propositions (concerning the past and present), that they are true—as, if he is to be able to exercise his maximal power, he would need to know the nature of the alternative actions that are dependent upon what occurred in the past and what is presently occurring. Third, being an maximal power trope, he would also be *maximally free*—he would be free from any non-rational influence determining the choices that he makes—as if he is to be able to exercise his power in any logically

possible way, then his power must operate without any causal limitation or hindrance. Fourth, being maximally knowledgeable and free, the MGB would also be *maximally good*—he will always perform the best action (or kind of action) if there is one, many good actions and no bad actions. That is, given the MGB's maximal knowledge, he would know the nature of each available action that he can choose from and thus would possess knowledge of whether each action is good or bad, or is better than some incompatible action. Moreover, in recognising an action as good, the MGB would have some motivation to perform that action, and in recognising an action as being better than another action, the MGB would have an even greater motivation to perform it (Swinburne, 2016). Hence, given his maximal freedom, if the MGB is situated in a scenario in which there is the best possible action (or best kind of action) for him to perform, then the MGB will always perform that action (or kind of action), and if there is no best action (or kind of action), then the MGB will perform a good action and no bad actions.²⁷ Fifth, as a maximally powerful entity, the MGB would be *eternal*—he would exist without beginning and without end—as if he were to have a beginning or end to his existence, then he would be somehow (causally) reliant upon another entity to cause this state of affairs to occur (i.e., him beginning or ceasing to exist), and thus a being who is maximal in power cannot be dependent in this way. The eternity of a maximally powerful being is thus an entailed notion; however, one can either conceive of this eternity as that of *timelessness*—where the MGB exists *without* temporal *succession* (i.e., the MGB does *not* experience a succession of events within the divine life), *location* (i.e., the MGB's existence is *not* datable), and *extension* (i.e., the MGB does *not* persist through time) (Mullins, 2021, 87). Thus, in this specific view, the MGB's existence is incompatible with time, such that the MGB exists at no particular time, with solely the MGB's activity being able to bring about 'datable events' without himself being part of any temporal process (Davies, 2004, 6). Or, one can conceive of this eternity as that of *temporality*—where the MGB exists *with* temporal *succession* (i.e., there being a succession of events within the divine life), *location* (i.e., the MGB's existence is datable) and *extension* (i.e., the MGB persists through time). Thus, in *this* specific view, the MGB's existence is compatible with time,

with all of his actions taking place over periods of time.²⁸ Lastly, for *immensity*, in traditional thought, this attribute has been closely tied to the further notion of infinity, which has traditionally been construed negatively as that of an MGB lacking any limitations in regards to his essence, power, knowledge, freedom and goodness, *and* positively as that of him, and his nature, being intrinsically full and complete (Inman, 2020). Specifically, on the basis of the positive aspect of an MGB's existence, for one to say that this being is immense is to say that his nature, as Inman (2021, 127) notes, 'is without limitation, particularly as it pertains to the limitations of space; the divine nature is uncircumscribable, immeasurable, and incapable of being contained or bound by space.'²⁹ Moreover, an analogy can be drawn between immensity and eternity, which is stated clearly by Thomas Barlow (cited in Hampton, 2008, 256) as follows:

This can best be described by the proposition which divine eternity has with respect to time. For God is present by immensity in space just as [he is present] by eternity to [specific] time. . . . Therefore, just as eternity is in all finite times yet exceeds them to an infinite degree; so immensity is in all finite locations or space; and yet surpasses them to an infinite degree. And just as the eternity of God cannot be included within finite periods of time, but is outside time . . . and if before them; and follows after all of them; so, indeed, is immensity with respect to finite locations or spaces.

Immensity is thus an absolute attribute in the sense that, apart from created reality, the MGB is immense in his essence; yet, in relation to created reality, the MGB is entirely unconditioned by spatial boundaries and limitations due to the intrinsic fullness of its life—in short, the MGB's existence and nature are illimitable and thus cannot be contained by space—with this attribute being derivable from the MGB's maximal power, on the basis that his essence is identical to his maximal (limitless) power—the MGB *just is* a maximal power trope—and thus he is by definition lacking all limitations relative to its essence and existence. As the MGB lacks these limitations, and thus is immense, he would be *repletively present* in the sense, as noted by Inman (2021, 131), that he would be present 'at each and every place at the same time.'³⁰ Thus, as an immense entity, the MGB is able to be present at each existing place at the same time, yet without being contained

or bound by any place. In assuming the notion of exact location in the fundamental and derivative sense, one can construe the repletive presence that is had by the MGB being immense, in two ways: as *fundamental presence*—where the MGB is *fundamentally exactly located at each and every place*—or, as *derivative presence*—where the MGB is *derivatively weakly located at each and every place*. By the MGB being fundamentally located, the repletive presence—and thus immensity of the MGB—is not reducible to that of his other attributes (i.e., maximal power and knowledge), whereas by him being derivatively located, these attributes *are* reducible in this way—namely, that it is nothing above the MGB’s causal and epistemic activity.³¹

In summary, the specific conceptualisation of the nature of an MGB, within the MROA, is that of an entity—a trope—that is maximal in power and thus has a maximally consistent set of great-making attributes—namely, the entailed characteristics of maximal knowledge (i.e., knows of all true propositions), freedom (i.e., has no non-rational influences determining his choices), goodness (i.e., perform the best action, if there is one, and no bad actions), eternity (i.e., has no beginning and no end to his existence), and immensity (i.e., is an uncircumscribed entity and thus is fundamentally and/or derivatively present at every place). Thus, an entity is maximally great in virtue of having these types of attributes in a consistent manner and to the highest degree possible. Taking this conception of the nature of an MGB on board, we can now proceed forward to further elucidate the Possibility Premise.

3. Constructing the Modal Realist Ontological Argument

(ii): Precising the Possibility Premise and Conclusion

The second phase of our constructive task focuses on the *Possibility Premise*, and the conclusion(s) that can be derived from this important premise—both of which we can re-state as follows:

(7) (Possibility Premise)	(8) (Conclusion)
(i) There is a concrete possible world, within the pluriverse, in which an entity is maximally great.	(ii) Therefore, there is a being that is maximally great in every concrete possible world within the pluriverse. (iii) Therefore, there is a being (i.e., God) that is maximally great that is present (i.e., ‘exists’) in the actual world within the pluriverse.

For (7) and (8), which capture the central premise and conclusion of the MROA, there is a specific possible world, conceived of as a concrete world that is part of the ‘pluriverse,’ that includes within it an MGB. However, given the nature of an MGB, this entity must not only be present (i.e., ‘exist’) within this one particular world, but also it must be present (i.e., ‘exist’) *in all worlds* within the pluriverse. Thus, on the basis of this, one can conclude that there is an MGB that is present within the actual world. The conclusion reached here, however, is not assumed in the Possibility Premise—and thus is not ‘begging the question’—in the manner that the MOA is—and thus, barring other potential issues that can be raised against the argument, one can affirm the soundness of it. Thus, to show how one can support this version of the Possibility Premise, and reach the conclusion of the MROA that has just been noted, it will be important to now turn our attention to detailing the nature of the modal metaphysical framework that will aid us in achieving this end. As the specific framework that will be utilised to formulate the MROA is a relatively ‘new’ theory, one could raise the initial question of why one should adopt that specific framework over the more established frameworks. This issue is important, as for the MROA to be successful in establishing the existence of God, one must indeed adopt a particular understanding of modality—namely, that of a ‘possible world’ being identified as a ‘concrete’ entity with ‘spatiotemporal regions,’ which then results in God (i.e., a maximally great being) being ‘present’ within each of these worlds—including that of the actual world as well. Hence, it is important now to spend some time in providing independent motivation for adopting this specific modal theory, over that of the more well-established theories, which will thus show how this alternative modal framework is able to procure the advantages of the more well-established theories without, however, also incurring their costs.

3.2 The Nature of Modal Metaphysics: Two Concepts

In contemporary metaphysics, a number of philosophers have seen the relative merit in utilising the notion of a ‘possible world’ to bring further clarity to various modal matters. Following Peter van Inwagen (1986), we can take the concept of a possible world to be a *functional concept*. The concept of a ‘possible world,’ which we have already encountered, is one that ‘plays a certain role’ in *representing*

ways reality is or could be. That is, as van Inwagen (1986, 193) notes, at a general level, it ‘can fill a certain role in philosophical discourse about modality, essence, counterfactuals, truth-theories for natural languages, and so on.’ One important function that the concept of a possible world has fulfilled within a modal context is that of providing an explication of the important notion of *de dicto* modality, which can be stated succinctly through the following bi-conditional:

- (9) (De Dicto) It is possible that $x \leftrightarrow$ there is a w such that w is a possible world and at w , x .

As expressed by (9), the modal operator ‘it is possible that’ (and modal operators such as ‘it is necessary that’), within a modal metaphysics that utilises ‘possible world semantics,’ is now conceived of as a quantifier over worlds, which thus provides a further explication and/or analysis of modality—and helps to dispel the mystery that has often surrounded these type of locutions. In addition to the provision of an analysis of *de dicto* terms, the utilisation of the notion of possible worlds also provides a means for one to analyse *de re* modality. However, the nature of this type of analysis is best grasped once the concept of a possible world is further fleshed out. In the contemporary literature, two specific realist metaphysical theses concerning the nature of the concept of a possible world have played an influential role: Concrete Modal Realism and Abstract Modal Realism. Concrete Modal Realism (hereafter, Concretism), proposed by David K. Lewis (1986), is a *possibilist* theory (i.e., one that takes there to exist merely possible entities that are strictly non-actual), that seeks to provide a *reductionist* account of modality (i.e., it seeks to reduce modal notions to non-modal notions) and conceives of a possible world as a concrete object—and thus there being an infinite plurality of concrete possible worlds (amongst other things). By contrast, Abstract Modal Realism (hereafter, Abstractionism),³² proposed by Plantinga (1974a), is an *actualist* theory (i.e., one that denies the existence of merely possible entities and takes the actual world to be the only possible world that does obtain), that seeks to provide a *non-reductionist* account of modality (i.e., it does not seek to reduce modal notions to non-modal notions) and conceives of a possible world as an abstract object—and thus there being an infinite plurality of abstract possible worlds (amongst other things). Hence,

what we are presented with through these metaphysical theses are two ontological concepts ('concreteness' and 'abstractness')—concerning two types of objects—that are coextensive with the functional concept 'possible world' (van Inwagen, 1986). For Plantinga's Abstractionism and Lewis' Concretism—let's term the former *Plantingian Realism* (hereafter, PR) and the latter *Lewisian Realism* (hereafter, LR)—there is a shared affirmation of the existence of an infinite plurality of objects. Where there is divergence between these two views is in regard to how one is to correctly conceive of the nature of these objects. On the one hand, for PR, the totality of reality includes within it an infinite plurality of objects—namely, abstract possible worlds, conceived of as maximal possible states of affairs (i.e., abstract total ways in which the 'actual' world could have been). Entities exist at a given possible world by their 'individual essence' being instantiated at that world—where an entity is able to be 'transworld identical' with another entity existing at another world by an individual essence at the latter world functioning as a proxy for that entity within that world. Abstract possible worlds are thus able to 'overlap'—with one of these worlds, within the infinite plurality of worlds, being 'absolutely actual' in the sense that it is the possible maximal state of affairs that actually obtains. On the other hand, for LR, the totality of reality includes within it an infinite plurality of objects—namely, concrete possible worlds, conceived of as mereological sums of spatiotemporally related individuals. These sums of individuals are 'spatiotemporally isolated' from other sums of individuals—that is, entities are not transworld identical to other entities, and thus these worlds and their inhabitants do *not* 'overlap'—with there not being a single absolutely actual world; rather, a given world is solely actual from the indexical perspective of an inhabitant of a given world. These are the central tenets of PR and LR, and the reasons for adopting them is primarily due to the fact that the entities postulated by these modal theories provide the truthmakers for our various modal statements and locutions. That is, the abstract possible worlds in PR, and the concrete worlds in LR, provide the structure needed for a metaphysical explanation for the truth of the various modal statements that are uttered by individuals, in that the truth of these statements is fully dependent on these entities—and by LR, in particular, reducing the modal to the non-modal,

it provides a more 'economical' metaphysical system. In addition to the modal realist frameworks of PR and LR providing the necessary truthmakers for our modal statements—and the inherent economical virtue of LR in particular—one can also draw support for these modal frameworks from the notion of intentionality. Intentionality, as noted by Bricker (2007, 121), 'refers to a feature of certain mental states such as belief and desire: these states are always "directed" towards some object or objects; one doesn't just believe or desire, one always believes or desires something'. An intentional state can be given either a wide or narrow interpretation. A narrow intentional states come in two forms a belief—that relates a subject to a proposition (or property)—and a direct state, such as fear, which relates a subject direct to an object (Bricker, 2007). The path to ground possibilia focuses on the second form of a narrow intentional state—namely, that of a direct state, which is that of the state of 'thinking' about some object or objects. Suppose one is thinking about a gold dodecahedron, one can have this thought whether or not a dodecahedron actually exists or not (Bricker, 2006a). If there is an actual dodecahedron, then one's related to it based on the fact that they are in that intentional states, and thus it is an object of one's thought (Bricker, 2006a). However, even if there is no actual gold dodecahedron this does not prevent one from thinking about it. Yet, as the state of 'thinking about' is relational, and as relations require relata, only merely possible a gold dodecahedron are able to fulfil the role of the needed relata—that is the object of one's thought. One must be thus related to non-actual objects through their intentional states—namely, that of the merely possible entities of the worlds posited by PR and LR. Despite the benefits that can be received by one adopting LR or PR, there are indeed some (now standard) problems that can be raised against these positions, for PR there is one problem, which we can term the *Representation Problem*, and, for LR, there are three problems, which we can term the *Extravagance Problem*, the *Humphrey Problem* and the *Island Universes Problem*. It will be helpful now to detail these problems in order to provide strong motivation for adopting the modal theory that will be used as the metaphysical framework for the MROA.

First, the Representation Problem: raises an issue concerning the representative role of the possible worlds that are posited by PR. That

is, the infinite plurality of abstract possible worlds (i.e., maximal states of affairs), as with the concrete possible worlds of LR, are taken to function as possible worlds that represent reality in the many ways that it can be. One of these maximal states of affairs obtains and thus is the actual world. One can ask, however, why any specific possible world represents our 'concrete cosmos' (hereafter, cosmos) in the way that it does, rather than another possible world fulfilling this role instead? Within the framework of Abstractionism, there is no informative explanation for this—that is, a certain possible world—the actual world—represents in the way that it does simply because it is *of its nature to do so*. Yet, if that is so, then one can indeed ask the further question of what is the relation between this specific possible world and our cosmos, which enables it to represent it in the way that it does? Is it an external relation or an internal relation? If it is external, then the cosmos might have borne this relation to a different maximal state of affairs, even if the cosmos had had exactly the same intrinsic properties, which Lewis says 'especially repugnant' (1986, 179). That is, it seems to be clear that the relation between the cosmos (in the condition that it actually is) and the actual world must be a necessary one. In other words, if the cosmos exists, then a *specific* possible world is actualised. Yet, if the 'actualises' relation is an external relation, then one is not provided with any explanation of what this necessary connection is. One is instead left with a mystery. However, on the other hand, if the relation is internal, then it is unintelligible. The reason for this is that an internal relation is one that necessarily holds between the *relata*, based on their intrinsic natures—for example, if David is 6ft and Paul is 5ft 8, then Paul necessarily stands in the *shorter than* relation to David. Yet, if the relation under question is internal, then it would be equally mysterious why the relation somehow holds between the cosmos and the specific possible world that is actualised, given that this possible world (and all other possible worlds) are mereologically simple, and thus devoid of any intrinsic structure. That is, if a possible world lacks internal structure, then one can ask the question of what specific internal structure does it have, which allows it to be the case that if the cosmos exists, then this possible world bears this actualisation relation? (In the same way that if David is the height that he is and Paul is the height that he is, then Paul must bear the *shorter*

than relation to David). Within the PR framework, one is not given an explanation of this, and thus it seems to be a case, as Lewis (1986, 182) notes, of the representative role of a possible world being one of 'magic.' However, as plausibly one should not affirm the veracity of a magical explanation, we should not conceive of possible worlds in the manner found within PR—that is, one should reject PR.

Second, the Extravagance Problem, or what Lewis terms 'the incredulous stare,' focuses on highlighting the problem that LR has with fitting with common sense opinion about what there is. According to LR, the talking donkeys, purple unicorns, and flying pigs are as 'real' as actual donkeys, horses and pigs. However, this just seems too incredible to be believed—despite, as noted above, Lewis' insistence that his theory is systematically unifying and economical—the cost of believing in such forms of extravagance seems to be too great. That is, LR is just simply not in accord with our deepest intuitions about what exists in actuality. Thus, given the counterintuitive nature of LR, one has good reason to not affirm the veracity of LR. Third, the Humphrey Problem focuses on highlighting a problem with the 'counterpart theory' that plays a central role in the LR framework. According to the proponent of LR, each possible individual is world bound, and so the modal truths concerning that individual are not made true by facts concerning how that *specific* individual is in other worlds. Rather, these modal claims are made true by the existence and actions of counterparts of this individual. More precisely, a counterpart of an entity x is one that exists in a distinct world w from x and resembles x more closely than anything else that exists in w . For Lewis (1986, 8–11), the counterpart relation—instead of the notion of *transworld identity*—is the specific resemblance relation that holds between distinct individuals that are inhabitants of distinct worlds, and thus it provides the grounds for an analysis of *de re* modal analysis. However, as Saul Kripke (1980: 45) famously noted:

if we say 'Humphrey might have won the election (if only he had done such-and-such),' we are not talking about something that might have happened to Humphrey, but to someone else, a 'counterpart.' Probably, however, Humphrey could not care less whether someone else, no matter how much resembling him, would have been victorious in another possible world.

It is a strong intuition of most—as expressed by Kripke—that the modal statement ‘Humphrey might have won the election’ (and others like it) is a statement that is *solely* about Humphrey, and thus the truth of that statement is one that has Humphrey, and Humphrey *alone*, as its truthmaker. Yet, counterpart theory takes it to be the case that this modal statement is not about Humphrey—but a counterpart existing in another world—which does not seem to be the correct truthmaker for the statement under question. Thus, as before, given the counterintuitive nature of counterpart theory, one should reject this theory and the thesis of LR that is built upon it. Fourth, the Island Universes Problem focuses on highlighting the incompatibility between the possible existence of island universes that are actual—actual individuals that do not stand in any spatiotemporal relation to one another—and some of the central tenets of the Concretist framework. That is, the possible existence of island universes is problematic, under LR, as the conception of a world is that of a *maximal mereological sum of spatiotemporally related individuals*, implying that spatiotemporally disconnected island universes are impossible—in that there is no actual world that is not spatiotemporally united. As Philip Bricker (2001, 28), in clearly expressing this issue, writes,

According to Lewis, possible individuals are part of one and the same possible world if, and only if, they are spatiotemporally related. It follows immediately that no possible world is composed of island universes of spatiotemporally isolated parts. Given the standard analysis of possibility as truth at some possible world, island universes, then, are impossible.

Thus, it intuitively seems to be the case that it is possible that there could be more than one actual physical universe that is spatiotemporally unrelated to another. For example, it is quite clear that there could be two symmetrical physical universes that are exactly similar to one another, yet they are spatio-temporally unconnected from one another—and thus, each fulfils the requirement of being an actual concrete possible world (Menzel, 2016). This, however, leads to a contradiction as anything that is spatiotemporally related to a world is a part of it. Yet if there are multiple spatiotemporally unrelated physical universes—that is, there is a possible world that has multiple possible worlds within it, then this would entail that there is an object—a concrete possible

world—all of whose parts are spatio-temporally related, yet there are two parts that are not spatio-temporally related—hence, contradiction, which provides good reason to reject LR (Menzel, 2016). Taking all of these things into account, we seem to have some important issues that can be raised against LR and PR and thus there is motivation for utilising an alternative modal theory for formulating our ontological argument. This alternative theory is formulated by utilising certain elements of Lewis' theory (and concepts from Plantinga), in combination with two other alternative versions of modal realism: *Modal Realism with Overlap*, proposed by Kris McDaniel (2004, 2006), and *Leibnizian Realism*, proposed by Philip Bricker (2001, 2006, 2007)—which, when brought together, provide a means to affirm the veracity of modal realism without facing the problems raised against PR and LR. More specifically, on the one hand, McDaniel's Modal Realism with Overlap proposes a version of modal realism that posits, first, in a similar manner to LR, the existence of an infinite plurality of *concrete* possible worlds—rather than that of a plurality of abstract worlds—and thus these concrete entities will be able to unproblematically fulfil the representative function that is expected of a possible world. Hence, the Representation Problem is inapplicable to this account. Second, it also provides a modal framework that does not assume counterpart theory—instead affirming the possibility of 'overlap'—which allows one to assume, in a similar manner to PR, a form of transworld identity. Thus, we have the Humphrey Objection being a non-issue as well. However, on the other hand, Bricker's Leibnizian Realism proposes a version of modal realism which, in a similar manner to PR, does not, first, relativise actuality and, second, take the degrees of existence had by each of the infinite plurality of worlds to be equal. This thus provides one with a clear way to adopt a less extravagant ontology and affirm the possible existence of island universes. Hence, this account also can ward off the Extravagance Problem and Island Universes Problem. One can thus deal with these issues raised against LR by combining the versions above, which will also, more importantly, provide a more robust modal framework that will be helpful in providing a basis for formulating the MROA—let's term this combination *Leibnizian Realism with Overlap*—and thus, what will be of importance now in helping us to successfully formulate

the MROA will be to further elucidate its central tenets of this modal framework, and then proceed to apply it to the task at hand.

3.2. *The Nature of Leibnizian Realism with Overlap*

At a general level, Concretism is a metaphysical thesis that posits the existence of a ‘logical space’ or ‘pluriverse’ that is made up of an infinite plurality of concrete possible worlds.³³ More specifically, this metaphysical thesis, as noted above, has been championed by Lewis, and further developed in part by McDaniel and Bricker—with the combination of the central tenets of the theses of these been termed Leibnizian Realism with Overlap (hereafter, LRO),³⁴ which we can state succinctly as follows:

- (10) (LRO)
- (a) *Pluriverse*: The totality of metaphysical reality and the largest domain of quantification that includes within it three ontological categories.
 - (b) *Concrete Worlds*: A possible individual x is a world w if and only if w is a region of spacetime R and no R , which is part of w , is spatiotemporally related to anything that is not part of w .
 - (c) *Overlap*: A possible individual x is at w if x is present at an R that is part of w .
 - (d) *Absolute Actuality*: A possible individual x is an actual world w if w is part of the fundamental category of actuality and thus possesses a greater degree of being than the possible worlds that are not part of this category.

For (a) of (10), the notion of the ‘Pluriverse’ functions in the framework of LRO as the metaphysical terrain of the totality of reality. In Lewis’s (1983, 39–40) thought, the pluriverse is organised into three fundamental ontological categories: *possible individuals*, *impossible individuals* and *non-individuals*. These three ontological categories can be understood as follows: first, the category of possible individuals includes within it the entities that exist wholly within a possible world, i.e., as a part of that world. For the category of possible individuals, each of the worlds within the pluriverse is a (large) possible individual that has certain ‘spatiotemporal regions’ as parts.³⁵ Hence, within the LRO—as will be noted more fully below—possible individuals are occupiers of these regions and thus—unlike LR—are not ‘bound’ to a possible world through being a ‘part’ of it.³⁶ Second, the category

of impossible individuals includes within it the entities that do not exist wholly in any world, but are composed of possible individuals from two or more worlds. For the category of impossible individuals, these types of individuals are mereological summations of individuals within the pluriverse (Lewis, 1983). More specifically, impossible, cross-world, individuals consist of parts from several distinct worlds within the pluriverse. As the name indicates, however, this type of individual is not a possible individual, as it is not in any world—it is partly in each of the many worlds. Third, the category of non-individuals includes within it the entities which do not exist in any world, but nevertheless exist ‘from the standpoint of a possible world.’ That is, for the category of non-individuals, these types of entities—which are paradigmatically identified as ‘pure sets’ (i.e., numbers, properties, propositions and events)—do not exist in any world in the sense of them existing as a part of a possible world, nor do they exist as a mereological summation of the individuals that exist within the infinite number of distinct worlds; rather they exist from the *standpoint of a possible world*, by existing within the least restricted domain that is appropriate in evaluating the truth at the world of quantifications (Lewis, 1983, 40). Thus, in following Lewis (1983, 40), within the LRO framework, we have three fundamental ontological categories: possible individuals, impossible individuals and non-individuals, that are individuated by three distinct relations: being in a possible world (i.e., being an occupier of a region that is part of a possible world) for possible individuals, being partly in a possible world (i.e., having a part that is wholly in that world) for impossible individuals, and existing from the standpoint of a possible world for non-individuals. For illustrative purposes, we can depict through Figure 1. the nature of the pluriverse as follows (where ‘PI’ stands for ‘possible individual,’ ‘IPI’ and ‘oval shape’ stand for ‘impossible individuals,’ ‘N-I’ stands for ‘non-individuals,’ ‘W_n’ stands for a ‘particular world,’ ‘Concrete’ stands for ‘concrete domain’ and ‘Abstract’ stands for ‘abstract domain’):

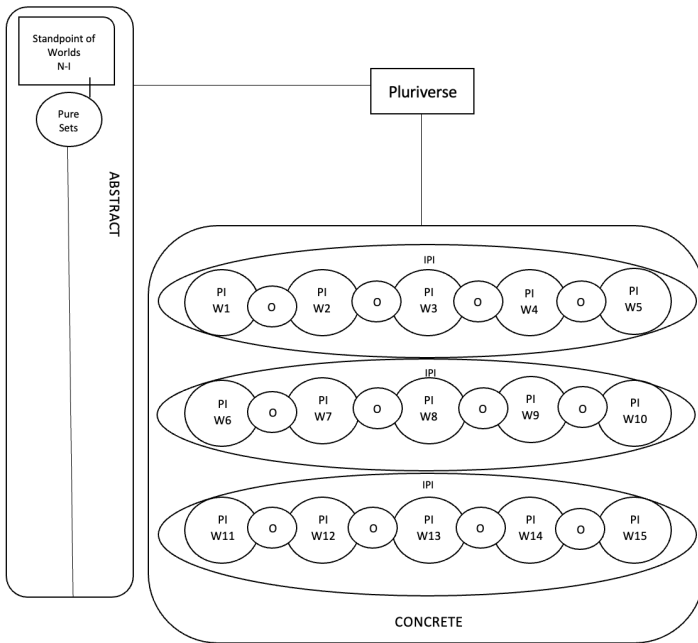


Figure 1. Nature of the Pluriverse

Now, the positing of the existence of the pluriverse enables one to provide a *reductive account of modality*. That is, LRO, through the notion of the pluriverse (and, more importantly, the notion of a possible world), seeks to provide an analysis or reductive account of modal notions such that one can understand the meaning of modal locutions without them depending upon further modal notions—namely, these locutions being reducible to concrete possible worlds—and thus modality not being primitive. To further explicate the metaphysical thesis of LRO, and its modal reductionism, it will be important to now further detail the notion of a possible world, as expressed by (b)–(d) of (10).

For (b) and (c), the notion of ‘Concrete Worlds’ and ‘Overlap’ expresses the fact that there exists an infinite plurality of concrete possible worlds within logical space that are identified as *maximally spatiotemporally related regions of spacetime* that have objects as occupants of those regions. Focusing first on the latter tenet: worlds are spatiotemporally isolated maximal regions of spacetime—rather

than the maximal summation of the things that they contain, as Lewis (1986)—such that, as McDaniel (2004, 147) notes, ‘worlds are containers in the same sense that regions of spacetime are containers.’ These regions of spacetime—instead of the material objects that they contain—are ‘parts’ of worlds. In other words, the primary way in which LRO conceives of an object being ‘contained’ within a world—that is, it exists at a specific world by occupying a spatiotemporal region—is that of it being *present* (or located) at that region, without being a part of that region. At a more precise level, an object *x* exists at a world, as McDaniel (2004, 147) writes, if, and only if, ‘there is some region *R* such that (i) *x* is present at *R* and (ii) *R* is a part of *w*; a region *R* exists at a world iff it is a part of that world.’ Hence, according to LRO, the ‘atness’ relation within a world reduces to *occupation*. A specific object is thus *at* more than one world by it (‘exactly’) occupying a particular region that is part of one of the worlds, whilst it also (‘weakly’) occupying a different region that is part of one of the other worlds within the pluriverse.³⁷ Material objects, as McDaniel notes (2006, 306), thus ‘enjoy multi-location.’³⁸

In addition to the account of ‘existing at a world’ provided by LRO, we also have an account of what it is for a particular object to have a ‘part at a world’ and a ‘property at a world.’ For the former notion, an entity *x* is a part of an entity *y* at world *w*, according to McDaniel (2004, 148), if and only if ‘there is some *R* such that *x* is part of *y* at *R* and *R* is a part of *w*.’ Objects thus have parts *at* parts of worlds. That is, assuming *compositional pluralism*—the thesis that there are two different fundamental part-whole relations—the fundamental parthood relation for *spacetime regions* is a two-place relation—where a region of spacetime is part of a region of spacetime *simpliciter* (i.e., not relative to anything). In contrast, the fundamental parthood relation for *material objects* is a three-place relation—where part-whole relations for material objects are *indexed to specific spacetime regions*. Thus, as McDaniel (2006, 306) notes, ‘Objects and worlds not only do not overlap, but cannot overlap given that objects and worlds are unified by numerically distinct parthood relations.’ Now, in a similar manner to the part-whole relation for material objects, LRO takes the possession of properties to also be indexed to spatiotemporal regions—namely, a given object has a property only if there is a specific region of spacetime, such that

the object is present at that region, the region is part of the whole in question, and the object possesses that property relative to that region. Thus, given the notions of having a part at a world and a property at a world, an object cannot have a part or property *simpliciter*. Instead, an object *must* have a part of a property relative to a certain spatiotemporal region. Thus, as McDaniel (2006, 306) writes, given LRO, ‘objects are literally present at different possible worlds. And the properties that an object literally has at other possible worlds are literally the properties that this very same object at our world could have had.’ So, what we see here is that of the atness (or location) relation being able to be construed in a variety of different ways within the LRO framework.

Now, focusing our attention now on the former tenet: the ‘concreteness’ of a possible world expresses the idea that the ‘merely possible worlds’ that make up the pluriverse are of the *same ontological kind* as the ‘actual world.’ Lewis (1986), however, is hesitant to directly affirm the concreteness of possible worlds, given the ambiguity and lack of clarity that surrounds the abstract/concrete distinction in contemporary philosophy. Nevertheless, Lewis (1986, 82–86) distinguishes four different ways of conceiving of the abstract/concrete distinction, and the manner in which worlds fit with these ways. First, the *Way of Example*: worlds have parts that are taken to be paradigmatically concrete (i.e., donkeys, protons, stars and galaxies). Second, the *Way of Conflation*: worlds are taken to be particulars and individuals, rather than universals and sets. Third, the *Negative Way*: worlds have parts that are taken to stand in spatiotemporal relation to one another. Fourth, the *Way of Abstraction*: worlds are taken to be fully determinate entities that are not abstractions from any other entity. In each of these four ways, according to Lewis (1986, 82), worlds (and most of their parts) can be conceived of as concrete entities—with all other types of entities (namely, non-individuals) being conceived of as abstract entities, due to the fact that these entities are not spatiotemporal *and* fail to meet the four-fold criteria. So, a possible world is a concrete entity, yet, there is not only one world in logical space, but an ‘infinite plurality’ of worlds. More specifically, within the LRO, as expressed by Lewis, *any way a possible world could be is a way that some world is*. That is, according to the *Principle of Plenitude*, which can be stated succinctly as such:³⁹

(11) (Plenitude) No genuine potentiality can remain unfulfilled

Worlds are abundant such that there are no ‘gaps in logical space.’ At a more general level, this principle requires that no possible entity can remain as a potentiality; as Arthur Lovejoy (1932) notes in expressing this principle that it is ‘not only the thesis that the universe is a *plenum formarum* in which the range of conceivable diversity of *kinds* of living things is exhaustively exemplified, but also any other deductions from the assumption that no genuine potentiality of being can remain unfulfilled.’ And thus, as Michael Almeida (2017, 8) writes, on the basis of this principle, ‘every possible object, kind of object, event, kind of event, state of affairs and so on exists at some time or other.’ Now, in underwriting this principle within the current modal framework, a more specific principle, identified by Charles R. Pidgen and Rebecca E.B. Entwisle (2012, 158–161), can be put forward that will help one identify the types of worlds that are required to be realised in accord with the Principle of Plenitude.⁴⁰

(12) (Consistent Describability) Every consistent set of sentences corresponds to at least one world.

For a set of sentences to be consistent is for it not to include contradictions. And it must not entail any contradictions either (Pidgen and Entwisle, 2012). There is thus at least one world corresponding to every consistent description—that is, as Lewis (1984, xi n4) notes, ‘If, as I suppose, a being does not have to satisfy some inconsistent description to be a god, then I take the number of Gods to be at least ≥ 2 . Unlike most polytheists, however, I think of this world we live in as entirely godless.’⁴¹ Moreover, this applies to other entities as well, as there is indeed somewhere in logical space where there are aliens, dragons and talking donkeys; so long as a being does not have to satisfy an inconsistent description to exist, then there is somewhere in logical space where that being exists. Thus, at a more general level, the Principle of Plenitude is such that it underwrites the existence of worlds that correspond to consistent descriptions—that is, there are at least as many worlds as one can consistently suppose, which is to say that there is an *infinite plurality of worlds within the pluriverse*.

For (d), the notion of ‘absolute actuality’ expresses the fact that actuality is a *primitive* (i.e., unanalysable) property that is *categorical* and *absolute*. For Plantinga, actuality is a special property (i.e., the property of being absolutely actual) that distinguishes exactly one possible world from all the other possible worlds—amongst the plurality of possible worlds, just one of these possible worlds, is designated as the actual world—every. Re-stating this Plantingian position now within the current framework, in the pluriverse, there are many worlds, yet there is (at the least) only one world—*our* world—that possesses the special property of being actual.⁴² Actual entities comprise a fundamental ontological category by sharing a primitive, non-qualitative property of ‘actuality,’ such that it is in virtue of these entities belonging to that specific category—and possessing that specific property—that they have a different ontological status to *merely possible* entities (Bricker, 2007). In other words, actual entities are distinguishable by them possessing the special property of actuality, which results in a certain region of the pluriverse—the ‘region of actuality’—being ontologically distinct from another region—the ‘region of the merely possible’—with the latter *not* forming a genuine ontological category (Bricker, 2006). Moreover, the ontological status bestowed upon these entities by the property of actuality is had by them in an *absolute* manner—in that, *contra* Lewis, actuality is not relative to the individual. Therefore, there is an ontological distinction of kind between the actual and the merely possible. Hence, as Bricker (2001, 29) notes, there is thus ‘an absolute fact as to which among all the possible worlds has been actualized.’ Yet, despite actuality being absolute, rather than relative, actuality is still a contingent notion, due to the fact that a distinction can be made between what is true *of* a world and what is true *at* a world—such that possibility and necessity are to be interpreted in terms of what is true *at* a world, rather than what is true *of* a world. A property is true of a world, as Bricker (2001, 43) writes, ‘when the world has that property; a property is true at a world when the world represents itself as having that property.’ In most cases, what is true at a world is what is true of that world; however, in the case of actuality, the two notions of ‘truth of’ and ‘truth at’ a world do not coincide, in that ‘is actual’ is *true at every world*, but is of *true of our world* and no other world. Thus, the absoluteness of actuality is secured by the

latter affirmation—a certain world has a special ontological status that other merely possible worlds do not have—and the contingency of actuality is secured by the former affirmation—namely, which specific world is actual is contingent as any world *could* be actual.

Thus, there is a primitive fact about which things in the pluriverse are the actual entities. Yet, this specific fact cannot be grounded upon the fact that they have a quality that the others lack—that is, the actual world(s) have the property of absolute actuality, not on the basis of it being qualitatively different from any other world (Bricker, 2001). Thus, the important question to be faced here is: on what does this primitive fact of actuality consist of? One plausible answer forwarded by McDaniel (2017) is that of each of the merely possible worlds existing in a *fundamentally different way* than the actual world(s)—that is, there exist merely possible worlds and there exists an actual world(s), but the *ways* in which these entities exist differ—the way in which the merely possible worlds are *real* is not the same as the way in which actual objects are real. More fully, according to McDaniel (2017), we can have an answer to our question by assuming the veracity of *ontological pluralism* (hereafter, OP). OP is the thesis that there are multiple ways of being that are captured by ‘elite’ quantifiers that are at least as *natural* as the unrestricted quantifier. That is, within the pluralistic framework, there is an unrestricted quantifier (\exists) that ranges over everything that exists, *and* there are several elite quantifiers ($\exists_1, \dots, \exists_n$)—which is a quantifier that fails to range over everything that exists but is also not a semantically complex entity that consists of the unrestricted quantifier and a restricting predicate/operator—with the meaning of each elite quantifier being at least as *natural* as the meaning of the unrestricted quantifier—where an expression is more natural than another if the former carves reality at its joints to a greater extent than the latter.

Now, within the LRO framework, the infinite plurality of concrete worlds other than the actual world exists, yet, in now fleshing this out within an OP framework, we can take the way of being of the non-actual concrete possible worlds to exist in a *different way* than the actual world, in the sense that they enjoy *being-by-courtesy*. Being-by-courtesy, in McDaniel’s (2017, 147) thought, is a *degenerate* mode of being that is characterised in a negative manner as existence (in the

sense of \exists) that is *not* expressed by any of the elite quantifiers ($\exists 1, \dots, \exists n$). That is, entities—such as the merely possible worlds—that have being-by-courtesy are thus the entities that remain when the ranges of the elite quantifiers are subtracted from the range of the unrestricted quantifier. Now, if the elite quantifiers are conceived of as being perfectly natural—as they are—and thus carve nature at its joints by capturing fundamental ways of being, entities that are beings by courtesy would not be quantified over in any fundamental language—that is, a language that only employs elite quantifiers. Hence, beings-by-courtesy enjoy a degenerate way of being due to their way of being not being fundamental. In other words, entities that enjoy being-by-courtesy possess a lesser degree of reality than the entities that fall within the range of some elite quantifier. Following McDaniel (2017, 149–150), we can thus define the notion of degree of reality as such x is less real than y to degree n just in case (i) “ $\exists 1$ ” is the most natural quantifier that ranges over x , (ii) “ $\exists 2$ ” is the most natural quantifier that ranges over y , and (iii) “ $\exists 2$ ” is a more natural quantifier than “ \exists ” to degree n . An entity’s degree of being is thus proportionate to the naturalness of its most natural mode of existence. In other words, if an entity fundamentally exists—it exists and is in the domain of an elite quantifier—then it has the highest degree of being. And if an entity degeneratively exists—it exists and is not in the domain of an elite quantifier—then exists to a less than maximal degree. Given this, it follows that infinite, merely possible worlds are less real than the actual world(s)—in that, the way of being of the merely possible worlds is being-by-courtesy—they enjoy a “diminished” kind of being. In short, the merely possible worlds and the actual world have different modes of being, with the former having an inferior mode of being to the latter.

This is thus the LRO framework laid out in full, and so we can now (briefly) focus on showing how the previous issues raised against LR and PR do not plague this version of modal realism. For the central issue raised against PR—that is, the Representation Problem—as (in a similar manner to LR) the worlds featured in LRO are *concrete* entities—rather than abstract entities (such as states of affairs and propositions)—we do not have the question needing to be raised of why any specific possible world (e.g, states of affairs or propositions)

represents our cosmos in the way that it does—which was the functional role envisioned by PR for all of the non-actual worlds—as each world is not conceived of as being *a way that our world is*. That is, a possible world is what it is and has its existence without it needing to bear any representational relation to our world. In short, the functional role fulfilled by a possible world is not to represent our cosmos but to solely represent itself. Hence, there is no Representation Problem, as the possible worlds posited by LRO are not required to bear any representational relation to our world, given the fact that a possible world is a maximal spacetime region and not a maximal way the world could have been. Now, for the central issues raised against LR—that is, the Extravagance Problem, the Humphrey Problem and the Island Universes Problem—we can proceed to detail how they are avoided in the LRO framework as follows: for the Extravagance Problem, one does not have to face any incredulous stare, as within the LRO framework, the merely possible worlds with the talking donkeys, purple unicorns and flying pigs are *not* as ‘real’ as actual donkeys, horses and pigs—as the former, through being occupiers of merely possible worlds have enjoy a *degenerate way of being*. That is, these entities are entities that remain when the ranges of the elite quantifiers are subtracted from the range of the unrestricted quantifier. Hence, merely possible worlds now—and their extravagant occupiers—possess a lesser degree of reality—where a possible world’s degree of being is proportionate to the naturalness of its most natural mode of existence. Thus, the talking donkeys, purple unicorns and flying pigs degeneratively exist—they exist and are not in the domain of an elite quantifier—and thus exist to a less than maximal degree. Whereas donkeys, horses and pigs have a fundamental way of being—they exist and are in the domain of an elite quantifier (e.g. $\exists 1$)—and thus have the highest degree of being. In short, the extravagant entities that featured in LR simply exist as beings-by-courtesy that have a lesser degree of reality than the actual entities by them not sharing in a fundamental way of being. Thus, unlike LR, the LRO does not face the Extravagance Problem, as one is not required to affirm the fact of the extravagant entities existing in the same way that the entities that populate the actual world.

For the Island Universes Problem, it is specifically, in a similar manner to PR, the absoluteness of actuality—and the inherent contingency

of it—that provides a means for one to affirm the possible existence of island universes as a modal realist. As by one affirming the actuality of one world, one can indeed allow that the actual realm is, in fact, composed of island universes by permitting more than one world to be actual. In other words, unlike the position expressed by LR, LRO allows for there to be a part of actuality that is spatiotemporally and causally isolated from the part that we, in fact, inhabit. Hence, the possibility of island universes is no issue for LRO.

Lastly, for the Humphrey Problem, it is specifically on the basis of the ‘existing at relation’ that one can reap the rewards of LR—namely, the theoretical advantages of reducing the modal to the non-modal—without, however, adopting counterpart theory and thus facing the Humphrey Problem—as *de re* modality can now be analysed within a new theoretical framework. That is, first, within the LRO framework, the notion of possibility is to be construed as such through the following biconditional:

(De Re-P₂) x is possibly $F \leftrightarrow$ there is a world, w , such that x exists at w and is F at w ; x exists at w iff x is wholly present at a region R that is itself a part of w .

Second, the notion of necessity can also be construed as such through the following biconditional:

(De Re-N₂) x is necessarily $F \leftrightarrow$ for every world, w , x itself exists at w and is F at w ; x exists at w iff x is wholly present at a region R that is itself a part of w .

According to LRO, *de re* modal claims about objects are thus not made true by facts about counterparts of the objects in question; rather, they are made true by facts about the objects themselves—by the features that these objects literally have at other worlds. Within the LRO framework, some worlds within the pluriverse are thus taken to have overlapping content—and thus Isolation being false—as there exist worlds w_1 and w_2 that have objects that literally exists at both worlds, with different parts and properties at those worlds—we can thus say, as with PR, that these entities enjoy transworld identity. For heuristic purposes, we can thus illustrate through Figure 2. the important modifications made to the structure and map of reality by LRO

as follows (where ‘PI’ stands for ‘possible individual,’ ‘W_n’ stands for a ‘particular world,’ ‘Merely Possible boxes’ represent ‘merely possible category/individuals,’ ‘Actual (Kind) box’ represents ‘the actual world category/individuals’ and ‘Concrete’ stands for ‘concrete domain’):

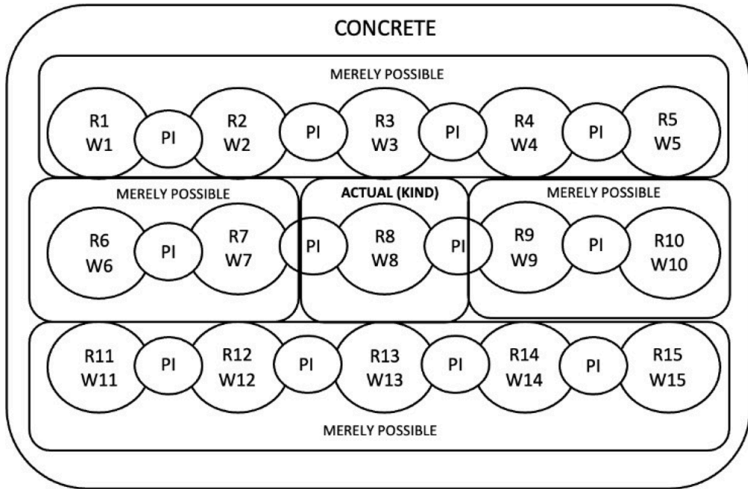


Figure 2. Leibnizian Realism with Overlap

Within the framework provided by the LRO, modal statements are made true by concrete worlds (i.e., maximal spatiotemporal regions) and the self-same occupants of those worlds—namely, that of the self-same objects that are occupants of the regions of those worlds—rather than that of distinct counterparts that are taken to be ‘parts’ of a world (i.e., the maximal summation of the things that they contain). And thus, in an object fulfilling this role, one can take them to not be world bound, and worlds not to be isolated; instead, objects are (possibly) multi-located, and worlds can indeed overlap. Thus, given this, *contra* the Humphrey Problem, the truthmakers for statements about Humphrey would have Humphrey, and him *alone*, as its truthmaker. There is thus no Humphrey Problem that is applicable to the LRO. In all, we thus can see that LRO can procure the same theoretical advantages found within PR and LR, without incurring their issues, as, first, the possible worlds of the LRO can successfully fulfil the representational

role required of these entities. And, LRO fits very well with our pre-theoretic intuitions—as the extravagant entities within our ontology do not share in the same reality as the actual entities, there can be island universes within a given possible world and modal statements about entities are solely about those entities. LRO thus seems to provide a viable modal metaphysics for formulating the MROA within, and so we should proceed forward in utilising *this* specific modal framework for formulating our ontological argument. To this task, we now turn.

3.3 Precisified Premise and Conclusion:

A ‘Victorious’ Argument

According to the metaphysical framework assumed by the MROA, there is a pluriverse that includes within it an infinite plurality of concrete possible worlds. These possible worlds are to be identified as maximal regions of spacetime. That is, each of the worlds within the pluriverse is a collection of regions of spacetime that function as a ‘container’ for the individuals that occupy those regions. Hence, possible worlds can overlap in the sense that the self-same individual (‘exactly’) occupying a spacetime region in one possible world can also (‘weakly’) occupy another spacetime region in another possible world. Thus, individuals can enjoy multiple location. Amongst the infinite plurality of possible worlds, there is one specific world that bears the primitive absolute property of actuality. All of the merely possible worlds exist within the pluriverse with a different ontological status from the actual world. That is, they are *beings-by-courtesy* and thus exist with a lesser degree of being than the actual world, which secures the ontological distinction between the actual world and the other merely possible worlds that populate the pluriverse. Actuality is thus absolute and a unique characteristic of one possible world within the pluriverse. Underwriting this plurality of worlds is the Principle of Plenitude—which captures the fact of there not being any genuine potentiality that can remain unfulfilled—and thus, within the present context, this principle ensures that there are no gaps in logical space. Hence, within the current metaphysical framework, any way a possible world could be is a way that some world is—with every kind of object, event, state of affairs (and other categories of entities) being realised in some world—which thus results in their being an infinite plurality of possible worlds (and inhabitants of those worlds)

that make up the pluriverse. In identifying the nature of the possible worlds, and the inhabitants of those worlds, one can, as noted previously, draw on the Principle of Consistent Describability, which expresses the fact that a consistent set of sentences is to be taken as one that corresponds to at least one world. That is, there should be (at least) as many worlds as one can consistently suppose. Thus, if there is a consistent description of something, then there will be a world in the pluriverse with that thing existing within it. Given this (as Lewis supposed in terming himself a 'polytheist' and taking the number of 'Gods' in logical space to be at least ≥ 2), there should thus be *at least* one possible world where there is an MGB—if this being does not have to satisfy an inconsistent description in order to be. That is, if an MGB does not have to satisfy an inconsistent description in order to exist, then in some world or another within the pluriverse, this entity does, in fact, exist. Now, recall that an MGB is defined as an entity (i.e., a trope) that is maximal in power, and thus has a *maximally consistent set of great-making attributes* (i.e., the entailed characteristics of maximal knowledge, freedom, goodness, eternity and immensity); thus MGB is *by definition* one that does not satisfy an inconsistent description but instead has components that are mutually consistent (and thus internally coherent). Based on this, there is thus a guarantee that there is (at least) one possible world within the pluriverse that includes an MGB as one of its inhabitants. This postulation here is indeed *not* problematic within the current modal framework that we are operating within, as consistency (given the Principle of Plenitude and the (underwriting principle of) Consistent Describability) does, in fact, entail possibility—where possibility here is the inhabiting of one (or more) concrete worlds within the pluriverse. Hence, we do have support for the Possibility Premise that features in the MROA in the form of Principles of Plenitude and Consistent Desirability, in combination, allowing consistency to entail possibility (i.e., the inhabiting of a specific possible world). However, as an MGB is *not* taken within the MROA to be a necessary being,⁴³ one is not committed to affirming its existence in all other worlds as well, *based on its necessity*. Rather, the grounds for one making this additional move—once one is committed to an MGB's existence in one possible world—is based on one of its other great-making attributes—namely, that of the *im-*

mentsity of an MGB. The immensity of an MGB, as noted previously, is that of this being existing in an uncircumscribed manner. That is, other ‘non-immense’ entities are taken to be limited to a certain part of space, whereas, as an immense entity, an MGB is not subject to any limitations and thus is not constrained by any spatial boundaries. Thus, there is no possible region of space that does not have the MGB being ‘present’ within it. In other words, an MGB cannot be ‘contained’ and thus ‘fills’ all that *can* be filled with itself—that is, there cannot be any finite space or location that is not, in some way, or another, ‘occupied’ by the MGB. Now, as the MGB is taken to exist at least one possible world within the pluriverse (which is defined as a maximally, spatiotemporally related region of spacetime)—on the grounds of plenitude and it not fulfilling an inconsistent description—the MGB, as with other concrete entities, exists as an occupant of a spatiotemporal region at one possible world.

However, as an MGB is immense, it cannot be constrained or limited within the boundaries of a *single spatiotemporal region* but must be present at all the other spatial regions within the specific world that it exists at. Yet, as each of the worlds within the pluriverse according to LRO (possibly) overlap, the MGB cannot then be constrained within *one* specific world; rather, it must surpass that world and be present at (‘be an occupier of,’ or ‘fill up’) the spatiotemporal regions of each of the other worlds as well. Thus, if one is committed to the existence of an MGB in one world—as an occupier of a specific spatiotemporal region—then, on the basis that this type of being cannot be subject to any limitations—and thus is not limited to a certain part of space, nor constrained by any spatial boundaries—one must also be committed to his presence in all the other possible spatial regions within the pluriverse, which is just to say that he is an occupier of all the other possible worlds within it, given that a possible world is simply a maximally, spatiotemporally related region of spacetime. In short, the existence and presence of the MGB in the region(s) of one world ‘spills’ over into other worlds by it filling up the regions of all of these worlds.

The position being formulated here can now be further precisified by taking into account, first, the distinction between existing *at* a world and *at* the standpoint of a world, and, second, and more

importantly, the distinction between fundamental presence and derivative presence. Focusing first on the former distinction: a distinction can be drawn between an entity existing at the ‘standpoint of a world and ‘at a world,’ and we can take an MGB to either be conceived of as an entity that exists in the former way, or as one that exists in the latter way, in relation to the single possible world that we are taking it to be an inhabitant of—let’s term this world *beta*-world: β . More specifically, we can take the MGB to either exist *at* β by there being a certain region in which he is *present at*, and that region is a part of that world—thus, the MGB is a spatiotemporal object. Or, we can take the MGB to exist at the standpoint of β —where an entity exists from the standpoint of a given world if, as noted previously, it ‘belongs to the least restricted domain that is normally . . . appropriate in evaluating the truth at that world of quantifications.’ The MGB, within this specific location, thus does not exist exactly or weakly at β ; rather, he can be taken to be among the objects that exist from the standpoint of β . And thus, has the same *ontological status* as abstract entities—without, however, being like these objects in all respects.⁴⁴ That is, in other words, the MGB has the same status as (some) abstract entities *qua* existing from the standpoint of β . Now, for the argument being formulated—namely, the MROA—which specific mode of existence is chosen: that of existing at the standpoint of β , or *at* β , is not overly important; rather, where this distinction comes into play is concerning whether one wants to conceive of the eternity of the MGB in a timeless or temporal manner. As, in one conceiving of the MGB as a timeless being, one would want to affirm its existence from the standpoint of β , as doing so would enable him to be an entity that exists outside of time altogether—and thus would lack temporal succession, location and extension (as these would be features had by an occupant of a spatiotemporal region of a given world [and not those of an entity that exists outside of a world]). However, in conceiving of the MGB as a temporal entity, then one would want to affirm its existence *at* β , as doing so would enable him to be an entity that exists within time—as these would be features that he would have as an occupant of a spatiotemporal region of a given world. Nevertheless, in proceeding forward, we can assume the latter mode of existence of the MGB existing *at* β —and leave open the possibility of one re-

interpreting this as him existing from the standpoint of β if one wants to uphold the timelessness of the MBG.

So, in focusing now on the distinction between exact/weak location and fundamental presence/derivative presence, we can understand the MGB's existence at β to be correctly conceived of as him being exactly and weakly located at a spatiotemporal region within β —let's term this region $r1$. That is, as noted previously, for an entity to be weakly located at a region is for that region to not be completely free of that entity. And for an entity to be exactly located at a region is for that entity to be entirely located at that region—in that, that specific region is not completely free of him, and all the regions that are disjoint from that specific region are completely free of him—and for it to be pervasively located at that region—in that the entity completely fills that region. The MGB is thus taken to be exactly located at $r1$, and thus, because of this, he is also weakly located at it,⁴⁵ and this occupation of $r1$ is had *fundamentally*. That is, the MGB is exactly (and weakly) located at $r1$ *in its own right*. In other words, the locative facts about where the MGB is located at obtain in virtue of facts about the MGB together with $r1$ and the location relation (of exact (and weak) location) that ties them to that region. Being fundamentally located at $r1$ in β is thus not reducible to the MGB standing in a causal or epistemic relation to any other distinct entity that is itself located in a fundamental manner at that region. We can thus illustrate this through Figure 3. as follows (where the 'oval shape' represents a 'concrete world,' the letter 'G' stands for 'God (i.e., the MGB)'s location/presence at a spatiotemporal region,' the 'squares' represent 'a spatiotemporal region,' the 'black square' represent 'the MGB's exact, fundamental location' and the 'grey squares' representing the MGB's weak, derivative locations'):

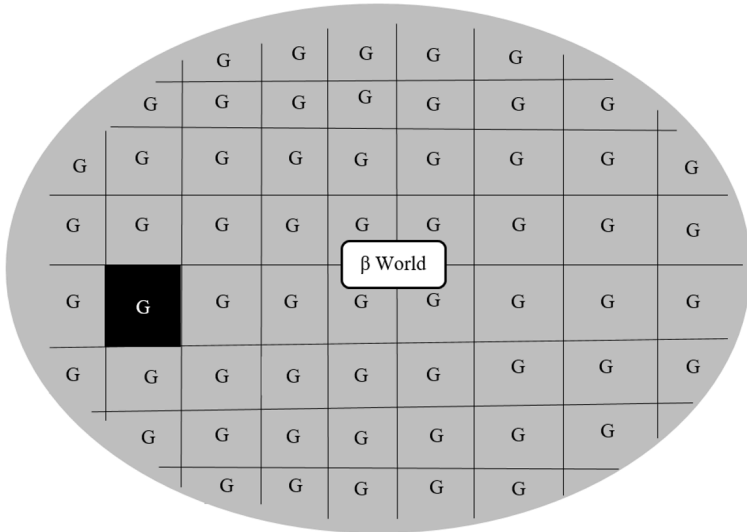


Figure 3. The MGB's Presence in a Concrete World

The MGB thus exists within the concrete world β by being exactly (and weakly) located at a specific spatiotemporal region that is a part of β . Yet, given that it is part of the nature of the MGB to be immense—and thus lack limitations in relation to space—the MGB cannot be solely located within r_1 within β but, instead, his presence must *extend* across the boundaries of this region into that of another region r_2 and thus (on the basis of the immensity of MGB again) into other regions ' $r_3, r_4, r_5 \dots r_n$ ' within β —such that the MGB is *present, fully and completely in all the regions of β , at all times*. In other words, the MGB must be repletively present in all regions in the sense of being present at each and every region in β . However, this presence must not stop simply at the boundaries of the 'maximal collection of spatiotemporal regions'—which is simply that of β as a concrete world—but must continue to *extend* across the boundaries of this world into that of another world β_1 —filling up all of the regions of this world in the same manner that it did in β —and thus (on the basis of the immensity of MGB again) into each and every world ' $\beta, \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4 \dots \beta_n$ ' within the pluriverse—such that

the MGB is *present, fully and completely in (all the regions of) all the worlds within the pluriverse, at all times*. It will be helpful to illustrate this point through Figure 4. as follows (where the ‘large oval shape’ represents the ‘pluriverse,’ the ‘smaller oval shapes’ represent ‘concrete worlds (with the middle shape representing the ‘actual world’),’ the letter ‘G’ stands for ‘God (i.e., the MGB)’s location/presence at a spatiotemporal region,’ the ‘squares’ represent ‘a spatiotemporal region,’ the ‘black square’ represent ‘the MGB’s exact, fundamental location’ and the ‘grey squares’ represent the MGB’s weak, derivative locations’):

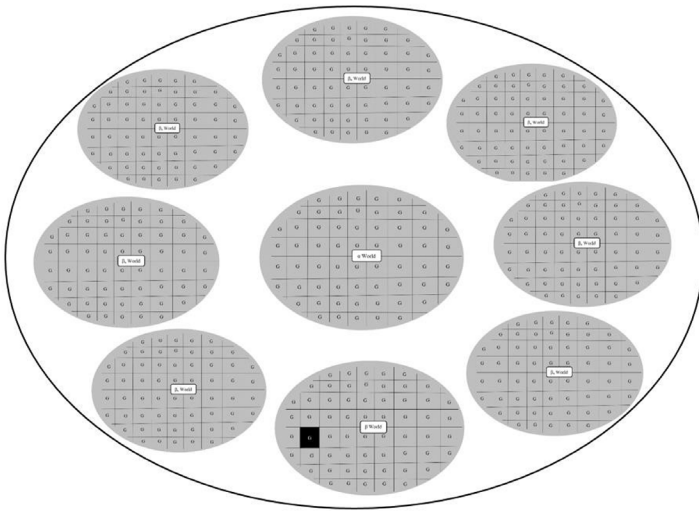


Figure 4. The MGB's Presence in the Pluriverse

The presence of the MGB at each of the regions outside of r_1 in β , and each of the infinite plurality of worlds within the pluriverse, cannot be that of an exact location, given the fact that if the MGB is exactly located at r_1 —and thus is *entirely located* there—then he cannot also be exactly located at any other disjoint region. That is, all of the other disjoint regions that, when brought together as a collection, make up the other worlds within the pluriverse must be *completely free* of him. Hence, the presence of the MGB in each of the other regions outside of r_1 in β , and all the other worlds within the pluriverse outside of β , must be that of him having a *weak location* at those regions and

worlds, and this must be had in a *derivative* manner. For an entity to be derivatively present at a region, as noted previously, is for them to be weakly located at that region by them standing in a causal and/or epistemic relation to an entity that is itself fundamentally (exactly and/or weakly) located at that region. The MGB is thus derivatively weakly located at all the other spatiotemporal regions within the pluriverse—those regions are *not* completely free of him—by him being causally and epistemically related to each of the entities that are occupants of those regions—and thus the locative facts about where the MGB is located at obtain, not in virtue of facts about the MGB, but in virtue of the locative facts about where some distinct entity is located fundamentally, together with the various relations (i.e., exact and/or weak location relations) it bears to the entity in question located at a region and the location relation that ties them to that region. The MGB, being immense, is thus *repletively present at all of the regions within the pluriverse*—which is to say that he is *present at each and every world within the pluriverse*. However, the presence—or ‘existence’—of the MGB at β (specifically $r1$ of β) is that of him being exactly (and weakly) located at β , in a fundamental sense—that is, he is present at that world in his own right. However, the presence—or ‘existence’—of the MGB in all of the worlds within the pluriverse outside of β (and also all of the regions outside of $r1$ in β) is that of him being weakly located at those worlds, in a derivative sense—that is, his presence at all of those worlds is nothing more than that of him standing in some causal and/or epistemic relation to all of the distinct entities that occupy the spatiotemporal regions that make up these worlds.

On the basis of the position reached here—namely, that of the MGB being ‘present’ or ‘existing’ at all of the worlds within the pluriverse—we can thus now also take the MGB to be a being that is present, or ‘exists’ within the actual world as well—which we can now show as follows: first, as the location relation of ‘existing at’ is taken to be synonymous to ‘located/present at’ or ‘occupier of’ in the chorological system under study, to say the MGB is present in each and every world is to say that he ‘exists at’ each and every world—though in a derivative manner for all of the worlds but one. Second, and most importantly, as the actual world—which we can term the *alpha*-world: α —is simply taken to be one amongst an infinite plurality of *concrete* worlds, then,

as the MGB exists at each and every world within this plurality, it must also exist at α as well. More fully, α is distinguished from the other 'merely possible worlds' by having a fundamental way of being that is expressed by a specific elite quantifier. The merely possible worlds are beings-by-courtesy and thus enjoy a *degenerate way of being* due to these entities being the entities that remain when the ranges of the elite quantifiers are subtracted from the range of the unrestricted quantifier. The merely possible worlds possess a lesser degree of reality—where a possible world's degree of being is proportionate to the naturalness of its most natural mode of existence. Hence, the merely possible worlds degeneratively exist—they exist and are not in the domain of an elite quantifier—and thus exist to a less than maximal degree. Whereas α has a fundamental way of being—it exists and is in the domain of an elite quantifier (e.g. $\exists 1$)—and thus has the highest degree of being.

The immensity of the MGB leads to it not only existing at (being present at or located at) each of the merely possible worlds that have a degenerate way of being, but also—on the basis of it not being possible for the MGB to be constrained by spatial boundaries—its existence (presence or location) must also extend into whichever world is taken to have the special ontological status of being α . In other words, by taking the MGB to exist in one possible world—which we are allowed to do within the current metaphysical (modal) framework, based on the Principles of Plenitude and Consistent Describability—one must also affirm the fact of him (derivatively) 'existing at' α as well—in short, the possibility of the MGB's existence leads to the actuality of it as well. One thus has firm grounds for affirming the existence of God in α on the basis of his possibility (i.e., that of him existing at a possible world). Taking all of these things into account, we can now thus see how the MROA is not subject to the BQ Objection. Specifically, the MROA wards off this objection by this argument *not* relying on the notion of necessity or any axioms of modal logic—which, as noted previously, would link the Possibility Premise too closely to the conclusion of the argument. Rather, based on the nature of the MGB, the consistency of his nature, and certain principles within the metaphysical framework under analysis—namely, the Principles of Plenitude and Consistent Describability, one must affirm the (fundamental) presence (location or existence) of the MGB in (at least) one possible world, and then

based on one specific aspect of this nature—namely, the immensity, which is entailed by the MGB being a maximally powerful entity—he must also be (derivatively) present at (located at or existing at) each and every world within the pluriverse, including that of α as well. Thus, one is led to the conclusion that the MGB ‘exists’ in actuality—from that of him existing (or being located) as a possible entity (in a single concrete possible world). There is thus no charge of one begging the question that can be raised, as one would indeed affirm the possibility of an MGB (within the framework of the LRO), based on its consistency—and the fact that consistency leads to possibility, which then leads to actuality. Thus, on the basis of *this* objection, one does not have reason to withhold judgment concerning the veracity of its conclusion. However, one could indeed ask if there is another reason that can be put forward in support of someone withholding judgment in this way? In other words, is there another objection that needs to be faced before one can rightly affirm the soundness of the MROA? One potential objection in the literature is that of what we can term the *Reverse Objection*, which we can state succinctly as follows:

- (13) (Reverse Objection) An individual should withhold judgment concerning the veracity of the conclusion of the Modal Ontological Argument due to the possibility of forming a reverse, symmetrical argument that commits one to a conclusion that is inconsistent with the conclusion of the Modal Ontological Argument.

It will be helpful to now further flesh this objection out within the context of the original ‘modal’ version of the ontological argument: the MOA, and then proceed to show how this objection cannot be raised against the new version—namely, the MROA.

3.3 A Reverse Objection: Symmetry Broken

The Reverse Objection (hereafter, RO) centres on showing how the possibility of one forming a reverse, symmetrical argument for the non-existence of God—termed a ‘reverse Modal Ontological Argument’—provides good reason to withhold judgment concerning the veracity of the Possibility Premise, and thus the MOA as a whole. The Reverse Modal Ontological Argument (hereafter, Reverse MOA) can be stated succinctly as follows:

- (14) (Reverse Modal OA) (ME) Maximal Excellence =_{df} The possession by a being of omnipotence, omniscience and perfect goodness by a being.
 (MG) Maximal Greatness =_{df} The necessary possession by a being of omnipotence, omniscience and perfect goodness.
- (i) There is a possible world in which no being is maximally great.
 - (ii) Therefore, there is no being that is maximally excellent in every possible world.
 - (iii) Therefore, there is no being (i.e., God) that is maximally excellent in the actual world.

The conclusion of the reverse MOA is inconsistent with that of the conclusion of the MOA—and thus, one cannot affirm both of them; however, as the structure of the arguments are similar—and as each relies on the same inference, underwritten by system S5—where the central premise of the MOA: (i) of (1), posits the possibility of a maximally great being existing, and thus it existing in the actual world, and the central premise of the reverse MOA: (i) of (14), posits the possibility of this being failing to exist, and thus it failing to exist in the actual world as well. The question to be faced is whether a non-theist would have reason to favour the former premise, and thus conclusion, over that of the latter. Yet, it seems to be the case that, as Graham Oppy (2019, §8) writes, ‘if you do not already accept the claim that there is an entity which possesses maximal greatness, then you won’t agree that the first of these arguments is more acceptable than the second.’ And thus, as Joshua Rasmussen (2018, 182) in further emphasising this issue writes, ‘The conclusion is this: in the absence of an independent reason to think that God’s existence (or non-existence) is genuinely possible, the proper response is to withhold judgment about such a possibility.’ One can now ask the important question of if this type of objection can be raised against the MROA, and thus, because of this, one should also withhold judgment concerning the veracity of its conclusion? I believe not, as the MROA is able to ward off this objection by a reverse, symmetrical argument *not* being able to be formulated against this argument—which we can see by put-

ting forward a candidate reverse Modal Realist Ontological Argument (hereafter, reverse MROA):

(15) (Reverse Modal Realist OA)

(MG) Maximal Greatness =_{df} The possession of a maximally consistent set of great-making attributes by an entity (i.e., a trope) that renders it as extensively and intensively superior to any other possible being.

(i) There is a concrete possible world, within the pluriverse, in which no entity is maximally great.

(ii) Therefore, there is no being that is maximally great in every concrete possible world, within the pluriverse.

(ii) Therefore, there is no entity (i.e., God) that is maximally great that is present in the actual world, within the pluriverse.

The reverse MROA *prima facie* parallels the MROA; however, where the ‘symmetry breaker’ lies is concerning the fact that this argument is, firstly, *not* a valid argument, given that the conclusion does not necessarily follow from the ‘Impossibility Premise’ (i.e., premise (i) of the reverse MROA), and, secondly, even if one can deny the ‘existence’ (or presence) of a MGB in α it does not mean that one cannot also affirm his ‘existence’ (or ‘presence’) in α in *another sense*. Focusing first on the former point: it is quite clear that the Impossibility Premise is a consistent statement—in that, one cannot derive a contradiction from the supposition that there is a concrete world within the pluriverse in which there is no MGB—and thus, on the basis of the Principles of Plenitude and Consistent Describability, there must thus be a concrete world that is such that this type of being does not exist within it. However, even if this is plausibly the case, this does not entail the further state of affairs of there not being an MGB in α for the following reason: the existence of the MGB in all the worlds within the pluriverse is secured by him being ‘immense’ rather than

him being 'necessary,' thus even if, for one reason or another, the MGB is not able to be present within one concrete world: 'β3,' this does not lead to it *not* existing in all the other worlds as well 'β, β1, β2, β4 . . . βn'—as would be so if the attribute of necessity was underwriting his existence in all the other worlds. And, why this is the case is because the immensity of the MGB leads to him 'filling up' spatial regions that *can* be filled—and so if there is a specific maximal spatiotemporal region (i.e., a concrete world) that is such that an MGB doesn't exist at it—then there is no specific reason why, firstly, it must do so—given that it is impossible—and, secondly, why it cannot still also fill all the *other* regions, which—unless an independent reason is provided for why α is, in fact, the particular world in which the MGB does not exist in—would include that of the regions of α as well.

Turning our attention now onto the latter point: even if one concedes the 'non-existence' of the MGB in α it does not mean that he does not 'exist' *simpliciter*. As one is required to specify what they mean by the term 'existence' in this specific context. More precisely, within the framework of the MROA, the 'existence of an entity' is synonymous with the 'location' or 'presence' of an entity at a certain region.⁴⁶ Now, the 'presence' or 'existence' of the MGB in α, is that of a derivative 'presence' or 'existence.' That is, the MGB is present at α through him being in (some manner) related to other entities within that world, and thus does not exist in α by being (exactly and/or weakly) located at that world in a *fundamental manner* (i.e., by occupying a region within this world in its own right). Hence, in all of the concrete worlds that make up the pluriverse, except for one, the MGB is taken to not 'exist' (fundamentally). Despite this, however, one can also affirm the fact of the MGB being able to 'exist' (derivatively) in all of these worlds as well. Thus, one can indeed affirm the fact, on the one hand, of there not being any entity that is maximally great and 'exists' within α, whilst still maintaining the fact, on the other hand, of there being an entity that is maximally great and 'exists' in α in a different sense—the derivative sense. Thus, as α has occupiers of its regions, the MGB can be taken to exist at this world on the basis of his relation to these entities, even if he does not exist at the world in the same manner that these entities do—namely, that of a fundamental manner. The proponent of the reverse MROA thus needs to

provide further argumentation for why the MGB cannot exist (or be present) within α in a fundamental manner, and they also will need to provide further argumentation for why the MGB cannot exist (or be present) within α in a derivative manner as well. However, given the nature of the MGB as a maximally powerful entity (i.e., a maximal power trope), he will have the power to be present in this specific way—and on the basis of his immensity—he will indeed be present in this way—and thus one can affirm the fact of it being *ad hoc* for one to suppose that there is a limitation on his power and immensity so that they can establish the conclusion of the reverse MROA. Thus, as it stands, the reverse MROA is not a successful parallel argument of the MROA. Hence, the MROA is left unscathed by the BQ and Reverse Objection, and thus one has good reason for adopting this specific version of the ontological argument, which appears, from the current standpoint, to indeed be a ‘victorious’ one.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the central focus of this article was to provide a ‘new’ ontological argument for the existence of God. The specific version of the ontological argument that was provided was a ‘modal’ version that was formulated within the modal realist metaphysical framework of David K. Lewis, Kris McDaniel and Philip Bricker. By formulating this argument, termed the Modal Realist Ontological Argument, within this framework—and through a further precisification of some of its central theological tenets—the plausibility of the central premise of the argument was able to be established, and a successful conclusion reached concerning the existence of God—in a manner, however, that was free from charges of begging the question or the possibility of parallel.

Notes

1. More precisely, Plantinga (1974a, 217–221) sees this argument as establishing the ‘rationality’ of belief in God rather than it serving as an argument for the existence of God. The primary reason for this is due to the issues that will be detailed below on the ‘Possibility Premise.’ However, as most commentators have seen the need for one to establish the latter in order for the former to hold as well, we will proceed forward as if Plantinga’s version of the ontological argument is formulated with the purpose of providing an argument for God’s existence.

2. There is no standard formulation of Plantinga's Modal Ontological Argument in the current literature—with some formulations of it containing one premise and one conclusion (i.e., Oppy, [2019]), whereas other formulations contain three premises and one conclusion (i.e., Plantinga, [1974a]), one premise and four conclusions (i.e., Nagasawa, [2017]), or six premises and one conclusion (i.e., Craig, [2008]) etc. Thus, the formulation that will be utilised in this article will take a middle position of containing one premise and two conclusions. Moreover, in Plantinga's discussion of the argument, he uses the language of 'exemplification' of omnipotence, omniscience and perfect goodness, whilst other commentators have used the language of 'instantiation.' In this article, the term 'possession' will be used instead in order to include each of the former terms and to not forestall 'Classical Theists' (who adopt the doctrine of Divine Simplicity) from adopting the argument.
3. Plantinga (1974a,b) prefers to use the term 'wholly good' rather than 'perfectly good.' However, to maintain the normal usage of the term in the existing literature, the latter term will be utilised here instead.
4. Other versions of the MOA have been provided by Charles Hartshorne (1962), Norman Malcolm (1960), E.J. Lowe (2012), and Yujin Nagasawa (2017), among others.
5. Attempts at supporting this premise range from Alexander Pruss's (2001) 'Ontomystical Arguments,' and Pruss' (2010) 'Flourishing Life Argument,' Joshua Rasmussen's (2018) 'Value Argument,' Yujin Nagasawa's (2017) 'Real Maximality argument' and Carl R Kordig's (1981) 'Deontic Argument.'
6. This is not to say that God cannot be conceived of as a necessary being; rather, it is simply that the argument's focus is not on establishing this fact—and thus it is silent on this issue.
7. And there being no possibility of forming another version that can be shown to be applicable to it.
8. I will use the term 'attribute' or 'characteristic' rather than 'property,' as the former allows one to not be committed to the maximally great being possessing any 'properties'—and thus him being 'metaphysically simple'—as these terms are able to refer to other entities that function as the attributes or characteristics of this being.
9. Leibniz's Law, which is often conceptualised as the principle of the indiscernibility of identicals, is conceived of here as its converse—the principle of the identity of indiscernibles, which can be stated formally as such:
$$\forall \varphi (\varphi(x) \leftrightarrow \varphi(y) \rightarrow x = y).$$
10. I leave the account of analogy here undefined.
11. An assumption is made here concerning a powerful trope being multi-track, rather than single-track.
12. We can assume the notion of intrinsicality noted above.
13. Though the chorological system that will be utilised is that of Parsons,' one can re-formulate the MROA within a different system—such as that of Cody Gilmore's (2018) and Hud Hudson's (2005) etc.

14. These terms are analogous, and thus there will be an interchanging of them throughout, without any change in meaning.
15. Inman (2017, 2021) did not make the distinction between exact/weak location; however, this distinction is helpful in further illuminating the fundamental/derivative distinction that he does draw.
16. Hence, even though it seems to be the case that an entity that is exactly located at one region cannot be weakly located at another region, one can indeed be simultaneously located in these ways *if* one is exactly located *fundamentally* and weakly located *derivatively*. This way out of this particular conceptual problem will be utilised below.
17. Moving forward, unless indicated otherwise, I will normally utilise the term 'maximally great being' rather than that of the term 'God' as a reference term for him.
18. As noted previously, at the centre of the MROA is the defined notion of maximal greatness—where the MROA (unlike that of the MOA) does not adopt the distinction between a maximally excellent being and a maximally great being. Rather the MROA solely affirms (a precisified version) of the former—re-terming it maximal greatness in the process—and does not take aboard the task of establishing the 'necessary existence' of a maximally excellent being. Hence, the MROA does not take necessary existence to be a 'great-making attribute.' In proceeding forward in this manner, one is able to affirm the traditional usage of the term, and, most importantly, it provides the 'first steps' for dealing with the BQ, which can be detailed as follows: a detractor of the MOA as noted previously, would have issues in affirming the possibility of a 'maximally great being'—as originally understood—but would potentially *not* have an issue with affirming the possibility of a 'maximally excellent being'—as originally understood—as Tyron Goldschmidt (2020, 49) writes, 'when atheists accept the possibility of God, they might accept only the possibility of maximal excellence, not maximal greatness.' Thus, in utilising the single defined notion of a maximally great being—which will be shown to simply be a precisification of Plantinga's definition of a maximally excellent being—one can begin to ward off this oft-raised issue with this type of ontological argument, as will now be shown below.
19. The paradox of whether an omnipotent (i.e. maximally powerful) being can create a stone that is too heavy for it to lift.
20. Mutual consistency would be things like whether perfect goodness is consistent with maximal power—as a maximally powerful being can do anything but, given its perfect goodness, it cannot perform the action of sinning. And, consistency with reality will be such things as consistency of the existence of evil with an omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good being.
21. This converges with the Christian view of the doctrine of the Trinity, where the MGB: the Father, is of the same nature as the Son and the Spirit, and is 'perichoretically' linked/co-located with both of those entities. The position formulated here, however, does not rely on this doctrine for it to be correct.
22. In Christian theology, these duplicates are termed the 'Son' and the 'Spirit.'

23. In previous writing, I have referred to this entity as an ‘omnipotence-trope’; however, in order to ward off certain consistency issues with the notion of ‘omnipotence,’ I now will refer to this entity as a ‘maximal power trope.’
24. In other writings I have construed the relation between God (i.e., the MGB) and his attributes as that of an identity relation, which I still affirm. However, for ease of explicating the MROA within the current context, I will proceed forward with the conception of this relation as an entailment relation.
25. A number of these definitions are based on the illuminating work of Swinburne (2016)—though the main divergence with him is on these definitions lacking any temporal indexing (in order to allow for an MGB to potentially be atemporal), and the attributes are taken here to be ‘maximal attributes,’ rather than ‘omni-attributes.’
26. Thus, to ward off a potential objection that can be raised here, conceiving of the MGB as a trope does not rob him of this personhood, given that he is a trope of a modular nature (i.e., a property*).
27. Whereas in recognising an action as bad, the MGB would have no motivation to perform it
28. Arguments can be put forward for conceptualising God in either of these two ways; however, within the present context, we can take both views concerning the MGB’s eternity on board for the formulation of our argument.
29. Unlike that of Inman and others, I do not take the attribute of ‘replete presence’ (‘maximal presence/omnipresence’) to be conceptually independent of that of the attribute of immensity; rather, this attribute is taken to be a component, or expression of the immensity of the MGB.
30. I adopt the term ‘present at’ rather than ‘wholly present at,’ as Inman (2021) does, in order to be in line with the chorological system of Parsons that does not recognise the relation of being wholly present.
31. Arguments can, again—as with the notion of eternity—be put forward for conceptualising God in either of these two ways; however, within the present context, we can take both views concerning God’s presence on board.
32. I follow van Inwagen in terming these theses ‘Concretism’ and ‘Abstractionism.’ Furthermore, Lewis’ Concretism is usually termed ‘genuine’ modal realism—with Plantinga’s Abstractionism frequently not being termed a modal realist account. However, following Plantinga (2003, 192–228) in identifying his thesis as a modal realist thesis, I will break convention here in taking both theses to be alternative modal realist accounts. Despite this, however, subsequent to this section, I will be using the general term ‘modal realism’ to refer to Concretism rather than Abstractionism. For an alternative Abstractionist theory, see (Adams, 1974).
33. In Lewisian Realism, there are no ‘impossible worlds,’ and thus one can refer to a ‘possible’ world simply as a possible world. However, to keep in line with Abstractionism—which allows for impossible worlds—the qualifier ‘possible’ will be retained throughout.
34. LRO worlds that make up the pluriverse are similar to the worlds that are postulated by the more traditional ‘Lewisian Realism’—in that both theses conceive of

- worlds as 'concrete' objects that are maximal spatiotemporal entities. However, in the framework provided by LRO, worlds, *contra* Lewis, are *not* defined as maximal mereological sums of individuals. Rather, a given world is a 'concrete' object that is a *maximal region of spacetime* that has objects as occupants (not parts), is spatiotemporally isolated from other worlds, and is absolutely actual—by being an instance of the category of actuality and bearing the property of actuality.
35. In Lewis' LR, the larger possible individual would have smaller possible individuals (such as atoms, humans and planets) as parts, rather than spatiotemporal regions.
 36. That is, LR, and not LRO, is committed to the thesis of world-boundness. More on this below.
 37. The conception of the occupation (location) relation here as that of an exact occupation and weak occupation relation is original to this article. It is important to utilise this distinction here, as multiple-location would only be possible within this chorological system if an entity is exactly/weakly located in one region and then is weakly (but not exactly) located at another region—given that the exact location of an individual includes that of an entity being entirely located in that region. This does not stop, however, an entity from being weakly located in another region in some other way.
 38. As before, I adopt the term 'present at' rather than 'wholly present at,' as McDaniel (2004) does, in order to be in line with the chorological system of Parsons that does not recognise the relation of being wholly present.
 39. The following statement of the Principle of Plenitude is not found in Lewis' work but is a more general statement of the principle found in the work of Arthur Lovejoy, and one that nevertheless captures the plenitude required by Lewis for his theory (and other modal realist theories).
 40. Pidgen and Entwisle see Lewis as taking this principle to be an important governing principle of his modal system (though they do see that it has some problems in fitting with Lewis' reductionist aims). Moreover, they, and others, also see Lewis as taking the Principle of Recombination to be a central underwriting principle for the Principle of Plenitude as well. More specifically, the Principle of Recombination states that *anything can co-exist, or fail to co-exist, with anything else*, or, as Lewis (1986, 88) writes, 'patching together parts of different possible worlds yields another possible world.' However, why this principle is not being adopted in the formulation of the LRO here is due to the fact that it is not a 'generative' principle—in that it allows one to duplicate and recombine entities, *once they are taken to exist*, but it does not help one to identify which entities can indeed exist within a given possible world. Moreover, it also does not help one to account for 'alien individuals' (i.e., individuals that are alien to the actual world). However, the Principle of Consistent Describability, which is a generative principle, can account for alien individuals, as even though there are individuals that exist in a possible world that cannot be captured by our coherent descriptions, one can take it to be the case that an *ideal cognizer* would be able to form these coherent descriptions that capture these entities, and thus the Principle of Consistent Describability should be construed as a principle

- that takes into account the coherent descriptions of an ideal cognizer, where if an ideal cognizer can form a coherent description about a thing, then there is a possible world that includes that thing.
41. This important statement is good anecdotal support for the position that is being formed here concerning the possibility of an MGB—as even Lewis himself affirmed the possibility of this type of being (though he did this within a less developed modal framework that does not allow for overlap—and thus these ‘god’s’ each being non-identical entities (or, more specifically, each being a counterpart of one another).
 42. Interestingly, Bricker (2007, 65) is open to there being more than one actual world but proceeds to explicate the position detailed here within a ‘one actual world’ framework. We shall follow suit.
 43. More specifically, the MROA is silent on this matter, and thus does not seek to argue for this being the case.
 44. This is important as MGB is not identified in this framework as an abstract entity, but simply as an entity that has the *same status* as an abstract entity—namely, existing from the standpoint of a world. Collier (2020, 59) has helpfully shown that it is not necessary (or sufficient) for an entity to *be* an abstract entity (with all the features of it) simply because it exists from the standpoint of a given world, as Lewis (1986, 83) himself allows *impure sets* to exist *at* a world—and not from the standpoint of a world—yet, these entities are abstract rather than concrete entities.
 45. Given the fact that $r1$ is not completely free of the MGB if it is exactly located at it.
 46. The response being formulated here to the Reverse Objection is not open to a proponent of the MOA, as this argument does not utilise the notion of location nor does it link this notion to that of the existence of an entity.

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