Abstract: Mereological nihilists typically employ a paraphrase strategy in order to mitigate the apparent absurdity of their denial of the existence of composite objects. I argue here that the nihilist’s paraphrase strategy is incomplete, because no schema for generating nihilistically acceptable paraphrases of sentences concerning material constitution has ever been given. Nor can an adequate schema be arrived at by generalising things that nihilists have already said. I fill this lacuna in the nihilist’s account by developing and defending a novel paraphrase schema that makes essential reference to the determinable-determinate relation that holds between arrangement-properties instantiated by the simples.

1. Introduction
In the same breath that mereological nihilists deny the existence of composite material Fs, they affirm the existence of simples arranged Fs-wise, that is, pluralities of partless subatomic particles that are each jointly empirically indistinguishable from single composite objects. Similarly, though nihilists must reject all intuitively true claims concerning which properties composite objects instantiate, they endorse corresponding sentences concerning what properties are instantiated by these pluralities of simples. In this way, nihilists offer paraphrases of intuitively true sentences that carry commitment to composite objects. By endorsing the truth of the paraphrases, they hope, the cost to their view of denying the truth of the original sentences is mitigated, at least to some extent. For example, by claiming that there are some simples Pacific Philosophical Quarterly

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arranged statue-of-David-wise, and that those simples are jointly 17 ft tall, nihilists hope to escape the charge of absurdity that typically greets their claim that Michelangelo’s 17 ft tall statue doesn’t exist.