Roberto Ciuni ▪ Kristie Miller ▪ Giuliano Torrengo
(Editors)

New Papers on the Present

Focus on Presentism

Philosophia

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication
in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie.
Detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at
http://dnb.d-nb.de.

ISBN 378-3-88405-103-0

Printed in Germany 2013

Presentism and Grounding Past Truths

Matthew Davidson

1. Introduction

In this paper I will consider a number of responses to the grounding problem for presentism. I don't think that the grounding problem is a damning problem for the presentist (it seems to me that presentism has much more serious problems with cross-time relations[1] and relativity). But each of the solutions comes at a cost, and some are much pricier than others. I will set out what I take these costs to be when I examine each response to the grounding problem.[2]

Presentism is the thesis that whatever exists is present. Equivalently, presentism is the thesis there are no merely past or future objects. The grounding problem for presentism arises when we try to square presentism with the idea that what is true must have a grounds for its truth. Typically this intuition about grounding is explicated by means of one of the two following principles.[3]

---

[1] See [Davidson 2003], [Crisp 2005], [De Clercq 2006], and [Ciuni and Torrengo 2012] for further discussion of the problem of cross-time relations.

[2] This essay is intended to provide a survey of the debates surrounding presentism and truthmaking. The reader should also consider Simon Keller's fine essay on this same topic ([Keller 2004]), as well as Brian Kierland's paper in this book.

[3] Here my terminology follows Merricks' helpful discussion in [Merricks 2007].

Truthmaker: Necessarily, for any true proposition, there is something that makes it true. (See, e.g. [Armstrong 1997], [Armstrong 2004]; and [Russell 1918].)

TSB (Truth supervenes on being.) Truth supervenes on what things there are and the properties and relations they instantiate. (See [Bigelow 1988], p. 133; [Lewis 1999], pp. 206–207, [Lewis 2001]).

Truthmaker has well-known troubles accounting for the truth of negative existentials. As a result, many plump for the weaker TSB instead.[4] TSB looks very plausible. I will assume it to be true throughout the course of this paper. If one rejected it (and Truthmaker), though, the grounding problem for presentism wouldn't arise.[5]

---

[4] Merricks argues ([Merricks 2007], Ch. 4) that TSB requires that each true proposition be made true by what it is "about", and as a result TSB doesn't, after all, help in accounting for the truth of negative existentials. I have some sympathy with Merricks' claim that grounding requires something stronger than TSB. This will surface at various points in the essay. But assessing Merricks' arguments that TSB, properly understood, is very much like Truthmaker is beyond the scope of this paper.

[5] TSB is quite weak. One could imagine someone demanding a grounds for past and future truths but allowing other violations of TSB, but it's diffcult to see how to motivate such a view. Indeed, [Merricks 2007] rejects TSB because he thinks it is inconsistent with presentism and presentism is true. [Sanson and Caplan 2010] suggest that the presentist should drop TSB and employ an irreducibly-tensed language to explain the present truth of past tensed (true) statements — a similar position is advanced by [Tallant 2009a] and [Tallant 2009b]. [Torrengo forthcoming] criticizes their arguments.

2. The grounding problem

Suppose TSB and presentism are true. Suppose, also, that Socrates doesn't exist anymore (he's not still around in virtue of being an immortal soul, say). Now, it seems as though

(1) Socrates was snubnosed

is true. It also seems that

(2) Obama was a child

is true. But on what do the truth of (1) and (2) supervene? Socrates no longer exists, and Obama no longer has the property *being a child*. The (typical) eternalist has ready grounds for the truth of (1) and (2). Even if Socrates doesn't exist now, Socrates exists. If a temporal part of Socrates was snubnosed, then (1) comes out true. Past childish temporal parts of Obama exist, and they make true (2). But the presentist can't make use of past objects (or past temporal parts of present objects) to explain how propositions like (1) and (2) are true.

A related problem

Consider (1). Suppose we have an appropriate ground for its truth. There is another problem lurking in the neighborhood, though. Suppose one is a presentist and a direct reference theorist. Then Socrates isn't around to be a constituent of the proposition *Socrates was snubnosed*. So the proposition can't be true because it's not "complete."[6] It seems to me that the presentist ought to reject direct reference and allow individual essences (haecceities or world-indexed essences) to be constituents of propositions. I will assume in this paper that the presentist has some sort of fix for this problem of incomplete or gappy singular propositions. Then the question

---

[6] See [Plantinga 1983], [Adams 1986], [Davidson 2000], [Davidson 2003], [Davidson 2007], and [Crisp 2007] for more on these sorts of worries.

will be: Assuming this, does the presentist have an appropriate supervenience base for complete propositions like (1) and (2)?

Three quick solutions

There are three very straightforward responses to the grounding problem. It's important to mention them, though I won't discuss them at length here. First, one might think that it is clear that TSB and presentism are in conflict, and give up presentism. Lewis ([Lewis 1999], p. 207) suggests just this. Second, one might think that it is clear that TSB and presentism are inconsistent, and choose to give up TSB. Trenton Merricks ([Merricks 2007]) does this. Merricks thinks that TSB, properly understood, is very similar to Truthmaker. TSB requires that the subvening base for the truth in question be what the truth is "about." None of the supervenience bases he surveys are such that non-present (past and future-tensed) truths are "about" them. So there is no supervenience base for non-present truths. But presentism is true; so much the worse for TSB.

I have some real sympathy for Merricks' arguments to the conclusion that (in essence) mere TSB as it's typically stated (and as I state it here) is too weak to fully capture our intuitions about grounding. However, I tend to think that a stronger grounding relationship tells in favor of eternalism.

Third, one might keep presentism, TSB, and claim there are no contingent truths about the past or future. Some philosophers–most famously Aristotle–have said that there are no future contingent truths. Usually this position is adopted as a way of escaping fatalism (divine or otherwise). Even so, this is not a position one adopts lightly. But the weight of this position pales in comparison to that of the view that there are no past truths. There are various paraphrase strategies one might adopt to try to ease some of the sting of this sort of view (see [Davidson 2003] for discussion of these). In the end, though, denying there are past truths is a view of prohibitive cost for most philosophers.

We now turn to five (other) solutions to the grounding problem.

3. Lucretianism

One way of reconciling TSB and presentism is to claim that there presently exists past-directed properties, and entities' instantiating these make true propositions about the past. So, again consider

(2) Obama was small.

(2) may be thought to be true in virtue of the fact that Obama has the property *having been small*. Obama's having this property entails that (2) is true, and we have our supervenience base. But what about

(1) Socrates was snubnosed?

Socrates isn't around anymore to provide a ground for the truth of (1), the way Obama can provide a ground for the truth of (2).[7] Taking his cue from Lucretius, John Bigelow ([Bigelow 1996]) argues that presentists might think that the grounds for the truth of propositions like (2) is the world's having the property *being such that Socrates was snubnosed*. Indeed, one can use any object that never passes out of existence or comes into existence and take its having the requisite past-directed (or future-directed) properties to be the grounds for the truth of propositions like (2).[8]

---

[7] I assume here the truth of serious presentism, the view that objects have properties at times only when they exist at that time. I think it follows from presentism; see [Davidson 2003] for an argument to this effect. See also [Bergmann 1999].

[8] For instance, one might follow [Chisholm 1990] and allow abstracta to bear these sorts of past and future-directed properties. It's worth pointing out that if you have a suffciently abundant view of properties, each abstract object will have these sorts of properties, and the world will have it, too. (Indeed, I have the property being such that Socrates was snubnosed.) Even on a solution like that of [Crisp 2007] or [Kierland and Monton 2007] on which the truth of past (or future) propositions is grounded by

There are a number of objections one might make to Lucretianism. Perhaps the most frequent objection one encounters to this sort of proposal is that positing these sorts of past-directed (or future-directed) properties is, in the words of Theodore Sider, *cheating* ([Sider 2001] pp. 36–41).[9] A property like *being such that Socrates was snubnosed* is "hypothetical" and – for the presentist – not reducible to categorical properties. It is hypothetical in the sense that it "points beyond itself, to the past" ([Sider 2001], p. 41). Now, it's not at all clear what the hypothetical-categorical distinction comes to, and Sider himself admits that the distinction is "elusive".[10] But it clearly is true in some important sense that *being such that Socrates was snubnosed* points beyond the present moment in a way that, say, *being square* doesn't. It's also clear why, for the presentist, this past-directed property isn't reducible to purely categorical properties in the way it might be for an eternalist. But the presentist may object that it isn't at all clear why relying on these sorts of irreducibly hypothetical properties is such a bad thing.[11] For instance, many philosophers think that modal properties can't be reduced to categorical properties, so many philosophers already are committed to irreducibly hypothetical properties.[12] Most metaphysicans think that in general hypothetical properties should be reduced to categorical properties where they

---

another sort of entity (ersatz times or a sui generis past), the properties of the Lucretian still will be exemplified (so long as one has a sufficiently abundant view of properties). The truth of past (and future) propositions will supervene on the exemplification of these properties. The difference between the Lucretian view and a view like Crisp's or that of Kierland and Monton's lies in there being another sort of entity on which the truth of past or future propositions also supervenes.

[9] See [Tallant 2009b] for further discussion of cheating.

[10] See [Crisp 2007] for further discussion of the distinction and the problems it (allegedly) raises for the presentist.

[11] See [Crisp 2007] for argument to this effect.

[12] David Lewis, of course, thinks he can reduce modal properties to categorical properties. See [Roy fothcoming] for insightful discussion of reducing modality.

can be so-reduced. So being left with unreduced past or future-directed properties would appear to be a cost of Lucretianism.

A second related objection to Lucretianism is that it is extravagant ontologically. It's not just that one is committed to the existence of irreducibly hypothetical properties. It's that one is committed to so many of them. For instance,

(3) Caesar crossed the Rubicon

also is true. So the Lucretian is committed to the existence of *being such that Caesar crossed the Rubicon*. And so on.

It's not clear to me that this is a serious objection to Lucretianism. First, many already are committed to there being a property for every predicate (for instance, one might think this if properties are taken to be the semantic values of predicates). So there is independent reason to think that these properties exist.

Second, the Lucretian might think of a property like *being such that Socrates was snubnosed* as a complex entity composed of a categorical base – *being Socrates* and *being snubnosed* – together with a hypothetical element – *being past*. So the Lucretian might "separate out" the hypothetical element from the past and future-directed properties she uses for grounding truths and be left (*qua* Lucretian) with only two irreducibly hypothetical properties, *being past* and *being future*. There still looks to be a cost here for the Lucretian in that there are irreducibly hypothetical properties. But the cost might be lower than one might have thought at first, as there are only two of them.

A third objection to Lucretianism we might call the *shifting-truthmakers objection*.[13] Suppose there's a cup named "Frank." At t_1 Frank is red. So

(4) Frank is red

[13] I make the same sort of argument in [Davidson 2004], p. 21.

is true at t_1. Intuitively, (4) is made true by Frank's exemplifying the property *being red*. Suppose at t_2 that Frank is painted blue. Then

(5) Frank was red

is true at t_2. For the Lucretian, (5) will be made true by Frank's exemplifying the property *having been red*. The grounds for the truth of (5) is, like the grounds for (4), Frank's having a property. Suppose at t_3 Frank is annihilated. (5) is still true, but suddenly its truthmaker switches to the world's having the property (or an abstract object's having the property) *being such that Frank was red*. This sudden shift in truthmakers is troubling, and it's not one the typical eternalist has to worry about. (I will argue it is one that several other presentist solutions to the grounding problem have to contend with, as well.) The Lucretian might propose that (5) at t_2 is made true by the world's having the property *being such that Frank was red*. But of course this doesn't allow the Lucretian to avoid the shift in truthmakers from t_1 to t_2.

It should be said that it's not *merely* that the truthmakers for (4) to (5) (at t_1 or at t_2) shift. There also is a problem in what the truthmaker shifts *to*. On the face of it, Frank's exemplifying a property is an appropriate truthmaker for both (4) and (5). Both seem to be *about* Frank and a property. But (5) simply doesn't seem to be *about* the world's having a property. To see this, suppose you think of propositions as structured sorts of entities. So, for the presentist, (5) is composed of an individual essence of Frank[14] and the property *having been red*. How, then, is a proposition composed of these elements grounded by the world's having a property? (This suggests, I think, that something stronger than TSB is needed to capture our intuitions about grounding.)

---

[14] Or Frank, though as I pointed out earlier, things are cleaner if one takes essences to be constituents of singular propositions.

So there are costs to Lucretianism. One is committed to at least two irreducibly-hypothetical properties. One also is committed to a shift in truthmakers as time passes, and a shift to the wrong sort of truthmakers as time passes. The eternalist (who is a four-dimensionalist or stage-theorist) is committed to none of these things.

4. Theistic Presentism

Presentism Alan Rhoda ([Rhoda 2009]) advances a theory of grounding for past truths that would have made the Medievals proud: God's memories ground truths that are wholly about the past. So (1) is made true by God's memory that Socrates is snub-nosed. Rhoda's view is a sort of "divine Lucretianism", it would seem. Rhoda thinks that theistic presentism has the virtue that it doesn't involve any "cheats" in the way the Lucretianism does.

> Furthermore, theistic presentism it is not vulnerable to the charge of metaphysical 'cheating' as is Lucretianism . . . the Lucretian's past-tensed properties are suspicious because they make no specifiable real difference to anything else. Apart from using formulaic labels like being such that Caesar was assassinated in 44 BC on the Ides of March, the Lucretian has no informative story to tell about what constitutes the having of such properties, or of what it is about the universe, regions of space, atomic particles, or what have you that enables them to bear such properties. By contrast, the theistic presentist does have a story to tell: Past-tensed properties are representational mental states of God, specifically, his memories. Analogy with human memory and other recording devices makes it reasonably clear how those representational states could bear the requisite structure to reflect the past. Furthermore, if theistic presentism is correct, then God's memories can make a real difference by informing his ongoing providential dealings with creation. For example, God could, if he desired, communicate to us information about the distant past (see [Rhoda 2009], p. 55).

It's not clear to me how Rhoda avoids problems with cheating.[15] The problem with cheating, as Sider sets it out, isn't that there is no story to tell with respect to the world's having properties like *being such that Socrates was snubnosed*. Rather, the problem is that these properties are irreducibly past-directed. In this regard, God's present thoughts fare no better; they too are irreducibly past-directed. So it seems to me that if Bigelow has a problem with cheating, so does Rhoda.

Rhoda's view also runs aground of the shifting-truthmakers objection. (4) is made true by Frank's having the property *being red*. (5) at t_2 is made true by God's remembering that (4) was true. So there is a shift in truthmakers from Frank's having a property to God's mental states. Also, there is a shift to what seems to be an inappropriate truthmaker, just as was the case with Lucretianism earlier: (5) looks to be made true by Frank's having a property, not by God's memories.

There also is also a sense in which the Rhoda gets the explanatory priority of elements in his account wrong. God's remembering *Socrates was snubnosed* does provide a supervenience base for the truth of *Socrates was snubnosed*. But in some important sense *Socrates was snubnosed*'s being true is *prior* to God's remembering *Socrates was snubnosed*. However, TSB is satisfied here; yet again we have a suggestion that TSB isn't strong enough to capture the grounding intuition that led us to TSB in the first place.

Apart from these considerations, Rhoda's theory will be prohibitively expensive for many philosophers as it relies on God to ground the truth of past-tense proposi-tions.

---

[15] While preparing this paper for press I came across Caplan and Sanson's (excellent) [Caplan and Sanson 2011], in which they make the same argument in response to Rhoda.

5. Ersatz B-Series

This strategy for grounding past truths has been developed by in great detail by Thomas Crisp ([Crisp 2007]).[16] The idea is to construct a series of abstract times that mirror those of the eternalist. But all of the times exist at each moment in time, so they are always around to do truthmaking duties. Crisp defines a time as follows:

x is a time := For some propositions, the *p*s, such that the *p*s are *maximal* and *consistent*,x= [(y) (y is one of the ps ⊃ y is true)]

where (i) a class C of propositions is maximal iff, for every proposition p, either p or its denial is a member of C, (ii) a class C of propositions is consistent iff, possibly, every member of C is true, and (iii) '$[\forall y(y \in C \supset y$ is true], I assume, denotes a tenseless proposition (lest my attempt to give a reductive account of tensed properties fall into unhappy circularity).

The present time is the time that is true. Past times are times that were true. (2) is true in virtue of the fact that there is a past time in which it is true. For a proposition p to be true at a time t simply is for t to be such that were it true, p would be true.

Alternately, we might take a time to be a maximal non-temporally-indexed state of affairs. On this view, the present time is the time that obtains now. These would be akin to Plantinga's ([Plantinga 1985]) possible worlds, apart from the fact that Plantinga takes possible worlds to be maximal temporally-indexed states of affairs.

Certain times are past and others are future. So it might look as though the ersatz B-series theorist is left with the same sorts of primitives that the Lucretian (in the best case scenario) is left with.

---

[16] [Davidson 2003] and [Davidson 2004] suggests such a strategy. [Bourne 2006] develops such a strategy. See also [Markosian 2004]. Because of limitations on space, I will focus on Crisp's account.

But Crisp analyzes away properties like *being past* and *being future* into an orthodox B-theoretic relation: *being earlier than*. Crisp says

> We can now see how the presentist can do without primitive pastness, presentness and futurity. She need simply take the foregoing earlier than relation as primitive, and say that a time is past =*df* it is earlier than the present time, that a time is future =*df* it is later than the present time, and that the present time is*df* whatever time happens to be true. ([Crisp 2007], pp. 104–105)

So the *earlier than* relation between times is Crisp's unreduced primitive.

How does Crisp's solution fare compared to the Lucretian solution? The Lucretian solution at its best has two primitives that Sider would complain "cheat": *being past* and *being future*. Crisp's solution involves only one, the *earlier than* relation. Furthermore, the *earlier than* relation is an orthodox B-theoretic relation, and it's one that even the eternalist claims her concrete times stand in to one another. What makes it the case that one concrete time stands in the *earlier than* relation to another? Even for the eternalist, that (or some-such relation) seems to be primitive. So Crisp seems to have left the presentist with a primitive (the likes of which) even the eternalist is left with. If Crisp's primitive is a cheat, so too, it would seem, is the eternalist's.

One might balk at the whole menagerie of abstract times that Crisp uses to ground past (and future) propositions. But for those (many) philosophers who already believe in "ersatz" Plantinga or Adams-style ([Adams 1974]) possible worlds, Crisp's ontology might not seem that extravagant.

It's worth noting that Crisp's solution also runs into trouble with the shifting truthmakers objection. Consider again

(4) Frank is red.

(4) is true at t_1. The truthmaker here, intuitively, is Frank's having the property *being red*. Now, as before, Frank is painted blue at t_2. At t_2

(5) Frank was red

is true. What makes it true? It's (ultimately) that there is a past time in which (4) is true. But here we've changed from a truthmaker involving a substance and a property to one involving abstract times. And, as with the Lucretian, one might object not just to the shift in truthmakers, but to what the truthmakers shift *to*. The proper ground for (5) (at t_1 and at t_3 where Frank is annihilated) would seem to involve Frank and a property. That's what (5) seems to be *about*. This is the sort of thing that only the eternalist may avail herself of; the presentist (at t_3) doesn't have Frank around as a truthmaker. Crisp could ground (5) at t_2 in Frank's having a past-directed property, but that would defeat a main virtue of his theory: he has only one primitive hypothetical property (the *earlier than* relation), and it's not at all an implausible one. But even if he did ground (5) at t_2 in Frank's having a property, (5) at t_3 must be grounded in a time. The proper ground of the truth of (5) doesn't seem to be a time. It ought to have something to do with Frank's having a property. So once again, we have a metaphysic that allows presentism to be consistent with TSB and the truth of propositions like (1) and (2), but once again there seems to be more to grounding truths than satisfying TSB.

6. Brute Past Presentism

Brian Kierland and Bradley Monton ([Kierland and Monton 2007]) argue that the past can serve as a truthmaker for propositions like (1) and (2). So far, this sounds eternalist. But it's not, and this comes out in a discussion of what the past is. Kierland and Monton write

> ...[T]he past is an aspect of reality, but it cannot be reduced to things or the properties they possess (i.e., how these things are). Call this brute past presentism; from here on out, in speaking of a 'brute past', we have in mind a past which cannot be so reduced... The brute past has an intrinsic nature...[W]e like to think of this intrinsic nature in terms of the past having a certain 'shape.' This shape does not consist in a structure of things having properties and standing in relation to one another...The crucial feature of brute past presentism is that it postulates a *sui generis* metaphysical category, one independent of things and how they are. ([Kierland and Monton 2007], p. 492)

It is the shape of the past that makes true propositions about the past true. The grounding problem for presentism is solved with this *sui generis* entity, the Past, (which exists now) and its having the right shape.[17] Because the past has the shape it does, (1) is true and

(6) Socrates had a button-nose

is false. Indeed, the Past having the shape it does entails that (1) is true. So we have a supervenience base for past-truths.

It will be immediately obvious that such a view would be considered a "cheater", according to Sider. The Past clearly "points beyond" itself in a manner that can't be reduced to categorical notions. Kierland and Monton are unphased by this, calling Sider's wholesale rejection of irreducibly-hypothetical entities "sheer metaphysical prejudice" (494). But for those who are concerned with irreducibly-hypothetical entities, there is cause for concern here.

---

[17] I will call their past "The Past" so that the reader is clear when I'm speaking of their sui generis entity. At least it solved in this manner for past-truths, one wonders if there will be a 'brute Future' for future-propositions.

It's also worth noting that this view suffers from the problem of shifting truthmakers, in the same way Lucretianism and the ersatz B-series solution does. (4) is made true by Frank's having a property. (5) is made true by the Past (both at t_2 and t_3). But this shift involves a move from the right sort of truthmaker for a proposition like (4) or (5) to one that simply isn't the right sort of truthmaker. So, again, it's not just the shift in truthmakers, but it's the shift from the proper sort of ground to an improper ground.

Third, accepting a *sui generis* Past whose *sui generis* shape makes true propositions about the past seems a high cost to pay to preserve the truth of propositions like (1) and (2). Indeed, we've already seen an account (that of the ersatz B-series) that also uses the past to ground past-truths. But we know what the past is on the ersatz B-series solution. It's a maximal proposition or state of affairs. We also know, on this view, what about the past makes past-truths true: Entailment (or inclusion if one takes times to be maximal states of affairs). So it's not at all clear to me at least why one would be drawn to a solution like Kierland and Monton's over a solution like Crisp's. Crisp's seems to cost much less.

7. Temporal Distributional Properties

Ross Cameron ([Cameron 2010]) draws on the work of Josh Parsons ([Parsons 2000], [Parsons 2004]) on distributional properties and appeals to temporal distributional properties to provide truthmakers for past truths for the presentist. To get a handle on Cameron's solution, consider first *spatial distributional properties*. These are properties that give the distribution of qualities across a region of space. Consider a white object with flecks of color on it. There is a spatial distributional property the having of which entails that flecks of color of those shades will be distributed thus-and-so on the object. Typically we might think that the having of such a property supervenes on or can be reduced to spatial parts of the object's having certain properties. However, suppose the object in question is an extended simple. Now it has the distributional prop-

erty it has and it doesn't have it in virtue of its spatial parts having properties; it has no spatial parts.[18]

Similarly, one might think that there are temporal distributional properties of which the presentist may avail herself. These detail the way an object is at various times it exists, in the same sort of way the spatial distributional property above details the way the flecks of color are distributed across the surface of the object. The property isn't reducible to properties of the temporal parts of the object in the same way that the extended simple's distributional property isn't reducible to properties of the spatial parts of the object. As Cameron says,

> If there are temporal distributional properties then I have a temporal distributional property in virtue of which, together with my age, I am now an adult, was a child and will be (hopefully) an old man. These properties are both difference makers, in settling my present intrinsic nature, and past settlers, in settling how I was intrinsically (9).

This will help with grounding truths like (2). But what about propositions like (1)? Socrates isn't around to instantiate any distributional properties.[19] Cameron thinks that to ground truths like (1) we should appeal to a distributional property that the entire world has, "the distributional property in virtue of which it has the history it in fact has" (10).

There are, it seems to me, several problems with Cameron's proposal. First, there still is cheating occurring here. Obama's having a temporal distributional property still "points beyond" the present moment and irreducibly so. Cameron thinks there isn't; he thinks that Sider objects to properties that point beyond the object

---

[18] For those who think that an extended simple is incoherent, it's not clear it is. Van Inwagen ([van Inwagen 1990], p. 98) claims that Aristotle might think of organisms as extended simples. Also, it's not implausible to read Spinoza as saying there is one giant extended simple – the universe.

[19] Here again I assume the truth of serious presentism.

in question that don't say anything about the intrinsic nature of the object. But I think this misreads Sider. Suppose that Bigelow's Lucretian properties *merely* point beyond their instances, and Cameron's distributional properties point beyond their instances and say something about the intrinsic nature of the object. They *still* point beyond their instances in an irreducible fashion. This is Sider's concern. Now, one may be unimpressed by Sider's intuition here (as Kierland and Monton and Crisp seem to be). But Cameron pretty clearly is cheating by the parameters Sider sets out.

Second, it's not clear to me that the presentist can avail herself of Cameron's temporal distributional properties. Consider again the spatial distributional property that characterizes the flecks of paint of the surface of the simple object. We can suppose the object's having this property doesn't reduce to the parts of the object having various properties (as the object has no proper parts). But the object still is spread out in space; the distributional property tells how the flecks of paint are distributed on the surface of an object across a region of space. In the case of temporal distributional properties, for the presentist there is no past or future over which the temporal distributional properties are distributed. So it's not at all clear that there can be these sorts of temporal distributional properties for the presentist.

Third, Cameron is committed to the world having a temporal distributional property that sets out the history of the world. If he already needs this for truths like (1), why have objects that have temporal distributional properties to ground propositions like (2)?

Giving up objects' having temporal distributional properties would, of course, allow him to avoid this second objection. But keeping them actually helps with the shifting-truthmaker objection. It allows Cameron to keep the truthmaker for (4) and

(5) at t_2 an object's having a property. So this uniformity is good. Of course there is a shift in the truthmaker for (5) at t_3; suddenly it will be the world's having a temporal distributional property that will ground its truth. Again, it's not just the shift in truth-

makers that is a problem here. It's a shift to something that doesn't look to be the proper grounds for the truth of (5) at $t<su>3$ or (1).

It's not at all clear to me that it is coherent for an object to have a property that distributes across times that don't exist. So this presses Cameron in the direction of a view like Bigelow's; it's just that the sort of property involved in the truthmaking differs But his view inherits the problems of Bigelow's in this regard.

8. Conclusion

Of the solutions we've examined, it seems to me that the ersatz B-series solution of Crisp is the least costly for the presentist. It does have trouble with the shifting-truthmaker objection. But it is difficult to see how any presentist grounding of non-present truths wouldn't have trouble with it. For the presentist, the passage of time eliminates the natural truthmakers that always are available to the eternalist. This is, it would seem, a cost of those who adopt presentism in a non-Merricksian manner.[20]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

[Adams 1974] Adams Robert M. (1974) 'Theories of Actuality', Noûs 8: 211-231.

[Adams 1986] Adams Robert M. (1986) 'Time and Thisness', in P. French, T. Uehling, and H. Wettstein (eds.) Midwest Studies in Philosophy, pp. 315–329. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

[Armstrong 1997] Armstrong David (1997) A World of States of Affairs, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

[Armstrong 2004] Armstrong David (2004) Truth and Truthmakers, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

[Bergmann 1999] Bergmann Michael (1999) '(Serious) Actualism and (Serious) Presentism", Noûs, 33/1: 118–132.

---

[20] Thanks to Dean Zimmerman, Tony Roy and the editors of this volume for comments on this paper, and to Tom Crisp for discussion of the grounding problem for presentism.

[Bigelow 1988] Bigelow John (1988) The Reality of Numbers: A Physicalist's Philosophy of Mathematics, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
[Bigelow 1996] Bigelow John (1996) 'Presentism and Properties', in J.E. Tomberlin (ed.) Philosophical Perspectives, 10, pp. 35–52. Cambridge, MA, Blackwell
[Bourne 2006] Bourne Craig (2006) A Future for Presentism, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
[Cameron 2010] Cameron Ross (2010) 'Truthmaking for Presentists', in Zimmerman Dean and Karen Bennett (eds.) Oxford Studies in Metaphysics, vol. 6, pp. 55–100. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
[Caplan and Sanson 2011] Caplan Ben and Sanson David (2011) 'Presentism and Truthmaking', Philosophy Compass 6: 196–208.
[Chisholm 1990] Chisholm Roderick (1990) 'Events Without Times: An Essay on Ontology', Noûs, 24: 413–428.
[Ciuni and Torrengo 2013] Ciuni Roberto and Torrengo Giuliano (2013) 'Presentism and Cross-Temporal Relations', this volume.
[Crisp 2005] Crisp Thomas (2005) 'Presentism and "Cross-Time" Relations', American Philosophical Quarterly, 42: 5–17.
[Crisp 2007] Crisp Thomas (2007) 'Presentism and the Grounding Objection', Noûs 41: 90–109.
[Davidson 2000] Davidson Matthew (2000) 'Direct Reference and Singular Propositions', American Philosophical Quarterly 37: 285–300.
[Davidson 2003] Davidson Matthew (2003) 'Presentism and the Non-Present', Philosophical Studies, 113/1: 77–92.
[Davidson 2004] Davidson Matthew (2004) 'Critical Notice: Four Dimensionalism by Theodore Sider', Philosophical Books 45: 17–33.
[Davidson 2007] Davidson Matthew (2007) 'Transworld Identity, Singular Propositions, and Picture-Thinking', In Davidson Matthew (ed.) On Sense and Direct Reference. New York, McGraw-Hill, pp. 559–568.
[De Clercq 2006] De Clercq Rafael (2006) 'Presentism and the Problem of Cross-Time Relations', Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 72/2: 386–402.
[Keller 2004] Keller Simon (2004) 'Presentism and Truthmaking', in D. Zimmerman (ed.) Oxford Studies in Metaphysics I, pp. 83–104. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
[Kierland and Monton 2007] Kierland Brian and Monton Bradley (2007) 'Presentism and the Objection from Being-Supervenience', Australasian Journal of Philosophy 85: 485–497.
[Lewis 1999] Lewis David (1999) 'Armstrong on Combinatorial Possibility' in Papers on Metaphysics and Epistemology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). Originally published in Australasian Journal of Philosophy, 70: 211–224.
[Lewis 2001] Lewis David (2001) 'Truthmaking and Difference Making', Noûs 35: 602–615.
[Markosian 2004] Markosian Ned (2004) 'A Defense of Presentism' in D. Zimmerman (ed.) Oxford Studies in Metaphysics I, pp 47–82. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

[Merricks 2007] Merricks Trenton (2007) Truth and Ontology, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

[Parsons 2000] Parsons Josh (2000) 'Must a Four-Dimensionalist Believe in Temporal Parts?', The Monist 83: 399–418.

[Parsons 2004] Parsons Josh (2004) 'Distributional Properties' in Jackson Frank and Priest Grahm (eds.) Lewisian Themes. Oxford, Clarendon, pp. 173–180.

[Plantinga 1983] Plantinga Alvin (1983) 'On Existentialism', Philosophical Studies 44: 1–20. Reprinted in Davidson Matthew (ed.) Essays in the Metaphysics of Modality. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003.

[Plantinga 1985] Plantinga Alvin (1985) 'Reply to John L. Pollock', in Tomberlin James and van Inwagen Peter (eds.) Alvin Plantinga, (Dordrecht, Reidel, pp. 313–329. Reprinted in Davidson Matthew (ed.) Essays in the Metaphysics of Modality. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 176–192.

[Rhoda 2009] Rhoda Alan (2009) 'Presentism, Truthmakers, and God', Pacific Philosophical Quarterly 90: 41–62.

[Roy 2013] Roy Tony (2013) 'Modality' in The Continuum Companion to Metaphysics.

[Russell 1918] Russell Bertrand (1918) 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism'. Reprinted in Slater J.G. (ed.) Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell, vol. VIII: The Philosophy of Logical Atomism and Other Essays: 1914 1919. London, Allen & Unwin, 1986.

[Sanson and Caplan 2010] Sanson Ben and Caplan David (2010) 'The Way Things Were', Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 81/1: 24–39.

[Sider 2001] Sider Ted (2001) Fourdimensionalism, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

[Tallant 2009a] Tallant Jonathan (2009a) 'Presentism and Truthmaking', Erkenntnis, 71/3: 407–416.

[Tallant 2009b] Tallant Jonathan (2009b) 'Ontological Cheats Might Just Prosper', Analysis 69/3: 422–430.

[Torrengo forthcoming] Torrengo Giuliano (forthcoming) 'The Grounding Problem and Presentist Explanations', Synthese, (online-first: http://www.springerlink.com/content/5384212230312001/)

[van Inwagen 1990] van Inwagen Peter (1990) Material Beings. Ithaca, Cornell University Press.