The New Leibniz's Law Arguments for Pluralism

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For years philosophers argued for the existence of distinct yet materially coincident things by appealing to modal and temporal properties. For instance, the statue was made on Monday and could not survive being flattened; the lump of clay was made months before and can survive flattening. Such arguments have been thoroughly examined. Kit Fine has proposed a new set of arguments using the same template. I offer a critical evaluation of what I take to be his central lines of reasoning.

Ordinary macroscopic material objects A and B *coincide* at a time if at that time they share the very same spatial regions and are made of the same underlying matter. Many philosophers hold that some easily possible or even actual material objects that coincide at a time are non-identical, for example, a statue and the hunk of clay that it is materially coincident with. Following Kit Fine (2003), I will call those philosophers *pluralists*. Other philosophers, monists, think that there are no pairs of distinct coincident ordinary material objects.

Some of the paradoxes of material constitution are frightfully difficult to solve, and it is almost always agreed that any response to them will be at least somewhat counterintuitive, so the oddity of pluralism is not its refutation.[1] Fine (2003) has developed further than anyone else a new set of Leibniz's Law arguments for pluralism. Using Leibniz's Law to argue for pluralism is not new. Many find intuitive the idea that a statue but not the hunk of clay from which it is made cannot survive being flattened; by Leibniz's Law we can conclude that the statue is not the hunk of clay, or so it appears. The new arguments are intended to be superior to the familiar arguments in two ways: they do not rely on controversial modal and temporal intuitions, and they suggest serious errors in the monist's replies to the old Leibniz's Law arguments.

[1] I do not mean to imply that the problems of coincidence are the only problems of material composition. Even more serious composition problems are found when investigating the questions 'Under what conditions does composition happen?' and 'When taking atoms away from a pumpkin, when does one no longer have a pumpkin?' Indeed, without a satisfactory solution to the latter problems, I do not see how we can be confident regarding our responses to the material coincidence problems.

The new arguments are a welcome addition to the literature, as the traditional Leibniz's Law arguments for pluralism have already been very thoroughly examined. However, it seems to me that the monist has plausible responses to the new arguments. I agree with Fine that monism is probably false, but I do not see how the new arguments mount a good case against it.

1. Fine's strategy

Suppose I take many bits of clay and make them into Rover, an expensive statue of a dog. The pluralist wants an argument of this form.

(1)   At time t, Rover is F.

(2)   It is not the case that at t the hunk of clay is F.[2]

(3)   Due to their form, if (1) and (2) are true, then Rover ≠ the hunk of clay.

(4)   Rover and the hunk of clay are coincident at t.

(5)   Thus, at t Rover ≠ the hunk of clay but Rover and the hunk of clay are coincident.

The pluralist needs to produce a predicate and linguistic context in which (1)–(4) are true. There are many promising candidates: for example, 'is valuable', 'is admired', 'is insured for £10,000', 'is defective', 'is badly made', 'is Romanesque'. If we suppose that despite being worth a tidy sum of money Rover is made of cheap materials so that if it were squashed people would not pay much for the hunk of clay, then it looks as though Rover is valuable but the hunk of clay is not. Further, I may insure Rover for £10,000 but insure the hunk of clay for just £100; so if Rover is flattened, I get £10,000, but if the hunk of clay is then completely scorched in a fire, I get another £100. Finally whereas Rover is greatly admired, no one admires the hunk of clay, as it was cheap and ordinary.

Thus, there are some conversational contexts and predicates that have at least a chance at making both (1) and (2) true. Roughly put, premiss (3) amounts to the claim that the sentential context in (1) and (2), 'x is F', is transparent (not opaque). Clearly, if $\ulcorner F \urcorner$ had different meanings in (1) and (2) then (3) might well be obviously false. For instance, in the following argument (8) is clearly unwarranted.

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[2] Throughout the essay I use 'hunk of clay' in order to emphasize the singular reference of 'the clay'. The monist thinks that the *hunk* of clay is identical to Rover; she does not think that the clay—the bits of clay—are somehow identical to Rover. So plural uses of 'the clay' are irrelevant.

(6) At *t*, *x* is [monetarily] valuable.

(7) It is not the case that at *t y* is [aesthetically] valuable.

(8) Due to their form, if (6) and (7) are true, then $x \neq y$.

(9) *x* and *y* are coincident at *t*.

(10) Thus, at *t* $x \neq y$ but *x* and *y* are coincident.

Just because *x* has monetary value and *y* does not have aesthetic value does not mean that *x* is not *y*. For the most part, Fine supposes that the monist will reply to the new Leibniz's Law arguments by trying to argue that they have a false third premiss—for instance, the new arguments will fail due to a failure of transparency, just as in (6)–(10). However, although the monist will sometimes react as Fine describes (viz. attacking premiss (3)), more often than not, as I will show in the following sections, she will find reason to doubt instances of the second premiss, (2).

2. Comparing arguments

In order to evaluate the pluralist's arguments involving 'Rover' and 'hunk of clay', I will pay close attention to some similar arguments.

(11) Rover is valuable/Romanesque/admired/well made.

(12) It is not the case that the hunk of clay is valuable/Romanesque/ admired/well made.

(13) Due to their form, if (11) and (12) are true, then Rover ≠ the hunk of clay.

(14) Rover and the hunk of clay are coincident.

(15) Thus, Rover ≠ the hunk of clay but Rover and the hunk of clay are coincident.[3]

(16) Superman flies/is a great date.

(17) It is not the case that Kent flies/is a great date.

(18) Due to their form, if (16) and (17) are true, then Superman ≠ Kent.

(19) Superman and Kent are coincident.

(20) Thus, Superman ≠ Kent but Superman and Kent are coincident.

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[3] Here I drop the temporal references since they will not matter to any of my or Fine's arguments.

When we explore the Superman (and related) arguments to see what is wrong with them, we will acquire good reason to think the Rover arguments are just as flawed—and we will have a good idea exactly what the flaws are.

3. Superman and Rover

Let us focus first on the Superman-flying argument. Most philosophers will of course reject (17), as Kent certainly can and often does fly. Just to make things clear, let us stipulate that Superman has always known how to fly, he has flown all his life, he does not have a split personality, he can fly perfectly well whether or not he has his superhero outfit on or whether or not he even thinks people seeing him will think he is a superhero, etc. In addition, when going out on dates while keeping his superhero status secret, he clams up and is a lousy date; but when he goes out revealed as a superhero he feels quite confident and impressive and makes for a great date. He is not interestingly different from a non-superheroic, mild-mannered, real-life reporter who on weekends and some weeknights disguises himself with a bushy moustache, bushy sideburns, and a new name, as he becomes a cowboy, riding broncos and the rest in rodeos. His friends from work would not recognize him on weekends, and his weekend friends would not recognize him on weekdays. He lives a double life. But of course it is pretty reasonable to hold there is just one person there: Carl the cowboy is identical to Ralph the reporter. Similarly, Superman the superhero is identical to Kent the reporter.

Analogously, the monist should, at least for most contexts (more on this qualification later) reject (12), 'It is not the case that the hunk of clay is valuable/Romanesque/admired/well made'. That is, the monist just does not see anything semantically untoward in asserting that *this very special* hunk of clay is quite valuable, Romanesque, beautiful, admirable, well made, purchased from Beardsley, and insured for £10,000. Obviously, most hunks of clay are almost worthless, not admired, not Romanesque, and certainly not insured for £10,000; but we are considering a *very special* hunk of clay. It is somewhat disrespectful and definitely misleading to call it 'a hunk of clay', as that phrase very strongly suggests that it is a *mere* hunk of clay—one that is not a statue or anything else of significance. But it is a hunk of clay all the same. Before the sculptor begins she has a mere hunk of clay. After finishing Rover it would be insulting to say to her 'It is still a hunk of clay', as the 'mere' is almost unavoidably smuggled in. The Great Wall of

China and the Berlin Wall are or were *walls*, even though to call them 'wall' with a lowercase 'w' is to under-represent them. The great race-horse Secretariat was an animal, but to call it an animal is, just like in the other cases, to under-represent it. The Taj Mahal and Sistine Chapel are buildings; Michelangelo's *David* is a statue; the Chair of St Peter in the Vatican Basilica was a chair; all of these are or were material objects. In these cases we want to protest, 'It's not just a building! It's not just a statue! It wasn't just a chair! It's not just a material object!', and the monist agrees wholeheartedly but sees no conflict. A £20 note is a piece of paper, and of course on most occasions you cannot buy much by handing someone a piece of paper—but for very special pieces of paper you can. I quite literally *spend* pieces of paper all the time—but of course they have to be quite special pieces of paper. My wife is a material object—but of course not just any old material object! It seems to me the most natural monist position involves the rejection of (12) in the pluralist's argument.

There is of course oddity in saying that a hunk of clay is insured for £10,000, or that one can spend a piece of paper, or that people travel thousands of miles to see a chair. But conversational oddity is hardly a good reason for attributing falsehood, at least in this area of metaphysics. Carl the cowboy did a historic exposé of Nixon and Ralph the reporter holds the state record for bronco busting; and these truths exist even if the expression of either of them would be odd to anyone but Carl and his wife.

I am not saying that monism is true! As I said earlier, I am inclined to side with Fine on the truth of pluralism. What I am saying is that rejecting (12) is the natural thing for the monist to do at least for most contexts (much more on that below), and the new Leibniz's Law arguments, all by themselves, do not provide resources to defend (12). For the most part, the monist should reason this way: (17) is false; (12) is just like (17); hence (12) is false; so I have no good reason to quibble with (13), as Fine thinks I need to do.

The pluralist could try to argue that contrary to that line of reasoning (17) is true; and so my proposed defence of monism is in trouble.[4] So be it: it remains the case that the monist most naturally says that both (12)

[4] In correspondence Fine suggested this move, but did not say whether he endorsed it. Some philosophers of language obsessed with substitutivity issues (such as myself in my 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2002) might want to engage in semantic gymnastics in order to guarantee the truth of virtually anything conversationally appropriate, but I think this is primarily due not to insight but to the obsession just mentioned combined with an allergy to error theories. Joseph Moore (1999 and 2000), Graeme Forbes (1997 and 1999), and Stefano Predelli (2004) each take seriously the claim that 'Kent cannot fly' is often true. But I think that the reporter/cowboy example, as well as others, makes the point I have tried to make with 'Superman' and 'Kent'.

and (17) are false and if Fine provided any reason for thinking otherwise, well, I missed it. Fine assumes the monist will accept (12) but challenge the transparency premiss (13), and he argues that there are grave difficulties with taking that line, but I wonder whether this is to misconstrue monism, or at least a natural species of monism.

I can think of three ways around this criticism. First, if Fine has excellent arguments for the truth of (17), then of course he can tack those on to the new Leibniz's Law arguments in order to make the latter much more powerful! Perhaps those arguments exist; we will soon know. But absent those excellent arguments, his defence of (13) looks targeted at just one kind of monism, as other monists will simply accept it. Second, perhaps the 'natural' monist view articulated above is, unknown to me, a complete non-starter. If so, I would appreciate seeing why this is so (but see section 5 below). If it is a non-starter, then Fine's focus on (13) is wise. Third, perhaps Fine intended all along to argue against just one kind of monist reaction to the new Leibniz's Law arguments. Then I have no criticism of Fine's work. But I will assume in this essay that he wanted to close off monism altogether (as his article seemed intended).

Perhaps as a defence of (12) and (17) (and a criticism of what I am calling the 'natural' monist response) Fine suggests that the monist who says things like 'The hunk of clay is insured for £10,000 and is Romanesque; the piece of fabric [that 'composes' a dress] is worth a fortune; I spent that piece of paper [currency] on a Caesar salad at the restaurant' does so with considerable strain and perhaps not even 'meaningfully' (2003, p. 207).[5] However, I do not see any strain on meaningfulness interestingly different from the strain of 'Carl the cowboy did a historical exposé of Nixon, and Ralph the reporter holds the state record for bronco-busting' (or the other odd sentences mentioned in the second paragraph of this section). Everyone who takes these metaphysical issues seriously ends up saying something odd. For instance, the pluralist says that the statue has a mass of 14kg, and that the hunk of clay has a mass of 14kg, but when you put them both on an accurate scale at the same time, the scale will read just 14kg. Similar difficulties arise with many other sentences, for example, 'Tom knocked two objects off the table, the statue and the hunk'. The pluralist has stories to tell here, to show that the sentences are true albeit conversationally

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[5] Actually, he suggests that *the clay* cannot meaningfully be said to be Romanesque. His use of 'the clay' may indicate something like stuff, and not necessarily a single material object. He does not use 'piece of clay'. I do not know if he would also say that the *piece* of clay (materially coincident with a statue) cannot meaningfully be said to be Romanesque.

odd. But this just shows that the presence of linguistic strain in the monist's defence is not that much of a weakness: everybody has that problem. And hair-splitting ('Your linguistic strains are much worse than mine') is not going to carry much weight, even when the claims are true.

However, the monist probably should not deny the truth of every use of (12). For on *some* occasions uses of (12) will be true—just as some uses of (17) will be true. But we have to be careful here. One might initially think that if Lois Lane says, 'Kent is a lousy date; Superman is a great date', then her remark is true—and that would make the conjunction of (16) and (17) true as well. She has 'dated Kent' as well as 'dated Superman'. All she *really* meant, one might suspect, with her use of 'Kent is a lousy date', is that the reporter from work is a lousy date. However, for various reasons this is implausible. Her conjunctive claim, 'Kent is a lousy date; Superman is a great date' is just like 'Kent does not fly; Superman flies' in being justified, rational, epistemically blameless, and reasonable; but that does not make it true.

On the other hand, if *I* said to *you*, 'Kent is a lousy date; Superman is a great date' (that is the conjunction of (16) and (17) again, in a different context) what I said might be true because we, who know the identity, know how to interpret it so that it states an interesting truth. Our mutual intentions and knowledge of his double life force the remark to express that truth. We might not know whether the remark expresses the truth as a matter of semantics or pragmatics. Independently of that matter, we might not know how to express that truth in a less context-dependent way (we might suspect that something like 'He plays two overarching roles in his life, one superhero and one not, and in the superhero role he is a great date but in the other role he is a lousy date' will do the trick). In any case, regardless of the semantics we can focus on the relevant truth (or truths) in the vicinity of my speech act. But this would be a very special use of 'Kent is a lousy date; Superman is a great date'. The truth expressed in this odd context does not offer any obvious reason to think that Superman is not Kent.

In the same spirit, a monist might say, in apparent agreement with the pluralist, 'Rover is Romanesque; the hunk of clay is not Romanesque'. She will insist that strictly speaking, what is said is false, full stop. But of course she may well admit that such a sentence can often *convey* something true. For instance, it could convey the truth that: Rover is Romanesque, but it is not in virtue of its being a hunk of clay that it is Romanesque. Or: Rover is Romanesque, but no mere hunk of clay is Romanesque. Or any of many other truths. The truth or truths conveyed

by (12) depend of course on many messy and potentially highly idiosyncratic pragmatic factors. This will be a theme in the next section.

4. Sculptor Al

Matters are more complicated with an intriguing story Fine uses to mount further arguments against the monist, a story that he judges to supply the most damaging criticisms of the monistic reaction to the new Leibniz's Law arguments for pluralism.

> Suppose Al [a sculptor] makes an inventory of items [he made and that] he considers well made; its sole entry is 'the [piece of] alloy' (or 'the alloy from which this statue is formed'). *I* then say 'an entry in Al's inventory refers to a badly made item' or, more idiomatically, 'Al referred to a badly made item'. Let us suppose that Al is right, the alloy is well made, although the (coincident) statue that is formed from the alloy is badly made. Then on the most natural understanding of my remarks, they are false. After all, Al refers through the sole entry in his inventory to the alloy, which is *not* badly made. (2003, pp. 221–22).[6]

I will use 'the *piece of* alloy' to emphasize the uniqueness of the referent of 'the alloy'.

As I understand it, one of Fine's primary arguments for pluralism based on the Al story has the following basic structure, ignoring the details:

(21) The piece of alloy is well made.

(22) The piece of alloy is not badly made.

(23) The statue is badly made.

(24) Commenting on Al's entry, Fred's remark 'Al referred to a badly made item' is most naturally understood as false. (Roughly put, since Al used 'piece of alloy', 'The piece of alloy is badly made' is false, and Fred used 'Al referred to a badly made item', it seems as though what Fred said is false.)[7]

(25) The monist has insuperable troubles accounting for the truth of (21)–(24).

(26) So, monism is false.

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[6] Fine uses this thought experiment, along with slight variations of it, to mount many pluralist arguments. I certainly do not have the space to consider all his arguments; his long and complicated article is overflowing with them. Instead, I investigate what I suspect and hope to be the main ones.

[7] For ease of reading, I have substituted a character named 'Fred' for Kit Fine himself.

Right away there is an apparent problem: why would the monist agree that (21)–(23) are true in Fine's story about Al? According to the monist, the piece of alloy just is the statue, so how on earth could it be badly made and not badly made, as Fine sets it up? How can the monist even understand Fine's thought experiment given that it includes the *stipulations* 'The piece of alloy *is not* badly made' and 'The statue *is* badly made'? Does not it simply follow from these stipulations that the statue is not the piece of alloy? It looks as though Fine has smuggled pluralism into the thought experiment as an assumption. What a lousy argument!

As we will see below, this point is relevant to assessing the pluralist's argument based on the Al story. However, it is a mistake to think the pluralist has simply assumed pluralism at the outset. If I understand Fine correctly, the pluralist's assumption is that there is *some* natural reading of (21)–(24) under which they are all true—a reading the monist must admit exists. Then the monist must attempt to find a way to account for the truth of (21)–(24)—an account that is consistent with monism. The pluralist thinks this cannot be done plausibly. There might be other interpretations of (21)–(24) under which some of them are false, or obviously question-begging against the monist, but the pluralist is not (she claims) interested in those readings. All she needs to mount a decent argument against monism is *one* convenient reading under which they are true; then she can challenge the monist to account for *that* reading. So: is there a reading that makes (21)–(24) true but not obviously question begging?

Let us focus on (21)–(23) first. Since (22) does not seem to add any relevant consideration not brought up by (21) or (23), I will ignore it in most of what follows ((24) does not add much either that I can see is relevant to my criticisms). The conjunction of (21) and (23) might, given the right contextual factors, semantically express the proposition P_1 better expressed by 'The piece of alloy is well made overall or on balance when judged by materials standards; the statue is badly made overall or on balance when judged by artistic standards'. Under this reading (21)–(23) are true, just as the pluralist says. But of course this does not suggest that statue is not the piece of alloy, as there is no reason at all to accept (25) for this context.

I am not saying that P_1 ever *is* the semantic value of the conjunction of (21) and (23), for any context of use. I am saying this: if P_1 is the semantic value of the conjunction, then although it is true, this, all by itself, offers no support for pluralism.

Perhaps the conjunction of (21) and (23) sometimes semantically expresses proposition P_2: the piece of alloy is well made overall, when

we tally absolutely all standards; the statue is badly made overall, when we tally absolutely all standards. But then the monist will of course take P_2 to fail to be true! In fact, depending on the context of use in which the conjunction of (21) and (23) expresses P_2, it might be unclear which of (21) and (23), if either, is true. The statue-alloy is well made in one respect and badly made in another; how are we supposed to do the sum? But in any case, the monist will plausibly hold that the conjunction is not true (it will either be truth-valueless or false). So P_2 will not help the pluralist's cause.

The conjunction of (21) and (23) might semantically express proposition P_3: the piece of alloy is well made in *this* materials respect; the statue is badly made in *this* artistic respect. The semantic values of the indexicals would be fixed by contextual factors. Given the right contextual factors the conjunction comes out true given natural values for the indexicals, but of course there is no conflict with monism as (25) will be implausible. This case is not interestingly different from the scenario in which the conjunction expresses P_1. So P_3 will not help either.

The conjunction might semantically express proposition P_4: the piece of alloy is well made in at least one materials respect; the statue is badly made in at least one artistic respect. True, but consistent with monism as (25) is once again left implausible. Similarly, if it expresses the claim P_5 that the piece of alloy is well made in at least some respect, while the statue is badly made in at least one respect, the conjunction is true; but none of this helps the pluralist.

The conjunction might mean the same as 'The piece of alloy is well made qua piece of alloy; the statue is badly made qua statue'. But this conjunctive sentence is not very clear to me. It might just express P_1 again, that is 'The piece of alloy is well made overall or on balance when judged by materials standards; the statue is badly made overall or on balance when judged by artistic standards'. In any case, it is up to the pluralist, I think, to reveal the natural reading of (21)–(24) in which they are true and, via the plausibility of (25), cause trouble for the monist.

Let me emphasize that I do not know which, if any, of P_1–P_5 is the literal meaning of the conjunction of (21) and (23). Maybe there is no literal meaning of that conjunction. Perhaps P_2, for instance, is the most natural or literal or default meaning and the others are merely pragmatically expressed given the right conversational contexts. Neither do I want to claim that for each of P_1–P_5 there are contexts in which the conjunction expresses, as a matter of *semantics*, that proposition. My only point is that the above considerations suggest, to me anyway, that

there is no context the pluralist can use to mount a decent argument with claims (21)–(26).

One might think that matters will change if we leave behind the awkward 'badly/well made' and use something else more supportive of pluralism.[8] This looks promising, but I was not able to see how it would work. For instance, the argument below seems to have all the problems of (21)–(26).[9]

(27)   The piece of alloy is highly valuable.

(28)   The statue is virtually without value.

(29)   Commenting on Al's entry (which used 'piece of alloy'), Fred's remark 'Al referred to an item virtually without value' is most naturally understood as false.

(30)   The monist has insuperable troubles accounting for the truth of (27)–(29).

(31)   So, monism is false.

Al is making a list of his works that are 'highly valuable' (as it is written at the top of his list). He writes 'The piece of alloy'. He is right: the alloy is valuable in that it is made of extremely expensive materials. So (27) looks true. The statue, however, is virtually worthless in that it has virtually no aesthetic value. So (28) looks true. Since 'The piece of alloy is highly valuable' is true, Al wrote 'The piece of alloy', and Fred said 'Al referred to an item virtually without value', it certainly looks as though what Fred said was false; so (29) is true as well. Should we accept (30)?

I do not see any reason to. When I accepted (27) I was clearly thinking of one kind of value; when I accepted (28), I set aside the first kind of value and focused on another kind; if I had not, then I would not have accepted (28). Hence, given an interpretation akin to that which generated P_1 ('The piece of alloy is well made overall or on balance when judged by materials standards; the statue is badly made overall or on balance when judged by artistic standards'), for instance, (27)–(29) can be true, but then (30) is baseless. In fact, the only contexts I know of that plausibly make each of (27)–(29) true seem to demand a false reading for (30) (since we have not been given any reason to think that the truths expressed by (27)–(29), in this context, suggest the falsehood of monism). And when I focus on an interpretation akin to that which

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[8] As Fine remarked in correspondence.

[9] Here I skip the irrelevant analogue to (22).

generated P$_2$ ('The piece of alloy is well made overall, when we tally absolutely all standards; the statue is badly made overall, when we tally absolutely all standards'), then the conjunction of (27) and (28) has the truth condition had by 'The piece of alloy is highly valuable, when we tally absolutely all kinds of value; the statue is virtually without value, when we tally absolutely all kinds of value'. But then the monist will of course take the conjunction to fail to be true. As before, I am not making any claim about the truth condition of the naked conjunction of (27) and (28); instead, I am saying that I cannot find a context of use in which (27)–(30) all express truths.

Or consider arguments that result when we use terms such as 'Romanesque' or 'insured for just £100'. Suppose we start out with a lumpy hunk of gold that originated in Ancient Greece; its only distinguishing feature is its origin. We melt it down and make it into a Romanesque statue—Romanesque in the sense of artistic style. Since the gold is from Ancient Greece, and not Rome, we are tempted to say: the hunk is a *Romanesque piece of gold* (as my monist claims), but the hunk is not *a piece of Romanesque gold* (it is a piece of Ancient Greek gold).[10] I think that is right, but it does not help the pluralist's cause. To say that the hunk is a piece of Romanesque gold is to comment (falsely) on its material origin; to say that the hunk is a Romanesque piece of gold is to comment (truly) on its artistic style; at least, that is how I would ordinarily interpret the sentences for this case. It seems that the unvarnished truth is that the hunk is a Romanesque piece of Ancient Greek gold; it is not an Ancient Greek piece of Romanesque gold.[11]

Finally, consider the insurance argument. In this story Al is making a list of his works that are insured for just £100. He writes 'the piece of alloy'.

(32) The piece of alloy is insured for just £100.

(33) The statue fails to be insured for just £100 (it is insured for £10,000).

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[10] Thanks to Tom Baldwin for suggesting I examine this case.

[11] One could truthfully say 'The gold is not Romanesque [it is Ancient Greek]; the piece of gold is Romanesque [in style]'. This might suggest that the piece of gold is not the gold; and this might look like a form of pluralism. But in that case the monist has a plausible two-fold response. The conjunctive sentence is true when we conceive of 'the gold' as a plural expression, but then it does not conflict with monism; the truth of the sentence with 'the gold' being singular would conflict with monism, but in that case the sentence is false.

(34) Commenting on Al's entry (which used 'piece of alloy'), Fred's remark 'Al referred to an item that fails to be insured for just £100' is most naturally understood as false.

(35) The monist has insuperable troubles accounting for the truth of (32)–(34).

(36) So, monism is false.

It seems to me that the monist is well within her rights to insist that (32) is just plain false—even though it can pragmatically convey a truth. There are two insurance policies for the one item, one policy that pays up if the item is damaged according to standards having to do with being a statue and the other policy paying up when the materials are seriously damaged. The statue-alloy is insured, in total, for £10,100; so (32) is false.[12]

Now *perhaps* there is a reading of (32)–(34) that makes all of them come out true. For instance, the conjunction of (32) and (33) might have the truth condition had by a sentence such as 'The piece of alloy is insured for just £100 when it comes to materials; the statue fails to be insured for just £100 when it comes to statue standards'. That sounds pretty awkward to my ears, but perhaps the conjunction of (32) and (33) could semantically express that truth condition, or a similar truth condition, in the right context. But there are two problems: first, under such a reading (35) is without any motivation; and second, the natural monist move, with regard to 'is insured for just £100' (or 'is Romanesque') is the one Fine did not seem to consider: (32) is false. So it is difficult to see how this new Leibniz's Law argument against monism is supposed to be convincing.

5. Pluralism wins?

So why does monism seem false? For familiar reasons. Suppose 'human trunk' meant the torso and the head. Suppose further that we lived in a community in which 'trunk' had a useful role in linguistic behaviour. So 'trunk' in this society is like 'arm' in our society. (E.g. perhaps in this society people lose their arms and legs often, so 'trunk' is really useful and used frequently.) At 1 p.m. you have an entirely intact and normal body; at 2 p.m. your arms and legs are removed but you are kept alive and fully conscious (with some morphine). Once your arms and legs

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[12] Insurance companies would disagree of course.

are removed they are annihilated in an explosion. Call your trunk 'Trunk'; call your body 'Body'; call your right foot 'Foot'.

(37) At 1 p.m. Body exists and *contains as a part/has as an append-age/is no more than six inches away from* Foot.

(38) At 1 p.m. Trunk exists but it is not the case that it *contains as a part/has as an appendage/is no more than six inches away from* Foot. (Trunk is no 'arbitrary' undetached part of Body! There are honest-to-goodness *joints* in nature separating it from other objects.)

(39) So, Body ≠ Trunk at 1 p.m..

(40) At 2 p.m. Body and Trunk exist and are materially coincident.

(41) If Body ≠ Trunk at 1 p.m., then Body ≠ Trunk at 2 p.m..

(42) So, at 2 p.m. Body ≠ Trunk but Body and Trunk are materially coincident.

This argument does not seem to employ any contexts that are opaque. It does, however, rely on certain temporal judgements that can be challenged. But it is harder to quarrel with, which is why I, for one, am willing to bet at least a pound that Fine is right: pluralism is true.[13]

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