A Future for Presentism
Craig Bourne

This book concerns the nature of time. It shows how presentism, the view that only the present exists, can be defended. Part I of the book shows how presentism is the only viable alternative to the tenseless theory of time. It then develops a framework for solving problems traditionally associated with the position, such as finding truthmakers for past-tensed statements; McTaggart's argument; the need for other times other than the present time; how to give the proper semantics for future contingent statements; how to deal with transtemporal relations between the past and the present; how we can meaningfully talk about past individuals; and how accounts of causation relations can be formulated. Part I concludes with a discussion of the direction of time and causation, the decision-theoretic problem known as ‘Newcomb's problem’, and the possibility of time travel and causal loops. Part II focuses on the problems for presentism raised by relativity theory. It begins by giving a self-contained exposition of the concepts of special relativity and its philosophical implications. The last two chapters focus on certain cosmological models of general relativity: namely, the expanding universes, and Gödel's infamous model. The necessary physics is explained, with the aid of diagrams.

Sketch for a Systematic Metaphysics
D. M. Armstrong

This book tries to present in brief compass a metaphysical system, matured (as is hoped) over many years. By metaphysics is understood an account of the fundamental categories of being, such notions as
property, relation, causality. These notions are more abstract than the results of scientific inquiry, and are controversial among scientists as well as among philosophers. The book sprang from lectures given to graduate students, and has deliberately been kept at an informal level. It includes some explanations not required in a book for professional philosophers. The argument is developed in sixteen short chapters. It is argued that the world is a world of states of affairs, involving universals and particulars. The notion of finding suitable truthmakers for truths grows in importance as the book proceeds.

**Truthmakers**
David M. Armstrong

in *Sketch for a Systematic Metaphysics*

Published in print: 2010 Published Online: September 2010
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199590612.003.0008

The notion of a truthmaker is introduced, and the importance of the notion for metaphysics is stressed. Russell was a pioneer. All truth is a matter of correspondence of a proposition to reality, so truthmaker Maximalism should be accepted. It need not be a one—one correspondence. ‘What are your truthmakers?’ is superior to Quine's question ‘What do you quantify over?’ Minimalist theories of truth, descending from Frank Ramsey, are rejected. Minimal truthmakers, however, are not rejected except in the case of infinities. The relation of truths to their truthmakers is an internal one, depending solely on the terms involved, truth and truthmaker. Truthbearers, that is truths, are true propositions, but propositions are no more than what is believed, supposes that, entertains that, etc., what philosophers call ‘intentional objects’. They can include impossibilities. There is no realm of propositions. The important Entailment Principle says that if a proposition entails some further proposition, then a truthmaker for the premise is also truthmaker for the conclusion. This casts significant light on the nature of valid argument.

**Time**
David M. Armstrong

in *Sketch for a Systematic Metaphysics*

Published in print: 2010 Published Online: September 2010
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199590612.003.0015
Truthmaker and other arguments are presented to show the implausibility, at least, of Presentism (only the present exists) and the more plausible Growing Block theory (the past exists but not the future). Omnitemporalism (all times exist) is the theory that goes naturally with truthmaker Maximalism. The animal need to ‘live in the present’ may explain the psychological attractiveness of Presentism, and the lack of secure knowledge of the future, an epistemological lack, may bolster Growing block views.

Ontological Categories and Categorial Schemes
E. J. Lowe

in The Four-Category Ontology: A Metaphysical Foundation for Natural Science
Published in print: 2005 Published Online: May 2006
Item type: chapter

A realist approach to metaphysics and ontology is defended in the face of some antirealist tendencies in contemporary philosophical thought. The general notion of an ontological category is explained and justified. Different systems of ontological categories are compared and contrasted with the four-category ontology: a one-category ontology of modes or tropes, a two-category ontology of particulars and universals, and a two-category ontology of substantial particulars and modes. The ontological status of states of affairs and natural laws, and the ontological implications of the truthmaker principle as advocated by D. M. Armstrong are discussed.

A Theory of Presentism
Craig Bourne

in A Future for Presentism
Published in print: 2006 Published Online: January 2007
Item type: chapter

I begin by laying down three conditions which any theory of time should meet: it should accord with our view that certain statements about the past are true; that the truthmakers for those statements should be clear; and should accommodate the truth-value links between various times. I show how two different kinds of presentism cannot meet these requirements, including that put forward by Prior. I develop a version
of presentism, analogous to ersatz modal realism in the possible worlds debate, which does satisfy the requirements.

**Truthmaking and Disposition Lines: From Quark to Colleague**

C. B. Martin

in *The Mind in Nature*

Published in print: 2007 Published Online: January 2008


Publisher: Oxford University Press DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199234103.003.0003

This chapter argues against the use of possible worlds both as truthmakers and as truth bearers. It focuses on the possible worlds theorizing of David Lewis. Lewis was chosen because he puts possible worlds to both of the purposes discussed above, and because he is among the few ontologically candid advocates of possible worlds as truthmakers. It is argued that we can trust Lewis's and that instead of 'possible worlds', we should speak of 'alternative (to ours) worlds'.

**Why Truthmakers**

Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra

in *Truthmakers: The Contemporary Debate*

Published in print: 2005 Published Online: May 2010


Publisher: Oxford University Press DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199283569.003.0002

This chapter argues that a significant class of true synthetic propositions, including inessential predications — like the proposition that the rose is red and negative existentials like the proposition that there are no penguins in the North Pole — are made true by entities, i.e. by the entities they are true in virtue of. The slogan 'no truthmaking without truthmakers' holds true of propositions in that class. This view is supported by two different arguments. Crucial to these two arguments is the idea that truth is grounded in the sense that truth depends on reality. Neither argument presupposes or suggests any view as to what kinds of entities truthmakers might be.
This chapter replies to arguments, advanced by Gonzalo Rodriguez–Pereyra, for thinking that the intuitions that have inspired theories of truthmaking cannot be accommodated without commitment to truth-making entities. It contains a suggestion about why, even if there are no entities that make propositions true, we should nonetheless be apt to think of truth as grounded (and thus of ‘truthmaking’). The advocates of truthmakers engage sometimes in a specifically ontological enquiry of a wide-ranging sort, sometimes in the project of understanding truth. Inasmuch as Rodriguez–Pereyra’s manner of defending a truthmaker principle makes connections with both of these projects, the objections to his account made in the chapter rebound on them both.

This chapter argues that the ‘sensible nominalist’ can invoke a nominalist-friendly version of the truthmaker principle in order to overcome a standard objection to nominalism. The nominalist is allegedly unable to account for the truth of ‘there is a colour that objects a and b share’. However, once we abandon Quine's quantificational criterion of ontological commitment in favour of a truthmaker-based criterion of commitment, the problem disappears: the truthmaker for ‘there is a colour that objects a and b share’ might be, for example, simply that a is red and b is red: something that entails no commitment to the existence of colours. Ontological commitment to truthmakers (e.g. a's being red) is avoided by treating ‘makes true’ as a sentential operator rather than a relation. The chapter further argues that truthmaking can be used to understand modal truths in a way that does not require appeal to possibilia.
So Where's the Explanation?

Chris Daly

in Truthmakers: The Contemporary Debate

Published in print: 2005 Published Online: May 2010
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199283569.003.0006
Item type: chapter

Some proponents of the truthmaker principle claim that it has an explanatory power, such as that of explaining why idealism is false, or explaining the mind-independence of truth. Other proponents of the truthmaker principle claim that describing things as truthmakers has explanatory power, such as that of formulating and solving the problem of universals. This chapter makes a case for scepticism about claims of both kinds. First, it is argued that the truthmaker principle fails to have the alleged explanatory power, and its supposed benefits can be had without it. Second, it is argued that talk of 'truthmakers' and of 'the ontological ground of truth' are empty metaphors without explanatory content.

Truthmakers and Explanation

David Liggins

in Truthmakers: The Contemporary Debate

Published in print: 2005 Published Online: May 2010
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Item type: chapter

Truthmaker theory promises to do some useful philosophical work: equipping us to argue against phenomenalism and Rylean behaviourism, for instance, and helping us decide what exists. But it has proved hard to formulate a truthmaker theory that is both useful and believable. This chapter outlines some of the most prominent accounts of truthmaking in the current literature, and argues that a neglected approach to truthmakers — that of Ian McFetridge — can surmount some of the problems that make other theories of truthmaking unattractive. McFetridge's version of the truthmaker principle invokes the concept of explanation: for every true sentence, it demands an explanation of why that sentence is true. It is argued that McFetridge's principle is intuitively plausible, powerful enough to argue against behaviourism and phenomenalism, and immune to some of the difficulties faced by the most prominent theories of truthmaking.
Lewis's Animadversions on the Truthmaker Principle
Fraser MacBride

in Truthmakers: The Contemporary Debate
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Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199283569.003.0008
Item type: chapter

The early David Lewis was a staunch critic of the Truthmaker Principle. To endorse the principle, he argued, is to accept that states of affairs are truthmakers for contingent predications. But states of affairs violate Hume's prohibition of necessary connections between distinct existences. So Lewis offered to replace the Truthmaker Principle with the weaker principle that ‘truth supervenes upon being’. This chapter argues that even this principle violates Hume's prohibition. Later Lewis came to 'withdraw' his doubts about the Truthmaker Principle, invoking counterpart theory to show how it is possible to respect the principle whilst admitting only things that do not violate Hume's prohibition. What this really reveals is that the Truthmaker Principle is no explanatory advance on the supervenience principle. Extending Lewis's use of counterpart theory also allows us to explain away the necessary connections that threatened to undermine his earlier statements of supervenience.

Armstrong on Truthmaking
Marian David

in Truthmakers: The Contemporary Debate
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Item type: chapter

Truthmakers have come to play a central role in David Armstrong's metaphysics. They are the things that stand in the relation of truthmaking to truthbearers. This chapter focuses on the relation. More specifically, it discusses a thesis Armstrong holds about truthmaking that is of special importance to him; namely, the thesis that truthmaking is an internal relation. It explores what work this thesis is supposed to do for Armstrong, especially for this doctrine of the ontological free lunch, raising questions and pointing out difficulties along the way. At the end of the chapter, it is shown that Armstrong's preferred truthbearers generate a serious difficulty for his thesis that the truthmaking relation is internal.
This chapter discusses the function of sensory awareness for perception in two ways. First, it addresses how sensory awareness functions so as to make available external items as objects of immediate demonstration. Second, it addresses how sensory awareness serves as grounding for that which is judged and predicated of the external items. These issues are taken up with the aid of an analogy between perception and digestion. In particular, it is argued that the function of sensory experience is to directly present truthmakers which guarantee the truth of the immediate judgments made about the sensed scenarios. Sensory experience provides us with direct awareness of environmental particulars, and immediate perceptual judgments of some feature of an environmental particular are then grounded in that direct sensory awareness. In this way, what is sensed can make true what is immediately judged on the basis of sensing.

A Semantic Conception of Truthmaking
Stephen Yablo

Truth for Aristotle was a metaphysical notion. Alfred Tarski showed how to conceive truth semantically, that is, in such a way that it could play a foundational role in semantics. David Armstrong, the Aristotle of truthmaking, conceives it metaphysically, as the a posteriori necessitation of truths by “things in the world.” This chapter, in a Tarskian spirit, seeks a semantic conception of truthmakers. It suggests two formal models, the recursive and the reductive. They represent tendencies in truthmaker assignment that pull, at times, in different directions. Where one can be indulged at no cost to the other, as in the case of quantifiers, that is the way to go. Otherwise a compromise has to be struck. How the tendencies trade off depends on the application. To
a first approximation, though, semantic truthmakers are facts that imply
truths and proportionally explain them.

The Moving Spotlight
Ross P. Cameron

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September 2015 DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198713296.001.0001

This book argues that the best version of the A-Theory is a version of
the Moving Spotlight view. Past and future beings are real, but there
is nonetheless an objectively privileged present. It is argued that the
Moving Spotlight theory should be viewed as having more in common
with Presentism—the view that reality is limited to the present—than
with the B-Theory—the view that time is just another dimension like
space through which things are spread out. The Moving Spotlight view,
on this picture, agrees with Presentism that everything is the way it is
now, it simply thinks that non-present beings are amongst the things that
are now some way. It is argued that the Moving Spotlight theory provides
the best account of truthmakers for claims about what was or will be the
case, and the view is defended against a number of objections, including
McTaggart’s argument that the A-Theory is inconsistent, and the charge
that if the A-Theory is true but Presentism false then we could not know
that we are present. An account of the open future is defended, and it is
argued that this is a better account than that available to the Growing
Block theory.

Oxford Studies in Medieval Philosophy, Volume 4
Robert Pasnau (ed.)

Published in print: 2016 Published Online: December 2016

This series annually collects the best current work in the field of medieval
philosophy. Each book features original chapters that contribute to an
understanding of a wide range of themes and problems in all aspects
of the field, from late antiquity into the Renaissance, and extending
over the Jewish, Islamic, and Christian traditions. Material published
includes analyses, extended book reviews, translations, commentaries,
and editions of texts. This volume contains the following chapters: Cary
Nederman on the medieval roots of modern toleration; Stephen Ogden
on how Averroes does not argue for a single separate intellect; John
Hawthorne on Scotus’s theory of universals; Jeff Steele on the irrelevance
of aesthetic considerations to Scotus’s theory of natural law; David Sanson and Ahmed Alwishah on Al-Taftāzānī’s treatment of the liar paradox; Jacob Tuttle on Suarez’s theory of efficient causation; Brian Embry on a late-scholastic theory of truthmakers; Thomas Ward’s critical review of Jeffrey Brower’s recent book on Aquinas; and a response by Turner Nevitt to a recent paper by Adam Wood on Aquinas’s account of “gappy” existence.

Truthmakers for What?
D. H. Mellor

in Mind, Meaning, and Reality: Essays in Philosophy
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Item type: chapter

This chapter defends a moderate truthmaker theory, not as a theory of truth or meaning but as an essential supplement to both. On this theory only truths that are not complete truth functions of other propositions have non-propositional truthmakers. These truths are either atomic propositions ascribing natural properties or relations to contingent particulars, or molecular propositions, like ‘I believe P’ and ‘probably P’, whose truth values don’t follow from those of their constituents. The chapter concludes by showing that true generalisations, including statements of laws of nature, need no truthmakers, despite not being entailed by the conjunction of all their instances.

Consequences of Necessitism
Timothy Williamson

in Modal Logic as Metaphysics
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Item type: chapter

Necessitism underpins an elegant metaphysical view on which the play of contingency and change occurs within a non-contingent, unchanging structural framework. Contingentists sometimes charge necessitists with denying a plausible claim of the supervenience of the modal on the non-modal. However, there is no good reason to endorse the supervenience claim in the form incompatible with necessitism. Another controversial consequence of necessitism is that contingent truths lack truthmakers. However, the relevant truthmaker principle depends
on an unjustified metaphysical privileging of first-order over higher-order quantification. Given the many implausible consequences of that truthmaker principle, its rejection is a benefit of necessitism. Finally, although some necessitists may assign explanatory priority to an extensional metalanguage with quantification over possible worlds and no modal operators, doing so commits them to rejecting radical contingency, a commitment too far. While permitting such quantification, necessitists should give priority to some modal operators, if not the expected ones.