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Enduring Property Versatility

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Enduring Property Versatility

Abstract

This is a contribution to a symposium on David Liebesman and Ofra Magidor's outstanding book, *Property Versatility and Copredication*. We focus on the implications of their view for foundational metaphysics—specifically, traditional ontological categories: 'abstract/concrete', 'material/immaterial', and endurantism vs. the rest. We agree the abstract/concrete and material/immaterial dichotomies should be sidelined or eliminated altogether. But we categorically disagree with the deflationary view they entertain regarding endurantism in particular and location more generally. We argue their view is committed to endurantism. But this is a *feature*, not a bug.

In *Property Versatility and Copredication* (hereafter, '*PVC*') David Liebesman and Ofra Magidor (hereafter, 'L&M') transform our understanding of the metaphysics of properties, types, and kinds. They argue that properties are *versatile* in a way that has largely gone unnoticed. *Property versatility* is the commonplace view that properties can be had in many ways; fire engines and frocks might both be red despite differences in hue, brightness, saturation, material, etc.[1] But property versatility *in L&M's hands* is a sort of generalization of the commonplace view. And it's the *versatility* of property versatility that has largely gone unnoticed. L&M contend that property versatility *versatility* (hereafter, 'PVV') has far-reaching implications for metaphysics.

To reiterate: This book is transformational. We recommend it unreservedly.

L&M advocate PVV as the solution to 'the problem of copredication'. PVV also plays an important role in L&M's solution to 'the counting problem' presented at *PVC*'s outset:

> There are three copies of *War and Peace* on an otherwise empty shelf (Figure 1).

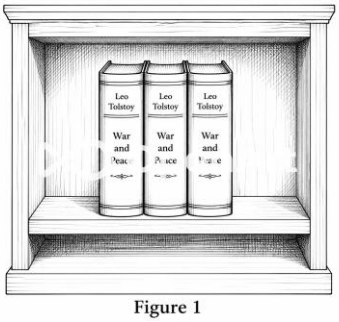


Figure 1

[1] We're blithely assuming colours aren't 'secondary qualities' à la Locke 1689.

> Now consider the following sentences:
>
> (1) Three books are on the shelf.
> (2) (Exactly) one book is on the shelf.
>
> . . . A natural hypothesis is that these two readings of the counting sentences because the noun 'book' itself has multiple readings . . . Given this natural hypothesis, there is one type of object which witnesses the true reading of (1) . . . and there is a very different type of object that witnesses the true reading of (2) . . . (L&M 2025: 1-2)

As their example makes clear, in addition to creatures of 'theoretical metaphysics' (properties, types, kinds), L&M are also concerned with quotidian entities, like books (*qua* physical object ('p-book')/'informational' object ('i-book')). But also lunches (*qua* foodstuffs/events), establishments (*qua* physical infrastructure/'institution'), and repeatable artworks (stories, musical works, cast sculptures, etc.), among others. These entities exhibit seemingly *incompatible properties*–lunches that are hours long and delicious; countries that are hexagonal republics; bestsellers that are on the shelf.[2]

L&M maintain that PVV helps sort baffling books, incompatible lunches, paradoxical countries, antinomous artworks, and more besides. Their appeal to PVV effectively scrambles traditional ontological categories: 'I-books' might seem 'abstract' or 'immaterial' but can be located.[3] Events can be tasty (when they're also lunches!). Countries can be hexagonal republics. Musical works can be repeatable and 'independent of particular manifestations' but also created and heard. Putative abstracta seem to have features attributed to 'concreta' because putative abstracta *do* have those features. (You *can* visit a University or hold a bestseller!) Putative concreta seem to have features attributed to 'abstracta' because putative concreta *do* have those features. (The car you drive *is* highly rated by J.D. Power & Associates!) And so on.

So even beyond the metaphysically theoretical and the quotidian, *PVC* has important and far-reaching implications for *foundational* issues in metaphysics. In L&M's view, PVV threatens traditional metaphysical categories: abstract/concrete, immaterial/material, and endurance/perdurance.[4] A recurring theme is: once we have PVV in hand, pursuing metaphysical

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[2] This is a version of the problem of copredication.

[3] As Weatherson (2026) points out, 'book' seems even more multifarious than L&M suggest. E.g., the modern King James version of the bible consists, in some sense, of 66 books, so how many books are on Weatherson's 'bible shelf'?. Perhaps Weatherson's 'bible shelf' has one *codex* but 66 books, in some sense of 'book'. But we're not entirely sure. We might also distinguish between books (in something like L&M's 'i(nformational)-object' sense) and *copies of books*, which aren't *literally* books (in something like L&M's 'p(hysical)-object' sense). But we're not entirely sure. And, besides, insisting on this sort of distinction doesn't plausibly yield a *general* solution to these sorts of issues.

[4] See their 2025: 1-6, 11-19, 187-259, 205-218, 325-415, and *passim*. Endurance and perdurance should be considered alongside other options, including exdurance, spanning ('transduring'), and combinations of

questions in terms of these standard ideological frames is, at best, *unmotivated*. And, at worst, devolves into incoherence or hopelessly distorts the terrain, giving rise to metaphysical *pseudo-problems*.

In what follows, we focus on the interaction between PVV and these standard ideological frames in turn: 'abstract/concrete', 'material/immaterial', and endurantism vs. the rest. In our estimation, L&M's view complements the case(s) against 'abstract/concrete' and, to an extent, 'material/immaterial'. But their case against endurantism vs. the rest is, in a number of ways, a different story.

(We understand L&M also discuss some issues in philosophy of language/linguistics.[5])

Abstract/Concrete

We think PVV strengthens the already formidable case against an 'abstract/concrete' distinction. If anything, we think L&M don't go far *enough* in emphasizing the threat from PVV. For example, Weatherson (2026) persistently portrays PVV as the view that *abstracta* can have properties traditionally associated with concreta.[6] Insofar as this *is* L&M's view, we think it shouldn't be. Insofar as it's *not*, we think that warrants underscoring. In our view, PVV does not invite an innovation (er, epicycle) of the 'abstract/concrete' distinction, as Weatherson (2026) perhaps envisions, so much as a complete *rethinking* of the approach to the problems that led to that distinction's invocation.[7]

Those problems flow from the venerable 'one over many' problem: How can there be identity in diversity?[8] David Armstrong (1978: 11) succinctly states its crux:

> Apparently, there can be something identical in things which are not identical. Things are one at the same time as they are many. How is this possible?

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these. See e.g. Hawley 2001, Sider 2001, Hudson 2005, Parsons 2008, Kleinschmidt 2017, Daniels 2019, and Fowler ms.

[5] In our view their work defending externalist semantics while rethinking generics, category mistakes, and more besides, is game-changing. But we'll focus here on their more metaphysical contributions.

[6] See especially Weatherson 2026: 1-2.

[7] Weatherson's (2026) discussion suggests a reading of L&M as making common cause with 'abstract artifactualists', discussed briefly below.

[8] In the West, the story begins with the Presocratics. (Cf. Cohen et al. 2000.) Arguably, there are analogues of ancient Greek ontological categories (particularly, analogues of the abstract/concrete roughly along the lines of Platonism (and contemporary platonism)) among the ancient Greeks' (approximate) contemporaries in classical Eastern thought, as well. Purusha/Prakriti in Hinduism (Samkhya), Samanya/Vishesha in Buddhism, and Wu/You in Daoism all can be seen as categorizing entities as eternal/unchanging/'spiritual' or temporary/changing/material or physical.

The 'abstract/concrete' ideology is a relic of Plato's famous answer. Plato theorizes the 'one' as an abstractum, and the 'many' as concreta that 'instantiate' it.[9] So, applied to L&M's case, while the many (well, *three*) concrete books are on the shelf, the abstract 'one' is in Plato's heaven; it's 'on the shelf', perhaps, *at best*, by courtesy.

Plato's view is not much discussed by metaphysicians today. Plato's Platonism has given way to Gottlob Frege's view, which is, confusingly enough, called 'platonism' (with a small 'p').[10] According to 'the standard view', platonism posits an exhaustive and exclusive division between abstracta and concreta.[11] Abstracta live in a 'third realm' or are altogether unlocated, while concreta reside in the spatiotemporal 'vale of tears'.[12]

The platonist solution to 'one over many' faces daunting challenges. First, no one knows what the putative abstract/concrete distinction amounts to.[13] Second, no one knows how instantiation is supposed to work for platonists. If it's relational, relating things in the 'third realm' to things in other realms, then to which realm, if any, does instantiation belong?[14] And if instantiation explains repeatability, how can it be invoked to explain the repeatability of instantiation itself?[15] For that matter, if instantiation is invoked to explain the relation between o and *F* when o instantiates *F*, then what explains *that*? An infinite regress looms.[16] Third, it seems suspicious (at

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[9] See e.g. Cooper 1997.

[10] See especially Frege 1884, 1918. We follow the convention of reserving 'Platonism' with a 'P' for Plato's views and platonism with a 'p' for contemporary platonism. They are importantly different, though not always in ways that matter for our purposes. One important difference is that Plato considers the Forms to be abstract objects that are causes *par excellence* while platonists regard abstract objects as causally inert. Cf. Cowling 2017, Falguera et al. 2025.

[11] Cf. Cowling 2017: 70-74.

[12] According to Frege 1918, reality partitions into 'the first realm' (more or less objective, physical things), 'the second realm' (more or less subjective, private ideas), and 'the third realm' (more or less the timeless, unchangeable abstract domain).

[13] Cf. e.g. Lewis 1986, Cowling 2017, and Falguera et al. 2025.

[14] Is it a *relation* 'connecting' concreta and abstracta? If so, *where is it?* An object o's instantiation of *F* seemingly can't be in Plato's heaven (or nowhere) if o is concrete, but it also seems it can't be spatiotemporal since *F* is not spatiotemporal. This is, itself, a version of the 'metaphysical misfits' problem alluded to above. One popular reply supposes that instantiation involves a 'brute, non-relational tie' instead of a relation. In addition to replacing one set of mysteries with another, this would also impugn the generality of the platonist solution. The generality of platonist repeatability is also threatened by its inability to credibly account for the repeatability involved in persistence. Cf. Johnston 2025, Tillman forthcoming.

[15] It can't be that the relation of instantiation repeats by instantiating instantiation. It's hardly satisfactory to explain *why* an object has a property by saying the object instantiates that property, but where *that* instantiation itself instantiates 'Instantiation-ness'! Platonists must tell some other story here.

[16] The mechanism of instantiation in the hands of the platonist invites an infinitely descending (ascending?) grounding chain: if o's being *F* is explained by o instantiating *F*-ness, then what explains o's instantiating *F*-ness? The answer will again be given in terms of instantiation, which invites the same sort of question (and answer) again, forever and ever. We think the last of these problems is a version of Bradley's (1893) regress, though we've heard the one that precedes it called that, too. (Our formulation follows Frugé 2025.) While not *essentially* vicious *qua regress*, an infinite *grounding* regress is anathema

best) to posit an invisible manifold to house unexplained explainers.[17] Fourth, and perhaps most pertinent presently, a great many things just don't fit either the 'abstract' or 'concrete' category, insofar as they are traditionally understood. Among them, the very entities L&M concern themselves with: books, lunches, establishments and institutions, artworks and artifacts, and much, much more besides. Elsewhere, we call these 'metaphysical misfits'.[18] Ontological puzzles involving 'metaphysical misfits' are, by our lights, ultimately pseudo-problems that only arise given platonist ideology. Once we stop trying to peer darkly through a platonist lens, 'metaphysical misfits' puzzles begin to vanish.[19]

We advocate focusing *directly* on aspects of an entity's metaphysical profile, such as how it's located, extended, or distributed across spacetime, instead of chasing traditional ontological categorization questions–largely for the foregoing reasons.[20] PVV complements this approach. On L&M's view, the thing that there is exactly one of on the shelf–they're careful not to call it 'abstract'–is *literally* on the shelf.[21]

Insofar as more immediate metaphysical questions concerning e.g. repeatability, causality, creation, essence, ground, location, etc., might *clarify* platonist categories, they can also *supplant* them–while losing little to nothing, and potentially gaining much. After presenting a somewhat similar list of more immediate metaphysical questions, L&M (2025: 367-8) channel just this insight:

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to practically any view of grounding. Cf. Bliss and Trogdon 2024, but see Cameron 2022 for a rare defense of infinite grounding regresses.

[17] There is a general presumption against platonism. Even among platonists. Peter van Inwagen (2004: 107-113), a reluctant platonist himself, sums up the sentiment:

> (A) philosopher should wish not to be a platonist if it's rationally possible for the informed philosopher not to be a platonist . . . Platonists . . . must say that reality, what there is, is divided into two parts: one part *we* belong to, and everything in this part is more like us than is anything in the other part. The inhabitants of the other part are radically unlike us, much more unlike us than is anything in "our" part, and we can't really say much about what the things in the other part are like. It seems to me to be evident that it would be better not to believe in the other parts of reality, the other category of things, if we could manage it. (Italics in original; editing due to authors.)

Like van Inwagen, *we* were reluctant platonists when we couldn't see our way to maintaining commitment to entities we believe exist–properties, types, kinds, sets, propositions, all the rest–without also accepting a form of platonism. We now see things differently. And that's, in part, due to L&M.

[18] Tillman forthcoming sets forth the 'metaphysical misfits' puzzle (§0) and discusses its range (§3.5). The metaphysical misfits puzzle presented there generalizes, in a way, from Tillman 2011, which in turn loosely follows Thomasson 2004. Claims to the effect that certain entities do not comport well with traditional divisions invoked by the standard platonist view are ubiquitous, however.

[19] Cf. Tillman forthcoming.

[20] *Ibid*. But *also* because we think 'one over many' is best addressed by theorizing *repeatability*, which we think amounts to a particular way of being located. More on this below.

[21] L&M *do* describe things as 'abstractish' throughout, however.

> This list of suggestions for refocusing the debate about [repeatables] illustrates that there are a wide variety of important issues that one can consider independently of the [ontological] category question. The list may also serve to bolster scepticism about ontological categorization as well. Imagine that we address the . . . issues above in some detail. What interest would be left in determining just what ontological category [metaphysical misfits] belong to? While we don't have an argument, our impression is: not much. (2025: 368. Editing due to authors.)

Not much, indeed.

Ontological investigations dominated by ontological categorization questions have largely played out in the long shadow of platonism's ideological framework. It's hard to see what platonist ideology adds to inquiry apart from *problems* that are best avoided by avoiding the ideology altogether. And, with it, standard views in ontology that are wedded to the platonist ideological framework, like nominalism and 'abstract artifactualism'.[22] We should decline the platonist invitation to sort the furniture of the universe exhaustively and exclusively into abstracta and concreta (along with the abstract artifactualist epicycle). And we should reject the pseudo-problems along with the framing. L&M help show the way.

Material/Immaterial

What about the 'material/immaterial' dichotomy? L&M actually devote *more* space to this putative distinction, despite 'abstract/concrete' traditionally masquerading as the more fundamental of the two. Though perhaps less central, 'material/immaterial' might at least be somewhat *clearer*.[23] At the end of the day, though, L&M argue this distinction, too, struggles to maintain utility and coherence in light of PVV.

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[22] Obviously, this includes platonism. Less obviously, perhaps, it also includes nominalism, since nominalism embraces platonist ideology even if nominalists hold that one category is empty. (Cf. Cowling and Giberman 2025.) 'Abstract artifactualism' à la Kripke 1973/2013, van Inwagen 1977, Thomasson 1999, etc., is impugned as well. Insofar as the approach is built on the platonist ideological infrastructure, abstract artifactualism inherits its structural instability. And it's unclear how their 'innovations' help matters. They could, for instance, maintain that 'abstract/concrete' partitions the universe, along with platonists and nominalists, but reject that creation or location partitions the universe along the same lines. The upshot, though, is *less* clarity on how to mark the alleged distinction between abstract and concrete. Alternatively, the abstract artifactualist might insist on a *tripartite* division between 'pure' abstracta, abstract artifacts, and concreta. But then instead of *one* inscrutable division in reality, the abstract artifactualist would now postulate *two*. Which amounts to a strange sort of progress.

[23] Like 'abstract/concrete', no one has any really good idea just what 'material/immaterial' amounts to. See Pérez-Jara et al. 2022 for a recent, comprehensive discussion. 'Material/immaterial' may also be less fundamental in the sense that matter might ultimately be understood in terms of *fields*. See e.g. Ney & Albert 2013 and Ney 2021.

Elsewhere (2011, 2012, 2019, forthcoming), we have defended a view of artworks that we think more or less readily generalizes to other 'metaphysical misfits' on which works repeat via their 'manifestations'.[24] And if those manifestations, or perhaps some suitable number of them, are *material*, then *voila*! We have a sort of materialist view of repeatable artworks (and other 'misfits'). There are various ways this view can be developed.[25] But let's focus on the *approach*. And let's call it 'Materialism'.

L&M express some sympathy for Materialism.[26] But they stop short of endorsing it. That's because they conclude it is *unmotivated*:

> Once one holds that durational properties are versatile, then what work is done by the additional claim that . . . works are . . . material? As far as we can tell, these additional claims do nothing to help with the problem(s) . . . once versatility is adopted . . . The general point is that once we adopt property versatility quite generally, adopting specific metaphysical commitments in order to justify a versatility claim is unwarranted. (2025: 358. Editing due to authors.)

We are grateful for the opportunity to address the criticism.[27]

Though it may come as something of a surprise from erstwhile defenders of *material* views of 'metaphysical misfits' like us, we actually *agree* with L&M's antipathy for the material/immaterial distinction and Materialism. Though Tillman 2011 calls the approach

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[24] As L&M 2025: 366 point out, 'manifestation' is a term of art. By 'manifestation' we mean to capture the sense in which an artwork can be 'present', or an event or state in which we 'encounter' works (in something like Puy's (2019: 241) sense). We can experience a musical work by experiencing a performance of it or perhaps by being in a certain mental state—maybe one aided by reading a copy of the score. We experience a literary work by experiencing a reading of it or perhaps by being in a certain mental state—maybe one aided by reading a copy of the story. We also suppose the repetition in question via manifestations proceeds *sans* instantiation and instead via some mechanism suited to 'spatiotemporal' entities. See below.

[25] Some ways of developing the view include Caplan and Matheson's (2006, 2008) perdurantism, Moruzzi's (2018) exdurantism, Friedell's (2014, 2021, 2025) 'transdurantism' (he would likely resist the label), or our endurantism. (See fn. 4 for brief remarks and citations.) We also consider Cray and Matheson 2017 a form of our endurantism, but they endorse a different account of manifestations than what we considered in our 2011 or 2012. More on that below. Other ways of pursuing the endurantist option are explored in the hylomorphic proposals of Evnine 2013, 2016 (who may also resist the label) and Tillman 2016.

[26] See e.g. their 2025: 356-367. We also receive a fair bit of criticism from L&M here, some of which we try to address below. But we'll take the best with the bitter.

[27] In the quoted passage L&M are actually engaging *our* preferred version of Materialism, which they aptly call 'Endurantism', rather than the 'umbrella' view. But since we're discussing endurantism in the final section, we thought we'd stick to the 'materialist approach' here and leave matters of location/persistence/extension/repeatability aside for now.

'musical materialism' we now think nothing more than an alliterative fit of sorts justifies insisting musical works are 'material', and we regret using the term.[28]

Regardless of whatever form manifestations of misfits may take, works or their manifestations might not be strictly *material*. They might, for instance, have parts where there is no relevant material 'substrate', as in a poem manifested by the negative space left by inscribing stone, or a word realized by a stencil, or the rest during the opening half beat in a performance of Beethoven's Fifth.[29] What we think is important about our approach is not whether manifestations are 'material', but, rather, that works themselves are theorized without recourse to the 'abstract/concrete' distinction and that works and their manifestations ultimately inhabit the same spatiotemporal world *we* do.

More importantly, perhaps, insofar as 'material/immaterial' goes proxy for 'abstract/concrete', the former inherits the latter's deficiencies; if it's another shorthand for clusters of features that are best theorized individually instead of as a package, the distinction is of dubious utility and coherence.[30] Equipped with the PVV view, we (by and large) have no more need for these proxies. Through a traditional lens, 'i-books' might be thought immaterial, since they can survive destruction of particular physical copies ('p-books'). And p-books might be thought material, since they are located. But L&M argue we should appreciate the versatility of properties like *being located*, and notice i-books can be located, too.

So if we follow tradition and take 'material/immaterial' to be exhaustive and exclusive, we invite more 'metaphysical misfit' pseudo-problems. If, instead, we suppose something that can be located is material, it then turns out that there are a lot more material things than might have been expected, including i-books. (Which is along the lines of what we were thinking in our previous work.) Or we might, instead, suppose something is immaterial if it can exist without material manifestations. But then it turns out immaterial things can be located (since i-books can be located). Or, instead, following L&M (2025: 343), we may reject ('evince . . . scepticism about') the material/immaterial distinction altogether. After all, if the categories are liberalized to this extent, they lose their utility as 'shorthand' for clusters of important properties. But the traditional, illiberal construals threaten incoherence in the face of 'metaphysical misfit'/copredication problems.[31] Hence, the distinction loses utility or coherence.

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[28] After all, we think Cray and Matheson's (2017) *musical idealism*, where manifestations of works are located, repeatable *ideas*, is best understood as a form of 'Materialism' in the sense we intended it. We're no experts on ideas, though. For starters, we have no idea whether ideas are material. And would not want the fortunes of the view we're *actually* interested in to be hostage to the fortunes of thoroughgoing materialism about the mental.

[29] Or a performance thereof. Cf. Kaplan 1990, Kania 2010.

[30] See e.g. their 2025: 216-218, 342-344, and *passim*.

[31] This paragraph follows L&M 2025: 342-4.

That, we think, is the bigger picture. We conclude this section with some further considerations.

First, we suspect that, in rejecting 'material/immaterial', L&M risk hoisting themselves by their own petard, as it were. After all, they think the three books on the shelf are *physical* books ('p-books'), at least *prima facie* committing them to the 'physical/non-physical' distinction. But physicalism is widely regarded as the ideological descendant of materialism.[32] (When we figured out physics needs to countenance a lot more than just *matter*, we more or less made the switch.) 'Physical/non-physical' looks to be in more or less the same boat as 'abstract/concrete' and 'material/immaterial'; problems for the latter seem to be problems for the former as well.[33] This is concerning insofar as the category *physical* is important to L&M's project. (Are i-books . . . *also* p-books??)

Second, Materialism faces a *prima facie* problem–as L&M (2025: 357-8) note–with pressure to systematically relate properties of works and their manifestations, even when they might (wildly) diverge. There are many versions of this problem, some of which L&M discuss under the label 'mixed-level property ascriptions' (L&M 2025: 348-58). In our 2012 we focused on Andrew Kania's (2026) 'wrong note' version of the problem: if all performances of a work contain a wrong note (the same one, let's suppose), then aren't Materialists committed to the work *itself* containing a wrong note? After all, on an attractive materialist view of persons (or their bodies), it couldn't be that all of David's manifestations are two-armed but somehow David himself is $n \neq$ 2-armed.

In reply, we supposed that works might be ontologically prior to their manifestations even if Materialism is true. (We'll spare you the details here.) And though we stand by the letter of that reply, we framed the problem in terms of 'inheritance principles'–principles describing systematic connections between works and their manifestations. But we are now convinced by L&M that pursuing this project in any general, systematic way is a strategic error (or worse). As they put it:

> [H]ow should we think of inheritance? . . . Begin with the conditions for inheritance. The most straightforward way to think about inheritance advances simple generalizations . . . This version of the view clearly fails . . . One way to give a more discriminating view would be to endorse a different quantificational schema . . . We reject any such straightforward account: these accounts are false because inheritance, and property instantiation more generally, is not so systematic.

[32] Here is the first sentence of the first section of the SEP entry on physicalism: "Physicalism is sometimes known as 'materialism.'." Stoljar 2026.
[33] It's hardly as if it's exactly clear what 'physical/non-physical' amounts to, or whether it's even properly regarded as a thesis or belief. Cf. Stoljar 2026, Ney 2008.

> An analogy makes the point vivid. Complex objects can inherit properties from their proper parts . . . However, there is no simple quantificational account of when an object inherits properties from its parts . . . Whether a complex instantiates a property depends not just on how many of its parts instantiate that property, but also on (at least) the nature of that property, the nature of the parts, and the nature of the complex. Given the variety of properties, parts, and complexes, we shouldn't expect a single straightforward quantificational account. (2025: 214-5, cf. 12-13. Editing due to authors.)

Though in our 2012 we were considering what L&M might call 'restricted inheritance principles', which they find more congenial, we would have benefitted from L&M's insights regarding inheritance. If only they had occurred to us.

So to recap a bit, insofar as 'material/immaterial' is a proxy for 'abstract/concrete', the same problems apply to both. The former strikes us as somewhat more tractable than the latter, however. Regardless, insofar as these dichotomies have to go, the 'physical/nonphysical' ideology may be similarly threatened, which would be at least *awkward* for L&M. And though we have defended Materialism in the past, we think we drew unnecessary fire for framing the view(s) we're interested in as 'materialist', which we now realize was a mistake. And we quite like L&M's point about just how systematic property inheritance is(n't).

So when it comes to the traditional metaphysical dichotomies of 'abstract/concrete' and 'material/immaterial', we by and large find ourselves in sympatico with L&M. But we part ways over views on location and persistence. We hope the rift is short-lived, though, since we think L&M already have practically everything they need to see things our way.

Location and Persistence

As mentioned above, we have defended a view according to which artworks and other metaphysical misfits repeat via their manifestations. On our preferred version of this view, they repeat across spacetime in much the way endurantists think we (or our bodies) repeat across time–by being wholly multiply located at different times, and coincident at a time with some suitably arranged nutrients (or their sum). Sensibly enough, L&M (2025: 347) label this view 'Endurantism'.[34]

[34] L&M (2025: 347) call our view concerning the location and repeatability of 'metaphysical misfits' 'Endurantism'. Much of what we say below also applies to *endurantism*, the more general view. But we'll typically use 'Endurantism' throughout, even when we intend a more general claim, too. *Mutatis mutandis* for 'Perdurantism' and perdurantism.

To our horror, L&M (2025: 366-7) sympathetically entertain a *deflationary* view about whether metaphysical misfits endure, perdure, or otherwise occupy spacetime paths:[35]

> [T]here's some reason to think that the Property Versatility view is not even directly comparable to Perdurantism and Endurantism as more familiarly understood. Those views are primarily concerned with the mereological structure and spatiotemporal locations of repeatable artworks. As discussed above, however, the Property Versatility approach is perfectly compatible with these issues simply having no straightforward resolution because particular cases happen to pull in opposite directions. Even if, as may be the case with literary works, they have all of the same locational properties that the Endurantist takes them to have, this may be due to highly contingent facts about which properties happen to be picked out by natural language predicates rather than any particularly substantial underlying metaphysical facts. To put it more straightforwardly, the Property Versatility approach is naturally combined with a deflationary attitude towards many of the questions posed by Perdurantism/Endurantism, though this deflationary attitude is by no means required. (Editing due to authors.)

We can't abide deflationism about location and persistence.[36] The ideology of endurance, perdurance, and the rest isn't subject to the same problems as 'abstract/concrete' and 'material/immaterial'. First, the location and persistence ideology is *considerably* clearer. Though it might be an open question what *exactly* these positions amount to, there is nothing approaching the cavalcade of counterexamples (among other problems) facing invocations of 'abstract/concrete' and 'material/immaterial'. Second, there are, presumably, objective, language-independent facts about how things are located, and our preferred option regarding location and persistence–Endurantism–is the best option for accounting for them. It alone demystifies repeatability. Third, L&M already seem *committed* to our preferred option. Even if L&M insist that metaphysical misfits might only endure contingently, it is sufficient to be an Endurantist about *location*, if not persistence, to countenance the *ideology* of Endurance–i.e., multilocating co-locators.[37] And L&M *do*.

So since L&M are committed anyway to our view of *how* things are located–if only contingently, perhaps–they're *already* committed to Endurantism. Serendipitously, their commitment can fill an important lacuna in their project: their unfinished business with the 'one over many'. L&M provide a robust basis for rejecting platonism's answer, but they don't provide one of their own.

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[35] Following Gilmore 2006: 204, the *path* of an entity is the union of the region(s) that it exactly occupies.
[36] Though they are careful to note that PVV doesn't *require* deflationism, L&M are clearly sympathetic. Despite this caveat, we'll simply attribute deflationism to them in what follows to avoid repeated, cumbersome hedges.
[37] After all, anyone who countenances temporal extension of *any* sort–including for spacetime itself–should accept temporal parts, too. And, hence, the core ideology of Perdurantism about location. But then commitment to Endurantism is simply a matter of *also* accepting the ideology of endurance. Cf. Hawthorne 2006, 2008.

That's consistent with their particularism, but we think there's a *general* answer to 'one over many': Endurantism.[38] Something repeats just if it's wholly multiply located–just if it *endures*.[39]

According to Endurantism, any time there is apparent identity among diversity, there is *literal* identity. *War and Peace*, the i-book on the shelf, is literally numerically identical to *War and Peace*, the i-book in the local bookstore. Moreover, according to Endurantism, any time there is identity among diversity, there is *literal* diversity. *War and Peace*, the i-book, has diverse manifestations in the forms of various p-books; it also has diverse locations–on the shelf and in the local bookstore.[40] L&M don't have a general solution to the one-over-many. They do have all the ingredients for a solution, however.

By way of contrast, the 'abstract/concrete' and 'material/immaterial' distinctions indeed appear to be broad ontological categories that cover clusters of properties and, as L&M point out, it is unclear which properties belong in those clusters, or, ultimately, *why* we should think whichever properties are so-clustered form foundational ontological categories. We agree with L&M that it's more useful to ask after the individual properties in those clusters rather than argue about the putative broad categories. But Endurantism and its rivals are not broad ontological categories that cover clusters of properties. They are specific theses about the mereological and locational properties of various objects.[41]

Let's unpack the route from PVV to Endurantism. Recall that L&M begin by introducing two problems: a counting problem and a copredication problem. The counting problem, they suggest, pushes us towards distinguishing two different readings of 'book': 'i-books' and 'p-books'. It seems that there is one book on the shelf because there is one i-book on the shelf. Whereas it seems that there are three books on the shelf because there are three p-books on the shelf.

The copredication problem (2025: 2) arises because the following seems true:

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[38] Cf. Tillman forthcoming.

[39] We prefer Hudson's (2005) term 'entend' over 'endure', where 'entension' : 'extension' :: 'endurant' : 'persistent'. *Extension* and *entension* apply to entities in spacetime regardless of spatiotemporal 'orientation'; i.e., without the primarily temporal reading that 'endurantism' invites. (We like Hudson's *term*, but not his account of what extending amounts to, but for technical reasons that need not detain us here.) We'll stick with the more common 'endurantism' here, though, since L&M use it as well.

[40] The literal identity and the literal diversity are, of course, not confined to *literature*.

[41] We believe that the core of Endurantism is the locational thesis: various entities, including 'metaphysical misfits', are spread through spacetime by being wholly multiply co-located with their manifestations. Significant ink has been spilt on how to understand the 'wholly' bit of that claim. But we, and others, are inclined to put far less emphasis on any putative *mereological* implications of that word. We are less interested in where all of a multi-locator's parts are and more interested in where *it*, as a whole, is located. Hence, even the 'cluster' that includes mereological and locational properties can be reduced to just locational properties. Whether one is an endurantist, then, is just a matter of accepting the Endurantist ideology of multi-located co-locators.

(3) The book on the shelf was written by Tolstoy.

But it doesn't seem like something can both be on the shelf and written by Tolstoy.[42] In terms of p-books and i-books, it seems like only p-books can be on the shelf and only i-books can be written by Tolstoy. As L&M point out, the copredication problem pushes us towards a single reading of 'book', a reading on which whatever is picked out by 'book' can both be on the shelf and written by Tolstoy. Surprisingly, L&M accept that there are both p-books and i-books, but they claim that various i-books have properties that we might ordinarily associate with p-books. It is the i-book that is both on the shelf and written by Tolstoy. This is part of PVV.

It's worth noting that L&M could have instead started with the copredication problem and said that whatever is meant by 'book', it better be a thing that can be on the shelf and written by Tolstoy. *Without* introducing the notions of a 'p-book' or an 'i-book', we are already well on our way to a property versatility view. There is a thing that has the property of being on the shelf and being written by Tolstoy. Let's call it a 'book'. It turns out that being on the shelf and being written by Tolstoy are not incompatible properties.

But once L&M have embraced PVV, they might *also* employ it to solve the counting problem. Whatever is meant by 'book on the shelf' it better be the sort of thing that is both exactly one in number and three in number. It turns out, they might have claimed, that being exactly one in number and being three in number are *not* incompatible properties.[43]

Ordinarily, one might say that being three in number is incompatible with being exactly one in number. But instead of analyzing numerical quantificational claims in the familiar Russellian manner, one might simply treat numerical quantifiers as primitives. We might symbolize 'there is at least one' as $\exists_1$ and 'there are at least three' as $\exists_3$. Thus, there is *exactly* one book on the shelf can by symbolized as follows:

$(\exists_1 x)(Bx \ \& \ (\forall y)(By \rightarrow y=x))$

And there are at least three books on the shelf can by symbolized as follows:

$(\exists_3 x)Bx$

[42] Unless, perhaps, you have a *very* special copy! More seriously, things seem to appear this way to many *philosophers*. But, in our experience, most people don't see incompatibility here or in similar cases without considerable prompting. Cf. Kripke 1980: 40-49.
[43] Cf. Spencer 2017.

These two formalizations are not inconsistent.[44] Put in more 'metaphysical' terms, the property of *being a book on the shelf and such that anything that is a book on the shelf is identical to it* has the fundamental higher-order property of *being at least one in number*. And the property of *being a book on the shelf* has the fundamental higher order property of *being at least three in number*.

That would be a radical solution to the L&M's two puzzles![45] But L&M did not end up going that direction. Instead, they seem to be convinced by the counting problem that there is one type of thing on the shelf that is exactly one in number, the i-book, and another type of thing on the shelf that is three in number, the p-books.

At this point, though, L&M have taken their first step towards Endurantism. Recall that the central theses of Endurantism are (i) that objects that have multiple manifestations are multiply located and (ii) that objects that have multiple manifestations are co-located with their various manifestations. Consider, again, *War and Peace*–the i-book. According to L&M, *War and Peace* is on the shelf, but it is also at our respective local libraries, and in various bookstores. It seems, then, that *War and Peace* is multi-located. But *War and Peace* is also co-located with its various manifestations. After all, *War and Peace* is on the shelf and there is a copy of *War and Peace* on the shelf as well–there is a p-book on the shelf; *War and Peace* is in our respective local libraries and there are copies of *War and Peace* in those respective libraries; *War and Peace* is in various bookstores and there are copies of *War and Peace* in those same bookstores. We would venture to say that wherever *War and Peace* is, there is also a copy (or, at least, a manifestation) of *War and Peace.* It looks to us like *War and Peace* is *co-located* with each of its manifestations. After all, the i-book is just where a p-book is, and i-books and p-books are numerically distinct. Hence, *War and Peace* is multiply located and it is co-located with its various manifestations. This result generalizes, it seems.

Admittedly, there are lots of different ways to be located. Some objects are located in a particular place by having a part in that particular place. Other objects are located in a particular place by being wholly in that place. If an object is located by having parts, then it perdures; if an object is located by being wholly there, then it endures.[46] Nothing above *shows* that L&M are committed

[44] Alternatively, one might retain the Russellian-style analysis and distinguish different notions of identity. We won't pursue this option here.

[45] Among other potential problems, it would require a plenitude of primitive ideology, and it would render the seemingly straightforward connections between mathematical claims mysterious. Cf. Lewis & Lewis 1970.

[46] This oversimplifies things. While i-books multilocate and coincide with p-books, an individual p-book has the spatial extension it has on the shelf at a time (with respect to a frame of reference) by having proper parts at subregions of the region it occupies at a time (with respect to a frame). Thus, the p-book perdures (pertends) (at a time, given a frame) and so the i-book coincident with it does that at that region, as well. So while the i-book endures (entends) across the three p-books on the shelf by being wholly multiply located–once where each of the p-books are–p-books pertend their space on the shelf, and hence so too the i-book coincident with it there. Cf. Tillman 2011: 20, *fn.* 29, Gilmore 2009.

to Endurantism over Perdurantism. In order to get from the claim that *War and Peace*–the i-book–and other entities with multiple manifestations are multiply located co-locators to the claim that *War and Peace* and other entities with multiple manifestation are multiply *wholly* located *wholly* co-locators, more work needs to be done.

This is where other philosophical concerns come into play. Recall that L&M (2025: 358) ask the following:

> Once one holds that durational properties are versatile, then what work is done by the additional claim that . . . works are wholly located where their manifestations . . . ? As far as we can tell, *these additional claims do nothing to help with the problem of mixed-level predications* once versatility is adopted. (Italics added.)

The work that is done relates to the other philosophical concerns. L&M are narrowly focused on certain problems in metaphysics/semantics, like those arising from mixed-level predications, which is certainly appropriate from the perspective of their project. But once we widen our focus, we see that there is much more work to be done: addressing 'one over many', theorizing misfits' locative, mereological, and persistence profiles, and so on. That work is done by Endurantism.

Recall that one can read the entirety of *War and Peace* without reading every copy of *War and Peace*. This suggests that *War and Peace* is not related to its manifestations in a part/whole like way. Relatedly, Tolstoy completed *War and Peace* during his lifetime even though *War and Peace* has manifestations that appeared long after Tolstoy died. This, again, suggests that *War and Peace* is not related to its manifestations in a part/whole like way.[47] While Endurantism might seem something of a 'fifth wheel' given only the problems L&M are concerned with in *PVC*, we see it earns its place once we appreciate the bigger picture.

L&M appear to agree that Endurantism should be favored over Perdurantism. But not as a 'deep' metaphysical thesis. Recall this portion of the above quotation:

> Even if, as may be the case with literary works, they have all of the same locational properties that the Endurantist takes them to have, this may be due to highly contingent facts about which properties happen to be picked out by natural language predicates rather than any particularly substantial underlying metaphysical facts. (2025: 367.)

Admittedly, we find this passage a bit obscure. We have found it helpful to think about this passage in connection with their discussion of the location of 'The Moonlight Sonata' and their

[47] Among other considerations. Cf. Tillman 2011 and Caplan and Matheson 2008.

§8.3.4 discussion of the metaphysics of properties.[48] They note that although our evidence suggests that The Moonlight Sonata has locations in time (it starts in 15 minutes), it does not seem to support the idea that The Moonlight Sonata *occurs* in time (it does not occur/take place in 15 minutes):

> In this case, the Moonlight Sonata seems to clearly contrast with entities . . . that instantiate temporal properties like occurring/taking place at a particular time.
>
> This data may be particularly hard to reconcile for theories where one expects to answer the straightforward question 'do repeatable artworks have temporal locations'? . . .
>
> However, recall that one of our guiding ideas is that we need to tackle the semantics of each particular predicate by paying close attention to the specific data. In this case, it may simply be that 'started at 1:30' expresses a versatile property true of musical works while 'will occur/take place in 15 minutes' does not. If this is right, it would show there is no simple answer to the question of whether musical works have temporal locations: they have some temporal locational properties but not others. But to stress again, this need not show anything metaphysically deep. There is a versatile property *will occur in 15 minutes** that is true of musical works. Our English predicate could have designated this versatile property, it just happened not to. (2025: 365. Editing due to authors.)

This passage and others suggest that L&M think there is a plenitude of properties–some versatile, but others less so.[49] And we use predicates to pick out some of those properties, but maybe just as easily could have picked out others.[50]

With all that in mind, if L&M indeed intend for the view to be deflationary with respect to Endurantism and Perdurantism, then we might interpret the deflationist claim as follows:

> There are Endurantist properties and Perdurantist properties already out there to be picked out; it is only our language that shifts.

Here is one way of developing the idea. There is a location-like relation, L_e, and another location-like relation, L_p. There is also a parthood-like relation, P_e and another parthood like relation, P_p.[51] The novel, *War and Peace*, the i-book that was written by Tolstoy, stands in L_e to each of several places (the shelf, our respective libraries, various bookstores); it stands in L_e to

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[48] L&M 2025: 215-218 and 364-368. We're glossing over L&M's point that things might work a bit differently for musical vs. literary works. Though they find the evidence for locational properties of musical works somewhat equivocal, they suggest the evidence for locational properties of literary works is more straightforward. See 2025: 364 and above.

[49] Cf. 2025: 215-218.

[50] Cf. Dorr et al. 2021.

[51] And perhaps these location-like and parthood-like relations come in different *strengths*, with varying degrees of versatility. We won't pursue that idea here, though.

any place that has a manifestation of *War and Peace*. Moreover, none of those manifestations stand in P_e to *War and Peace*. Additionally, *War and Peace*, the i-book that was written by Tolstoy, stands in L_p to the fusion of all those places to which it stands in L_e. Moreover, each of the manifestations stands in P_p to *War and Peace*. L_e and P_e seem to be location-like and parthood-like relations that fit with an Endurantist way of speaking whereas L_p and P_p are location-like and parthood-like relations that fit with a Perdurantist way of speaking. L&M might say that the arguments of the previous paragraphs just show that we happen to actually speak in an Endurantist way. But we could have just as easily spoken in a Perdurantist way. This, again, involves a fairly radical metaphysical claim. It requires us to think that at some level the i-book, *War and Peace*, both stands in Endurantist-like locational and mereological relations and also in Perdurantist-like locational and mereological relations.[52]

One question that L&M face is just how plenitudinous their properties are. They seem to want to say that *War and Peace* and The Moonlight Sonata stand in a location-like relation to each of the locations of their respective manifestations–in an Endurance-sort of way–and they stand in another location-like relation to the fusion of the locations of their respective manifestation–in a Perdurance-like way. But do they also stand in a location-like relation to a Roman Legion-shaped region across the Rubicon in 49 BCE? We suspect not. But why not? They can't simply say that neither *War and Peace* nor The Moonlight Sonata is *located* in that region. After all, the Endurantist could say that about the Perdurantist's locational claims and vice versa.

Or consider the three copies of *War and Peace* that are on the shelf in L&M's initial example. Each copy is 1,225 pages, let's say. Now consider the fusion of the region occupied by the first 1000 pages of the first copy from the left and with the region occupied by the last 225 pages of the second copy. Does *War and Peace* stand in a location-like relation to that region? Or consider a library that seemingly has no copy of *War and Peace* but contains enough books so that every word in *War and Peace* appears somewhere in the library. Does *War and Peace* stand in a location-like relation to the fusion of regions occupied by those words? If every note of The Moonlight Sonata was played by a member of the Beatles at some time or other, then does The Moonlight Sonata stand in a location-like relation to the fusion of the various times at which those notes were played? It strains credulity to think that they might respond in the affirmative to

[52] And what of the other locational and persistence views, like exdurantism or transdurantism? Do entities somehow also have these locative profiles though we don't tend to speak that way? On any remotely standard ways of characterizing these views, this is impossible, since it would require (e.g.) the i-book to both exactly occupy its path while failing to exactly occupy its path. We assume L&M's deflationist has something that isn't remotely standard in mind. But we're not sure just what it would be. Sticking closer to L&M's actual examples, it is similarly implausible to suppose that "there is no simple answer to the question of whether musical works have temporal locations: they have some temporal locational properties and lack others." (2025: 365.) If a version of PVV allows temporal locational properties to be *so* versatile that something can have a temporal locational property–the very temporal locational property a temporally located thing has–while *not being temporally located*, then that version is a bridge too far for us. We think it should be too far for L&M, too, since it opens the door to books being located on shelves without being located! Recall this is the *platonist* idea that's best left behind (with the rest of platonism).

any of these questions. But it is also hard to see what kind of principled restriction of property plenitude they might have that would help them respond in the negative.[53]

Although L&M are tempted by deflationism about the Endurantist/Perdurantist debate, L&M are committed to *substantial* underlying metaphysical facts. Ultimately, if you must choose between an Endurantist metaphysics like ours or plenitudinous relations metaphysics like the ones we think are suggested by L&M, we think you should choose ours![54]

One last point that we would like to make about L&M's dalliance with deflationism. L&M get to deflationism about location and persistence via relentless application of their particularist methodology, which involves reading the metaphysics off of 'true readings' of various sentences. But if they were *completely* methodologically ruthless, shouldn't they accept the radical view about counting outlined above? Shouldn't they say that there is one reading of 'book' and whatever we mean by 'book on the shelf', it better be the kind of thing that is (exactly) one in number and three in number? The fact that they *don't* suggests that they are sensitive to some external constraints on their methodology. We think objective language-independent facts should be included in those constraints, including facts about spatiotemporal locations. But once you do that, deflationism about location falls apart.

Perhaps when we confine ourselves *strictly* to what can be settled by PVV we don't find as strong a case for Endurantism. Our takeaway, then, is that PVV belongs in the toolkit, but not to the exclusion of other tools we need to address problems beyond the reach of PVV alone. The problems raised by copredication are pervasive and deep, and we are convinced by L&M's outstanding contribution that PVV is part of a complete answer–an answer that pushes past the stifling, ill-formed ideologies of 'abstract/concrete' and 'material/immaterial'. And as L&M have shown, PVV can serve to bolster Endurantism. But Endurantism also has something to offer proponents of PVV. Among other things, PVV plus Endurantism *together* give the only general

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[53] We of course don't *talk* that way, so L&M can use PVV to get some mileage out of that fact. But that's beside the present point, which is that L&M leave the door open for things to be all sorts of ways *regardless* of how we talk, since that's how they explain the supposed *shallowness* of the support PVV seems to provide for Endurantism. The present point is, instead, that there seems to be no principled *limit* to all the ways things are, independently of how we talk. Perhaps L&M would decline to cite a principle, mirroring their particularist approach to inheritance, say. But what, then, justifies their (2025: 365) claim that "(t)here is a versatile property *will occur in 15 minutes** that is true of musical works" but our predicates don't express that property?

[54] A bit more seriously, though, we think the main thing going for deflationism is the promise of a *metaphysical purge* of sorts from our enquiries. But on this issue, we agree with the 21st Century Monads about attempts to theorize *sans* metaphysics:

> It's something you can try to disown
> But you've a metaphysic all your own

Neither we, nor anyone else, can truly stop doing metaphysics.

(and correct!) answer to the counting problem and the problem of the one over many. And together they constitute an important first step in better understanding metaphysical misfits' place in our universe.

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