# PROXIES AND NECESSARY EXISTENTS

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**Abstract.** In this paper I argue that the metaphysical thesis regarding necessary existents (objects which necessarily exist), as supported by Bernard Linsky and Edward Zalta is not committed to proxies. In her paper "Proxy 'Actualism'" (2006), Karen Bennett argues that the view proposed by Zalta and Linsky is committed to such entities, and because of this, it cannot be considered actualist, as they propose. I consider her criticism regarding the correct labeling of this thesis, but I argue that it is not committed to proxies. I will follow three main themes in this paper. The first one concerns Bennett's account on the similarity between Alvin Plantinga's theory of individual essences and Zalta and Linsky's account on actualism. The second is whether Zalta and Linsky's metaphysical account is committed to proxies. Here, I will follow Zalta and Michael Nelson's reply to Bennett's paper and argue that Zalta and Linky's metaphysical interpretation of the simplest Quantified Modal Logic is not committed to proxies. Finally, the last problem regards the actualist nature of their account.
***Keywords:*** *proxy 'actualism', necessary existents, mere possibilia, the Barcan Formula.*

## 1. Zalta and Linsky's Actualism

One point in Zalta and Linsky's view is that necessarily, everything is necessarily identical with something (Linsky & Zalta 1994, 435). The same claim is also supported by Timothy Williamson (Williamson 1998)[2], but its status is more central within his theory.

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[2] In order to avoid any complication, Williamson proposes the replacement of the debate between the actualist and the possibilist with the one between necessitism and possibilism. Williamson's criticizes the traditional debate because, from his point of view, it is not clear what is meant by the claim

However, for the moment I will focus on the claims that the first two authors support. The implication of this rather strong metaphysical thesis concerning necessary existents would seem to be that, for instance, the laptop I use to write this paper is a necessary existent – i.e. it exists in every possible world. At the moment, this consequence seems quite counterintuitive. We can imagine a possible world in which this very object is not in my possession. Also, we can imagine that it could have contained other files and folders or, generally, other properties, except from the essential ones, as an essentialist would argue[3]. Continuing our imaginative exercise, we can ask ourselves whether we can say the same thing about the property of being concrete. Could it be the case that in another possible world, this object lacks the property of being concrete? Is it a necessary property? Zalta and Linsky would say that it is not a necessary one. Thus, their thesis becomes more adequate to our intuition since it does not have the consequence that my laptop exists as a concrete object in every possible world.

The question to be raised now is how can this property not be necessary for an object which is concrete? Consider the case of a possible child of Wittgenstein. It is metaphysically possible that Wittgenstein had a child. This object, obviously, is not concrete.

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that "everything is actual", specifically, it cannot be provided a definition for what "actual" means (Williamson 1998, pp. 258-259). If actuality is defined in terms of existence, it cannot be provided a definition for existence, since the last term is usually defined in terms of the former. The same thing happens if one tries to define existence in terms of being actual. Whether the debate between actualism and possibilism should be given up, is debatable. However, I think that one point that can be extracted from the necessitist/contingentist debate is that the necessitist claim should not be conflated with the actualist one, even if formally they can be consistent, since there is more to the actualist view that the necessitist is willing to take.

[3] In his paper "Essence and Modality" Zalta develops a theory of essential properties which he claims to be consistent with the main claim regarding necessary existence. Edward Zalta, 2006, "Essence and Modality", Mind 115 (459), 659-693.

However, it nevertheless exists, given the framework imposed by supporting the thesis of necessary existents. The problems raised in the last paragraph are solved both by Zalta, Linsky and Williamson by revising the abstract-concrete distinction. For them, not being concrete does not equate with being abstract. The classes are divided between contingently nonconcrete objects standing for mere possibilia, necessary nonconcrete object standing for abstract objects and contingently concrete standing for actually concrete objects (Bennett 2006, 266).

What would be the motivation for such revisions in metaphysics? The motivation is a technical and formal one: achieving the simplest Quantified Modal Logic, a system for quantified modal logic proposed by Zalta and Linsky. This system is problematic for metaphysicians with actualist views since it validates controversial metaphysical claims such as: there are non-actual objects or the necessary existents thesis. The claims are validated by formulas considered controversial as well: the Barcan Formula (BF), the converse Barcan formula (CBF) and Necessary Existence theorem (NE and NNE)[4]. Their aim is to show how this system can be provided with a background metaphysical interpretation in order to accommodate such consequences with the actualist claim.

The system as proposed by Zalta and Linky is the following (Linsky & Zalta 1994). The language for this system is a standard one: x, y... for individual variables, a, b, c... for individual constants, P, Q,.. for predicate letters, $\neg, \rightarrow$ for logical connectives, $\forall$ for the universal quantifier, and $\Box$ for the necessity operator. The set of axioms for these systems are the axioms of Propositional Logic, the K axiom, the axioms of Classical Quantification Theory and the axioms for identity. Concerning the rules employed, we have Modus Ponens and the Necessity Rule. With respect to

[4] (BF) $\Diamond \exists x \varphi \rightarrow \exists x \Diamond \varphi$
(CBF) $\exists x \Diamond \varphi \rightarrow \Diamond \exists x \varphi$
(NE) $\forall x \Box \exists y\, y=x$
(NNE) $\Box \forall x \Box \exists y\, y=x$

semantics, the distinctive semantical trait is the use of a constant domain semantics. A model M is defined as the tuple <W, w*, D, R, V> where W is the set of possible worlds, w* the actual world, D is the quantification domain, R is the accessibility relation between worlds, and V is the valuation function. Thus, it is different from a Kripke-style semantics which uses a function $\psi$ to assign to each $w \in W$ a set of objects from D, namely, the domain of w (Kripke 1971). Given the formal aspects, the formulas that are validated are the following: (BF), (CBF), (NE) and (NNE).

These formulas seem to be committed to mere possibilia. However, Zalta and Linsky provide a metaphysical interpretation of them that is promoted as a new form of actualism. Basically, since all objects are necessary, there are no objects which do not exist in the actual world. Thus, rather than talking about mere possibilia, the metaphysician should talk about contingently nonconcrete objects.

## 2. Bennett's Doubts

In “Proxy 'Actualism'” (Bennett 2006), Bennett argues for the following claims: there is a similarity between Linsky and Zalta's metaphysical claims and the one advanced by Plantinga. Neither of the two metaphysical views can be considered actualist, while both theories can be labeled as proxy 'actualism', and finally, proxy 'actualism' is not a form of actualism. I will debate her claim that Zalta and Linsky's theory is committed to mere actualia, defined by Bennett as objects which are actual but do not exist. I will also debate whether there are structural similarities between Zalta and Linsky's theory and Alvin Plantinga's metaphysical claims. Finally, I will endorse Bennett's worry that Zalta and Linsky's claims are not actualist.

### *2.1. The Similarities*

Plantiga, as well as Zalta and Linsky, reject the claim that there are nonexisting objects [5]. There are no objects that are not actual. However, we can express sentences as "there could have been talking donkeys". How do the authors account for this discourse? Plantinga argues that when we talk about possible talking donkeys, what we are saying is that there is a possible world in which the individual essence of at least one talking donkey is exemplified (Plantinga 1976). Regarding Zalta and Linsky, their claim is that there is a contingently nonconcrete object x such that x is possibly a talking donkey. One similarity Bennett found with respect to the two proposals is the following: both theories involve a domain considered the stock from which, in every possible world, entities are drawn as a display case (Bennett 2006, 268). Plantinga uses a stock represented by the domain of individual essences, while Zalta and Linsky operate with a stock represented by the constant domain of quantification used in the semantics of simplest QML. She continues with the following idea: both theories make use of both a constant domain (the stock) and of varying domains as well (the display case). The display case is meant to replace the set of objects that exist at a certain world. To be more specific, while in a Kripke semantics existence is used when taking about a certain domain of quantification for a possible world, Plantinga uses exemplification and Zalta and Linsky replace existence with concreteness.

[5] The same idea also holds for Zalta and Linsky. The fact that there could not have been nonexisting objects derives from the claim that all objects necessary exist. However, I consider that I the case of Plantinga, this claim becomes more interesting since it does not follow from the main thesis, but it rather is the main thesis that actualism is the view that there are not, nor could have been nonexistent objects.

### *2.2. The Differences*

Besides the structural similarities, Bennett also acknowledges the differences between the two theories. One difference she considers regards the different ontological commitments. While Zalta and Linsky are committed to the claim that all individuals exist in all possible worlds, a thesis Plantinga would not accept. Plantinga makes use of individual essences, entities unnecessary for Zalta and Linsky's theory. However, Bennett considers this difference to be overcome by the fact that both theories use both varying and constant domains. I would rephrase this claim in the following way: it is not important what kind of entities the theories postulate, as long as they both use them for the same purpose, namely, accounting for the metaphysical possibility of talking donkeys. Moreover, both theories characterize in the same way a domain of a possible world: either by exemplified individual essences or by concrete objects. However, I consider this difference to be an important one, especially with respect to the thesis that Zalta and Linsky use proxies in order to express possibility claims.

Another difference is that while Zalta and Linsky are opting for a constant domain semantics in quantified modal logic, Plantinga sticks with a Kripke varying domain semantics. I consider this difference to be crucial. This difference is determined by the use of unrestricted quantifiers in conjunction with the fact that the stock is made out of necessary individuals. This shows that we have a structural dissimilarity, since Zalta and Linsky's metaphysics is not committed to a hidden varying domain assumption.

The third difference that Bennett takes into consideration is that while the display case is a subset of the stock in Zalta and Linsky's account, the individuals that compose the display case are different from those composing the stock in Plantinga's metaphysics. I consider this dissimilarity to be important in a structural sense. Since claims about possible individuals may seem to commit us to mere possibilia, Plantinga choses to use a discourse in which the talk can be translated. The translation can be accepted from an

actualist point of view because individual essences are abstract entities with a less shady ontological status.

### 3. Proxy Actualism and a Proxy-free Metaphysics

Bennett characterizes both views as proxy 'actualism'. Her main argument is based on the claims that both theories account for mere possibilia in terms of "nonqualitative, actual stand-ins" (Bennett 2006, 273). The class of stand-ins is in a proxy relation with mere possibilia. The class of stand-ins is, for Plantinga, the class of individual essences, and the class of contingently nonconcrete for Zalta and Linsky. How is the proxy relation defined? Bennett accounts for this relation in the following way: "entity *p* stays proxy for an object *o* just in case p necessarily exists, and there is some property *F* such that, necessarily, *o* exists in the standard English sense – i.e., is in the display case – if and only if *p* has *F*" (Bennett 2006, 272). Formally: □ ∃F ∀x ∃y [□ ∃y & □ (Fy ↔Dx], were F stays for the witness property and D for the display case (Bennett 2006, 272). A critique against Bennett's characterization was formulated by Michael Nelson and Edward Zalta in "Bennett and 'Proxy Actualism'" (Nelson & Zalta 2009). Their first observation is that it is not clear in which language the formal definition is provided. Their second observation is that this formulation is inconsistent with the language of the simplest QML. They argue that when translated into the language of simplest QML, it becomes trivially true, if the existence predicate ∃y is replaced by ∃y x=y and 'F' and 'D' which represent concreteness properties are replaced by the concreteness predicate 'C!'. They see as a main problem for Bennett's formulation that when translated into the language of the simplest QML, no distinction can be drawn between the witness property and the display case property (Nelson & Zalta 2008, 282, 283, 286). Thus, Bennett's definition is translated in simple QML as ∀x ∃y[□ ∃z (z=y) & □ (C!y ↔ C!x)].

Bennett might argue that the witness property cannot be conflated with the concreteness property. However, I think that

what she considers to be a proxy for a possible individual is a witness only in those worlds in which the individual is in the display case. Having a witness is a necessary and sufficient condition for the object to be in the display case, to be concrete. Thus, the proxy cannot be a witness unless the object is concrete. Since we have an identity relation between what Bennett calls a proxy and the object and given the equivalence, the two properties can be conflated and represented by the same property.

The other strategy Bennett uses is to define nonproxy actualism and compare it with the characterization she provides for Zalta and Linsky's metaphysics. Nonproxy actualism is the view that there are no stand-in entities for possible objects and there is no stock of entities staying as proxies for mere possibilia. Thus, the actualist accepts only entities in the display case. For her, to exist is to be in the display case. An exception is made for the abstract objects since they have a different ontological status from the contingently nonconcrete). My intuition is that Bennett is right when providing this definition for nonproxy actualism, since this is the intuition the actualist wants to grasp in her thesis. Bennett's claim is that they use one existential quantifier for the stock and one for the variable domain of the display case[6]. Moreover, Bennett considers that the proxies to which they are committed to are mere actualia. They are actual things (the contingently nonconcrete objects) which do not genuinely exist. Given the two aspects of their theory, Bennett concludes that this cannot be a thesis of genuine actualism.

I will systematize the general argument Bennett provides. Zalta and Linsky's theory is committed to objects which are actual but do not exist (they do not exist in the common sense of the word "exist"). This is a consequence of the fact that they use two existential quantifiers, one for the stock which does not express

[6] Richard Woodward (Woodward 2011) argues against Bennett's position that Zalta and Linsky use two existential quantifiers. His main approach is that the actualism defended by Zalta and Linsky is not problematic if the purpose is to reject quantification over mere possibilia.

genuine existence, and one for the display case, which expresses the genuine existence. Finally, these aspects are the consequence of using two domains: the stock and the display case.

I will now answer to Bennett's characterization in a more elaborate way. For this, I will start from a characterization for proxy reduction provided by Kit Fine in his paper "The Problem of Possibilia" (Fine 2005, 215). His definition for proxy reduction is the following: "With each possibilium x is associated another entity x' which is acceptable for the actualist, and any statement Φ(a, b,...) about possibilia a, b... is then understood in terms of a corresponding sentence Φ'(a', b',...) about the associated entities a', b',..." (Fine 2005, 215). He provides two examples in order to make the pursue clearer. The first example is the logicist reduction of numbers to sets. The other example concerns the reduction of mental states to physical processes. Why are these two examples relevant? Because both examples are based on the idea that we have a discourse about some entities reduced to another discourse which uses different acceptable entities. The thesis Fine supports with respect to possibilia is that the talk about such entities is factual but reducible to one which does not involve the problematic entities (Fine 2005, p. 214). Given the thesis that a proxy reduction involves the reduction of a discourse to another, it can be said that the proxy relation is one of identity since we have two names for the same object. At this point, it is important to mention that Bennett considers the proxy relation used by Zalta and Linsky to be a relation of identity (Bennett 2006, 272). However, I think for Zalta and Linsky's metaphysics we have a relation of identity and the same discourse, in the sense that we do not have different names for the same entity. This claim can be supported by the BF in the existential form. The BF says that if possibly there is an individual x which has property F, then there is an x which possibly has property F. Formally $\Diamond \exists x \phi \rightarrow \exists x \Diamond \phi$, then a possible talking donkey is an object which possibly has the property of being a talking donkey. I consider that since the variable is assigned the same value, we can say that we gave the

same discourse and the same object. This last can be supported by a substitutional quantification and the objectual one as well.

## 4. The Barcan Formula Against Proxies

An analysis on the way the Barcan Formula is legitimized in a formal modal construction can be illuminating for the ontological assumptions regarding quantification and the objects that quantifiers range over. The first step is to see how the Barcan Formula is treated when using substitutional quantification as Ruth Barcan Marcus does in "Modalities and Intensional Languages" (Barcan 1961, 319-320). The second step would be to see how it is treated in a modal construction which uses objectual quantification (Williamson 2003, 422).

Starting with Barcan's treatment, it is important though to mention briefly her metaphysical claims regarding possibilia. Firstly, when the formula was added as an axiom of the quantified modal system in "A Functional Calculus of Order Based on Strict implication" (Barcan 1946, 2), it was meant to establish how to treat the interaction between the quantifiers and the modal operators. The metaphysical difficulties regarding the Barcan Formula is determined by a an account of the modal operators in terms of possible world semantics, since the endorsement of the formula seems to bring a commitment to mere possibilia. Barcan's metaphysical choice was not to endorse mere possibilia, but to try to provide a metaphysical account in which no such ontological commitment is made (Barcan 1961). Thus, in "Modalities and Intensional Languages" she proposes a reading on the Barcan Formula meant to resist the charge of quantifying over mere possibilia. If given the wrong interpretation, Barcan acknowledges that the formula has unacceptable consequences since the "the antecedent seems to be about what is logically possible and the consequent about what there is" (Barcan 1962, 316). To provide an account for the interpretation of the Barcan Formula, Barcan

proposes a semantical construction meant to eliminate unwanted metaphysical commitments.

The semantical construction is minimal. A language L is constructed of truth functional connectives, the modal operator for possibility, an infinite number of variables, a finite number of constants, a two placed predicate R and the quantifiers. Every element in the domain of quantification is named by a constant and the quantifiers range only over those objects. A model M is a class of ordered couples from D such that the pairs are represented by all the members of D between which R holds. Concerning the evaluation clauses I will mention here, the relevant ones are those for quantifiers and for the possibility operator. Thus, a sentence of the form $(\exists x)B$ holds in a model M if and only if there is at least one substitution instance of B that holds in M. For the universal quantifier all substitution instances of B must hold in M. Finally, $\Diamond B$ holds in M, if and only if it holds in some model M1 (Barcan 1961, 319).

Given the semantical construction, the reading on the Barcan Formula can be the following: if it is possibly true that $\exists x\phi x$, then there is a substitution instance which is possibly true in M. A more elaborate analysis using the evaluation clauses would be developed. If it is true in some model M that $\Diamond \exists x\phi x$, meaning that $\exists x\phi x$ is true in some model M1, then there is some substitution instance of $\phi x$, $\phi b$ which is true in M1. For the consequent, $\exists x\Diamond\phi x$, the evaluation clause for the existential quantifier says that $\exists x\Diamond\phi x$ is true in model M if and only if there is some substitution instance of $\Diamond\phi x$ true in M and this would further mean that i$\Diamond\phi b$ is true in M; then there is a model M1 such that $\phi b$ is true in M1. The important point of this analysis regarding the problem of using proxies to justify the necessary existence claim is that when evaluating both the antecedent and the consequent the variable is given the same value. The result is the same in both cases, namely that there is some model M1 such that, $\phi b$ is true in that model. Since the constant is a name for an object in D, we have the same object in both cases, for the antecedent and the consequent. This result is more obvious in the defense Barcan provides by means of

a *reductio ad absurdum*. Barcan's strategy (Barcan 1962, 319-320) is to assume the truth of its negation. Supposing that ◊(◊ ∃xϕx & ¬ ∃x◊ϕx) is true in some model M, then there is some model M1 such that ◊ ∃xϕx & ¬ ∃x◊ϕx. Thus, both conjuncts are true in M1. If ◊ ∃xϕx is true in M1, then ∃xϕx is true in some model M2. Thus, there is some substitution instance of ϕx, ϕb which is true in M2. If ∃x◊ϕx does not hold in M1, then there is some substitution instance of ∃x◊ϕx, ◊ϕb such that it does not hold in M1. Thus ϕb does not hold in M2. The conclusion Barcan draws is that for the antecedent there is some member of D such that ϕ holds of b in M2, while for the consequent ϕ does not hold of b in M2.

Since this semantical construction does not use a possible world semantics but only models represented by pairs of objects from D, the problem of quantifying over mere possibilia does not arise yet, however Barcan accepts that given the wrong interpretation the formula can seem problematic.

What I think it is relevant from the semantical construction Barcan provides is that the substitution instances of both the antecedent and the consequent of the Barcan Formula have the same constant, and since the constants are names for objects and thus are rigid, we also have the same object.

Objectual quantification in quantified modal logic can be more illuminating for the problem discussed here, specifically whether the thesis of necessary existents is committed to proxies. In "Everything", Williamson argues for the unrestricted use of quantifiers, as opposed to the restricted ones used in a Kripke-style semantics (Williamson 2003). Quantification, as used by Williamson, is objectual and the truth-conditions for quantified formulas are the following (Williamson 2003, 418): for the universal quantifier, "∀x$\alpha$ is true under [an assignment] A if and only if everything d is such that $\alpha$ is true under A[x/d]", for the existential quantifier, "∃x$\alpha$ is true under [an assignment] A if and only if something d is such that $\alpha$ is true under A[x/d]", where D is the domain of objects the assignment function takes value from. Thus, the assignment function is not restricted to different variable domains. When using unrestricted objectual quantification, I consider the result to

be even more straight forward. In natural language what the BF says is that if there could have been a talking donkey, then there is something which could have been a talking donkey. If given the proper interpretation, the BF does not bring into being mere possibilia and in this sense no reduction is needed. What was problematic for actualists is that the BF seems to impose quantification over mere possibilia. Thus, the problematic possibilist interpretation for this formula would be as Williamson states the following: "if possibly something is an X, then some possible (perhaps actual) is such that possibly is an X" (Williamson 2003, 422). This corresponds to the distinction between attributive and predicative reading on the consequent of the conditional (Williamson 2013, 10). On the attributive reading a possible F is an object which is not an F but could have been an F, while on the predicative reading, corresponding to possibilists, x is an F and x could have existed. Thus, if possibly something is the child of Wittgenstein, then there is something which could have been the child of Wittgenstein, but which is not the child of Wittgenstein in the actual world. On the possiblist predicative reading, if possibly something is the child of Wittgenstein, then there is a possible child of Wittgenstein which could have existed but it does not.

The challenge is to account for the claim that there could have been an object X when no object populating the actual world has this property or set of individuating properties. The possibilist choice is to say that there are possible objects which do not exist. The necessitist choice is to say that there is such an object which could have had those properties. The possibilist is not committed to proxies since he makes no reduction on the interpretation for the consequent of the BF. Why should the necessitist or anyone who accepts the necessary existents claim be committed to such entities. Given the truth conditions for the quantifiers, the assignment function selects the same object as value for both the antecedent and the consequent of the BF.

**5. Are they actualists?**

Bennett tries to provide an account for what nonproxy actualism would mean. She defines it in the following terms. One is an actualist if she rejects a proxy reduction, considers that an object can be said to exist only if it is in the display case, or if it genuinely exists in the common use of the word. Bennett's position regarding nonproxy actualism is more similar with what Christopher Menzel calls general existence (Menzel 1993, 198). An object exists if it is either abstract or concrete. Since Zalta's theory must rely on possible objects in order to account for the formal aspects in quantified modal logic, Zalta is committed to possibilia. Indeed, Zalta and Linsky do not seem to satisfy the restriction of general existence to concrete and abstract objects. However, does this commit them to proxies? As mentioned before, this would commit them to not being actualists. If actualism is taken to mean that all objects are actual, Zalta and Linsky's proposal can be considered to be consistent with such a claim. However, if actualism is seen from an intuitive point of view, their proposal seems to be inconsistent with actualism. I would propose to analyze this problem into a framework defined by Kit Fine in "The Problem of Possibilia". Instead of dividing modal metaphysics regarding mere possibilia into actualism and possiblism, he rather proposes degrees of actualism and possibilism (Fine 2005, 214). In the following lines, I will consider the approach to possibilia as presented by Fine, that we can account for the possibilist discourse without the appeal to the problematic entities.

A first step in the analysis would be to see what kind of reduction Fine proposes, and secondly, what does being an actualist means for him. Afterwards, I will place the view that necessarily everything necessarily exists within Fine's actualism/ possibilism framework.

Kit Fine considers the discourse on mere possibilia to be reducible without an appeal to proxies. How is this reduction to be made and what kind of sentences of the possibilist discourse should be reduced? The kind of sentences that need to be reduced

are those in which the possibility operator is in the scope of the quantifier such as "there is a possible object which possibly is talking donkey" (Fine 2005, 225). What Kit Fine proposes a reduction of such sentences to one of the form in which the quantifier is in the scope of the possibility operator. Thus, the sentence above must be translated as "possibly, there is an object which possibly is talking donkey" (Fine 2005, 225). However, this kind of reduction does not work in all cases, and the solution Fine proposes is called *back-reference*. This solution consists in taking the evaluation of a proposition back to the actual world: "if there is a possible object which is not actual, then the actual world is such that possibly there is such an object whose non-existence is compatible with that world being actual" (Fine 2005, 225).

What does an actualist want? And why is the third view possibilist in a sense but actualist in nature? The possibilist flavor is given by the acceptance of the intelligibility and factuality of the discourse. Why is it actualist? Fine considers the actualist desideratum to be the following: "[The actualist] objects to the idea that general possibilities may be the source of a distinctive ontology of objects that instantiates those possibilities" (Fine 2005, 219) and "[the actualist] will be suspicious of any object whose existence would appear to depend upon its being the instantiator in this way of a general possibility" (Fine 2005, 219). What the actualist would reject would be the reduction of a claim such as "there could have been a possible donkey" to the claim that there is a possible object which could have been a talking donkey. Maybe the possibilist will not make such a strong claim regarding the commitment to mere possible, but we can keep the more relaxed claim regarding the "the distinctive ontology" of such objects. The account Fine provides for the actualist position may face the criticism of being too strong since it excludes any account of possibilia by means of proxies. Fine considers that the actualist would not be comfortable with Plantinga's account in terms of individual essences since such entities seem to have a "possibilist origin" (Fine 2005, 219). In this sense, Zalta and Linsky make a reduction to entities not acceptable to the actualist, since the

contingently nonconcrete have a "possibilist origin". Thus, their existence is determined by the possibility that such objects have certain properties or by having certain modal properties. As we can see, the problem would not be that quantifiers range over non-existent possible objects, the problem is that some of the existent objects over which the quantifiers range depend on the necessary existents claim and the possibility claim that there could have been an object having such and such properties. Thus, if there could have been a child of Wittgenstein, then there is an object which could have been the child of Wittgenstein, since all objects necessarily exist.

A concluding point regarding Zalta and Linsky account is that they provide a proxy-free reduction. It can be said to be consistent with the actualist claim that there are only actual objects, all mere possibilia being excluded, but it is not actualist in nature – if we take Fine's criterion for the actualist desideratum.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper I have argued against the thesis that Zalta and Linsky's metaphysical view is committed to proxies. Bennett argues for her claim based on the fact that the metaphysics of necessary existence is committed to the use of both a varying domain and a constant domain. This last view is supported by the idea that Zalta and Linsky use two kinds of existential quantifiers. I have argued both against the general claim and the auxiliary ones. In the last part of the paper I have addressed the worry that their view may not be an actualist one and considered some of Fine's proposals to treat actualism. Finally, the last point I made is that all the four views should be separated even though, at some point, necessitism can intersect with actualism.

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