

COUNTERPARTS

IN his important and original paper on "Counterpart Theory and Quantified Modal Logic,"* David Lewis proposes a theory which is intended, among other things, to provide clear, precise, formal translations for certain perplexing modal sentences of English. His theory is based on the intuition that "you are in the actual world and no other, but you have counterparts in several other worlds". To say you could have had some attribute that in fact you don't have, is not to say that you have that attribute in some other possible world. Rather, it is to say that your counterpart in some other world has it. To say that some attribute is essential to you is not to say that you have it in all possible worlds, but rather it is to say that you share that attribute with all your counterparts.

One feature that makes Lewis's theory especially interesting is that it avoids all the puzzles about transworld identification. No entity is identified with any entity in another world. Rather, entities have counterparts in other worlds. But this feature, which may be considered the most original feature of Lewis's theory, is also the source of some problems. In this note I attempt to show that, in virtue of the way Lewis explicates the counterpart relation, it is difficult to see how his theory can provide suitable translations for certain sentences of English.

By way of explaining the counterpart relation, Lewis says:

Your counterparts resemble you closely in content and context in important respects. They resemble you more closely than do the other things in their worlds (114).

Suppose whatever thing x_0 in world w_0 it is that resembles you more closely than anything else in w_0 is nevertheless quite unlike you; nothing in w_0 resembles you at all closely. If so, you have no counterpart in w_0 (116).

I believe we can see, from these remarks, that Lewis accepts the following theses concerning counterparts:

- (A) If you have a counterpart in another world, then it is the entity in that world which resembles you most closely.
- (B) If an entity in another world is "quite unlike" you, then it is not your counterpart.

very doubtful), then it is parasitic on some illocutionary act: you can report such a presupposition, but you cannot express it on its own as you can express a belief.

* David Lewis, "Counterpart Theory and Quantified Modal Logic," this JOURNAL, LXV, 5 (March 7, 1968): 113-126; parenthetical page references are to this paper.

The concepts of "resemblance" and "unlikeness" seem to me rather obscure. The obscurity of these concepts generates some serious difficulties for counterpart theory. For one, consider the following sentence:

(1) I could have been quite unlike what I in fact am.

(1) is a fairly standard modal sentence of English, and apparently just the sort of sentence for which counterpart theory should provide a translation. Furthermore, it seems to me that a man might use (1) to assert something true. But, when translated according to Lewis's suggestions, (1) becomes something like:

(1') I have a counterpart who is quite unlike me.

As we have seen, Lewis maintains thesis (B). All my counterparts must resemble me quite closely, and so none of them can be "quite unlike" me. Thus, (1') cannot be true. Since (1), fuzzy as it is, may express a truth, but (1') cannot express a truth, (1') is not a suitable translation for (1). So far as I can tell, Lewis has not provided any alternative way of translating (1).

A second difficult case for counterpart theory is provided by the following reflections. Suppose two people lead rather divergent lives. One is happy, healthy, and prosperous, while the other is sad, sickly, and poor. The happy man, pondering his own good fortune, and the plight of his sad friend, may be inclined to say:

(2) I could have been more like what you in fact are than like what I in fact am, and at the same time, you could have been more like what I in fact am than like what you in fact are.

Though it is unlikely that (2) is uttered every day, still it is an example of "everyday English." Furthermore, it seems to me that (2) might be used to express something true, and something that should be expressible in counterpart-theory terminology. However, there is no straightforward way to accomplish such a translation. We may try:

(2') There is a possible world, w , and two entities therein, x and y , such that x is my counterpart in w , y is your counterpart in w , x is more like what you actually are than y is, and y is more like what I actually am than x is.

The trouble with (2') is that it, like (1'), cannot be true. (A) assures its falsity. If you have a counterpart in another world, then it must be the entity in that world which of all the entities in that world, is most like you. In our case, we want to say that there is a possible world in which your counterpart is less like you than my counterpart is, and my counterpart is less like me than your coun-

terpart is. This is ruled out by (A), and so (2') cannot be considered a suitable translation of (2). So far as I can tell, Lewis has not suggested any alternative way of translating (2).

The third case I wish to discuss is a bit more complicated. Lewis says:

An essential attribute of something is an attribute it shares with all its counterparts (122).

Some philosophers have held that humanity is an essential attribute of each human being. This view is by no means self-evident, but it seems to me that it might be true. At any rate, counterpart theory should remain neutral with respect to the question whether humanity is an essential attribute or not (unless, of course, counterpart theory reveals some special, previously unnoticed fact about humanity that would explain why it is, or is not, an essential attribute). However, counterpart theory leads us to say that humanity is not essential to anyone.

To see this point more clearly, imagine a possible world as much like ours as possible, except for this one change and all its consequences: In that world, all the walking, talking, humanoid creatures who play the roles we play here are robots. Imagine that among these robots, there is one who looks just like you, says pretty much the same things you say, and, in short, lives a life as similar to yours as any robot could. I think we must say that this robot is your counterpart in the imagined world, for he is more like you than anything else in that world is, and he is quite like you.

But since he is a robot, he lacks humanity. Thus, you have a counterpart who lacks humanity. If your essential attributes are those you share with all your counterparts, then we must say that you are not essentially human.

Similar considerations will show, I believe, that very few interesting attributes, if any, are essential. Humanity, rationality, mortality, etc. all seem to fail to be essential. I do not claim that these properties are essential to the things that have them. My point is that counterpart theory should remain neutral on metaphysical questions of this sort, unless it can provide some good explanation for the fact that it legislates as it does. It seems to me that counterpart theory has legislated on these metaphysical issues, but no good reason has been given to suppose that it has legislated correctly.

And so, in spite of its elegance and novelty, counterpart theory, as developed by Lewis, does not provide a satisfactory means of translating English modal sentences. Perhaps some further explana-

tion of what is meant by saying that something is "quite like" something else, would help clear up these puzzles.

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HOW QUINE ELIMINATES DEMONSTRATIVES *

ONE of the characteristics of Quine's eternal sentences is that their "truth value stays fixed through time and from speaker to speaker" (WO 193).[†] Consequently, the sentence

(1) $(\exists x)(x = a \cdot x \text{ is red here and now})$

is at best only a first step toward the fully developed eternal-sentence counterpart of

(2) $a \text{ is red here and now}$

(1) approximates the eternal sentence which is the proper paraphrase of (2) in that (1) has only variables in purely referential position; but, since (1) retains the demonstratives of (2), albeit in predicate position, both fail to be freely repeatable. On noticing these facts, C. A. Hooker correctly concludes that the demonstratives in (1) must be replaced with some nondemonstrative terms, e.g., ' t_1p_1 ', which "fix" the spatiotemporal location at which the individual referred to by ' a ' in (2) is said to be red (H 954). Since part of my objection to Hooker's critique of Quine's eternal sentences stems from the way Hooker thinks the needed replacement of terms is to be carried out, a brief exposition of my interpretation of Quine's procedure is in order.

When dealing with eternal sentences that describe the material world, it is of fundamental importance to keep in mind that the values of the variables in an eternal sentence are always cross sections of the four-dimensional spatiotemporal manifold—these are the "denizens of space-time." In general, therefore, an important feature of the task of replacing singular terms (other than variables) consists in the design of predicate expressions that ascribe qualities to spatiotemporal cross sections. This is the case whether the singular terms are such names as ' a ', such demonstratives as 'here' and 'now', or such coordinate designating expressions as ' t_1p_1 '. Now if as an interim measure one replaces 'here' and 'now' with

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[†] I use the following abbreviations. 'WO' abbreviates: W. V. Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1964). 'H' abbreviates: C. A. Hooker, "Demonstratives, Definite Descriptions, and the Elimination of Singular Terms," this JOURNAL LXVII, 22 (Nov. 19, 1970): 951-961.