ON ORDINARY OBJECTS

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Göksu Dayan, certify that

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ABSTRACT

On Ordinary Objects

In this thesis, I discuss Amie Thomasson's framework defending the existence of ordinary objects and some criticisms raised by Jonathan Schaffer and Simon Evnine and then provide two original arguments against Thomasson. The first original objection aims to show that application conditions have a higher conceptual priority than terms, so if a common sense ontologist is to introduce new entities which of correspondent terms with application conditions shared with another term already present in his or her ontology, he or she has to be extremely careful in order to not violate parsimony. The second objection aims to show that Thomasson needs to provide more clarification on one important element of her defense, namely analytic entailments if they are to work in the way Thomasson intends them to. This thesis' purpose is to further the debate on the existence of ordinary objects, not to conclude that ordinary objects do not exist as conclusive blows on any view in philosophy are extremely rare. I hope that any philosophical progress will be possible, thanks to this thesis.

ÖZET

Sıradan Objeler Üzerine

Bu tezde Amie Thomasson'ın sıradan objelerin varlığını savunan çerçevesini ve Jonathan Schaffer ve Simon Evnine tarafından ortaya konulan bazı eleştirileri tartışıyor, sonrasındaysa Thomasson'a karşı iki özgün argüman sağlıyorum. İlk özgün argüman uygulama koşullarının terimlerden daha yüksek bir kavramsal önceliği olduğunu, bu sebeple sağduyu varlıkbilimcisi ontolojisine ontolojisinde zaten yer alan terimlerle paylaşılan bir terime tekabül eden varlıklar katarken sadeliği ihlal etmemek için oldukça dikkatli olması gerektiğini göstermeyi hedefler. İkinci özgün argüman Thomasson'ın savunmasındaki önemli bir ögenin, ismiyle analitik gerektirimlerin, Thomasson'ın hedeflediği şekilde çalışması için daha fazla açıklığa ihtiyaç duyduğunu göstermeyi hedefler. İkinci özgün argüman ise uygulama koşullarının terimlerden daha fazla varlıkbilimsel önceliği olduğunu, bu sebeple de bir sağduyu varlıkbilimcisinin ontolojisinde aynı uygulama koşullarına sahip terimler zaten mevcutsa böyle yeni terimleri ontolojisine katarken sadeliği ihlal etmemek için oldukça dikkatli olması gerektiğini göstermeyi hedefler. Bu tezin amacı sıradan objelerin varlığı üzerindeki tartışmayı ilerletmektir, felsefedeki herhangi bir görüşe nihai darbelerin son derece nadir olması sebebiyle sıradan objelerin var olmadığı sonucuna varmak değildir. Bu tez sayesinde bir miktar felsefi ilerlemenin mümkün olmasını umuyorum.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I think that it has taken more than one hundred and fifty hours, excluding the time spend on the research, to write this thesis, while sitting on a chair in front of my time. Especially for the last few weeks, my daily routine was something like in the following lines. I wake up around 1 PM, get up and have my breakfast by 2 PM, checking daily news while having my morning coffee by 3 PM, then going out to drink another cup of coffee while writing this thesis, we have dinner around 7:30 PM, so I return by then. After then I make some more coffee and keep writing this thesis until 3 AM. Some snacks and tea might be involved as well, I plead guilty for this.

In our daily lives, we interact with so many objects. When I sleep, I put my head to a pillow. After I wake up, I use utensils while having breakfast. My phone rings, I pick it up. I use cash or my debit card to pay for ice cream. When in the need of a painkiller, because my head is killing me, I go to the pharmacist and ask for a box of painkillers. While this is more or less how we act in our daily lives, things seem to get a bit more complicated when the place of discussion is our chambers in philosophy classrooms. We tend to have a “deeper” understanding of things when we are in a philosophy class, with our philosopher hats on. Usually dealing with concepts and how they work, sometimes facts turn out to be quite different than what our common sense tells us. This is pretty much the same when the topic is the existence of ordinary objects. We use ordinary object terms in daily lives quite often as described above, yet some philosophical theses and positions argue that the number of existent things is smaller than we ordinarily think so. Going even further,

it is often argued that these ordinary objects actually do not exist, and the fact that we use these terms does not mean that they in fact exist.

In this chapter where categories and theories of objects and some problems associated with them will be introduced, Daniel Z Korman's categorization of these as presented in his Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry titled *Ordinary Objects* will be generally followed, mainly because the literature on this topic is huge, and Korman truly deserves high praise for his neat job. But before that, I would like to summarize Peter van Inwagen's renowned paper titled *When are Objects Parts?*, on the ground that its introduction of several different expressions, like the Special Composition Question, greatly helps any reader to understand different positions on the existence of ordinary objects.

According to van Inwagen, any discussion on composition and composites must distinguish the Special Composition Question and the General Composition Question. Briefly, the Special Composition Question asks "when, or under what conditions, composition occurs" (23), while the General Composition Question is the question that what composition is (24). As for this thesis' purposes, there is no need to concern ourselves with the latter question, no discussion on it will take place.

van Inwagen divides answers to the Special Composition Question into two categories. The first category of moderate answers has "the following consequent: It is possible for there to be objects that compose something, and it is possible for there to be objects that do not compose anything" (34). Among moderate answers which Peter van Inwagen discusses thoroughly in the paper, there is "contact", "fastening", "cohesion", and "fusion. The first moderate answer, contact, is that if two simples are in contact, for instance, they touch each other, then they compose something; but when they are not, they do not (26). But this does not seem right, as my shaking

hands with Joel McHale does not yield a further, composite object. He then considers fastening which he takes to be a relation such that two or more simples are fastened to each other in a way that it is really hard to break them apart. Consider the same example above, but this time while we are shaking hands, our hands and fingers got paralyzed, so that it is almost impossible to break us apart without implementing damage. But in this case as well, we are inclined to say that a new object does not come into existence. Cohesion is the case that two objects are cohered like two wooden blocks are super-glued to each other, or two metal pieces are welded, but this does not hold as well. I had applied some kind of glue that bonds skin instantly to my hand, I have shaken McHale's hand, but again, no new object comes into existence. The last moderate answer to the Special Composition Question is fusion, that if two simples are fused, then they form a further object. This does not hold as well, because if two things compose some object, they automatically compose it, not by getting fused.

The second category of answers to the Special Composition Question, which van Inwagen calls extreme answers, consists of nihilism and universalism. While van Inwagen takes any non-moderate answer to be an extreme answer, I think the reason why these are called extreme answers, based on van Inwagen's understanding of them, is that either simples always compose further objects as the universalist thesis argues for, or that simples never compose further objects as the nihilist thesis argues for. There are no in-between cases where under certain conditions simples compose composites and under some other certain conditions, they do not. If we take all moderate and extreme answers to form a spectrum, nihilism would be located at one end, and universalism at the other end. Nihilism is the thesis that "it is impossible for one to bring it about that something is such that the xs compose it, because,

necessarily, (if the *x*s are two or more) nothing is such that the *x*s compose it" (34). This thesis entails that all there are is simples and that no composite object exists, meaning also that ordinary objects do not exist, and the number of existing things in any given situation is equal to the number of simples.

On the other hand, universalism is the thesis that "it is impossible for one to bring it about that something is such that the *x*s compose it, because, necessarily, (if no two of the *x*s overlap), something is such that the *x*s compose it" (35). This thesis entails that it is impossible for anyone to create a composite object as well, because if such a composition is possible, then it is already composed automatically. In the same manner, one's creating a simple object means that his or her creating composite objects which take it as a part, but following van Inwagen's definition, this creation is conducted automatically, so after creating the simple object, one does not perform a further action of creating such composite objects. This means that universalism entails that given a domain of simple objects which new simples can be added to or removed from, all composite objects which take these simples as their parts already exist, so one cannot create new composite objects, as all there could be is already there.

So, returning to Korman's paper, he divides overall approaches on ordinary objects to two categories, namely ordinary conception(s) of objects and revisionary conception(s) of objects.

According to the ordinary conception(s), objects that we generally believe to exist and interact in our daily lives, based on mainly our perceptions of them, exist. The table just in front of me, the computer on it, the cup near, all exist. On the other hand, according to revisionary conception(s), there are more or fewer objects than we prima facie take to. Some revisionary conceptions, for instance, eliminativism, argue

that these macroscopic objects, in fact, do not exist: Instead of asking for a cup of coffee, it turns out that what I should have asked in the first place is that some brown liquid full of caffeine in a cup-wise arrangement of particles.

Unsurprisingly, most theories of eliminativism about ordinary objects argue that, well, they do not exist. While there is a variety of eliminativist positions, like nihilism as briefly introduced above, and organicism, the thesis that some objects which constitute lives are composite, as this paper deals only with inanimate, ordinary objects, I will make no claim on whether living beings are composite objects or not, and throughout this thesis the sole focus will be on ordinary objects. But perhaps there is more in the existence than what the mind sees, and in fact, this is most permissive conceptions of objects argue for. Although there are many different permissive theories, like diachronic universalism, the doctrine of plenitude, constitutionalism and so on, I suspect that introducing universalism, in brief, suffices for our purposes. Because universalists are willing to admit objects like an object composed of Bill Clinton's nose and the Eiffel Tower, universalism is said to be a permissive conception.

Now that an overview of different conceptions and theories of objects is presented, we can discuss some objections presented against and for the existence of ordinary objects. Although in the literature there is an enormous number of such objections, I will discuss some of the more compelling ones.

The first one I would like to discuss is Sorites arguments for the elimination of macroscopic objects, including ordinary objects. These arguments usually take the following form.

1. Every K is composed of a finite number of particles.
2. No K can be composed of two or fewer particles.

3. Then for any number of particles n, if no K can be composed of n particles, then no K can be composed of n+1 particles.
4. Then there is no Ks.

Furthermore, Sorites arguments require sharp cut points and/or borderline cases. A sharp cut point k is that if an object has more particles than k, then it is a K; but it has less than k, then it is not a K. Borderline cases are the cases where the predicate in question neither definitely applies nor definitely does not apply. If that argument is sound, then those cases entail that either universalism or nihilism must be true.

In addition to these issues, we have another problem with the number of existent things in any given situation. Let us say that there are two simple objects on the table. In a situation where the nihilist and the universalist discussing how many objects are there on the table, the nihilist, arguing that there is not an object composed of these two objects, would say that there are two objects on the table, while the universalist, arguing that there is an object composed of these two objects, would say that there are three objects on the table.

An argument for the existence of macroscopic objects, including ordinary objects as well, that I would like to mention here is the argument from entailment which usually takes the following form.

1. There are particles arranged K-wise.
2. If there are particles arranged K-wise, then there are Ks.
3. So, there are Ks.

If sound, this argument shows that the statements of particle arrangements entail the statements of objects, thus the position of the eliminativist is self-defeating. Since the most controversial premise of the argument is the second one, Korman in

his *Ordinary Objects* entry presents two arguments for it, one attacking the second premise and another defending it: The argument from identity and the argument from application conditions, which is the main topic of this thesis. The argument from identity states that composite objects are identical to their particles, but one of the main problems associated with this argument is that identity relations usually are not taken to hold between one thing and many things, or in other words, identity relations are not one-to-many relations. While I think that this might be at least prima facie true, I think the friend of ordinary objects can simply replace the term particles arranged K-wise with the term a K-wise arrangement of particles, perhaps in a holistic way, so that the arrangement counts as a single thing, rather than a plurality of its particles. In fact, this is what seems to have Thomasson in her mind as stated in her piece titled *The Controversy over the Existence of Ordinary Objects*.

> A first barrier to identification comes from the observation that *one* can't be identical to *many*: it doesn't make sense to think that a single statue, say, could be identical to *many* particles. This problem is avoided if we suggest not that the statue is identical to *the particles*, but rather that the statue is identical to the relevant *collection of particles* (properly arranged) – so that we have a one-one rather than one-many identification. But there are also problems for the view that an ordinary object could be identical to a *collection* of fundamental particles (properly arranged). For the two seem to have rather different properties. First, they seem to have very different modal properties (the statue but not the piece is essentially a statue), and persistence conditions: the statue, we want to say, could survive minor changes in the particles that compose it; the collection of particles could not. … But Leibniz's law prohibits us from identifying objects that have different properties. (pp. 593)

A second problem with this argument is that there seem to be differences in persistence conditions of ordinary objects and particle arrangements. If I accidentally break this cup on my table, it is presumably not a cup anymore; but still, the particles are there.

Very briefly, the main purpose of this thesis is to introduce Amie Thomasson's framework defending the existence of ordinary objects in detail, to

discuss some problems raised against it by other philosophers, and to present two original arguments of mine. As shall be discussed in detail in the next chapter, this framework has four important elements. While discussing if a term, for instance, the term table, has a non-empty extension, we first determine this term's application conditions, simply conditions stating when we say that there are tables. Then we check if they are fulfilled. If so, then it means that the term table refers, and then there are tables. If not, then the term does not refer, and there are not tables.

The thesis follows this plan: In Chapter 2, Amie Thomasson's framework on the existence of ordinary objects shall be introduced in detail. In Chapter 3, Jonathan Schaffer's and Simon Evnine's criticisms will be discussed. In Chapter 4, I will provide two original objections to Thomasson's framework. If they are any good, when combined they show that any common sense ontologist has to provide very strong reasons before admitting ordinary objects terms into his or her ontology. Chapter 5 will conclude the thesis.

CHAPTER 2

THOMASSON'S FRAMEWORK ON ORDINARY OBJECTS

Although this thesis aims to present objections against Thomasson's framework on the existence of ordinary objects, I have to acknowledge that, whether my objections meet their purposes or not, Thomasson's work truly deserves the highest praise. Coming up with these objections was truly a hard task for me, mainly because I feel like the way Thomasson and I conceive philosophy is quite similar, and we use extremely akin methods. At times I felt like I am challenging myself. But at the same time, there are some fundamental differences as well, which was essentially the reason why I was so willing to take on this challenge. I hope that my effort is not in vain, and I have done good enough to further the discussion even a little bit.

In this chapter, four main elements of Thomasson's framework, namely the E schema, the R schema, application conditions, and analytic entailments, shall be introduced in detail. One concern which Lynne Rudder Baker raises in her piece titled *Amie Thomasson on Ordinary Objects* will be used to show the importance of star quotes which Thomasson appeals to in her E schema, and how they enable her to provide replies to some questions similar to Baker's. Lastly, how they can be used to argue for the existence of Ks shall be demonstrated. If I were to summarize the framework, it would be in the following lines: There are conditions that we go along when we say that some object is or is not, let us say a table. In most cases, we are already familiar with these conditions to some extent. We determine these conditions by conceptual analysis. If these conditions which we associate with the term table are fulfilled, then the term associated with these conditions refers, and then tables exist.

On the other hand, if these conditions are not fulfilled, then the term table does not refer, and then tables do not exist.

There are at least four main elements of Thomasson's framework, namely the schema about existence (the E schema), the schema about reference (the R schema), application conditions, and analytic entailments. She uses the first element, the E schema, to determine when we say that things of a certain general kind exist. This hybrid theory of reference enables her to avoid problems usually associated with pure theories of reference such as the qua problem and the problem of handling nonexistence claims (Thomasson, 2007, p. 38). Firstly, she considers the following schema.

Ks exist if and only if 'K' refers (2008, p. 65)

Unfortunately, this schema faces with the problem of 'K's referring in the case of its non-existence when 'K' associated with a different meaning. Another, but similar problem is that "there may be worlds in which Ks exist, but the term 'K' does not exist or is associated with different application conditions" (Thomasson, 2014, p. 86). Thomasson thinks that taking a metasemantic approach rather than a metalinguistic one has a higher chance of success, and furthermore, she introduces "star quotes to pick out terms individuated not just phonologically or typographically, but on the basis of meaning" (2008, p. 65).

(E) Ks exists iff *K* refers.

The use of star quotes also enables Thomasson to avoid certain problems when terms are associated with untrue application conditions in cases where her analytic entailments might be under suspicion, as Baker's criticism which shall be discussed at the end of this chapter. Now the connection between entities' existence (or non-existence) and the corresponding term's referring (or not referring) is

established, we can turn to the second element of Thomasson's framework, namely R-schema.

> (R) for most general nouns *K*, *K* refers if and only if the application conditions for *K* are fulfilled. (2008, p. 67)

This schema establishes the connection between a term's application conditions and whether it refers or not, and combining with the E schema, Thomasson almost has all needed to defend the existence of ordinary objects. But as the success of the framework greatly depends on application conditions, the third important element of Thomasson's framework, they should be described in detail. Application conditions "are among the semantic rules of use established by speakers through their normative practices of applying and refusing terms in various circumstances, and approving or correcting others in their use of them" (2008, p. 67), are used to "simply specify conditions that are *conceptually* relevant to whether or not reference is established, not all the conditions that may be *empirically* discovered as relevant" (2009, p. 446-447) and helps us to answer frame-level questions regarding identity conditions, persistence conditions and ontological category of entities of various kinds (2009, p. 452). In her book *Ontology Made Easy*, Thomasson mentions some important features of application conditionals "to avoid misunderstanding:

> 1. They are semantic rules of use which speakers *master*, but these rules needn't take the form of necessary and sufficient conditions, and needn't be statable.
> 2. They are not merely conditions under which we would have *evidence* that the term applies, but rather conditions under which the term *would be correctly applied* (entitling us to truly say 'there is a K').
> 3. They need not be descriptive, and may involve deference to experts and to the world. (91)

Let us consider the term student for instance and for our purposes here, let us say that a human person becomes a student upon his or her registration to a school, and he or

she ceases to be one when he or she is deregistered, upon meeting success or unsuccess conditions. So, in this case, the application condition associated with the term student would be a) to be registered in a school and b) to be human person, meaning that if some human person is registered in a school, the term student would refer to this person, and by (E) and (R) schemas, students would exist. But how do we determine a term's application conditions, one might ask. This is usually done by conducting a conceptual inquiry, enquiring when we do say that there are students, tables, chairs and so on. Considering things which we usually call tables, it is possible to associate the term table with application conditions of having a flat surface, having one or more legs, having the function of using objects put on them, for instance, while working or having dinner.

Thomasson's framework consists also a second kind of conditions, namely co-application conditions. According to her, these co-application conditions are used to see under what conditions a term is used to refer to the same entity (Thomasson, 2009, p. 447). For instance, if I have this metal cup, which I arbitrarily call Marvin, and it gets melted into a coin, it is no longer a cup, so Marvin the metal cup is no more. But on the other hand, if I had used the term Marvin to refer to this piece of metal, which the description of do not necessarily include it's being a cup, I could still use the term to refer to this newly melted metal coin. For that co-application conditions are not that much relevant to our purposes in this thesis, as long as the reader is slightly familiar with them, this brief introduction should suffice.

But how do these three elements help us to argue that ordinary objects exist? Let us say that we are considering the existence of tables. Firstly, we determine this term's application conditions, which can be considered to be conditions when we use to refer to the term in question. This is more of a conceptual inquiry rather than an

empirical one. After this conceptual inquiry is concluded and we have determined the term in question's application conditions, we check if these application conditions we associate with this term is fulfilled. If they are fulfilled, then this means that the term refers to some entities and that it has a non-empty extension. So, we say that tables exist. On the other hand, if application conditions associated with the term table are not fulfilled, then it means that the term does not refer to any entity and that it has an empty extension. Furthermore, if two terms are associated with the same application conditions, meaning that any application condition which is not associated with one term, is not associated with the other as well, then these terms are used in the same situations, meaning that if one refers to some entity or entities, the other does as well. For instance, if the application conditions associated with the term table and the term particles arranged table-wise are the same, then it means that the term table's referring to some entity entails the term particles arranged table-wise's referring to the same entity.

While most of the terms that we use in our daily lives and in our ordinary languages pass these steps and refer to some entities, some terms do not. Among many such terms, two terms, namely witches and phlogiston, can be used to illustrate where the failure of these terms' referring to some entities. Firstly, let us consider the term witch. Upon conceptual analysis, we determine this term's application conditions as (a) to be a woman, and (b) to have supernatural powers obtained by an agreement with the Devil. Now we have determined this term's application conditions, it is time to check if they are fulfilled. We check and see that they are not fulfilled. Now we can say that because these application conditions are not fulfilled, by the R schema, the term witch does not refer, and then by the E schema, that witches do not exist. Secondly, let us consider the term phlogiston. Upon conceptual

analysis, we determine this term's application conditions to be a substance released after the combustion. By the modern combustion theory, we know that no such substance is released, meaning that the term's application conditions are not fulfilled, and again by appealing to the R schema and the E schema, we conclude that phlogiston does not exist.

But in some cases, the disagreement on application conditions we associate with a term, due to several reasons, can take place, and two or more parties can associate a term with different application conditions. Thomasson thinks that this alone is sufficient to make this debate a merely verbal one, "If disputants differ in the application conditions they associate with the term used in a specific existence question, their dispute is merely verbal" (Thomasson, 2009, 457), rather than a substantive one because they "are talking past each other" (Thomasson, 2009, p. 455), meaning that because the meanings of the terms are fixed by the use of star quotes and any difference in two terms' application conditions make them different terms, these parties would be using these terms with different meanings.

I think that one might consider a situation where two or more parties associate a term with different application conditions while both terms refer to the same entities. Let us say that I associate the term Assistant Professor with the academic title of my MA thesis' supervisor as presented on the faculty's web page and some other person associates the term Assistant Professor with the academic title of the person who shall offer the Introduction to Ontology course next semester. Later, it turns out that both conditions refer to the same name. I think that Thomasson would say that even if in some cases, in the presence of disagreement over application conditions associated with a term can refer to the same entity, as the meaning of the term would not be fixed, in other cases it is extremely likely that the

same term, but associated with different application conditions by different parties, will refer to different entities. For instance, the person which the term Assistant Professor might get promoted, or by the faculty's or the institute's further decision, some other person with a different academic title might be asked to offer the course. This kind of application conditions seems to be situation-bounded or contingent.

I think that one of the most important reasons to require both parties to agree upon frame-level application conditions associated with a term is to ensure that once the agreement on the term's application conditions is established, no disagreement over the term's extension, that is which entities the term refers to, can take place, because an agreement on these frame-level application conditions, which acts as the intension of the term, fixes which entities fulfill them, i.e. its extension.

The fourth important element of Thomasson's framework is analytic entailments. Thomasson uses the expressions analytic entailment and to analytic entail to mean

> 'entail in virtue of the meanings of the expressions involved and rules of inference', so that a sentence (or set of sentences) *p* analytically entails a sentence *q* if and only if, given only logical principles and the meanings of the terms involved, the truth of *p* guarantees the truth of *q*" (Thomasson, 2006, p. 347).

For instance, let us consider two statements, 'particles arranged table-wise exists' and 'tables exist'. If the statement 'particles arranged table-wise exists' analytically entails the statement 'tables exist', then by analyticity, any party who accepts the truth of the former statement has to acknowledge the truth of the latter statement as well. Thomasson's conception of analytic entailments is perhaps the most objected element of her framework and one such criticism by Jonathan Schaffer will be discussed in the next chapter. In Chapter 4, I will present an objection of mine against analytic entailments as well.

Now the framework which Amie Thomasson presents for her "easy ontology" approach is presented, we can move onto how it applies to the debate on the existence of ordinary objects. The debate is conventionally taken to be between two parties of common sense ontologists and eliminativists/serious ontologists. Thomasson takes serious ontologists to be philosophers who think that existence questions like those we deal in this thesis are "deep philosophical questions, to be resolved by distinctively philosophical argumentation" (Thomasson, 2008, p. 64), and the position serious ontology to be "the view that assumes that there are existence questions of this nature – which cannot be resolved either by linguistic/conceptual or straightforward empirical means" (Thomasson, 2014, p. 1). On the other hand, a common sense ontologist, philosophers who think that existence questions like those we deal in this thesis are not deep philosophical questions and can be solved by conceptual and/or empirical means, assumes the opposite position.

So, let me briefly describe a case: A serious ontologist and a common sense ontologist stand near an object, allegedly a table as the common people would call, arguing whether there are tables. The serious ontologist argues that macroscopic objects, including tables, do not exist, and what the common sense ontologist call a table is only a table-wise arrangement of particles. S/he states that there ought to be more than just a table-wise arrangement of particles for there to be a table. But the common sense ontologist disagrees, saying that all there is to be a table is to be a table-wise arrangement of particles and states that the eliminativist's asking more for there to be a table is wrongful.

Since now all of the important elements of Thomasson's framework are introduced in detail, let us see how her defense of ordinary objects goes. Firstly, we determine which we associate with an ordinary object term, let us say, table. Now the

term in question's application conditions are determined, we check whether they are fulfilled or not, and we see that in fact they are fulfilled. By the R schema, now we can say that the term table refers, and then by the E schema, that tables exist. Even if the eliminativist objects and says that for tables to exist, there ought to be more, for instance, that a non-causal metaphysical dependence relation R, like composition, constitution or anything else, has to be obtained, given that the expression 'Particles arranged table-wise exists' analytically entails the expression 'Tables exists' and any difference in the application conditions associated with these two terms would mean that the whole debate on the existence of tables is merely verbal, the serious ontologist has to admit that tables exist.

There is no scarcity of objections towards Thomasson's framework and one criticism Lynne Rudder Baker makes in her paper titled *Amie Thomasson on Ordinary Objects* should be discussed to point out and clarify one seemingly common misunderstanding on Thomasson's R schema and analytic entailments.

> 'Oscar is a whale' seems to analytically entail 'Oscar is a mammal', and not 'Oscar is a fish'. Indeed, 'whale' and 'mammal' exemplify just the sort of species/genus hierarchy of sortals that Thomasson discusses. But it seems that a child today, and whole populations of yesteryear, could understand the words 'whale' and 'mammal', be competent reasoners and mistakenly believe that if Oscar is a whale, then Oscar is a fish, but not believe that if Oscar is a whale, then Oscar is a mammal.
>
> However, if Thomasson is right, then the person who asserts, 'A whale is a big fish' either does not understand the word 'whale' or is an incompetent reasoner. Logic and language alone should inform the speaker that whales are not fish. But it seems to me that the knowledge lacked by a person who asserts, 'A whale is a big fish' concerns not the meanings of the words, but the nature of whales.
>
> So, my question is this: Are analytic entailments relative to the state of empirical knowledge? If so – if 'Oscar is a whale' did not analytically entail 'Oscar is a mammal' until certain empirical discoveries were made – then how can the relation between 'Oscar is a whale' and 'Oscar is a mammal' be one of analytic entailment at all (since the relation between whales and mammals is not time-bound)? But if not – if 'Oscar is whale' always entailed 'Oscar is a mammal' – then how can the entailment be known on the basis of meanings alone, without empirical knowledge? (pp. 4-5)

Let us say that a little child named Paul thinks that Oscar the whale is a fish because he has watched a cartoon where Oscar was swimming in the ocean. If we were to ask Paul what whales are, it is likely that he would answer by saying that whales are big fishes living in the water. So, in Thomasson's terms, the application conditions Paul would associate with the term whale would be a) to be big, b) to be a fish, and c) to live in the water. In this case, it is easy to see how the expression 'Oscar is a whale' entails 'Oscar is a fish' for Paul, simply because he has associated the application condition of being a fish with the term whale, though incorrectly. On the other hand, if we were to ask Rainer the marine biologist what whales are, it is likely that he would answer by saying that they are a very large, aquatic, marine mammal with such and such physical features. In Rainer's case, the expression 'Oscar is a whale' entails 'Oscar is a mammal' because among the application conditions he associated with the term whale there lies the application condition of being a mammal. So, I think that this problem is not due to analytic entailments or Thomasson's R schema, and it is rather due to the possibility of some untrue application conditions getting associated with terms. I do not see this as an important issue for Thomasson's framework, because whether the term is taken to be a mammal or be a fish, whales exist. So, as long as at least some application conditions are fulfilled by a term, meaning that by the R schema, the term refers, and then by the E schema, such entities exist. I think that the peculiarity here is that even if some of the application conditions associated with a term are not fulfilled, the term can refer to some entity, meaning that the entity can exist. As one of my own objections is extremely akin to this conclusion, more will be said later.

So, Thomasson's framework follows the following structure.

1. Firstly, we determine application conditions associated with a term K.

2. Secondly, we check if these application conditions are fulfilled.
3. Thirdly, if these application conditions are fulfilled, then by the R schema, the term K refers.
4. Lastly, if the term K refers, by the E schema, Ks exist.

In this chapter, I have introduced Amie Thomasson's framework defending the existence of ordinary objects. The framework consists of four important elements. The E schema is used to establish the connection between existential statements and referential statements. Her use of star quotes to fix the meanings of the term is emphasized as it will be used in the following chapters as well. The R schema is used to establish the connection between application conditions associated with a term and referential statements. The last element of her framework, namely analytic entailments, are discussed in detail as well, though more shall be said in Section 4.2. as one of my original objections are directed at them. Finally, after all these elements are introduced, how Thomasson uses to argue for the existence of Ks are shown.

CHAPTER 3

SCHAFFER AND EVNINE ON THOMASSON

Now that Thomasson’s framework is presented in detail, we can discuss some problems raised against it. In this chapter, Jonathan Schaffer's concerns which he expresses in his piece titled *The Deflationary Metaontology of Thomasson's Ordinary Objects* and Simon Evnine's concerns which he shares in his piece titled *Problems for Ontological Minimalism* shall be discussed. Schaffer questions the reason why Thomasson's analytic entailments run from accepted statements rather than from disputed statements, and shows that if they were to run from disputed statements, then the eliminativist, who by his or her position reject such statements, would not have to accept the truth of the consequents of such analytic entailments, like 'Tables exist'. On the other hand, if these analytic entailments run from the statements of particle arrangements and the antecedent analytically entails the consequent, the eliminativist has to acknowledge the truth of the consequent.

As shall be discussed, the eliminativist's acknowledging the truth of the antecedent is not sufficient for him or her to acknowledge the truth of the consequent; because in addition, he or she has to accept that analyticity, understood as used in analytic entailments, is a good guide to existence. Furthermore, if the eliminativist is a serious ontologist, then this means that he or she thinks that such existential debates cannot be solved by conceptual and empirical means and that by being a serious ontologist, he or she has to refuse analyticity's guide to existence.

I think that the reason why analytic entailments run from accepted statements rather than from disputed statements is that any agreement on the existence of Ks is not possible otherwise. Following Schaffer, the common sense ontologist can start

the debate with a disputed statement, but after seeing that the debate does not further, he or she can return to accepted statements.

In Section 3.2, Evnine's criticism that is Thomasson's framework presupposes "the existence of something to which the concept is applied" shall be discussed (162-163). I think that this is due to a misunderstanding of existence questions which can be shown by presenting two different readings. The first reading asks if the term in question K associated with such and such application conditions refer to any existing entities. If the answer is affirmative, then this means that prior to our conceptual inquiry, Ks have existed, and by a successful application of the framework, we merely termed them. In other words, Ks were "un-termed entities". On the other hand, the second reading asks if a term K associated with such and such unique application conditions refer to any entity. The uniqueness requirement here makes sure that our ontology does not already have an entity which of the correspondent term is not associated with the same application conditions, so if we were to admit Ks into our ontology, this would be a parsimonious addition. This reading at most presupposes that some objects which have no relevance with the term in question at the time of our conceptual inquiry exist, which is an innocent truism, if not a metaphysical necessity.

3.1 Schaffer on Thomasson

According to Schaffer, Thomasson’s argument on the existence of ordinary objects is as follows.

> First, she argues from the need for sortals in determination to the existence of analytic entailments for referring terms. In particular, she argues that it is analytic that if there are particles arranged cupwise, then there is a cup. Second, she argues from the existence of analytic entailments for referring

> terms to the existence of ordinary objects. Since all sides agree that there are particles arranged cupwise, all sides are committed to cups (142).

Before going any further, I think that Schaffer's saying that "it is analytic that if there are particles arranged cupwise, then there is a cup" is not very precise, because, as shall be discussed in the next chapter, I think that a common sense ontologist is more likely to take these analytic entailments to be biconditionals. But even if they are directional, being an eliminativist about ordinary objects, I would be considerably concerned about their running from the statements of particle arrangement to the statements of ordinary objects, rather than the other way around. Although both of us have a concern on Thomasson's analytic entailments, Schaffer's is with their running from accepted descriptions, rather than disputed descriptions.

> For example, if 'there are particles arranged cupwise' entails "Grail exists" then even the mereological nihilist (or the sort who accepts that there are particles arranged cupwise) would be forced to grant the existence of Grail. But if the relevant analytic entailment only went from the presence of *the fusion* of particles arranged cupwise, then the mereological nihilist (who does not accept the existence of fusions) would not be forced to grant the existence of Grail. So why think that the analytic entailments run from particle arrangement, rather than from fusion of particles? (145-146).

I think that Schaffer is on the right track here, because if the mereological nihilist accepts the statement 'there are particles arranged cupwise', the conditional 'if there are particles arranged cupwise, then Grail exists', and that analyticity is a good guide to existence, he or she has to accept the consequent. By his or her position, the nihilist has to accept statements like 'there are particles arranged cupwise', but this does not necessitate him or her to accept the conditional. Equally, he or she can deny that the conditional holds, or that analytic entailments hold for all of such cases. Considering a conditional which has a disputed statement as its antecedent, like 'If there is a fusion of particles arranged cupwise, then Grail exists', since the nihilist

denies the existence of fusions, multiplicities without unities, now he or she can deny the antecedent as well, meaning all three options are available to him or her if he or she is to reject the existence of ordinary objects. Even if there is an analytic entailment between the conditional's antecedent and consequent, this does not force the nihilist to acknowledge the truth of the consequent and Grail's existence, because his or her position does not require him or her to acknowledge the existence of fusions of particles arranged cup-wise.

Schaffer seems to think that we can make the main problem with Thomasson's analytic entailments more vivid by generalizing the case. Let us say that P is a statement which at least one party in the debate does not accept and that Q is a statement which all parties in the debate accept. Generally speaking, because P is not accepted by all parties in the debate, it is a disputed statement or a "disputed description" in Schaffer's terms. In the same manner, generally speaking, because Q is accepted by all parties in the debate, it is an accepted statement, or an "accepted description" in Schaffer's terms (146). Now we can generalize the problem by using these terms: Given that the nihilist by his or her position accepts statements like 'particles arranged cup-wise exist', if analytic entailments run from accepted descriptions, in order not to acknowledge the existence of ordinary objects, he or she has to reject either analyticity as a guide to existence or these analytic entailments. On the other hand, if analytic entailments running from such disputed statements are equally plausible, now he or she has the chance to reject the antecedent as well. Furthermore, if the nihilist is a serious ontologist who thinks that such existence questions cannot be answered by empirical or conceptual means, presumably including analytic means as well, then he or she can reject analyticity's guide to existence, making any appeal to analytic entailments on existential debates null. I

think that the actual reason why Thomasson's analytic entailments run from the accepted statements rather than the disputed statements is that there can be no debate between any parties if there is a dispute on the statement taken as the antecedent. So, for any debate to take place, it should start from a statement which both parties accept.

Concluding the section, while Schaffer raises a fair point, I think that using disputed statements instead of accepted statements barely makes any contribution to the overall issue we have in our hands here and does not further the debate, thus the common sense ontologist has the right to set the debate again with analytic entailments running from accepted descriptions. But this is not the say that analytic entailments are problem-free, as in Section 4.1 an objection against them will be raised.

3.2 Evnine on Thomasson

Now that Schaffer's view on Thomasson's framework is extensively discussed, it is time to move to Simone Evnine's which is presented in his paper titled *Problems for Ontological Minimalism*, though the reader should note that I will focus on only one criticism he offers among many existing in the paper. Summarizing Evnine's criticism, he thinks that this kind of appeal to application conditions presuppose the existence of the kind in the question, which obviously would be a problem for the common sense ontologist. Or rather in his own words:

> For the conditions of application of that kind must presuppose the existence of something to which the concept is applied: *it* must be thus and so if *it* is a K. But the whole point of the minimalist's use of application conditions was to get at what it is for there to exist something of a certain kind, not what it is for something that exists to be of a certain kind (162-163).

Basically, Evnine says that the minimalist ought to show that something of a certain kind exists, not that something existing is of a certain kind. So, let us follow Thomasson's schema to see why this is, in fact, a problem and say that we are having a debate over the existence of witches. We go through step one and at the end of our conceptual inquiry, we determine that a witch is a woman who obtained supernatural powers by an agreement with the Devil. Now we are to check if any entity fulfills these application conditions. If these application conditions are (not) fulfilled, then by the R schema, the term does (not) refer, and then by the E schema, witches do (not) exist. But in order to check if any term fulfills these application conditions, an entity ought to exist first, so only then these terms can refer to some entities, and then they can exist. In other words, what we check is in fact whether there are witches among already existing entities.

Or let us consider a term, chair, presumably with a non-empty extension. We go through step one and we determine the term chair's application conditions to be such and such. As in the previous example, now we are to check if any term fulfills these application conditions. We check and see that some term fulfills, meaning that the term refers and that chairs exist. The conclusion we arrive at is that there are chairs. But, again, in the case, to check if some entity fulfills the application conditions, we determine by conceptual inquiry to belong to chairs, some object ought to exist.

I think the main issue here is that questions like "Do Ks exist?", which I will call existence question(s) for the rest of this chapter, at least in this context, have more than just one reading, one allegedly presupposing the existence of the entity in question as Evnine argues, and the another which does not presuppose the existence

of any entity. The first reading of the existence question, "Do Ks exist?", would be something in the following lines.

> (S_1) Does the term K which is associated with such and such application conditions refer to any existing entities?

S_1 is the question asking, for instance, that if tables already are among existent things. According to this reading, if we were to conclude that tables exist by going through all steps described in Chapter 2, it means that tables were existent, but the term table was not introduced to our ontology, our ways and talks did not consist of them. In a way, I think that we can say that we have discovered that the term table refers to some object, whether tables had existed prior to our establishing its reference. But all these mean that, for instance, this entity in front of me which the common sense ontologist calls a table, was just an "un-termed entity" before we go through conceptual inquiry and checking if application conditions, we associate with the term table are fulfilled. Lynne Rudder Baker raises the same concern in her piece titled *Amie Thomasson on Ordinary Objects* as well.

> If Thomasson is correct, I can make anything exist by proposing a term and giving it application conditions that are satisfied. [….] So, we can bring things into existence just by stipulation. All we have to do is provide a name and give it application conditions that are fulfilled. This consequence of Thomasson's view seems to make ontology, not only amenable to novelty, but altogether unstable. I now see that I was mistaken. Gollyswoggles were already in existence before anyone named them; they existed, but they just weren't called 'gollyswoggles'. However, I can reformulate the point: ontology becomes not unstable, but wildly unconstrained. (9-10)

On the other hand, the second reading of the existence question would be something like in the following lines.

> (S_2) Does the term K which is associated with such and such unique application conditions refer to any entity?

Following Thomasson's framework, we can say that if two terms, *a* and *b*, have the exact application conditions, no more no less, meaning that they share the same application conditions without any difference in them, then the term *a* refers to same entities which the term *b* refers to. The uniqueness criterion mentioned in S_2 helps us to make sure that the application conditions associated with the term in question are not associated with another term which already took its place in our ontology. So, in accordance with this reading of the existence question, a positive answer means that if a K, which has a unique conjunction of application conditions, fulfills its application conditions, then (by the E schema and the R schema) K would be truly a genuine addition to our ontology. While the conceptual inquiry by its nature ought to assume that some objects prior to the debate exist, both sides of the debate are ensured that whether K exists or not, the associated term is not identical to any term in their ontologies already consist, thus K's existence is not presupposed in any way. So, only an innocent presupposition is made.

So, I think that Evnine and Baker would be right about that Thomasson or any common sense ontologist siding with her were presupposing the existence of something if they intend the first reading of the existence question, S_1. By asking S_1 and going along with Thomasson's framework, at best it seems to achieve is that determining if Ks are among already existent things. Thus, rather than genuinely concluding that Ks exist, what we were doing is discovering that the term had a non-empty extension prior to our conceptual inquiry. But on the other hand, it seems at least equally possible that they might be meaning S_2, where the only presupposition/assumption is that some thing exists and any positive answer yields the admission of an object to an ontology in which no identical object took its place beforehand. This phrase "some thing exists" can be taken to be a truism, if not a

metaphysical necessity, and some kind of Cogito argument can be used to justify it. The reader shall not be bothered with this. Thus, I think that if Thomasson or any common sense ontologist siding with her intends the second reading of the existence question, S_2, they make an ontologically innocent presumption.

CHAPTER 4

TWO OBJECTIONS

In this chapter, two original arguments against Thomasson's framework shall be presented. The first argument aims to show that application conditions have a higher ontological priority than terms, meaning that our ontological and/or conceptual commitments should be understood in terms of application conditions, rather than of terms. The second argument aims to show that if both ordinary object terms and particle arrangement terms are associated with the same application conditions, then they form analytic biconditionals, which simply can be conceived as analytic entailments going both ways. Furthermore, following the first argument, this means that if two terms are associated with the same (conjunction of) application conditions and our ontologies consists one, we should be extremely careful while introducing entities corresponding to the other term.

4.1 Applications conditions over terms

In this section, I will argue that application conditions have a higher conceptual and/or ontological priority than terms, and if so, we should be extremely careful while introducing entities which of the correspondent terms associated with application conditions already present in our ontologies. Furthermore, if an ontology consists terms of particle arrangements, and there is no difference of application conditions between the terms of particle arrangements and the terms of ordinary objects, the common sense ontologist has to offer very strong reasons to admit such ordinary objects into his or her ontology.

To show that application conditions have a higher ontological and/or conceptual priority than terms, I will introduce a pair of new terms which I call variant terms and variants/variant entities. I take variant terms to be derivative, but new terms associated with a failed term in question's positive application conditions and its negative applications' internal negations. That is to say that if a term in question's some of the application conditions are not fulfilled, but some other application conditions associated with this term are, then we can internally negate these unfulfilled application conditions, combine them with the failed term's positive application conditions, associate this new conjunction of application conditions with new terms, namely variant terms. Furthermore, variant terms are capable of following Thomasson's E schema and R schema, which means that variant terms refer, and variants exist.

If so, in inquiries, application conditions have a higher conceptual and/or ontological priority than terms, meaning that what our focus should be on application conditions, not terms themselves. This entails that if our ontologies consist of entities of particle arrangements, like particles arranged table-wise, which of the term is associated with such and such application conditions, then the common sense ontologist has to present very appealing reasons to admit ordinary object terms into his or her ontology.

If the term *a* is associated with a conjunction of application conditions, C*a*, our ontology already consists *a*s, and we are discussing whether we should introduce a new kind *b*, which of the term is associated with the same (conjunction of) application conditions, to our ontology, unless we have strong reasons, we should avoid their introductions to preserve parsimony. This does not say that under no

circumstances, your ontology shall not introduce such entities to your ontology, but says rather that we should be extremely careful and have good reasons to do so.

So, let us remind ourselves in brief how Thomasson's framework works. We associate a term *K* with a (conjunction of) application condition and check if it is fulfilled. If it is fulfilled, then by her R schema, it means that the term in question *K* refers, and then by her E schema, *K*s exist. But what do we say when some of the application conditions associated with a term are not fulfilled, but some others are fulfilled? While the term in question, *K*, does not refer and thus does not exist, I think that since some of the application conditions associated with the term, it means that some object with these fulfilled, positive application conditions exist, even if our ontology does not include this term at the time of our inquiry.

So, let C_K be a conjunction of application conditions which is associated with a term K. But before going any further, I would like to make three assumptions on application conditions here, though the reader should note that to my knowledge Thomasson is not necessarily committed to them. The first assumption is that each of these application conditions is necessary to be K so that if only some of them are fulfilled, by Thomasson's E schema and R schema, an object with those fulfilled application conditions exist, but that object would not be a K. The second assumption is that none of these application conditions on their own is sufficient to be K, so that if one application condition associated with the term K is fulfilled, but others are not, we would not say that the existing object is a K. The third assumption is that all together they are sufficient to be K. Otherwise, even if the associated application conditions are fulfilled, the term refers and the corresponding object exists, we would not be able to say that this object is a K. I think her use of star quotes in the E schema is sufficient to think that Thomasson would agree with this line of reasoning, because

all three assumptions are required to fix the application conditions associated with a term and to be able to conclude that if the term has a non-empty extension, it is a K, rather than, let us say, an M. As far as I can tell, my argument does not depend on these assumptions, but they make the issue much clearer.

So, let us say that we are considering whether a term K with four non-identical application conditions, C_1, C_2, C_3, and C_4, has a non-empty extension or Ks exists. After determining its application conditions, we check if they are fulfilled, but we find out that while C_2 and C_3 are not fulfilled, C_1 and C_4 are fulfilled. Because the conjunction of application conditions associated with the term K is not fulfilled, the term K does not refer, and Ks do not exist. From here, we can simply leave our discussion on the existence of Ks behind, or given that some of the application conditions associated with the term are fulfilled, we can try to figure out what the correspondent entities' application conditions. The important thing here to note is that even if one single application condition is fulfilled, it means that by Thomasson's E and R schema, some object fulfilling this application condition exists, whether our ontology consists it or not.

There I would like to introduce two new terms which I call variant terms and variants. As I take them, a variant term is a derivative of a term which initially was considered to be admitted into our ontology. For the sake of the convenience, I shall express a term K's variant term as K', but the reader should note that a failed term can have more than just one variant term. If application conditions associated with a variant term is fulfilled, then the corresponding entity, called variant, exists.

Every variant has to meet at least two conditions. The first condition is that every variant has to have at least one positive application conditions which no term in our ontology is associated with for the sake of parsimony. The reason is that if all

of its application conditions are associated with another term already took its place in our ontology, then we have very weak reasons to consider the variant's admission into our ontologies. The second condition is that some of the application conditions associated with the term in question, not the variant, have to fail. The reason is that if the term in question fulfills all application conditions associated with it, then we have no reason to consider the variant term itself, let alone the admission of entities corresponding to this term into our ontologies.

One might be concerned with variants and say that variant terms change the meanings of the terms in question, so they violate Thomasson's E schema where star quotes are used to fix the meaning of the terms in question. To that person, I would like to point that the variant terms are not terms whose meanings are changed, they are new terms "derived" from the term in question by internally negating unfulfilled application conditions if some pre-determined requirements are met.

So, it turns out that some of the application conditions associated with the term K, namely C_2 and C_3, are not fulfilled, but C_1 and C_4 are fulfilled. Since this means that there exists an object fulfilling C_1 and C_4, our ontology better consists of them. This is where variant terms come into the play. We can associate K' with C_1, ¬ C_2, ¬ C_3, and C_4 where the negation is used in its internal sense, that is as an internal negation, rather than its ordinary sense, that is as an external negation. For instance, let us say that we associate the term witch with the following application conditions: a) is a woman, and b) has supernatural powers obtained by an agreement with the Devil. We check if these application conditions are fulfilled, and see that even though (a) is fulfilled, (b) is not. If we did not have the first condition, then we would have a right to discuss whether we should include woman without supernatural

powers into our ontologies, but a woman without supernatural powers is just a woman, which presumably our ontology consists such entities.

Let us consider another case where we are considering if there are non-flying blue birds, which we named Nikbirds. Going off the record, to my knowledge, such birds do not exist, but even if they do, let us assume that their absence will turn out to be the case at the end of our inquiry here. That is to say that the application conditions associated with this term to (a) to be non-flying, (b) to be blue, and (c) to be a bird. We check, and as the conjunction of these application conditions is not fulfilled, see that there are not any, meaning that at least one of these application conditions are not fulfilled, being blue and being non-flying at the same case. But it turns out that, to our surprise, there are non-blue, brown to be specific, non-flying birds, which we decide to call Rikbirds. So, we take and internally negate these unfulfilled application conditions by the original term in question, namely (a) and (b), and say that the application conditions (a') to be flying, (b'), to be non-blue, and (c) to be a bird, are fulfilled by the term Rikbirds. The use of internal negation rather than of external negation is quite important here because this element helps us to create positive application conditions for the variant term from negative application conditions of a failed term in question. I think this has especially a very good use for non-binary application conditions, like those of colors, like (b) and (b') above, compared to binary application conditions, because if we are able to determine, at least in some cases if not all, what the corresponding true predicate is for this non-binary application condition, like it is brown, not just non-blue, then we know that the variant exists for sure and that its extension is not empty. For instance, if we were to find non-flying, brown birds while considering non-flying, blue birds, we would know that such non-flying blue birds exist.

Let us consider another example and say that upon conceptual inquiry we have determined a high honor student to be a student by "obtaining a semester GPA of 3.49 to 4.00 while carrying at least a minimum course load and having a CGPA of 2.00 or higher"[1]. So that is to say that application conditions of the term high honor student are (a) to have a semester GPA of 3.49 to 4.00, (b) to carry at least a minimum course load, and (c) to have a minimum CGPA of 2.00. We check if any student (within a domain) fulfills these application conditions, and sadly see that no student fulfills all of them. But while going through records, we noticed that some students are quite close to a semester GPA of 3.49, like David has a semester GPA of 3.45. So, we leave (a) behind, replace it with another application condition, (a') "obtaining a semester GPA of 3.00 to 3.49", call the new term "honor student". So, in the failure of the term high honor student, we have the success of the term honor student.

Therefore, in any case, such that at least one application condition which is not associated with any term already in our ontology is fulfilled, but some other application conditions are not fulfilled, entities corresponding to a new term K' can be introduced to our ontology, and by Thomasson's E schema and R schema, it can be said that the term K' refers and Ks exist. I think that the underlying reason is the presence of one positive application condition is sufficient for an entity corresponding to this term to be admitted into our ontologies in most cases.

So, if application conditions have a higher conceptual and/or ontological priority than terms as shown by the presence of variant terms, then any principle of parsimony we accept should be directed at application conditions, rather than terms. That is to say that instead of discussing whether the introduction of an entity

[1] https://catalog.bilkent.edu.tr/general/standing.html#HONORS

corresponding to such an entity to our ontology makes it less parsimonious or not, we should discuss whether a positive application condition's introduction via a term to our ontology makes it less parsimonious or not. This is simply because introducing new entities with the correspondent term's already accepted application conditions does not make any change in our ontology's ontological basis. In other words, there is nothing wrong with saying that there are tables, but as long as we associate the term table with application conditions fulfilled by another term already took its place in our ontology, the addition of the entity table into our ontology does not make any significant contribution. So, the whole argument is as follows.

1. If some application conditions associated with a term K fails, but some others do not, this means that the term K does not refer, and thus Ks do not exist.
2. In such cases, we can come up with new terms, called variant terms, by internally negating unfulfilled application conditions. These terms are guaranteed to refer, as long as they meet a few very simple requirements. Furthermore, they are capable of following Thomasson's E and R schemas.
3. Then in most of such cases, variants exist. This means that from the failure of fulfillment of some application conditions associated with a term follows the success of fulfillment of all application conditions associated with that term's variant.
4. If so, application conditions have a higher conceptual and/or ontological priority than terms. This also means that while introducing new elements into our ontologies, we should focus on application conditions rather than terms themselves.

5. Then, our direct ontological commitments should be on application conditions or their ontological counterparts, and any principle of parsimony should be directed at them.
6. Then, if a term in question's application conditions are already associated with a term which of the correspondent entity already took its place in our ontology, then the addition of this entity into our ontology does not make any change in our ontological basis and in application conditions.
7. Therefore, if two terms *a* and *b* are associated with the same application conditions, and our ontology already consists As, we have very weak reasons to admit Bs to our ontology. But this is not to say that there are not Bs.

4.2 Analytic entailments

This section will deal with Thomasson's analytic entailments, simply because I have two concerns. One is that due to her definition of analytic entailments and to entail analytically, it is not clear in which cases they take the form of conditionals and in which cases they take the form of biconditionals. To provide clarification over the issue, I shall introduce two terms, bare analytic conditionals, basically can be described as analytic entailments running from one way, but not from other, and analytic conditionals, analytic entailments running from both ways. This shall help me to evaluate each possible option and eventually to show that if Thomasson takes analytic entailments between the statements of particle arrangements and the statements of ordinary objects to be bare analytic conditionals going either way, then the terms involved in these statements cannot have the same application conditions. On the other hand, given that both terms involved in these statements are associated

with the same application conditions, she has to take them in the form of analytic biconditionals. The second concern is that as I think that there is a very intimate relation between application conditions and analytic entailments.

But this raises a question on parsimony, which Thomasson puts a high emphasis in several pieces. However, if the argument that is presented in Section 4.1 is right, and application conditions have a higher conceptual and/or ontological priority than terms, so any parsimony principle should be defined in terms of application conditions, rather than of terms. Furthermore, given that both parties of the debate acknowledge the truth of the statements of particle arrangements, like 'Particles arranged K-wise exist', but the eliminativist/serious ontologist side does not necessarily accept the statements of ordinary objects, like 'Ks exist', by refusing the analyticity's guidance to existential claims, the common sense ontologist has to provide good reasons to introduce entities corresponding to ordinary object terms into his or her ontology.

Later, I will present an example of analytic biconditionals, to show that there are some cases in which they work, even if they do not work between the statements of particle arrangements and the statements of ordinary objects. I suspect that one group of cases where analytic biconditionals works are that one term is analytically directionally connected to two other terms, where these two terms are bidirectionally connected to each other.

Considering how Thomasson defines analytic entailments and to entail analytically once again, I have two concerns of mine as well. The first one is that it is not clear if these analytic entailments are conditionals or biconditionals, and when they are so. While this might seem like an insignificant point at first sight, if my reasoning that shall be discussed is right, then Thomasson's analytic entailments do

not run from the statements of particle arrangements to the statements of ordinary objects, as Schaffer seemingly takes them, because they do not run from one way to another, simply due to the fact that such analytic entailments are biconditionals. The definition Thomasson offers for analytic entailments suffices as long as the truth of the consequent or the statement on the right hand is guaranteed by the truth of the antecedent or the statement on the left hand, as long as this so-called entailment is based on the meanings of the terms involved in these expressions and logical principles. So, the case seems for me to be that anything satisfying these counts as analytic entailments, but whether it is a bare analytic conditional or an analytic biconditional makes a crucial difference in this debate.

Firstly, let me remark that it is a common convention in our talks on the existence of objects that particles, whatever they might be, are the fundamental units of entities, like protons, neutrons, and electrons in the classic atom theory. So the use of the term particles does not necessary refer to one single fundamental unit, or a set of plenty fundamental units: Whatever they are, it barely makes any difference for our case here, so I would appreciate that if the reader does not bother herself or himself with what they are or what they might be. As long as they are "understood . . . as a placeholder for whichever microscopic objects or stuffs features in the best microphysical explanations of observable reality" (Korman, 2015, p. 8), it suffices.

Now I shall define what a bare analytic conditional and an analytic biconditional is, clearly as much as possible. Using Thomasson's definition with slight changes, I take a bare analytic conditional to be a conditional where a sentence (or set of sentences) *p*, taken as this conditional's antecedent, analytically entails a sentence *q*, taken as this conditional's consequent, if and only if, given only logical principles and the meanings of the terms involved, the truth of *p* guarantees the truth

of *q*, but not vice versa. So essentially, bare analytic conditionals are analytic entailments running from one direction, but not from the other direction. This means that if a statement 'particles arranged table-wise exist' analytically entails a statement 'tables exist', but 'tables exist' do not analytically entail 'particles arranged table-wise exist', the combined statement has the form 'If particles arranged table-wise exist, then tables exist' and is a bare analytic conditional.

On the other hand, again appealing to Thomasson's definition of analytic entailments but making slight changes, I take an analytic biconditional to be a conditional where a sentence (or set of sentences) *p*, taken as the statement on the left side, analytically entails a sentence *q*, taken as the statement on the right side, if and only if, given only logical principles and the meanings of the terms involved, the truth of *p* guarantees the truth of *q*, and vice versa. So essentially, analytic biconditionals are analytic entailments running from both directions. This means that if a statement 'particles arranged table-wise exist' analytically entails a statement 'tables exist', and 'tables exist' analytically entails 'particles arranged table-wise exist', the combined statement has the form 'Particles arranged table-wise exist if and only if tables exist' and is an analytic biconditional. It should be underlined that this distinction is for further clarification, and Thomasson might argue that there is no need for this. Still, I think that at least on logical grounds, this is a legitimate move. In the presence of a conditional in the form $P \rightarrow Q$, either $Q \rightarrow P$ follows, which we end up with a biconditional $P \leftrightarrow Q$ by biconditional introduction, or it does not follow, then we end up with an exclusive conditional in the sense described above.

I think we can interpret bare analytic conditionals and analytic biconditionals as in the following. Since according to Thomasson, in cases of analytic entailments,

the truth of the statement on the left side guarantees the truth of the statement on the right side, given only logical principles and the meanings of the terms involved, any situation described by the statement on the left side, ‘particles arranged table-wise exist’ in our case, can be described by the statement on the right side, ‘tables exists’ assuming the former analytically entails the latter. If this is the case, then this means also that there is no true situation described by the statement on the right side, ‘tables exist’ if the situation described by the statement on the left side, ‘particles arranged table-wise exists’ is true, simply because the truth of the statement on the right side is guaranteed by the truth of the statement on the left side by analyticity plus logical principles.

I think that this is more obvious when we consider a case which is similar to Baker has pointed as discussed in the previous section. Let us say that there is an analytic entailment between these two statements and that there is no true situation described by the statement ‘particles arranged table-wise exist’ because this statement is false. As Thomasson’s definition of analytic entailments do not say much about such cases, based on analyticity, we cannot say that if the statements of particles arrangements are false, then the statements of ordinary objects are false as well, because this means that then by contraposition, we can equally say that ‘tables exist’ analytically entails ‘ particles arranged table-wise exist’. This would mean that there is an analytic biconditional between these two statements.

So, all these is to say that if there is a bare analytic conditional running from a statement *p* to another statement *q*, then every situation described by *p* can be described by *q*, but not vice versa. This means that if a situation S is truly described by *p*, then the same situation can be described by *q*, but not vice versa. In the same manner, if there is an analytic biconditional between two statements, *p* and *q*, then

every situation described by *p* can be described by *q*, and vice versa. I think that what Thomasson has in her mind is much closer to analytic biconditionals rather than bare analytic conditionals when it comes down to the statements of particle arrangements and the statements of ordinary objects, because terms involved in these statements are guaranteed to refer to same entities in same situations only when they are associated with the same application conditions.

I think that there are three alternatives where *p* stands for a statement of particle arrangements and *q* for a statement of ordinary objects as in the following:

1. There is a bare analytic conditional running from *p* to *q*.

2. There is a bare analytic conditional running from *q* to *p*.

3. There is an analytic biconditional between *p* and *q*.

I think that by saying that there is an analytic entailment running from statements of particle arrangement to statements of ordinary objects, Thomasson means either (1) or (3), but I am inclined to think that she would prefer to go with (3).

Firstly, I think that (1) is false and that there is no bare analytic conditional running from a statement like ‘particles arranged table-wise exist’ to a statement like ‘tables exist’ because some situations described by ‘particles arranged table-wise exist’ cannot be described by ‘tables exist’. Neither an eliminativist who thinks that the mere presence of particles arranged table-wise is not sufficient for the existence of tables, and says that “If there are atoms arranged tablewise *and they compose an object*, then there are tables” (Korman, 2015, 39), nor a common sense ontologist who thinks that the terms table and particles arranged table-wise are associated with the same application conditions would accept that. The eliminativist’s acceptance of (1) and of that analyticity is a guide to existence means that he or she is self-defeated.

If the common sense ontologist accepts (1), then he or she ought to accept that these two terms' referring to the same objects in every situation is not guaranteed.

Let us consider two statements, 'Oscar is a whale' and 'Oscar is a mammal'. Because every situation which is described by the statement 'Oscar is a whale' can be described by the statement 'Oscar is a mammal', given that being a mammal is associated with term whale, but not vice versa, we can say that there is a bare analytic conditional running from the statement 'Oscar is a whale' to the statement 'Oscar is a mammal'. In the same manner, let us consider two other statements, 'x is a table' and 'x is an artefact'. Because every situation which is described by the statement 'x is a table' can be described by the statement 'x is an artefact', we can say that there is a bare analytic conditional running from the statement 'x is a table' to 'x is an artefact'. I think that at least in these two cases, whether there are bare analytic conditionals or analytic biconditionals involved, and if it is the former, which direction it runs from can be solved easily by analytically evaluating 'x the whale is a mammal' or 'Every whale is a mammal', and 'x the table is an artefact' or 'Every table is an artefact'. Furthermore, we can evaluate bare analytic conditions running from the other direction in the same manner, by analytically evaluating 'Every mammal is a whale', and 'Every artefact is a table', and because these statements are false, we can say that bare analytic entailments running from the other direction are false. I think that this is a simple and good way to generalize to find out what kind of analytic entailment is involved between any two statements.

I suspect that while some loss in the content is possibly there, we can have a prima facie method to determine what kind of an analytic entailment is there between two statements in the following way:

1. If ‘Every x is a y, but every y is not an x’ is an analytic truth, then there is a bare analytic conditional running from the statements of xs to the statements of y.

2. If ‘Every y is an x, but every x is not a y’ is an analytic truth, then there is a bare analytic conditional running from the statements of ys to the statements of xs.

3. If ‘Every x is a y, and every y is an x’ is an analytic truth, there is an analytical biconditional between the statements of xs and the statements of ys.

Thomasson’s saying that “It is in part constitutive of the meaning of ‘house’ that all houses are buildings, so that the truth of ‘X bought a house’ is sufficient for the truth of ‘X bought a building’” (2007, p. 28) shows that she thinks that at least some analytic entailments can be written in the following forms described above.

The reader should note that here, by analytic, I mean the connection between terms and statements involving them as Thomasson’s definition of analytic entailments. Whether this holds for all cases or not, I am not sure. But I think that it holds for relatively easy examples like whales/mammals and tables/artefacts.

Secondly, I think that even if (3) is true, the common sense ontologist would have to present very strong reasons to admit ordinary object terms into our ontologies, given that they already consist of entities corresponding to accepted terms of particle arrangements, like the term particles arranged table-wise. If my argument in the previous section is true, it shows that application conditions have a higher conceptual and/or ontological priority than terms. Furthermore, if two terms are associated with the same application conditions, which is a requirement for there to be an analytic biconditional between statements of these terms, and an entity corresponding to one of these terms is already placed into our ontology, the common sense ontologist has to provide strong reasons for including another entity corresponding to the other term into our ontology as well. Simply, introducing

entities whose terms are associated with the same (conjunction of) application conditions does not yield a better ontology.

Lastly, I think that if analytic entailments are to work, (2) is the likely candidate. If both (1) and (3) do not work, then this is sufficient to conclude this, but I would like to discuss two more cases for its truth. One is that tables cannot exist without particles composing them. In this section's terms, that is to say that in every situation where there are tables, there are particles composing them, so the truth of the former statement guarantees the latter statement, perhaps not on the grounds of analyticity, but on the grounds of metaphysics. An eliminativist/serious ontologist can assume this position by rejecting that analyticity is a good guide to existence. In such cases, the only way for there to be tables in the absence of particles forming them is that tables are simple objects, of which I think we can simply disregard without further argumentation. The second is that as long as we associate the term table with the application condition, 'the composite object which is such and such', the analyticity between these two terms are much less demanding.

But if analytic biconditionals do not work between such terms, do they ever work and if so, when, one might ask. I think that one group of cases where analytic biconditionals work is the different terms which refer to coexistent objects. For instance, let us associate the term l-brain with the following application conditions: It is the organ coordinating its owner's intellectual and nervous activities, and it is located in a living human person's body. Also, let us associate the term l-heart with the following application conditions: It is the organ that pumps blood through the circulatory system, and it is located in a living human person's body. As a working heart and a working brain is necessary for a human person to live, if the term l-brain refers to some object, namely Göksu's brain, and Göksu is a living human person,

then the term l-heart refers to some other object, namely Göksu's heart as well. Furthermore, as long as Göksu is alive, this ensures that both the terms l-brain and l-heart refers to some objects, and every situation which is described by an l-brain statement, can be described by an l-heart statement, and vice versa.

I suspect that one group of cases in which analytic biconditionals between statements of terms work and yield benefits can be generalized in the following lines. Let K, L, and M be terms associated with different conjunctions of application conditions. If there are bare analytic conditionals, one running from the K statement to the L statement and another running from the K statement to the M statement, this means that there is an analytic biconditional between the L statement and the M statement.

This objection might be partially resembling Schaffer's criticism which is discussed in the last chapter, but I would like to point out that while Schaffer is concerned with Thomasson's running her analytic entailments from accepted statements rather than disputed statements, this objection aims to clarify the nature of analytic entailments by separating them into two kinds, bare analytic conditionals, and analytic biconditionals, and then discuss and show that which of these work in the way Thomasson intends them to.

In this section, I have presented an original objection of mine towards Thomasson's conception of analytic entailments. To argue that, firstly I have introduced two new terms, bare analytic conditionals, and analytic biconditionals, and shown that every analytical entailment can be taken either as a bare analytic conditional, running from a statement or the other, or an analytic biconditional. As I think that some misconceptions on Thomasson's analytic entailments and how they work is due to how they are defined is not crystal clear, this distinction helped us to

see which one Thomasson means in her defense of ordinary objects. Later, I have shown that we can evaluate analytical entailments, or rather bare analytic conditionals and analytic conditions by using these statements while describing situations. If the way I have conceived them is right, then in the case of bare analytic conditionals, any situation S which is described by the antecedent of a bare analytic conditional, can be described by its consequent, but not vice versa. On the other hand, in the case of analytic biconditionals, any situation S which is described by the statement on the left side can be described by the statement on the right side, and vice versa.

After describing these two new terms, I have noted that there are three alternatives that an analytic entailment turns out to be: A bare analytic conditional running from 'particles arranged table-wise exist' to 'tables exist', a bare analytic conditional running from 'tables exist' to 'particles arranged table-wise exist', and an analytic biconditional between 'tables exist' and 'particles arranged table-wise exist'. I have argued that the first one is false because some situations which are described by 'particles arranged table-wise exist' cannot be described by 'tables exist'. Furthermore, any party of the debate seemingly does not claim this position, because the eliminativist would argue that more than the existence of particles arranged table-wise is required for there to be tables, and the common sense ontologist would say that both terms are associated with the same application conditions, thus there cannot be any difference in situations described by these two statements. Following this, I have argued that the third one is false as well, but only under certain circumstances. I have shown that if our ontologies consist terms, like particles arranged table-wise, then introducing terms with the same application conditions, like a table, does not further our ontology. Still, this does not mean that one cannot introduce this term to

his or her ontology, or that tables do not exist. Lastly, I have argued that the second one works, because in every situation that is described by a statement 'Tables exist' can be described by a statement 'Particles arranged table-wise exist'. Although I have noted that the failure of the first and the third alternatives are sufficient to conclude the second's truth, I have provided two other reasons as well. Lastly, I have provided a case where analytic biconditionals work.

One final thing that I would like to remark before concluding this section and this chapter that is that as the reader probably has noticed as well, it is quite hard to come up with examples of exact application conditions associated with terms. I would like to think that although this is partially on me, it is mainly due to the fact that it is really hard to specify an actual term's application conditions. But seemingly this is not a hard issue for Thomasson: "Even if we can't properly *state* the application conditions for terms like 'table' and 'chair', it's clear that most dining rooms provide sufficient conditions for these terms to refer according to the speakers' ordinary standards, most art galleries meet conditions that ensure 'painting' and 'sculpture' refer, and so on" (Thomasson, 2008, p. 71). I shall assume that this thesis made my position sufficiently clear, and so I would like to refrain from any comment on this quote.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In Chapter 1, some of the main theories and conceptions of objects, and objections against these were discussed. Korman's Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry titled *Ordinary Objects* and Peter van Inwagen's *When are Objects Parts?* are followed mainly in this chapter. Now the foundation had laid for the further discussion, in Chapter 2, Thomasson's framework on the existence of ordinary objects are introduced in detail, and some negative and positive examples are used to show how it works. As application conditions are the most crucial part of her system, in my opinion, most of the discussion has revolved around them.

In Chapter 3, two objections raised by Jonathan Schaffer and Simon Evnine are presented, discussed, and some problems with them are pointed out. Schaffer questions why analytic entailments run from accepted statements, rather than from disputed statements. I have shown that this is a requirement for any debate between a common sense ontologist and an eliminativist about ordinary objects to be able to take off. If both parties do not accept the antecedent of a conditional, then there is no debate. In the following section, Evnine's position is discussed. Evnine thinks that Thomasson's framework presupposes existence, but by distinguishing two readings of the existential claims, I have shown that this is true only for one them.

In Chapter 4, two original objections of mine are discussed. Firstly, by introducing two new terms, variant terms and variants, I have shown that because even in some cases of failed terms, we can still come up with referring terms, our conceptual and/or ontological commitments and priorities should be on application conditions rather than terms.

This means that given both parties of the debate, namely the eliminativist and the common sense ontologist, accept that particles arranged K-wise exist, the common sense ontologist has to provide strong reasons to admit ordinary objects into his or her ontology. Although I am extremely unsure about that, I think that one resolution both parties could agree on is that keeping ordinary objects as un-termed entities.

Then, I have argued that analytic entailments as defined by Thomasson are not clear enough, as whether they are directional conditionals or biconditionals is made obvious in the cases of the statements of particle arrangements and the statements of ordinary objects. To be able to make this distinction, I have introduced two terms, bare analytic conditionals, and analytic biconditionals. Then I have argued that Thomasson cannot get them to be bare analytic conditionals running from the statements of particle arrangements to the statements of ordinary objects, because her defense of ordinary objects is very dependent on the claim that ordinary objects and particle arrangements have the same application conditions in most cases, if not all. This meant that either these analytic entailments are bare analytic conditionals running from the statements of ordinary objects, which I take to be the case, or are analytic biconditionals, which Thomasson takes to be the case.

Hopefully, this thesis meets its purpose to further the debate on the existence of ordinary objects. I have truly enjoyed writing it.

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