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I Was Right!

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ABSTRACT: In this article author discusses the problem of the future contingents. He wants to show that the same problem holds for a number of related cases like decisions, promises, beginnings, birth dates, moral luck, post-mortal harms, etc. The focus of the article is on the question of when and how statements about the future acquire their truth values. Author argues that truth is a relational property that statements acquire when the events that they talk about occur. For this reason, the meanings of statements like *I was right!* or *I knew!* should not be taken at their face value but rather reinterpreted according to the proposed theory. Also, several other accounts are criticised and rejected: causal determinism, thin red line, eternalism and realism about the future.

KEY WORDS: Cambridge change, determinism, fatalism, future contingents, intrinsic properties, moral luck, open future, realism about the future, relational properties, sea battle.

The puzzle and the solution

In the everyday language there are expressions like "It turned out that I was right!" or "Time has shown that I was right!" or "Further course of events has shown that I was right!", etc. We also use simpler expressions like "I was right!" or "You see! What did I tell you?". Of course, we can be wrong as well.[1] Although these expressions are usual and common, there is a deep

[1] In this context *right* may mean *true*, it may mean *prudentially right*, it may also mean *morally right*. Here I use a pretheoretical notion of truth which is compatible with correspondence as well as minimalist understanding of truth. Relevant sense of prudentially and morally right is here consequentialist: *Right* means *has desired consequences*. Nonconsequentialist sense in which *right* means *rational in the light of the evidence available at the time of decision* is not relevant here.

philosophical problem behind them. We use them in a kind of situation in which at t_1 we make future-related statement or decision, and then later, in t_2, it turns out that we were right.[2] But the question is: *When* were we right? When did our statements or decisions regarding future events become true or right?[3] In principle, there are three options:

1) At t_1 – a moment when they were made.
2) At t_2 – a moment when the corresponding events occur.
3) Atemporally.

In this article I will defend the second option – the view that our statements and decisions are neither right nor wrong at the time we make them and that they become right or wrong later – at the time when the events they are about occur. I will try to show that this view is plausible and that it holds for a number of cases both in philosophy and in the everyday life.

The obvious problem for option 2) is how something that occurs at t_1 can become right or true later, *post hoc*, in t_2. How is something like that possible? Or, if you want to put it that way, how can truthness and rightness travel back in time? Of course, nothing can travel back in time. Backward causation is impossible.[4] So we are facing a dilemma here. On the one hand, it seems that all the properties that an event (statement or decision) has, it must have at the moment when it occurs. On the other hand, it seems that our statements and decisions regarding future events cannot be true or right at the moment we make them but only later when the events they were about happen. For it is not clear how they could be true or right before the events they are about happen. So, in order to show that option 2) is true, we have to show that the following principle is false:

> All the properties that an event has, it must have at the moment when it occurs.

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[2] In order to reconcile the indeterminacy intuition (that statements about the future are neither true nor false) and the determinacy intuition (that statements have to be either true or false), John MacFarlane drew a distinction between a *context of utterance* and a *context of assessment* (MacFarlane 2003). I find this distinction appropriate and important, although I will not enter into the details of his semantic analysis. I am primarily interested in the ontology of the future-related statements and decisions. For the critique of MacFarlane's view see for instance (Brogaard 2008).

[3] Of course, one might argue that future contingents are never true. An *error theorist* might argue that since future contingents are about not-yet-existent things, they are all false. An *expressivist* might argue that future contingents state no facts but rather express our hopes and fears about the future and as such they have no truth value. One might argue that future contingents are *concealed imperatives* and as such have no truth values. On this analysis the real meaning of "Train leaves in 5 minutes." would be "Hurry up!".

[4] Though there are authors who argue that backward causation is possible: Jan Faye in his book *The reality of the future* from 1989.

However, there are a number of cases that convincingly show that this principle is false and that events can acquire their properties later. This is not surprising because we are dealing with *relational* properties here, not with *intrinsic* ones.[5] Being true and being right are relational properties of our statements and decisions.[6] Statements and decisions are not true and right by themselves but only in relation to circumstances that are external to them. And these circumstances sometimes occur *after* we make our statements and decisions. For this reason it is possible that statements and decisions made at t_1 become true and right at t_2.

The abovementioned principle seems to be true for the intrinsic properties of events, like time and place of occurrence, duration, intensity, etc. Whether a statement was made with a certain tone or whether a decision was made with a hesitation are intrinsic properties and they cannot depend on anything that happens later. On the other hand, being true and being right are relational properties and they can depend on things that happen later.[7] Cambridge change is not much of a change, but it matters. Now, let's focus on cases that show that the abovementioned principle is false and that consequently option 2) can be true.

Supporting cases

Promises can be fulfilled or unfulfilled, kept or broken. However, at the moment we make them, they are neither fulfilled nor unfulfilled, they become fulfilled or unfulfilled later, depending on our actions. This is not surprising because promises are essentially temporal. They are kept or not kept over time, not instantaneously. If I promise you today that I will do something for you next week, the promise that I made today will *acquire the property* of being fulfilled or unfulfilled next week.

Investments can be good or bad, depending on whether they have positive or negative rates of return. Decision to invest in the *Bitcoin* was a right thing to do. However, the decision was not right before the rise of the *Bitcoin*, it became right at the time of its rise.

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[5] In this article I use *relational* as opposed to *intrinsic*, although this terminological choice can be seen as problematic. For instance, the property of having longer legs than arms seems to be both intrinsic and relational. However, it is questionable whether this is a good counterexample because a whole has this property only with reference to its parts. Discussion on this problem can be found in Marshall and Weatherson (2018).

[6] Obviously, I assume that statements and decisions are events.

[7] Although I would like to remain neutral in respect to the theory of truth, the idea that truth is a relational property fits naturally with the correspondence theory.

In *Casablanca* character Rick says, "Louis, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship".[8] However, whether an encounter is or is not going to be the beginning of a beautiful friendship depends on the further development. The beginning of a beautiful friendship is a property that an encounter *can only acquire later*, in retrospective.

Birth dates acquire many properties after they occur. Ljudevit was born in 1987 and in 2018 he married Gabriela.[9] So, it is true that Gabriela's husband was born in 1987, although he was not yet Gabriela's husband at the time when he was born. The date of his birth *acquired one more property* in 2018 – it became the birth date of Gabriela's husband. In 2018 Ljudevit's birth date acquired a property that it did not have before.

The father of Croatian literature Marko Marulić was born in 1450. Marulić wrote his masterpiece *Judita*, an epic poem, in 1501. Therefore, in 1501 it became true that the author of *Judita* was born in 1450. It was not true before 1501 because Marulić did not write *Judita* before that. So, the event of Marulić's birth acquired a new property in 1501 – the property that it was the birth of the author of *Judita*. Also, Marulić is regarded as *the father of Croatian literature*. But it was already the beginning of the 20th century when the historians of Croatian literature achieved consensus that Marulić was its father. So, the claim that the father of Croatian literature was born in 1450 became true at the beginning of the 20th century. Probably it became true earlier but certainly not before Croatian literature came into existence. So, one might say that at the beginning of the 20thcentury, after 450 years, Marulić's birth acquired another property – the property of being the birth of the father of Croatian literature.

Whether *an armed incident* is or is not the beginning of a war depends on the future course of events. If it is followed by a concatenated series of battles, it becomes the beginning of a war. If not, it remains an isolated incident.[10]

Here one might be tempted to take an antirealistic stance toward entities like national literature, war, etc. It might seem that there is a constitutive subjective element in deciding whether a series of publications makes a national literature, or whether a series of battles makes a war. Don't these decisions ultimately depend upon our taxonomies? No! Whether a number of battles constitutes a single war depends on causal relations between indi-

[8] Michael Curtiz' 1942 film *Casablanca*, character Rick Blaine interpreted by Humphrey Bogart.

[9] This point was clarified in the discussion with Gabriela Bašić, Ljudevit Hanžek, and Neven Sesardić.

[10] In *Fiction and Metaphysics* Amie Thomasson analyzes the concept of *dependence*. She recognises cases of *future dependence*: Whether slight shaking of the ground is the beginning of an earthquake, and whether an individual is the beginning of a new species depends on the future course of events (Thomasson 1999/2008: 29–30).

vidual battles and other relevant factors like political decisions, etc. Although sometimes it can be hard to decide, it is a perfectly objective matter. The same holds for national literature. So, although beginnings are relational, they are perfectly objective. The relevant point here is that they become beginnings of larger wholes later, when these wholes come into existence. According to this analysis, the property *being the beginning of*, in the case of events that extend in time, is a relational property that "travels back in time". It is a property that an event does not have at the moment when it occurs, it acquires it later.

Moral Luck

In well-known cases of *moral luck* we can see how rightness might "travel back in time".[11] Paul Gauguin left his family in poor conditions and moved to Tahiti to paint. His family suffered and in this respect his decision was wrong. However, his decision was justified by his later success as a painter. His later success made his earlier decision *right*.[12] The decision to abandon his family was not yet right at the time he made it. It became right later, when he succeeded as a painter. His decision from t_1 became right at t_2.[13]

Talking about painters in this context we have to mention Vincent van Gogh who, after his death, became the most expensive painter in the history of mankind. Although he lived in misery, he *is* the most expensive painter in the history of mankind. Was he the most expensive painter during his life but did not know it? No, he acquired this property after his death.

A case of a revolutionary is supposed to be parallel to the Gauguin's case.[14] A revolutionary starts an armed uprising against a cruel dictator. If he succeeds he becomes a hero. If he fails he becomes an irresponsible adventurer. So, his decision to start a revolution will become right or wrong *later*, depending on the outcome of the revolution.[15] Sometimes a further course of events makes our decisions right or wrong.[16]

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[11] Here we are dealing with the so called *resultant luck*, "luck in the way one's actions and projects turn out" (Nagel 1979: 28).

[12] The case of Gauguin was put forward by Bernard Williams in his *Moral Luck* (Williams 1982: 22–26).

[13] Though, in cases of moral luck the relationship between the decision and the right-making outcome is typically *causal*, while the relationship between the statement and the truthmaking event is typically *semantic*.

[14] Case of successful and unsuccessful revolutionaries was discussed by Thomas Nagel in "Moral Luck" in *Mortal Questions* (1979: 30–31).

[15] Of course, things are not so simple. We can have high moral esteem for leaders who fail in their uprisings. Spartacus and Matija Gubec (the leader of the 1573 peasant uprising in Croatia and Slovenia) are regarded as heroes although their uprisings were unsuccessful.

[16] Williams and Nagel were not interested in the temporal aspect of the situation. They were interested in the fact that moral properties of an action can depend on the factors that are beyond the control of the one who acts.

Happiness, Good Life, and Death

King Priam of Troy lived very happily most of his life. However, at the end of his life, horrible things happened to him. He, his family, and his citizens, were killed and his town was destroyed. For this reason Solon said that we cannot say whether somebody had a happy life when one is still alive.[17] We have to wait until the very end of one's life to make a right judgment. The idea is that things that happen later in our life can affect our life as a whole. There is a sense in which our present happiness depends on future events. Moreover, there is a sense in which our present happiness can depend on events that will happen after our death.[18] Even if Priam had died 6 months earlier, there is still a sense in which the destruction of Troy would have been something horrible *for him*. But how can *post-mortem* events affect us *ante-mortem*? How can they "travel back in time"? There is a plausible answer. King Priam had his preferences – things that he cared about. Once his preferences were formed, they can be *satisfied* or *unsatisfied* years or decades later, even after his death. In fact, King Priam was better off after Heinrich Schliemann rediscovered Troy and thereby brought back some of its glory. Of course, the relationship cannot be causal because backward causation is not possible. King Priam cannot be affected because he does not exist anymore (if he ever did). But preferences he had when he was alive can acquire a relational property of being satisfied or of not being satisfied years after his death. And in this sense things that happen after his death can be good or bad *for him*.

Objections

Truth is atemporal 1: Conceptual analysis

Common objection to the proposed view is that truth is by its nature something atemporal. The objection might run as follows: Truth is not something that can change over time. Either something is true or it is not. It cannot become true, cease to be true, etc. Truth is something that is immune to changes in space and time. If a proposition is true in Europe, it cannot be false in Asia. If a proposition is true today, it cannot be false tomorrow. It is irrelevant who, when and where utters a proposition. If something is true, it is true always, everywhere and for everybody.[19] Also, primary bearers of

[17] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I, Chapters 10 and 11.

[18] Thomas Nagel raised this question in "Death" in *Mortal Questions* (1979: 4). In the contemporary discussion about death there is a number of answers to the question of *when* is post-mortal event bad for us (Luper 2014).

[19] This view was defended by Richard Taylor, a champion of fatalism, in his *Metaphysics* (1963/1974: 68).

truth are propositions and propositions are abstract entities outside time and space.[20] For these reasons, the objection runs, we have to reject the idea that propositions about future contingents *became* true when corresponding events happen. If true at all, they are true already at t_1. If they are not true, they cannot become true at any later time.

This objection may have some rhetorical force, but it is not clear why anybody should take it seriously. Some truths obviously are atemporal. It is certainly inappropriate to ask *When 2+2=4?* or *Where* $a^2+b^2=c^2$*?*. But some truths obviously are temporal (in a sense that there is a specific time when they come into existence). The assassination of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo took place on 28 June 1914. It is hard to see how this proposition could have been true before 28 June 1914.[21] Talk about the eternal character of truth seems completely illegitimate in this case. Though, something close to it really is the case. *Once* the assassination took place on 28 June 1914, it will *forever remain true* that it took place on 28 June 1914. And this is the sense in which propositions cannot alter their truth value. But this certainly does not mean that it was true *before* 28 June 1914.

The view that propositions are abstract entities out of space and time is very problematic and it probably causes much more problems than it solves. No matter what views on the nature of propositions one has, in this article I discuss *statements*, concrete tokens uttered in space and time, like this evening's weather forecast read on the Croatian national TV 7.30 news.

Truth is atemporal 2: The law of excluded middle

The idea that propositions about the future have yet no truth value is at odds with the law of excluded middle.[22] This law states that for every proposition holds that it is either true or its negation is true (p V non-p). The problem arises because it seems that the law holds for the propositions about the future as well. It is *already* true that either it will rain tomorrow or it will not rain tomorrow. Since the only way that a disjunction can be true is that one disjunct is true, it must be the case that one disjunct is already true. We do

[20] Several colleagues mentioned this objection but none of them took it as a serious problem. Among others: Neven Sesardić, Majda Trobok, Dušan Dožudić, Tomislav Čop.

[21] One might object that here I assume the A-theory of time. However, I think I do not. A proponent of B-theory of time must have a way of saying that Ferdinand was not killed on June 27, 1914 but June 28, 1914. It is one thing to say that Ferdinand is killed on June 27, 1914, and another thing to say that on June 27, 1914 it is true that he is killed June 28, 1914. B-theorist has to deny the first claim, typically he argues in favour of the second.

[22] The problem was discussed by Aristotle in *De Interpretatione*, Book IX, § 28–40. This is where he discusses the famous sea battle argument.

not know which one is true, but we know that one must already be true. Therefore, the objection runs, our statements and decisions regarding future events, if true and right at all, already are true and right.

It would be hard to deny that it is true that either it will rain tomorrow or it will not. However, the question is, what makes this proposition true, tomorrow's rain or its logical form? Obviously, what makes it true is its logical form (*p* V non-*p*), not tomorrow's rain. This is a proposition of logic, not a proposition of meteorology. So, it is not true that the only way in which a disjunction of this form can be true is that one of its disjuncts has to be true. It can be true when no disjunct is true. Moreover, it has to be true, due its logical form. The proposition is a tautology and, as such, it has no factual content, it says nothing about the weather. Imagine that a meteorologist announces that tomorrow it will either rain or it will not (*p* V non-*p*). Or that if tomorrow it will rain, then it will rain ($p \rightarrow p$). That would not be informative, not about the weather, and not about the future. Such propositions, although grammatically formulated in the future tense, are not about the future at all. Therefore, instances of the law of excluded middle do not show that statements about the future contingents have their truth value already at the moment we make them.

Truth is atemporal 3: Contemporary science

A number of people believe that contemporary science shows that the future is equally real as the past and the present.[23] If this is so, then our statements and decisions regarding future events *already are* true or right at the time when we make them.

This view is very counterintuitive and hard to believe. But we will not discuss its truth here. We would rather concentrate on its consequences for the initial puzzle. If the view was true, then our statements and decisions about the future would in a sense have their truthmakers and rightmakers at the moment we make them. However, the question is whether this sense would be the sense relevant for the discussion. According to the view, what makes our statements and decisions about the future true and right are very general characteristics of the universe described by Einstein's special theory of relativity. However, when we make our statements and decisions regarding the future we normally do not have in mind the theories of advanced physics. When a car mechanic claims that an engine will run another 100.000 km, he does not have in mind anything related to the Einstein's theory. And this

[23] The idea that Einstein's special theory of relativity shows that future is determined and real was put forward by C. W. Rietdijk and Hillary Putnam (Rietdijk 1966; Putnam 1967). Eternalists and fourdimensionalists typically accept this idea.

is a peculiar consequence of the proposed view – that we have in mind *one thing* and that *another thing* makes us right. In the case of *knowledge* these two things should coincide. If they do not, we do not have knowledge. And this means that all our true predictions and right decisions were just *lucky guesses*. Nimitz and Yamamoto were trying to predict the outcomes of sea battles, but it was not the Einstein's theory that made their predictions true or false. This comment may sound unphilosophical, but it is not too much to ask that the *actual truthmaker* has to be a part of what one has in mind when one makes a prediction. Imagine that future science, on some completely unexpected ground, shows that God really exist. Would that mean that religious people had *known* that God existed? No! It would mean that their belief was just a *lucky guess*. And when we triumphally exclaim "You see, what did I tell you?!", we do not want to say that we were right just by a lucky guess. We want to say that we had grounds for our claim and that these grounds were relevant for the predicted event.

True and *right* as intrinsic properties

One might object that the rightness of the right decision and the truthness of the true statement are too important to be relational properties, so they must be intrinsic properties of our decisions and statements. They are too important to be acquired later, so they must be intrinsic to decisions and statements from the very moment we make them.[24] After all, we make predictions intending for them to be true and we make decisions intending for them to be right. The idea is that the relationship between a statement and its truth cannot be a relation, but it has to be something much closer. For instance, one might claim that truth is somehow *constitutive of* or *inherent to* the statement and that therefore it cannot be its relational property. In a sense this is true, but not in the sense that is relevant here. There really is something self-refuting in "Now I am going to tell you something false". If I say that *p*, then *ipso facto* I say that *p* is true. However, what is built into the statement is that *it purports to be true*, not that *it is true*. Whether things really are as the statement says they are is not built into the statement. Otherwise false statements would be impossible and we know that they are possible. Therefore, truthness of a statement is its external or relational property. The same holds for the rightness of decisions. Although an investment conceptually cannot

[24] In *Dilemmas* Gilbert Ryle talks about this option: "As sugar is sweet and white from the moment it comes into existence to the moment when it goes out of existence, so we are tempted to infer, by parity of reasoning, that the trueness or correctness of predictions and guesses must be features or properties which belong all the time to their possessors, whether we can detect their presence in them or not" (1954/2015: 17).

be an investment without an intention to make profit, it is a contingent and relational matter whether an investment has positive return or not. Therefore, although rightness and truthness are *for us* the most important properties of decisions and statements, they are nevertheless relational properties and there is nothing strange about it.[25] If one wants, one might say that they are pragmatically essential because they are our primary interest, but ontologically they are relational.

Was true, was right, and *knew*

Since expressions like "I *was* right!" or "I *knew* that was going to happen!" are part of our common linguistic practice, a satisfactory philosophical theory of truth should account for that fact. The claim is that a satisfactory theory has to explain how it is possible that some statements are true and some decisions are right before the corresponding events happen. However, this objection does not have much weight. A philosophical theory can be *conservative* and preserve all or most of the features of our common linguistic practice. But it can also be *revisionary* and reject some parts of our common linguistic practice as ill-founded or just false. On the account defended in this article, expressions like "I *was* right!" or "I *knew* it!", if taken literally, are just false. We cannot know things before they happen, and our decisions cannot be right before the corresponding events occur. Common linguistic practice is just sloppy and imprecise here. In the case of future contingents, instead of *true*, we might use semantically close expressions like *accurate*, *correct*, etc. After all, do you say that a weather forecast was *true*? Since knowledge entails truth, the same holds for expressions like "I knew it!".

In spite of semantic imprecisions, there obviously is something good and praiseworthy in cases in which we say that we were right or that we knew what was going to happen. "I was right!" may mean that my decision was rational in the light of the evidence available at the time when I made it. "I knew it!" may mean that my prediction was a result of 20-years' experience. After all, "I knew it!" may mean that I am the one who knows, that you should listen to me and follow me.

Knowledge of the future

To a certain extent we are good at predicting the future: meteorologists predict the weather, coaches predict outcomes of football games, businessmen predict returns of investments, etc. If we know the relevant factors in the present,

[25] Running faster than others is a runner's primary goal although it is a paradigmatic case of relational property.

we may correctly predict the future course of events. Perhaps such justified and accurate predictions deserve the label of *knowledge*. If a meteorologist knows that the Genoa cyclone causes a storm over the North Adriatic within a day, and if he knows that the Genoa cyclone has just started, he knows that within a day there will be a storm over the North Adriatic. This inference has a structure of *modus ponens*: If one knows that p and if one knows that $p \acute{o} q$, then one knows that q. So, we might be tempted to say that a simple logical inference like *modus ponens* enables us to have knowledge about the future. However, we have to have in mind that implication here is not logical but rather causal and temporal. Perhaps one might try to define knowledge about the future along the lines of the causal theory of knowledge:

> A knows that p at t_1 iff A's belief that p is at t_1 caused by the factors that will bring about p at t_2.

The idea is that the knowledge of the relevant factors in the present might be sufficient for the knowledge of the future. But this brings us back to the beginning. The question is, how can we know something that is not yet the case? Knowledge implies truth, and if something is not yet true, we cannot know it. Justified predictions can become knowledge only *post factum*, when the predicted events occur. The same holds for semantically close expressions like *correct* or *accurate*. Predictions become correct or accurate only after the predicted events occur.

Epistemic construal

One natural and simple reaction to the initial puzzle is that our statements and decisions *are right* at the moment t_1 we make them, but we *do not know* that until the corresponding event E occurs at t_2. According to this understanding, "It turned out that I was right!" has an *epistemic meaning*. The idea is that although I was right already at t_1, that was not known until t_2. However, the epistemic construal is untenable. The problem is not that before t_2 we did not know whether p was true, the problem is that p was not true before t_2. There was simply nothing to know before the corresponding event occurred. Statements cannot be true before their truthmakers happen. A good investment cannot be good before the money is in the account.

Under the assumption of an *open future* epistemic construal hardly makes much sense. However, it looks much better under the assumption of a *fixed future*. If the corresponding future events are already fixed, then our statements and decisions already have their truthmakers and rightmakers. Under this assumption it makes sense to claim that statements about future contingents already have their truth values although we do not know them yet. However, the assumption of a fixed future is highly implausible. The picture

is that future events are stored in a large stock and they wait for their turn to happen. Only if we accept this picture, we can accept the epistemic construal. And this seems to be too high a price to pay for vindicating suspicious linguistic practice of using expressions like "I was right!", "I knew it!", etc.

Determinism, fatalism, and realism about the future

One might wonder whether the idea of a fixed future might be worked out at a lower cost. Perhaps we do not need a full-fledged *realism about the future* and positions like eternalism or fatalism. Perhaps something weaker and more plausible would suffice. Maybe causal determinism would do? Causal determinism is the view that future events *can be predicted*, not the view that *they are real* and that they in a sense already exist.[26] Causal determinism does not entail realism about the future. Assume that at t_1 an astronomer makes a 100% accurate prediction that next year at t_2 celestial body *B* will be at the coordinates *C*. Even under the assumption of universal causal determinism, his prediction cannot be true before t_2, that is, before the body reaches the coordinates. Even in a completely deterministic universe, a 100% accurate prediction cannot be true before the predicted event occurs. And what is needed for the epistemic construal is that prediction *is true* although we do not know it. This is why causal determinism is not strong enough for the epistemic construal of future contingents. Only positions that embrace realism about the future, like eternalism or fatalism, are strong enough. A number of authors assume that if universal determinism were true, the problem of future contingents would not arise at all because all the future events would be settled in advance. However, they are wrong. It is not sufficient that future events are *settled* by present factors, they have to *happen*. For this reason, even if universal determinism were true, there would still be a legitimate philosophical puzzle about the future contingents.[27]

One of the frequently asked questions in philosophy is what is the difference between determinism and fatalism, if there is any.[28] Here we are in a

[26] Of course, predictability is an epistemic category, while determinateness is a metaphysical category. Here predicatability is meant as a reliable indicator of determinateness: A system is predictable only if it is deterministic.

[27] For instance, Michael Perloff and Nuel Belnap, discussing future contingents and the sea battle, say: "On our view, if determinism were everywhere and always true, the difficulty with which we are concerned would simply disappear" (2011: 582). Or, Alex Malpass says: "[F]uture contingents – future-tensed statements about events that are not themselves predetermined" (2016: 55). However, they are wrong.

[28] Richard Taylor, for instance, claims that a consistent determinist should be a fatalist (1963/1974: 59). But, as we saw, a determinist is not a fatalist.

position to give the answer: It is the *realism about the future*![29] Fatalism presupposes realism about the future while determinism does not. A motive for determinism is the idea that we can *calculate* the future. On the other hand, a motive for fatalism is the idea that we can *see* the future. Nostradamus did not calculate the future on the grounds of available evidence. He allegedly *saw* the events from the future. And in order to see them, they have to exist. In a sense, they have to be real before they happen, and this is a very strange claim.

Thin red line

Perhaps there is a way to combine the idea of an open future with the idea that our statements and decisions about the future are true or right already at the moment in which we make them. A candidate is the idea that there is *a thin red line* that runs through the events that will happen. Although different futures are possible, only one will be actual. And there is a *thin red line* that links all the actual events, past, present, as well as the future ones.[30] The idea of a thin red line is a sort of a middle way between the fixed future and the open future. On the one hand, the future is open because there are different possible futures. On the other hand, the future is fixed because only events with a thin red line will happen. It is *prima facie* obvious how this idea fits the bill: A thin red line is the thing that makes our present statements and decisions about the future true or right already at the time when we make them. There is no realism about the future here, but there are truthmakers and righmakers for statements and decisions about the future – the ones with a thin red line in their fabric. A thin red line extends from our statements and decisions at t_1 to corresponding events at t_2. And this is how it makes true or right the statements and decisions that we make at t_1.[31]

Obviously, the question is whether this position is consistent. The future is either fixed or open. It cannot be both. A proponent of the thin red line approach wants to have a pie and eat it. If the future is open, future contingents cannot already be true. If the future is fixed, there cannot be different possible futures. For this reason, we should reject the approach as inconsistent.

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[29] Josh Parsons defines the thesis: "Realism about the future is the doctrine that future things exist, and are not constitutively dependent on wholly present things" (2005: 162). As a possible example he mentions the Australian Republic.

[30] The view was analysed by Arthur Prior in his *Past, Present, and Future*, Chapter VII (1967) and also by Nuel Belnap and Mitchell Green (1994). Their view is also published as Chapter 6 of *Facing the Future* (Belnap, Perloff and Xu 2001).

[31] Of course, if there is such a thing like thin red line, then it extends from the beginning of time to its end.

Moreover, even if the idea of a thin red line might be somehow worked out, it is not strong enough to make future contingents true. As we saw, causal determinism is not strong enough to entail the truth of future contingents, what is needed is realism about the future. Since the idea of a red thin line is usually worked out within the framework of causal determinism, it cannot provide a sufficiently strong ground for the view that statements about the future contingents already have their truth value.

A-language and B-language

The whole puzzle is formulated in the language of the A-series of time: *not yet*, *still*, *not any more*, *was*, *will be*, etc. However, the objection runs, if we describe the situation in the language of the B-series of time, there will be no puzzle at all.[32] The idea is that without reference to the *present*, no puzzle would appear. However, this is not true. The whole puzzle can be described in the B-language alone, without any reference to the present. Here it runs: One makes statement S at t_1. S states that E happens at t_2. E really happens at t_2 and S is true. The question is when is S true, at t_1, at t_2, or atemporally.[33] The whole puzzle is here, without any reference to the A-series of time. Though, puzzle might sound stronger and more dramatic if described with the A-vocabulary, but the language of the A-series of time is not essential to it. After all, B-series of time contains relations *before* and *after*, and that is sufficient to formulate the puzzle.

Tensing the truthmakers

One possible reaction to the puzzle of how truthness and rightness can "travel back in time" is to try to tense the truthmakers.[34] Assume that p is asserted at t_1, that E is the truthmaker of p, and that E occurs at t_2. The idea is that p is true at t_1, not because E already *is* the case at t_1, but rather because *it will be* the case at t_2. *Prima facie* this option might sound plausible. Today's weather forecast that it will rain tomorrow is true today because *it will* rain tomorrow. So, although at t_1 it is not yet the case that E (because E by assumption occurs

[32] Dušan Dožudić raised this objection.

[33] One might object that under the assumption of the B-theory of time all truths are atemporal, and that it is inappropriate to ask *when* certain sentence become true. However, as I argued in the footnote 21 (discussing the assassination of Franz Ferdinand) B-theorist must have means for saying that sentence "F.F. is assassinated" is false on June 27, 1914 and true on June 28, 1914. So, even under the assumption of the B-theory of time, there must be a sense in which it is appropriate to ask *when* certain sentence bacame true.

[34] In a discussion David Pitt defended this view. Marian David helped formulating the view, though he did not find it promissing.

at t_2), at t_1 it already is the case that at t_2 it will be the case that *E*. The idea is that there are *tensed truthmakers* and that future truthmakers work equally well as the present ones. On this view, things that *will* happen can make our present statements true or false just as things that *do* happen. A truthmaker tenser has to ground a present truth in a future truth. In order to do that, he has to accept the principle:

> If it is at t_1 true that at t_2 it will be true that p, then p is true at t_1.

The idea is that something is already true because it will be true in the future. Of course, the question is how can something already be true when the assumption is that it *will* be true. For, if something *will be* the case, it means that it is *not yet* the case.

So, an immediate response to this view is simply to repeat the intuition that only real events can be truthmakers. Since future events are not yet real, they cannot serve as truthmakers. They can be truthmakers only when they happen, not before that. Of course, the question is who begs the question here, but the intuition that only real events can be truthmakers is widespread and well entrenched. So it seems that the burden of proof is on the one who wants to tense the truthmakers. In this place a truthmaker tenser might claim that we should not be biased toward the present, and that future events are equally real as the present ones. But this claim is *realism about the future*. Therefore, it seems that one can tense the truthmakers only at the cost of accepting realism about the future. So to say, it is true today that I will eat shrimp tomorrow only if there is a sense in which I already am eating shrimp tomorrow. The ungrammaticality of this formulation at least *prima facie* counts against the view that it expresses. If this analysis is correct, it shows that tensing truthmakers cannot be a position on its own, but necessarily has to collapse into eternalism or some similar position.[35]

Conclusions

1) The puzzle of future contingents is not limited only to truth values of statements about future contingent events. It is a widespread phenomenon. It includes decisions, promises, investments, births, beginnings

[35] In *Truth and Truthmakers* D. M. Armstrong defends the *Omnitemporal view* that "provides straightforward truthmakers for all truths about the past and the future. The past exists. The future exists. They are 'there' (they exist, they are real) to be truthmakers" (2004: 145–146). However, the question is whether an eternalist can take tenses seriously. For a tenser, future should be something that *will be* the case and is *not yet* the case, while for an eternalist future in a sense *already is* the case. Since an eternalist has to reject the idea of irreducible tenses, the question is whether he can tense the truthmakers in any interesting sense. It seems that one can tense the truthmakers only if one does not take tenses seriously.

(wars, friendships, epochs, etc.), consequentialist justification of our actions, assessments of good life, post-mortal harms, etc.

2) *Being right* and *being true* are relational properties. They are not intrinsic properties of our decisions and statements.
3) Things and events can acquire their relational properties later. This is the sense in which properties can "travel back in time". Things and events must have their intrinsic properties at the time of their occurrence, but they can acquire their relational properties later.
4) Causal determinism is not strong enough to provide truth for future contingents. Consequently, the idea of a thin red line is not strong enough to make future contingents true. The idea of tensed truthmakers is also not strong enough for this purpose. Only realism about the future can make future contingents true before corresponding events happen, but this view seems very implausible.
5) In the contexts where our decisions and statements are about future events, expressions like *was right*, *was true*, and *knew* cannot be taken at face value. Although they can be good enough for the everyday communication, strictly speaking, they have to be reinterpreted according to the proposed analysis.[36]

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