Safeer Ahmed
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Trog Argument's Flaw

§1 At its core, The Special Composition Question asks about how composite objects come to be. In "This Is Metaphysics: An Introduction", Kris McDaniel brings up two possible answers to said question. The two answers he mentions are compositional nihilism and compositional universalism. Yet, McDaniel claims both the answers are "radical answers." This is likely because the answers have approaches that vastly redefine our common intuition of how composition works. Nevertheless, it is still important to analyze these answers even if they seem radical to some. This is because they can simplify some compositional arguments eloquently when accepted. However, the goal of this paper is to focus solely on compositional universalism. More specifically, I will object to an argument that relies heavily on accepting compositional universalism. Firstly, section two will further overview compositional universalism. Next, I will explain an argument that argues for the existence of composite objects called trogs. Then, section three will emphasize my criticism against a flawed premise within the trog argument in great detail. Finally, section four will provide a summary of the entire paper.

§2 Essentially, agreeing with compositional universalism means accepting the stance that whenever two or more objects exist, there is a composition formed by those objects. This means that each individual object is a part of the composed object. The argument for trogs is the argument that I will criticize in this paper since it relies heavily on accepting this stance of compositional universalism. The premises for the argument are as follows: [I] Scattered objects like families, the Solar System, and the Milky Way exist; [II] There is no relevant difference between scattered objects and trogs (an object that is composed of dogs and trees); [III] If there is no relevant difference between scattered objects and trogs, then if scattered objects exist, then trogs exist as well; [IV] If these scattered objects exist, trogs exist; for the conclusion: [V] Trogs exist. Before continuing, I should reiterate that the argument entails that scattered objects compose a whole if and only if they exist, meaning we cannot assume that this composition occurs for nonexistent objects. Hence, an arbitrary trog with nonexistent dog and/or tree parts does not apply here and is irrelevant to this argument and paper. To prevent any additional confusion, I will restrict and assume that scattered objects only have parts that exist at the same time.

Basically, the argument for trogs by proponents of compositional universalism claim that since any two objects can form composition and that trogs are no different from scattered objects like the Milky Way (which I believe exists, and it exists under compositional universalism), trogs exist. Also note that for this paper, I recognize McDaniel's explanation of "quantifier domain restriction" on page 104. It describes that a certain domain exists when informally speaking about objects existing universally – i.e., "all" in certain statements does not explicitly refer to all the objects in reality. However, for clarity and the sake of this paper, assume that this argument poses that trogs exist regardless of the domain, so we are speaking about any dog and any tree forming a composite trog if all parts (dog and tree) exist. Also, for the sake of brevity, from this point forward I will call any commonly scattered objects similar to the Milky Way, Solar System, and families as *intuitively scattered objects*.

§3 I consider that the overall conclusion '[5]: Trogs exist', is not convincing enough in this argument based on the problematic premise '[II]: There is no relevant difference between scattered objects (like the Milky Way [1]) and trogs.' The reason why I believe that premise [II] is the most problematic premise is that it is the most vulnerable premise. This is apparent since one might be inclined to believe based on their intuition that there can be stark differences between certain *intuitively scattered objects* when compared to something like a trog. For instance, we can consider some differences between the Milky Way and any particular trog. Immediately I think of physical size. The Milky Way as a whole is clearly much larger than any trog that has one tree and one dog part. But the same can be said between the Milky Way and a family of humans. This is not a difference that can successfully undermine premise [II]. Thus, there needs to be a way to determine whether a difference is relevant enough or not between every *intuitively scattered object* and trogs. Physical size is clearly not a relevant difference because it occurs between the composed objects we previously classified as *intuitively scattered objects* and trogs.

The notion of 'relevant difference' itself is quite vague because relevancy can change depending on the context; therefore, I must consider a way to define a difference as relevant that is clear in any context. Let us consider that a relevant difference is a difference between two objects that is fundamental to the objects' physical existence or agreed-upon definition. Fundamental in the sense that negating the specific aspect considered different between each object would change both objects to the point where they are physically impossible or defy their original definition. We can test for this type of relevancy using a method where we test if negating the difference would lead to contradictions occurring from the resulting object. This method will yield a stronger counterargument to premise [II] because the method of determining relevance is picky and only accepts drastic differences – as seen with the examples below.

An example is necessary to explain this method of determining relevant differences. Let us assume we have a proton and an electron isolated. If I claim that a relevant difference between the particles is their charge, I would be correct when using the method described. This is because if we negate 'the specific aspect considered different' (each particle's charge), it will result in two objects that are impossible. Protons can never have a negative charge and electrons can never have a positive charge in our physical universe, so the resulting objects will not be possible. Basically, the difference chosen is significant to how the object fundamentally physically exists.

This method of testing relevant differences can determine an irrelevant difference as well. Consider an apple and an orange with their basic respective fruit definitions (color, texture, etc.). If I claim that a relevant difference between the fruits is their respective tastes, I would be incorrect when using the method described. This is because if we negate the original tastes of the apple and orange, it will not create a physically impossible object or defy the fruit definitions. The texture might be a more relevant difference, though, an actual relevant difference between fruits is not important for this paper.

Overall, a flaw with this method is that objects can have definitions that vary in clarity and/or have varying restrictions, and it relies too much on ever-changing physics rules.

Nevertheless, although this method is not perfect, it ensures that whatever difference is identified is a highly relevant difference between the objects. So, two identical blankets with different colors, for instance, are not relevantly different based on their color. This test makes it seem as if both blankets have no relevant difference at all, but one might argue for some relevant difference to exist. Therefore, let us call relevant differences found through this method to be called super relevant differences. This is because the method ensures that a difference being recognized can only be relevant if it affects the physical possibility or core definition of said objects. Recall that a difference of this nature needs to be distinct between any *intuitively scattered objects* and any trog, in order to object to premise [II]. Then, when an opponent finds such super relevant difference following the aforementioned method, the opponent can strongly refute the notion of "no relevant difference" as their objection to premise [II].

A relevant difference that I will specify uses a term that I will call 'purposeful part correlation'. This is my definition of purposeful part correlation: A scattered object has purposeful part correlation if and only if the scattered object as a whole has functions that affect all of its individual parts. These functions must be distinct from simply existing or ceasing to exist. To illustrate this, I will construct an extreme example. For this example, imagine two scattered objects where both consist of drones composing scattered air forces. Air force A has near-infinite fuel, while Air force B has no fuel at all. Because of the difference in fuel, Air force A clearly has purposeful part correlation because they can do practice missions that affect every drone – directly or indirectly. The drones directly in the mission are affected by having wear and tear done to them. Because of this, the drones that did not fly indirectly have their resale value increased since they did not fly. All parts of Air force A were affected by the action done by the whole Air force A. On the contrary, Air force B does not have purposeful part correlation. This is due to Air force B having no possible functions to commit that impact all their drones since they have no fuel to do those actions. This example assumes that both air forces are completely isolated from each other, so their actions do not impact parts of the other air forces. This is essentially how purposeful part correlation works as I defined it.

Essentially, the difference in purposeful part correlation between *intuitively scattered objects* and trogs is the relevant difference to be discussed moving forward. But before continuing, we need to check if this difference is relevant using the aforementioned method above. Let us consider an *intuitively scattered object* like any family and any trog where they both have their purposeful part correlations negated. Negating purposeful part correlation from the family basically means that every individual within the family can never be affected by the object acting as a whole. This would mean that if a family drove somewhere in a car, the individuals cannot be affected. This sounds like a contradiction! How can a family move in a car where each individual is not affected and does not move? The answer would need to redefine our understanding of physics and/or logic. So, the *intuitively scattered* family passes the test method for relevance since the contradiction yields a physical impossibility. Furthermore, trogs have no apparent function that affects each dog or tree part – this will be further elaborated on next. However, negating purposeful part correlation would cause trogs to have purposeful part correlation. By definition, trogs can exist regardless of their position in space relative to each other. If we had a trog where the dog and tree are separated by an entire galaxy on planets with the same features as Earth, there is no way in the physical universe for them to be affected by the object they compose doing something. It logically makes no sense that trogs can affect their parts

across the entire galaxy because their parts are independent of each other. So, trogs also pass the test method for relevance. Additionally, all scattered objects that were categorized as *intuitively scattered objects* have purposeful part connections, so there is no difference between them in this regard. This alleviates the issue of differences like physical size touched on earlier. Thus, we have established the notion that *intuitively scattered objects* and trogs have the relevant difference of either having purposeful part correlation or not.

But just because purposeful part correlation is a super relative difference does not lead to a conclusive objection, I need to actually justify that trogs have no purposeful part correlation. At the same time, I will establish that *intuitively scattered objects* have purposeful part correlation and mention part relations. Earlier, I referred to a trog that exists with a dog part and tree part on Earth-like planets with a distance of a galaxy separating them. This is just one specific trog that can exist. The issue is that a trog can be any dog and tree parts composed. One in my backyard, the other side of Earth, or the galaxy. There is no concrete definition of a trog unlike the Milky Way or the Solar System. Those scattered objects are easily defined as the composition of every object that orbits a center point of gravity. Defining families is slightly tricky, like trogs, because parts can be separated infinite distances yet still act as composition under compositional universalism. Though families can be understood as individuals having some relation to one another, trogs do not need any relation between their parts – this is what is meant by part relations. A dog and a tree will act independently with respect to one another always. This ties together with purposeful part correlation because the whole's overall functions that affect its parts rely on the relationship between its parts. An army has soldiers related by fighting for some cause, families have members related by their ancestry or marital agreements, solar systems have planets related by their central star, a pair of socks has sock parts that are related by their shape but flipped, and the list goes on for relations of *intuitively scattered objects*. Consequently, the list goes on past *intuitively scattered objects* and certain problematic scattered objects occur. One case is the scattered object that consists of me and an electron that flew off me. It is problematic because this object also has related parts, but it is not similar to *intuitively scattered objects*. The relation is that both parts were once me. This is why I argued that purposeful part correlation is the super relative difference, rather than part relations in scattered objects. Purposeful part correlation adds a layer of necessary functions that affect every part. The scattered object between me and my lost electron is not purposefully part correlated since there is no function that the whole object can do that affects every part – electrons can never change. Because I have stated that trogs have parts that are not related in any way, unlike *intuitively scattered objects*, they cannot have purposeful part correlation. If there is no part relation, how can the parts be solely affected by a single function the whole enacts? Contrarily, the Milky Way can spin and affect all its parts because they are related by gravity. Families can do things like drive together, picnic, etc. which affects everyone in the family – even those that do not show up will have a weaker bond resulting. Overall, part relation is the core to differentiating *intuitively scattered objects* from trogs; however, purposeful part correlation ensures that absurd scattered objects like trogs are differentiated from the intuitive ones.

There is a slight catch to this that someone can criticize me on. What if one finds a tree and a dog that are related in some manner, and there is a function the resulting trog can do that affects both parts? Or what if another object similarly composed like trogs also has the same features? I would be forced to argue using some form of rationalist line. The "Stanford

Encyclopedia of Philosophy" states that some sort of rational insight is needed to "apprehend relevant facts about which objects compose something." If my prior relevant facts regarding purposeful part correlation fail to explain why a critique's trog has no relevant differences, then I can respond by claiming that his finding is an absurd outlier. I can say that I believe rationally if we can pick a random trog and a random family, for instance, then it will be the case that the random trog is super relevantly different than the random family due to purposeful part correlation. Rationally speaking, most trogs are likely to have the same differences; therefore, we can reject an edge case due to the extremely uncommon instance of it. Additionally, I might even reclassify that edge case as being something outright different than a trog, to begin with, because the types of trogs can vastly differ under its vague definition.

§4 After first providing an overview of the argument for trogs, this paper then successfully gave ample criticism of one of its premises with a defense against a possible countercriticism. A strict method of determining super relevant differences was outlined to assist in reasoning. In doing so, I have given justification for the weakness of the claim that trogs exist using the concept of purposeful part correlation. Hence, the answer to the Special Composition Question of compositional universalism cannot strongly bring forth arguments of similar structure to the argument for trogs when considering how to tackle the said question. Note that I have not outright rejected compositional universalism altogether; instead, I reject the claim that there is no relevant difference between objects like trogs and more purposefully composed scattered objects.