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## Book of Abstracts

Philosophy of Language (1): Semantics of Fictional Discourse

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## Plenary lectures



# Reference in Fiction

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In this paper I argue that non-empty names in fiction, such as 'Napoleon' or 'Russia' in *War and Peace*, refer directly to their bearers, and that their role in fiction is to prompt singular imaginings. I criticize alternative approaches, including the position that such names cannot fulfil the conditions of reference, and the view that they are essentially tied to fictional descriptions. Not only is there no good reason to say that names in fiction function differently than names in non-fiction, there are positive reasons to conclude that they play precisely the same role.

# Fictional Names, Fictional Characters and Persons Referred to in Narrative Fiction

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## I. Basic assumptions

The questions concerning the status of fictional characters, their identity conditions, the role of fictional names etc. are not those we should start with in the theory of literary fiction. According to my opinion, the basic question providing proper framework for addressing such issues is: what does the reader have to do (to assume, to accept, to imagine) in order to allow the text of narrative fiction to fulfill its literary functions? Here is the general reply I am suggesting as a starting point for discussing more specific topics:

**/F/** The literary functions of a text of narrative fiction require from the reader that she approaches, in the *as if* mode (for short: approaches<sub>AI</sub>), its sentences as records of utterances of an inhabitant of the actual world – the narrator, who tells us what happened in this world.<sup>1</sup>

Within this scheme, the interpretation of a text and its components, like fictional names, is pinned down to the actual world and to the narrator's utterances (taking place in this world – as the reader is supposed to assume<sub>AI</sub>). This double linkage is crucial for the identification of the entities referred to in the texts of narrative fiction, for the solution of the completeness/incompleteness problem concerning these entities and for the explanation of the completeness of the propositions expressed by sentences occurring in literary texts.

The assumption that a text of narrative fiction directs our thought (as well as our imagination and our sensitivity) to the actual world, and that it does so quite straightforwardly (rather than through analogies, allusions etc.) is, indeed, controversial. For instance, the well-known doctrine of "recentering"<sup>2</sup> requires the reader to move (in her imagination) to a fictional world created by the author, attach the label "actual" to it and transfer material from the "actual actual world" to this new destination (in order to fill in the narrative gaps, work out the implicatures etc.). On the contrary, if /F/ is accepted, the basic instruction for the reader

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<sup>1</sup> Obviously, this scheme applies only to narrative fiction in strict sense: fictional content need not be presented to the reader as mediated through narration. Cf. Seymour Chatman on "non-narrated stories" in *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, Ithaca: Cornell UP 1978, Ch. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. e.g. Marie-Laure Ryan, *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory*, Bloomington-Indianapolis: Indiana UP 1991; Fiction, Cognition in Non-Verbal Media, in: *Intermediality and Storytelling* (ed. by M. Grishakova and M.-L. Ryan), Berlin-New York: De Gruyter 2010.

is: “Stay (in your imagination) where you are and leave everything as it is, except for the modifications (if any) required by the text.”

## II. Proper names in fictional discourse (textual use)

This, among other things, requires the reader to assume<sub>AI</sub> that the narrator uses expressions like “Emma” in the same way in which we use proper names in ordinary communication, which means that the narrator joins certain chain of uses of the name “Emma”, at the beginning of which that name has been assigned to particular person (inhabitant of the actual world), quite independently of the narrator’s performance.<sup>1</sup> About that person, as the reader is supposed to assume<sub>AI</sub>, the narrator makes a series of statements, factual as well as counterfactual, direct as well as implicated (in Gricean sense).<sup>2</sup>

## III. Identification of a person referred to in fiction and identification of a fictional character

This provides us with a straightforward way of identifying the persons spoken about in a text of narrative fiction. In order to identify<sub>AI</sub> the referent of the narrator’s utterance of the name “Emma”, we can simply rely<sub>AI</sub> on the chain of the type just mentioned or transfer it into a complex definite description and identify<sub>AI</sub> Emma as “the person who has been assigned the name ‘Emma’ at the beginning of the chain to which this narrator’s utterance belongs.” This description can be classified as “parasitic” or “formal” in that sense that it is based on the general mechanism of referential functioning of names rather than on factual information regarding the bearer of the name. The reader is supposed to assume<sub>AI</sub> that this formal description is satisfied by precisely one person in the actual world; and it is the person identified in this way to whom she assigns<sub>AI</sub> all informal Emma-descriptions which she collects while reading Flaubert’s text. Obviously, the assumed<sub>AI</sub> referential mechanism or the corresponding parasitic description we are supposed to connect with the name “Emma” does not relate Flaubert’s text, nor our’s thoughts accompanying our reading the text, to any entity – neither a concrete person nor an abstract construct. But it provides us with quite determinate way of thinking about Emma as a concrete person (or, in terms of the adverbial account of representation, thinking Emma-wise).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For an opposite view see e.g. Manuel García-Carpintero, *Is Fictional Reference Rigid?*, *Organon F* 2015, Supplementary Issue 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Stacie Friend: “It is more plausible to say that we simply imagine that there are such people as Lizzie or Candide, for instance by imagining that the author’s use of a name leads back to a real person” (*Fictional Characters*, *Philosophy Compass* 2/2007, p. 11). I would just replace reference to the author with reference to the narrator.

<sup>3</sup> For a general non-relational account of representation see e.g. Uriah Kriegel, *Intentional Inexistence and Phenomenal Intentionality*, *Philosophical Perspectives* 21, 2007; Mark Sainsbury, *Representing Unicorns: How to Think about Intensionality*, in: G. Currie, P. Koťátko, M. Pokorný (eds.), *Mimesis: Metaphysics, Cognition, Pragmatics*, London, College Publications 2012.

The identification<sub>AI</sub> of a *person* referred to in fiction should not be confused with the identification of a *fictional character* – which is, according to this account, a parameter of the literary functions of a text of narrative fiction. To identify this parameter is to give a list of relevant moves required by these functions from the reader, for instance:

- (1) the assumption<sub>AI</sub> that there exists a person referred to by the narrator's utterances of "Emma";
- (2) the assumption<sub>AI</sub> that that person married doctor Charles Bovary; etc.<sup>1</sup>

#### IV. The author's creative act

If somebody wonders how Flaubert could have succeeded to identify precisely one person as Emma, if there are, in various possible worlds, countless persons satisfying all the Emma-descriptions to be found in his text,<sup>2</sup> the reply should be quite simple. The author has done so by producing a text with literary functions which require us to make the moves (to adopt<sub>AI</sub> the actual world-related assumptions) described in II and III. According to this account, it does not belong to the author's creative act that he *pretends* to use the name "Emma" to refer to particular inhabitant of the actual world: the *author* creates a text which requires the *reader* to pretend that the *narrator* has used that name to refer to a real person. Correspondingly, the author does not pretend to assert something but his text is to be interpreted as recording assertive utterances made by the narrator.

#### V. Fictional names again (paratextual and metatextual use)

The implications of the principle /F/ concern not only textual uses of names (cf. I), but also other levels of discourse, in which fictional names occur. For instance:

- (1) *Paratextual use*: "Emma ruined her husband."

Interpretation based on /F/: The literary functions of Flaubert's novel require us to assume<sub>AI</sub> that there exists a person referred to by the narrator as "Emma" and that that person ruined her husband.

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<sup>1</sup> Those who insist that identification of fictional characters requires participation of solid Platonic entities can, following Alberto Voltolini, interpret this list so that the moves described in it constitute a special "game of make-believe" which "mobilizes" certain set of properties (specified in the description of these moves) and that these two elements (the "game-theoretical" and the "set-theoretical") together individuate Emma as a fictional character. Cf. A.Voltolini, A Syncretistic Ontology of Fictional Beings, in: T. Koblížek, P. Kořátko, M. Pokorný (eds.), *Text and Work: the Menard Case*, Prague, Litteraria Pragensia 2013, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> This led Gregory Currie to suggesting that expressions like "Emma Bovary" do not function as proper names of individuals, but rather as names of "individual roles" (functions from possible worlds to individuals). Cf. Characters and Contingency, *Dialectica* 57, 2/2003.

(2) *Metatextual use*: “Emma is a fictional entity.”

Interpretation based on /F/: The expression “Emma”, as it appears in Flaubert’s text, does not have any referent in the actual world, but the literary functions of the text require us to assume<sub>AI</sub> the opposite.

As this interpretation shows, I do not share the view that metatextual uses of fictional names require introducing fictional characters as abstract entities *sui generis* into our ontology.<sup>1</sup>

## VI. The role of pretense

In this interpretation, neither the paratextual statement (1) nor the metatextual statement (2) are made in the *as if* (or *pretense*) mode: they are full-blooded statements about Flaubert’s novel which, if made sincerely, manifest beliefs (rather than make-beliefs) of the speaker. Similarly, nothing commits us to ascribe any moves in the *as if* mode to the author (cf. IV.). So, the role reserved within this approach for *pretense* is rather narrow: it concerns just some moves required from the reader by literary functions of a text of narrative fiction.<sup>2</sup>

## VII. Completeness of persons referred to in fiction

According to the adherents of the “recentering” doctrine (cf. I), the position of the interpreter of a text of narrative fiction is in an important respect ambiguous: “The reader knows that fictional worlds are incomplete, but when he ‘plays the game’, when he submerges in a fiction, he pretends to believe that this world is complete”.<sup>3</sup> From the point of view of the principle /F/ there is no reason for such a schizofreny. The completeness of the world of a work of narrative fiction and of its inhabitants is guaranteed by the fact that it is the actual world of our life, modified according to the instructions of the text (rather than an artificial construct stamped with the forged label “actual”).<sup>4</sup> The Emma-descriptions we find in Flaubert’s text then function as incomplete descriptions of a complete being (rather than as devices of construction of an incomplete being), precisely like any personal descriptions we use in everyday conversation.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g. Peter van Inwagen, *Creatures of Fiction*. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 14, 1977; Saul Kripke, *Vacuous Names and Fictional Entities*, in: *Philosophical Troubles. Collected Papers*, Vol 1, Oxford UP 2011; Zsófia Zvolenszky, *Inadvertent Creation and Fictional Characters*, *Organon F*, Vol. XXII, 2015, Supplementary Issue 1.

<sup>2</sup> Hence, what I suggest is not a “pure pretense theory” which, as Amie Thomasson has argued, has the counter-intuitive consequence that “all literary historians’ and critics’ apparently serious claims about fictional characters, their origins, history, development etc.” must be interpreted as involving “new, *ad hoc* games of make-believe.” Cf. Amie L. Thomasson, *Speaking of Fictional Characters*, *Dialectica* 57, 2003, p. 209.

<sup>3</sup> Marie-Laure Ryan, *From Possible Worlds to Parallel Universes*, <http://www.univ-paris-diderot.fr/clam/seminaires/RyanEN.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> For inspiring discussion of this and related topics see Göran Rossholm, *Contribution to Fictional Epistemology*, *Organon F* 2015, Supplementary Issue 1.

## The Nature of Fiction/al Utterances

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In this talk, first of all, I want to try a new defense of the utterance approach as to the relationship between fictional and nonfictional works on the one hand and between fictional and nonfictional utterances on the other hand, notably the idea that the distinction between fictional and nonfictional works is derivative on the distinction between fictional and nonfictional utterances of the sentences that constitute a text. Moreover, I want to account for the second distinction in minimally contextualist semantic terms. A fictional utterance of a sentence consists in that sentence paired with a narrow context of interpretation whose 'world' parameter is saturated by a fictional world, so as to yield for that sentence certain fictional truth conditions; a nonfictional utterance of a sentence consists in that sentence paired with a narrow context of interpretation whose 'world' parameter is saturated by the actual world, so as to yield for that sentence certain real truth conditions. Finally, I want to hold that what makes a fictional utterance, hence a fictional work, properly fictional is the contextually pre-semantic fact that its utterer entertains an act of make-believe, where such an act is accounted for in metarepresentational terms. This ultimately means that the fiction/nonfiction distinction is not clarified in terms of the fictional works / nonfictional works distinction, for things rather go the other way around.

## Contributed lectures



# Truth in Fiction and Indexicality

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## Overview

This paper outlines an account of fiction discourse. The account is characterized by two central ideas: **bicontextuality** and **imagination sensitivity**. The motivation for this bicontextual account (over rivals such as modal (e.g. Lewis, 1978, Hanley, 2004), monster (Predelli, 2008) and context shifty (Predelli, 1997, 2005, (Reimer, 2005) accounts) is both technical and philosophical. The technical motivation is that a bicontextual account is able to accommodate the behaviour of indexicals in fiction discourse, which the rivalling accounts seem unable to. It also avoids the need for stipulating covert fiction operators. The philosophical motivation is that brings an anti-exceptionalist account of fiction discourse. Fiction is a special case of imagination (or make-believe). It presents fictional engagement as an instance of imaginative projection into possibilities. A semantic framework is bicontextual if it relativizes truth to two contexts.

The proposal of this paper relativizes truth to a context of utterance and a **context of imagination**. A context of imagination, for the purposes of this paper, is an ⟨agent, time, set of worlds⟩ triple. It represents the point of view of the fiction by locating it in logical space. An expression is imagination sensitive if its semantic value depends on features of the context of imagination. We show how one can explain the special behaviour of indexicals in fiction discourse by treating them as lexically ambiguously. Indexicals are associated with two lexical entries, one where they are imagination sensitive on the other where they are not.

## Bicontextual postsemantics

A semantic theory, in the sense at issue here, is a definition of truth relative to a *point of evaluation*. The proposal takes a point of evaluation to be a context of utterance  $c_1$ , a context of imagination  $c_2$ , a world  $w$  (index) and an assignment  $a$  (function from variables to objects). When in fiction discourse, the context of imagination represents the point of the topical fiction. The set of worlds determined by the context of imagination, in that case, is the set of worlds compatible with the information provided by the fiction. The **postsemantics** (using the terminology of MacFarlane, 2014) incorporates a definition of truth relative to a context of utterance and a context of imagination. A speaker will have said something accurate if the sentence is true relative to both contexts. *Truth at a context of utterance and a context of imagination* is defined as follows:

### Bicontextual postsemantics

$\phi$  is true at  $(c_1, c_2)$  iff  $\forall w \in W(c_2) \llbracket \phi \rrbracket_{w', a}^{c_1, c_2} = 1$ .

Here  $\llbracket a \rrbracket_{w,a}$  denotes the extension of  $e$  relative to the point  $(c_1, c_2, w, a)$ .  $W(c)$  is the set of worlds overlapping at  $c$ , i.e. the sets of world determined by the topical fiction whose point of view is represented by  $c$ .  $c_1$  is the context of utterance understood in the usual sense. We defend **Bicontextual postsemantics** through an account of fiction as a special case of imagination or make-believe. In order to understand whether your daughter says something true when she says that there are dragons in England, you need to consider a context representing the point of view of the fiction she's talking about. **Bicontextual postsemantics** the worlds of evaluation to be the worlds of the context of imagination. So, it can handle standard cases, where truth in fiction only depends on truth relative to the worlds of the fiction. *There are dragons in England* is true (at  $c_1$  and  $c_2$ ) just in case in every world of the context of imagination  $c_2$ , there are dragons in  $c_2$ .

In non-fiction discourse the context of utterance and context of imagination collapses ( $c_1 = c_2$ ), so adopting **Bicontextual postsemantics** will not have any consequences for those cases. That will be situations where in order to assess whether what the speaker said was true you do not need to imaginatively project yourself into any possibility beyond the actual (or, arguably, the doxastic possibilities of the speaker).

### Indexicality

According to the bicontextual account presented, indexicals are associated with two different lexical entries, e.g. one for *Actually*<sub>1</sub> and one for *Actually*<sub>2</sub>. The semantic theory will include clauses for *Actually*<sub>1</sub> and *Actually*<sub>2</sub> along the following lines:

- (1)  $\llbracket \textit{Actually}_1(\phi) \rrbracket_{w,a}^{c_1,c_2} = 1$  iff  $\forall w' \in W(c_1), \llbracket \phi \rrbracket_{w',a}^{c_1,c_2} = 1$
- (2)  $\llbracket \textit{Actually}_2(\phi) \rrbracket_{w,a}^{c_1,c_2} = 1$  iff  $\forall w' \in W(c_2), \llbracket \phi \rrbracket_{w',a}^{c_1,c_2} = 1$

In the first clause, *Actually* shifts the world of evaluation rigidly to the worlds of the context of utterance ( $c_1$ ). In the second clause, *Actually* shifts the world of evaluation rigidly to the worlds of the context of imagination ( $c_2$ ). An example of indexical ambiguity in fiction discourse is (3), uttered during a discussion of Oliver Stone's *Alexander*.

- (3) Had Alexander used elephants he would have lost fewer men than he actually did.

On the first reading, (3) says that in worlds where Alexander used more elephants (than he did in the worlds of *Alexander*) he lost fewer men in those worlds than he did in the worlds of *Alexander*. On the second reading, (3) says that in worlds where Alexander used more elephants (than he did in the worlds of *Alexander*) he lost fewer men in those worlds than he in the worlds of *Alexander*. The two readings, we argue, are due to *actually* being ambiguous between (1) and (2). If we interpret it in the sense of (1) we get the second reading. If we interpret it in the sense of (2) we get the first reading.

We argue that this kind of ambiguity is prevalent across different indexicals (personal, temporal and locational). The reason (3) is not ambiguous in non-fiction cases is that there is a collapse between the two contexts ( $c_1 = c_2$ ), so (1) and (2) become extensionally equivalent. Given that all the rivaling accounts of fiction discourse are (to our knowledge) monocontextual they cannot accommodate both imagination sensitivity and indexical ambiguity.

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## Fictionalism and the Semantics of Fictional Discourse

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There has been much interest recently in philosophical views that make appeals to the notion of fiction in theorizing about a variety of issues. These views are typically classified as “fictionalist” accounts, but, despite this label, it is not entirely clear what the relationship between fictionalism and fiction is or should be. More specifically, on a common understanding of how fictionalism is related to fiction, developing a detailed fictionalist account on some topic requires antecedently endorsing some specific view of the semantics of fictional discourse. In this talk, we examine the relationship between fictionalist accounts and accounts of fiction, and distinguish between the aforementioned common understanding of fictionalism and an alternative one that makes fictionalism less tied to the semantics of fictional discourse. We then identify several problems that arise with the first understanding of fictionalism and take this to motivate the pursuit of the second sort of approach, when developing a fictionalist account of some topic. We close by extolling the virtues of adopting this second sort of approach.

The distinction we draw is between two species of fictionalism, *comparative fictionalism* and *philosophical fictionalism*. The difference regards how an appeal to fiction factors into theorizing. In the former species, the appeal to fiction is mainly for the purpose of analogizing how one treats (or proposes to treat) her target of analysis. Theorists often indicate this by offering a vague initial instruction to “treat the subject of theorizing as a kind of fiction”. As we show, following this instruction in a substantive way requires that one move beyond this mere suggestion to what we call *second-level comparative fictionalism*. This involves moving from comparing some topic with instances of fiction to comparing the *account* one is offering of her target with some *account* of fiction, specifically, of the semantics of fictional discourse from some philosophy of fiction. The fictionalist account then explains the semantics of discourse about its topic on the model of the semantics of fictional discourse. Even so, the details of the theorist’s account of the semantics of the target discourse need not mention the notion of fiction at all. For comparative fictionalists, the appeal to fiction is external to the account itself and functions more as a guide.

By contrast, philosophical fictionalism makes a more complex appeal to the notion of fiction. On this approach, a theorist makes explicit appeal to the notion of fiction in the details of his account of the semantic functioning of his target discourse, making this appeal internal to the account itself. However, while philosophical fictionalism applies the notion of fiction in this more integrated way, it is not necessary that the semantics of the analyzed discourse be similar to the semantics of fictional discourse in any way that underwrites any analogy between them.

As we will show, comparative fictionalism generates several concerns that motivate a preference for philosophical fictionalism within this *genus* of theorizing. The need for the former to move to the second-level either undermines calling such an account an instance of *fictionalism*, or it leads to a host of other concerns, depending on the theorist’s attitude towards the relevant philosophy of fiction. The first situation arises if the theorist simply uses the philosophy of fiction as a short cut to providing the details of her own account, and she does not care whether the philosophy of fiction is actually correct *about the semantics of fictional discourse*. In that case, even if the philosophy of fiction turned out to be incorrect, that would have no bearing on the status of her account. But then it would seem odd to view this account as an instance of *fictionalism*, since nothing about it hinges on any facts about fiction. The latter situation involves the theorist viewing the philosophy of fiction she relies on as correct. While this does not immediately undercut the motivation for classifying the account as fictionalism, as we will show, it leads to four new problems.

The first of these is what we call the *added burden problem*. It pertains to the comparative fictionalist taking on a responsibility for establishing the correctness of the philosophy of fiction she employs. The second concern is what we call the *exclusion problem*. It involves having to view any other fictionalist account that relies on an alternative philosophy of fiction as not really comparing its subject with fiction, and thereby not counting as a case of fictionalism at all. The third worry is

what we call the *forced classification problem*. It stems from the thesis that being relevantly similar to some philosophy of fiction is sufficient to make an account a *fictionalist* account; but this means that a comparative fictionalist must automatically view her preferred philosophy of fiction as a *fictionalist* philosophy of fiction (even if it is a so-called “fictional realist” account) and any alternative philosophy of fiction as automatically *not* a fictionalist philosophy of fiction (even if it is an “anti-realist” account). The fourth issue is what we call the *order of priority problem*. It highlights second-level comparative fictionalism’s presupposition that one must do philosophy of fiction first and then use those results as a stringboard for providing any account that deserves to be classified as fictionalism. This further undercuts our ability to distinguish between fictionalist philosophies of fiction and non-fictionalist, or realist, philosophies of fiction in motivated ways.

As we will show in our talk, philosophical fictionalism avoids all of these problems. It involves no commitment to any particular philosophy of fiction. Moreover, it need not maintain that any discourse so analyzed is analogous in any way to fictional (or meta-fictional) discourse. As a result, a philosophical fictionalist account can accept different appeals to the notion of fiction as equally counting as philosophical fictionalist views, and it can distinguish between fictionalist philosophies of fiction and non-fictionalist philosophies of fiction in motivated ways. We close by showing that philosophical fictionalism comports with a more plausible characterization of the definitive features of fictionalism as pertaining to semantics, rather than to metaphysics or epistemology.

## Truth in Fiction via Non-Standard Belief Revision

CHRISTOPHER BADURA  
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Is the sentence ‘Sherlock Holmes lives in Baker Street 221b’ true (does it express a true proposition)? Most people would agree, or would give the proviso ‘well, he does, *in the fiction*’. The question becomes even more pressing if one accepts that Sherlock Holmes does not exist, since *prima facie*, if something does not exist, then it does not have (instantiate) properties – at least not ones such as living in Baker Street.

In literary studies, many claims of this form are made: Romeo loves Juliet. They both live in Verona. And so forth. All these sentences, so some hold, are not literally true but true in the fiction. Thus, one prefixes sentences like the mentioned ones by a fiction operator ‘In the fiction *f*’, which we represent by writing ‘*In<sub>f</sub>*’, and then evaluates whether the resulting sentence of the form ‘*In<sub>f</sub>, φ*’ is true. The question then is: what are the truth conditions for a sentence of the form ‘*In<sub>f</sub>, φ*’?

Strategies using fiction operators have recently become very popular in various areas of ontology under the label *fictionalism*. To avoid ontological commitment to entities of kind  $K$ , for example Lewis's possible worlds, one employs a fictional operator strategy: according in the fiction of modal realism, there are possible worlds. We can also find fictionalism wrt mathematical entities or moral fictionalism. Hence, the sentences quantifying over entities of kind  $K$  are not literally true, but always in the fiction of the corresponding theory and we hence speak as if say, there were numbers, but there are numbers in the fiction of mathematics. Hence, these theories "can be good without being true". Thus, giving truth conditions for sentences of the form ' $In_f, \varphi$ ' is not only important in the philosophy of fiction and an analysis of truth in fiction can have applications in various areas of philosophy.

We take Lewis's (1978) famous Analysis 2 of truth in fiction:

A sentence of the form ' $In$  the fiction  $f$ ,  $\varphi$ ' is non-vacuously true iff. whenever  $w$  is one of the collective belief worlds of the community of origin of  $f$ , then some world where  $f$  is told as known fact and  $\varphi$  is true differs less from the world  $w$ , on balance, than does any world where  $f$  is told as known fact and  $\varphi$  is not true. It is vacuously true iff. there are no possible worlds where  $f$  is told as known fact.

The main flaw is that anything comes out as true in any inconsistent fiction. Although Lewis tries to fix his analysis for accidentally inconsistent fictions, such as the whole canon of the Holmes stories, he cannot account for blatantly inconsistent fictions, such as Graham Priest's *Sylvan's Box*.

The approach we are giving is based on the conception of logic as a theory of reasoning and information processing. Our approach is normative in that we are giving part of what Priest (2012) calls *logica utens*, that is (part of) the norms of the correct practice and that is in our case the norms of the correct practice of literary studies. The approach is thus normative in that it models what a good reasoner about truth in fiction ought to do.

We extend Lewis's analysis in a way that it can account for blatantly inconsistent fictions by providing a formal semantics for ' $In_f$ ' using impossible world semantics similar to the ones used by Berto (forthcoming) and ideas from belief revision theory, for example from van Benthem (2007), Baltag (2016) and Smets (2015). Engagement with fiction is treated as structurally analogous to belief revision. In Lewis's analysis this amounts to considering the common belief worlds of the community of origin and then consider what are the most plausible worlds after revising with the fiction's explicit content  $F$ . Using plausibility orderings of worlds is motivated as follows: in the debate on truth in fiction, analyses of truth in fiction are most the time tested against our/experts' intuitions. That is, we take a sentence  $\varphi$ , wonder what the analysis predicts for  $In_f, \varphi$  and then see whether intuitively,  $In_f, \varphi$  is true or not. Hence, it seems to be an agreed upon fact that our intuitions or educated judgements about truth in fiction are good. Hence, so we claim, that agents can order (im)possible worlds, in this context, based on their plausibility is a reasonable assumption.

The language we use is basic propositional modal logic plus the new operator ‘ $In_f$ ’. We start out by giving single agent plausibility models, with a plausibility order  $\leq$ , on which we define a belief revision operation, a soft upgrade  $\uparrow F$ . It reorders all the worlds in  $W$  and results in a new conversely well-founded total preordering  $\leq^{\uparrow F}$  on the worlds. We take this new ordering to be determined via pragmatic criteria such as the agent’s knowledge of  $f$ ’s genre, general interpretation conventions etc.

We extend this to a multi-agent plausibility model  $M = (W, \leq_a, V)$ , where  $W = P \cup I$  is a set of possible worlds  $P$  and impossible worlds  $I$ , s.t.  $P \cap I = \emptyset$ .  $\leq_a$  is the plausibility ordering on  $W$  for each agent  $a$ . It is a conversely well-founded total preorder.  $V = (V^+, V^-)$  is a pair of valuation maps assigning propositional variables to sets of worlds, namely  $V^+(p)$  is the set of worlds where  $p$  is true and  $V^-(p)$  is the set of worlds where  $p$  is false. For impossible worlds,  $V$  treats any formula as atomic, for possible worlds, we define truth at a world recursively. We can define a group plausibility ordering after the revision,  $\leq^{\uparrow F}$  by taking into account all single agents’ revised orderings  $\leq_a^{\uparrow F}$ . This gives for every subset  $S$  of  $W$  rise to a set of most plausible worlds wrt  $S$  in that revised multi-agent model, namely

$$best^{\uparrow F} S = \{w \in W \mid \forall x \in S: x \leq^{\uparrow F} w\}.$$

Let  $|CB_G^w|$  be the set of common belief worlds of group  $G$  at world  $w$ , where  $G$  is the community of origin of  $f$ . We can define truth at a world  $w$  in a model  $M$  for  $In_f, \varphi$  as follows:

$$M, w \models^+ In_f, \varphi \text{ iff. } \forall v \in best^{\uparrow F} |CB_G^w|: v \models^+ F \Rightarrow v \models \varphi$$

That is, any world  $v$  that is, after revision with the explicit content  $F$ , at least as plausible as any common belief world and which makes  $F$  true, is also a world which makes  $\varphi$  true. The inference from  $In_f, (\varphi \wedge \neg\varphi)$  to  $In_f, (\psi)$  is invalid if  $\varphi \wedge \neg\varphi \in F$ .

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# Pretended Truth and Its Truth Makers

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My proposal explores one particular path of bridging between the pretense theory of fiction and a form of realism about fiction. I look at the potential compatibility of Walton's notion of pretended truth with a realist account of fictional truth based on the notion of truth makers, i.e. existing artefacts and their interpretations, as suggested by Ross Cameron (2013). The marriage of pretended truth with actually existing truth makers explains why we call it "truth", and also it seems to provide a tentative answer to the question what, in addition to imagining, accounts for truth in fiction.

Kendall Walton famously claims that by its very nature fiction is something that involves us in a game of make-believing or pretense. Fictional entities, he argues, do not really exist and truth in fiction is only pretended. We play the game of make-believe by using our imagination (propositional and non-propositional), and something else which in combination with imagination ultimately tells us what is fictionally true and what is not. Walton lately admits that imagination is not enough (Walton 2015). Hence, the pretended fictional truth is not just the imagined truth in the fiction. For instance, in the background of *A Young Woman standing at a Virginal* Vermeer depicted a painting of Cupid. Looking at Vermeer's work, we imagine seeing both (i) Cupid and (ii) a painting of Cupid, but it is true in the fiction only that (ii'): there is a portrait of Cupid, and not that (i'): there is Cupid. How do we get to know that? Walton (2015) admits that he has no answer to this question. Let us call this "the missing component question".

In attempt to give a glimpse of an answer to the missing component question, I want suggest that pretended truth is being validated by a modest variety of other things: the presence of fictional medium, certain conventions relevant for interpreting it, whatever we know about the circumstances of its production, and by actually engaging with all that. Ross Cameron (2013) calls our interpretative acts based on such things "truth makers". He adopts a meta-ontology for fictions whereby what matters is not what exists, but what has been invoked as truth makers. My proposal concerning the missing component is that we recognize fictional truth by using the whole scale of our cognitive capacities and knowledge of the relevant circumstances. Imagination certainly plays a central role in the game of pretense, but other capacities also play a role of discovering and validating what is true in the fiction. Following Walton's example, imagine a photograph of a cactus appearing cuddly under the twilight. One can imagine seeing both a cuddly cactus and a cactus appearing cuddly. It is only true in the picture that there is a cactus *appearing* cuddly, not that there is a cuddly cactus. However, I want to say that we have other capacities and general intelligence to directly recognize what is there in the fictional world and to pick out the fictional truth.

Walton (1993) rightly notices that some fictions are more “proporiented” while others are more “content-oriented”. I guess we discover fictional truth with more than just imagination even when it comes to content-oriented fictions. Imagine a corresponding cartoon about a cuddly cactus – an apologetic and polite character ashamed of his capacity to hurt who has turned into a soft and bunny like being. In this case, it would be true in the fiction that there is a cuddly cactus, not a cactus that only appears cuddly. Easily our cognitive faculties and background knowledge will inform us what is appropriate to imagine.

I prefer to think of truth in fiction as pretended because pretended truth can legitimately be controversial as many fictional truths are. The theory of pretense is a simple way of accommodating the controversy. But also, the ontology of truth makers (artifacts and interpretative acts) has an explanatory role related to the sources of that truth, because even though pretended, truth in fiction is not arbitrary. On the other hand, accepting nominalist ontology of the kind comes for free. We do not have to deal with abstract objects or even worse – created abstracta. Finally, it seems to me that this proposal has an overall plausibility. It explains the sense in which we can talk of fictional entities as existing and not existing. On my proposal Holmes has just a pretended existence, and hence does not actually exist unlike the work of Conan Doyle and our interpretative acts of the character.

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## What Kind of Creatures Are Fictional Characters?

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### 1

Fictional entities are created entities. What is the meaning of ‘creation’ at stake here? According to Terence Parsons<sup>1</sup> what authors of novels do actually is not to

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<sup>1</sup> T. Parsons (1980), 184-188.

create fictional entities but rather to give them *fictional existence*. For him 'to create' must not be taken as meaning 'to make something exist', but rather as 'to make something fictional'<sup>1</sup>. But is this what 'to create' means? It seems that "creating" means giving being and not just assigning an additional property to something. The problem of an insufficient treatment of creation is nonetheless typical not only of Parsons.

Let us ask: when a sentence like the following is considered true?

(\*) Madame Bovary was created by Gustave Flaubert

It is true if and only if Flaubert created Madame Bovary (M.B. from now on). The question is intricate mainly because M.B. seems to be an abstract object. Briefly, the creation problem arises because we are inclined to accept each of the following statements:

- (C<sub>1</sub>) M.B. is a created entity
- (C<sub>2</sub>) To create means bringing something into being or causing it to exist
- (C<sub>3</sub>) M.B. is an abstract object
- (C<sub>4</sub>) M.B. was created as a woman.

To investigate the creation process means first giving reasons for all these statements, and secondly seeing in what ways they can be maintained without falling into contradiction. Let us then start from the very beginning of the creation process.

## 2

In September 1851 Flaubert started the novel *Madame Bovary* writing the opening sentence:

- (1) We were at prep, when the Head came in, followed by a new boy not in uniform and a school-servant carrying a big desk.<sup>2</sup>

Flaubert went on writing until the last day of April 1856, when he finished composing his work by writing:

- (2) He has just received the Legion of Honour.<sup>3</sup>

*Madame Bovary* was then published. This is what concerns the *construction* of the work *Madame Bovary* and of the character M.B., as merely a product of Flaubert's imagination. What is the author speaking about when he wrote (1) for the first time? He is not speaking about reality: he uses the same language we would use in

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<sup>1</sup> Ivi, 188.

<sup>2</sup> G. Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, Penguin, London, 2003, Part One, Chap. 1, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ivi, 327.

different circumstances to refer, but here he simply *pretends to*.<sup>1</sup> It is a mere *speaking of nothing*.<sup>2</sup> However, sentence after sentence, Flaubert ends his book, writing (2). And here his pretending use of language ends, too.

### 3

After its publication, people started to speak about *Madame Bovary*. Readers and critics spared neither words nor comments. What were these people talking about? They were speaking about a novel, about a character, and their reference was not simply pretended, it was real. This is what can be called the *hypostatizing use*<sup>3</sup> of language. When asserting:

- (3) M.B. was created by Flaubert
- (4) M.B. was created by Stoker

we actually do say something true (3) and something false (4). The truthfulness of (3) is based on the fact that the name 'Madame Bovary'<sup>4</sup> does refer to a fictional character created by Flaubert. Therefore, the fictional character subsists thanks to public and literary practices involving a hypostatizing use of language where the discourse about fiction is a serious one and is ontologically committed (to abstract entities).

We started with the pretending use of language (no true assertions, false names, no reference), and we have now arrived at the hypostatizing use<sup>5</sup> (true assertions and real names of subsisting entities). This is what has been labelled the *something from nothing*<sup>6</sup> feature.

Thanks to this distinction and thanks to the first step in the creation process, we have an object, a new object, with its own place in our inventory of the world. We now need improve the previous definition (C<sub>2</sub>) of *creation*: to create does not only mean to bring into existence, but it more generally means to make something up providing it with a positive way of givenness (existence or subsistence). Therefore, we will say:

- (C<sub>2</sub>\*) To create a thing means to give it a positive way of givenness (existence or subsistence).

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<sup>1</sup> S. Schiffer (1996). See also G. Evans (1982) who speaks about a *conniving use of language*.

<sup>2</sup> As suggested by K. Donnellan in a famous paper (1974).

<sup>3</sup> S. Schiffer (1996).

<sup>4</sup> Unlike 'Maude Bovary' which is a name not referring to any fictional character created by Flaubert.

<sup>5</sup> Or, following G. Evans, *non-conniving* use of language. It is nonetheless important to underline that the hypostatizing use of language, unlike Evans' non-conniving use, is ontologically committed. Non-conniving and hypostatizing use are similar in their considering relative statements as having serious (and not merely pretended) truth conditions.

<sup>6</sup> S. Schiffer (1996).

Hence, what kind of object will M.B. then be? It seems that the kind of object it will be is partly determined by the use of language that has included it in our ontology. Take:

- (5) M.B. is as famous as Anna Karenina.
- (6) M.B. reflects bourgeois dissatisfaction.

These sentences are intuitively true. But here a problem immediately emerges: a sentence like (7), for instance, according to this position, would be, strictly speaking, false (or without a truth value):

- (7) M.B. committed suicide because of the debts she had incurred.

Whereas in (5) and (6) we are ontologically committed, in (7) we would not say that we are. Clearly (7) is an internal assertion: *in the novel* M.B. is a woman and commits suicide. But the hypostatizing use which creates the fictional character, is external to the novel, and simply suggests that ficta are abstract entities. But what is the relationship subsisting between these abstract entities and what is said in the story? How does the author shape, within the novel, while the story is going on, a woman like M.B.? Through words and sentences.<sup>1</sup> Consider:

- (8) M.B.'s father is Père Rouault
- (9) M.B. read *Paul et Virginie*.
- (10) M.B. is bored with her married life.

All these sentences are necessary for Flaubert to build M.B., but, once the novel and the pretending use of language are finished, they turn out to be false. This sounds strange.

#### 4

Let us consider one by one the steps in this creation, made possible by the hypostatizing use of language:

- 1) Flaubert writes a novel about a woman whose name is M.B. (*pretending use of language*);
- 2) People read the novel;
- 3) People comment on and criticize the novel and its main character (*hypostatizing use of language*);
- 4) The character M.B. subsists;
- 5) It subsists (for us) as a character (hence it is false that M.B. is a woman).

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<sup>1</sup> Kit Fine (1982) maintains a similar view of creation in fiction. A. L. Thomasson also investigates the creation process of fictional entities, underlining the similarities with the creation of other artifacts such as tables and chairs, tools and machines, all requiring creation by intelligent beings. She nonetheless also points out a crucial difference between fictional entities and all other artifacts (Thomasson 1999, 12).

Here the creation process stops according to the artifactualists.<sup>1</sup> But maybe three additional points should be added to answer the metaphysical question:

- 6) M.B. was characterized (characterizing use of language) by its author as a woman (i.e. the property of being a woman is one of the internal properties of the set to which M.B. is correlated), therefore it cannot be false that she is a woman;
- 7) M.B. is an abstract entity (5) and is a concrete entity (6);
- 8) M.B. is a single object, simply having different properties.

The author's characterizing use of language thus sets in motion the constitution and the fabrication of the fictional entity within the novel.

One could object<sup>2</sup> that even if (4) and (6) are both true, it is interesting for us, from a strictly metaphysical point of view, only (4), because what we are interested in knowing is what kind of object the fictional entity M.B. is for us, in *our* world. But why accept that only *our* point of view is metaphysically relevant?

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<sup>1</sup> J. Searle (1979), P. van Inwagen (1977) and S. Schiffer (1996) would certainly stop here. A. Thomasson (1999) holds such a sharp artifactualist position, but then smoothes her view in Thomasson (2003).

<sup>2</sup> A. Thomasson (1999), 105-114

# Models, Fictions, and Understanding

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Recent decades have seen an explosion in analyses regarding the seemingly fictional nature of scientific models, from the ideal pendulum law to infinite population models. If these models are understood as abstract or fictitious objects, how then do practitioners make true or false claims about them? A current and promising answer to this dilemma is the pretense approach. At its core, pretense approach uses Walton's (1960) theory of make-believe in order to explain how it is that scientific models can be understood to represent their target system and function as objects in discourse. In §1 I set the stage by describing the ubiquity of models in scientific practice, and then explaining what I call pure and hybrid pretense views. In §2 I emphasize some epistemic differences between artifacts like literary fictions and scientific models. Finally, I conclude in §3 by sketching possible avenues for §2 and suggesting that scientific representation and conceptual truth may be a matter of material inference.

## 1. The nature and function of models in science

Models such as an infinite population model in biology, Bayesian computational models, and the ideal pendulum law are all essential to scientific practice<sup>1</sup> and understanding. Models can be said to represent certain relations within a target system in a manner determined by practitioners' interests and postulated by the parent theory in order to function as tools for prediction, knowledge, and control. Importantly, most models represent phenomena as behaving in ways that are known to not actually occur. Practitioners utilize methods such as abstraction and idealization in order to construct a model that will be useful for exploring features of the target system under study. A good example is the ideal pendulum law, which is an equation that represents the relationship of dependency between the length of string and the pendulum's swing as it would be without the influence of friction. Thus, an ideal pendulum model represents a force in a manner that does not obtain on earth.

*a. Pretense View.* Theorists such as Adam Toon (2010) have proposed adopting Kendall Walton's theory of fiction in aesthetics known as "make-believe" as a way to understand the truth conditions for statements made within and about<sup>2</sup> scientific models. This has been called the "pretense view." The pretense view holds that practitioners engage with models under the pretense that structures

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this abstract, I do not distinguish between types of models, nor disciplines within science that are said to be either more or less "model-based."

<sup>2</sup> That is, internal utterances *within* a model, external utterances *about* a model, and comparisons *between* models.

and features instantiated in a model stand in for the structures or relations believed to exist in the actual system. Consequently, scientists can make true and false claims about the model within the fiction, just like we can make claims about Sherlock Holmes or Santa Clause. Scientists can “investigate which of [the model’s] causal properties are ‘difference-makers’ in some context and which are not” (Godfrey-Smith 2009) under the pretense that the model is the actual system.

*b. Artifactualism.* Amie Thomasson (2015) suggests that pretense theory would benefit by incorporating elements of artifactualism, which also holds that models are like literary fictions but that such fictions should be understood as abstract artifacts. An artifact in this sense is not an object but more like a fictional character. Oftentimes we can be said to “imagine” things about a character that go beyond what is explicitly stated within a fiction.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, if models are abstract artifacts, then we can also make external claims about them in the same way we say things such as “Beethoven’s *Ode to Joy* is one of the most universally accepted pieces of Western art” without needing to appeal to an “unofficial game” of pretense or paraphrase (Walton, Toon, Frigg).

## 2. Consequences

In this section I explore possible epistemic issues for the pretense views of modeling. In §3 I argue that pretense views compliment contemporary theories of understanding in science. Additionally, pretense theorists (pure and hybrid) may have recourse in inferential semantics, such as Brandom’s material inferentialism.

*a. Epistemic Differences.* First, there is an asymmetry in epistemic access between the propositional content in a work of fiction and a scientific model. An author creates a literary fiction, with an (at least in principle) accessible intention and includes all the information she deems relevant.<sup>2</sup> Scientific modelers, on the other hand, lack all of the relevant information about the phenomenon under study; this is why they are working with a model in the first place. Scientific models can contain unknown causal influences, implicit contradictions, or observationally indistinguishable effects and these issues may not come out until their application or until more sophisticated models have been created.<sup>3</sup> Typically, literary fictions are not used as instruments for predicting actual phenomena. Scientific models, on the other hand, are oftentimes used primarily as tools for explanation, prediction, and control. This would be like using the behavior of a serial killer in a crime novel to predict criminal behavior and catch actual criminals.

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<sup>1</sup> Pretense theorists refer to this as “imaginings.”

<sup>2</sup> It seems odd to imagine an author who deliberately withholds some relevant truth about a character in a work of literary fiction.

<sup>3</sup> Consider as well the processes of trial and error and issues of epistemic opacity when working with complex computational models and methods.

### 3. Possible solutions

*a. Understanding in Science.* Many philosophers of science take scientific understanding to be a cognitive achievement that can be composed of non-propositional explanations and processes such as manipulation, visualization, and modal reasoning (Lipton 2009). Additionally, it is not a necessary feature of literary works that they cannot contribute to our understanding of the actual world. Christine Elgin has argued that artworks also promote understanding of real world phenomena through the process of exemplification. I augment her argument by noting that pretense is involved in exemplification and can contribute to non-propositional explanations such as visualization and counterfactual reasoning.

Margaret Morrison (2015) has suggested that abstract mathematical representations are constitutive of our understanding of concrete physical phenomena, such as phase transitions and population drifts. Thus, it seems reasonable for abstract artifacts to give rise to understanding of concrete phenomena.

*b. Semantic Inferentialism.* Finally, perhaps it will be most useful to steer model discourse away from the idea that scientists are seeking “truths” about the phenomena under study. To sketch briefly, even if models are abstract artifacts it seems practitioners can evaluate models by comparing the successes of their respective material inferential consequences. Model builders and users are committed to the content of certain concepts in virtue of the inferences endorsed by their use. Experts then gain understanding<sup>1</sup> of concepts through the exploration of various “material inferential practices.” This is why, for one, any model that instantiates equations for non-resorting linear force will be inconsistent with models that represent linear restoring force. The models each pretend to take the concept of force to *mean* something different and this is cached out in terms of the material inferences and their relevant appropriate consequences.<sup>2</sup>

Scientists, then, are the primary candidates for knowledge and expertise regarding the concepts relevant to their target system.<sup>3</sup> However, I also want to suggest that semantic inferentialism may help make sense of not only how practitioners learn about the actual system but also how they can assert comparison claims between models, and between models and the actual system, thus contributing to scientific progress.

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<sup>1</sup> Mastering a concept consists in “practically mastering the circumstances under which one becomes entitled to endorse a claim” (Brandom 64).

<sup>2</sup> Toon admits that the principles of generation governing a model’s fictional world are “more difficult to specify explicitly” and “will vary from case to case” (12) and imaginings also include what sorts of inferences are considered “good” under that system.

<sup>3</sup> According to Godfrey-Smith, a deflationary account can be given whereby model practitioners are understood to be “making claims about deductive relations, conditionals, and so on” (19).

# Do Fictional Names Refer?

## Kripke and Salmon on Negative Existential Statements

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The aim of my presentation is to give a comprehensive interpretation of Kripke's new book, *Reference and Existence – The John Locke Lectures*, focusing on the issues of the sentences containing empty names, especially the negative existential statements. After that, I will discuss Nathan Salmon's critique of Kripke's theory, showing that Kripke fails to solve the problem. However, I will argue that we can save the rigid designation thesis using Salmon's own theory, which is based on Kripke's ideas, avoiding its mistakes.

In the first section, I sketch the main problem of the *empty names* – names like Harry Potter or Sherlock Holmes, which doesn't have reference – and the *negative existential statements*, which denies the existence of something. Consider the following sentence:

- (1) Sherlock Holmes doesn't exist.

What is the problem with the statement above for a Kripkean? It is well argued, mainly by David Kaplan and Scott Soames, that if you are committed to the rigid designation thesis, you also have to commit yourself to the *direct reference theory* (DR for short). According to DR, a proper name's exclusive semantic content is its reference. One of the consequences of the DR is the neo-Russellian theory of propositions. In general, the propositional theory explains that a sentence has a meaning because it expresses a proposition. By the neo-Russellian theory, things which are referred to in a sentence, are fundamental elements of a proposition. Thus, if the referred thing doesn't exist, as in the case of the empty names, the sentence can't express a proposition, and therefore it can't have any meaning or truth value. However, we all understand and accept the truth of sentences like (1).

In the second section, I introduce Kripke's proposal to the problem, by discussing three distinctions. The first is the distinction between the different uses of fictional names. According to Kripke, when Conan Doyle writes his stories, he uses the name 'Sherlock Holmes' with no reference, merely *pretending to refer* to a brilliant detective – let's call this usage Holmes<sub>1</sub>. While Conan Doyle writes his stories, a metaphysical and a semantical phase happens: Doyle creates a fictional character, which is an abstract artefact, and the name Holmes<sub>1</sub> begins to refer to it. Let's call this name with a reference Holmes<sub>2</sub>. The second distinction is between the interpretation of the sentences in the fictional discourse. We can distinguish an in-the-story reading, where sentences like 'Sherlock Holmes plays the violin' are literally true (because according to the story, Holmes actually plays violin), from an out-and-out reading, where such sentences are false (because according to facts in our actual world, Holmes can't play the violin, he is just a fictional

character). In the third place, the distinction between the object-fictional sentences, that we usually use in an everyday fictional discourse, and meta-fictional sentences, which we can make up from them with the story operator ‘according to fiction *f*, *p*’ are also important. For example, from the upper object-fictional sentence ‘Sherlock Holmes plays the violin’ we can make its meta-fictional pair: ‘According to *Sherlock Holmes* stories, Sherlock Holmes plays the violin’. Meta-fictional sentences bear a different meaning and work the opposite way than its object-fictional pair.

Using the distinctions introduced above, we can distinguish four interpretations of the sentences of the fictional discourse and of the negative existential statements like (1):

- (2) [Holmes<sub>1</sub> doesn’t exist]<sub>outside the story</sub>
- (3) [Holmes<sub>1</sub> doesn’t exist]<sub>in the story</sub>
- (4) [Holmes<sub>2</sub> doesn’t exist]<sub>outside the story</sub>
- (5) [Holmes<sub>2</sub> doesn’t exist]<sub>in the story</sub>

Interpretation (2) describes a fact in our world, but it lacks of meaning, because it uses an empty name. In (3) the same problem could occur, but in this case, Kripke has a solution: in a complex ‘story-telling language game’ we base the truth value of the object-fictional sentence to its meta-fictional pair, thus (3) is false, in the story Holmes really exists. Statement (4) is also false, because in our actual world Sherlock Holmes as an abstract artefact does exist, created by Conan Doyle. Statement (5) is false again: in the story a flesh and blood Sherlock Holmes exists – which is Holmes<sub>1</sub> – not an abstract artefact.

Unfortunately, using (1), we would like to express its interpretation (2), the fact that in our actual world, a flesh and blood Sherlock Holmes doesn’t exist, but according to the analysis above, we just can’t say it is meaningful. Kripke’s suggestion is that (1) is a special case and we interpret it as ‘no such true proposition that Holmes<sub>1</sub> exists’. This account is surely not a persuasive one, and Salmon shows that indeed, it does not work.

In the third section, I introduce Salmon’s own solution to the problem, which mainly stands on two bases. Firstly, Salmon rejects the distinction between the different uses of fictional names: when I use the name ‘Sherlock Holmes’, I *always* refer to an abstract entity. It might feel odd that our beloved stories are about abstract entities, but Salmon sets up an illustrative analogy with the movies: for example, in the *Godfather*, we merely pretend that Marlon Brando is Don Corleone. Reading a fictional story of an abstract entity, we use the same method, pretending that the abstract entity is a brilliant detective named Sherlock Holmes. So the problem of the empty names is eliminated, there are no empty names at all. What about the negative existential statements? Salmon applies a Russellian approach here and introduces the descriptive use of the proper name: sometimes we say sentences like ‘Peter is an Einstein’ or ‘John is a Romeo’, which are not expressing identities, but are predicates, such as Peter is very clever, or John is a romantic man. According to Salmon, using sentence (1), we would like to assign a meaning such as ‘there is no such person as Holmes more or less as

he is actually depicted in the stories', or best: 'there is no such person who is both Holmes and Holmesesque'. At the end of his article, Salmon argues that this solution doesn't violate the DR, because this nonstandard usage of the name is parasitic of the more fundamental and usual usage of the fictional character's name.

With Salmon's theory I can conclude that the issue of the negative existential statements is not an inevitable problem for Kripke's rigid designation thesis – however he can't solve this problem in his *John Locke Lectures* in 1973.

## The Double-Aspect of Abstract Artifacts

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According to the Artifactual Theory of Fiction (ATF), as defined by Thomasson [1999], fictional characters are abstract artifacts created by their authors. I argue that abstract artifacts must be conceived as *double-aspected* entities; i.e., entities that appear as abstract artifacts according to an external perspective on fiction, but as concrete entities from an internal perspective. I thus propose a combination of the ATF to a semantics for the fictionality operator, as introduced by Woods [1974]. Such a combination is necessary to fill some gaps in the ATF. The semantics is defined with respect to a modal framework, on the basis of the *world-lines* semantics of Hintikka [1975]. To begin, I will outline the Thomasson's ATF and its limits, by reference to some significant objections, including some of Voltolini [2006] and Everett [2005]. Then, I will give a general explanation of modal (fictional) individuals in terms of *world-lines* and I will define the semantics for the fictionality operator in a modal framework. I will finally attempt to answer some objections we will have referred to. In this abstract, I only give some general motivations.

To begin, Thomasson's [1999] makes use of the notion of ontological dependency to define the existence and identity conditions of abstract artifacts, in order to explain the reference to fictional characters. For example, Holmes exists as an abstract artifact that has been created by Conan Doyle. Roughly, Holmes is historically rigidly dependent on Conan Doyle: nobody else than Conan Doyle could have created Holmes, and Holmes could not have existed if Conan Doyle had not existed. Then, Holmes survives its author's death in a cultural and linguistic community as long as there exist some copies of the original work and some peoples able to read the novels: it is said that Holmes is constantly generically dependent on the existence of copies and readers. The dependency is only generic, because no copy and nobody in particular is required. The dependency is constant, because Holmes would cease to exist if there were no more copy or someone able to read the novels. Given that ontological dependency is intrinsically a modal notion, it seems natural to define it in a modal framework constituted of possible worlds and instants

of time. The ATF explains how it is possible to refer to fictional entities from an external viewpoint on fiction; that is, in sentences such as ‘Holmes is a famous character’ or ‘Holmes has been created by Conan Doyle’. Notice that strictly speaking, it is not true of Holmes as abstract artifact that it is a detective. In order to deal with the internal viewpoint, like in ‘Holmes is a detective’, Thomasson incorporates the use of a fictionality operator, to be read as ‘according to the story’. Whereas it is necessary to articulate both perspectives in a unified theory, Thomasson does not systematically define any semantics for the combination with a fictionality operator.

However, if we define the semantics in a modal framework, in relation to possible worlds compatible with the story, the difficulty is now the following: if Conan Doyle does not exist in the world compatible with the story, how Holmes might exist there? Conversely, if Conan Doyle had existed and created Holmes in these worlds, how Holmes might be a concrete human being there? Following Voltolini [2006], it might also be asked how it is possible to create an abstract artifact by a narrative description (or something similar) if the resulting entity has none of the properties used in this description. Following the notion of ‘double-aspect’ semantics of Woods & Isenberg [2010], I would claim that what we have to account for is the double-aspect of abstract artifacts. Indeed, fictional characters appear like non-concrete entities from an external perspective, but they take the appearance of concrete entities from an internal perspective. Such a proposal might be compatible with the syncretism advocated by Voltolini [2006]. It is also the ground to answer other objections, raised by Voltolini too, against the relevance of the creative act. Indeed, how the identity of fictional entities might be guaranteed during the process of creation if they require the existence of an achieved fictional work?

In parallel, a double-aspect abstract artifact should be conceived in line with Hintikka’s notion of modal individual; that is, in terms of a *world-line* which connects several apparitions of one individual across various possible worlds. The main idea is that individuals are relative to a frame and a modality. Then, given two individuals, their *world-lines* might split or merge, and their identity might be contingent. Hopelessly, I cannot give all the details here, but I can mention some expected results. For example, the identity between some fictional entities and real entities might be explained in terms of interpretation, by taking into account the reader’s perspective. This result is also the basis for an answer to some objections against the identity of abstract artifacts such as those expressed by Everett [2005]. With respect to the creative act itself, the identity through the process of creation is not (and need not to be) guaranteed. It is also possible to explain the process of re-creation; that is, when an author creates a new work about an already existent character. Here too, the identity is never guaranteed, but different *world-lines* might merge in some relevant possible worlds (compatible with the creation of an author or compatible with the story).

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## Is Fictional Reference Rigid?

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Are ordinary proper names *rigid* when they occur in fictional discourse? In this paper I argue that they are not, at least when we consider the core case of discourse constituting works of fiction, and also the case, dependent on it, of discourse stating the content of fictions. Kot'átko (2010, 94) argues for the opposite view: "proper names remain *rigid designators* in Kripke's sense ... even if transferred from "everyday" communication to literary texts". Friend (2000, 2011, forthcoming) has also argued that only such a view can properly capture a certain "object-directness" intuition that we have regarding the content of fictions. Both Friend and Kot'átko support the main claim I want to confront here, which Kroon (1994) – in a persuasive critical discussion of views of this kind, providing arguments complementary to mine – states thus:

- (R) Occurrences in fictional contexts of real proper names like 'London', 'Baker Street', 'Napoleon', and so on, are purely referential and take their usual reference.

I'll outline the main considerations against (R) that I want to develop in the paper. My view adopts from referentialists such as Braun (1993, 2005) the idea that assertions of 'Vulcan is smaller than Mars' have gappy contents. Assertions of atomic sentences with these contents are untrue, false according to the free logics that Braun opts for, neither true nor false according to the supervaluationism that I prefer. This captures the fact that these assertions are *wrong*, with respect to a dimension of evaluation (truth) essential to assertions; corresponding remarks could be made about questions or orders with such contents, vis-à-vis their constitutive norms. However, there is absolutely nothing wrong about the acts of fiction-makers who use empty names; there is, for instance, no appearance of "imaginative resistance" on the part of appreciators of such fictions.

Similarly, by placing features accounting for differences in "cognitive significance" between 'Hesperus is smaller than Mars' and 'Phosphorus is smaller than

Mars', or 'today is Tuesday' and 'tomorrow was Tuesday' (with the respective contexts of utterance coordinated so that indexicals and tenses have the same referents) at a different level than that of the asserted content – the “ways of believing” of referentialists such as Salmon and Braun, or the presuppositional level my own view posits – we capture the intuitive commonalities in “what is said” among utterances made by people otherwise with very different perspectives on what they talk about, explain communicative success (cf. Perry 2001, 5, 19), and, importantly, account for our reflective intuitions about the objectivity of many subject-matters for our representational acts (Schroeter 2008). A good case can be made that these commonalities extend to straightforward assertions of ‘Marlowe is a clever detective’ and ‘Holmes is a clever detective’ by confused speakers who have taken fictional stories for factual ones; the manifest differences in cognitive significance between such utterances would be accounted for in the usual ways.

However, as Lamarque & Olsen (1994) also emphasize, nothing of this sort can be said about the contents that fictions intend proper appreciators to imagine. While the mode of thinking through which we think of Venus when we assert ‘Hesperus is smaller than Mars’ is intuitively and theoretically irrelevant to what we assert, in that many other modes of thinking about it may do as well, the corresponding modes of thinking “about” Marlowe and Holmes provided by the relevant fictions are essential to their contents: no proper appreciation can ignore them; no proper appreciation can do without building the corresponding files, starting with ‘object picked out by the relevant ‘Marlowe’ naming practice’, and stacking into it all the information about the character derived from the fiction. (We should not be misled here by the fact, which Walton (1990) emphasizes, that not all propositions constituting the content of fictions are on an equal rank with respect to a proper appreciation; many can be ignored, while still having a good notion of what the fiction is about.) All of this applies equally well to non-empty singular terms occurring in fictions, such as ‘Napoleon’ in *War and Peace* or ‘London’ in *1984*.

To sum up, I do not think that there are good reasons to support the claim that either ‘Bloom’ or ‘Dublin’ behaves like a rigid designator with respect to the content of the utterances constituting Joyce’s *Ulysses*. In the first place, the descriptive content associated with those names (in particular, *person named ‘Bloom’/city named ‘Dublin’ in relation to tokens used in Ulysses*) is *not* intuitively irrelevant with respect to that content; in the second place, it is not intuitively the case that, when we consider counterfactual circumstances to establish whether or not they constitute the contents the fiction ask us to imagine, we just consider how things are with a single Bloom/Dublin.

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## Fictional Entities: A Quasi-Realist Approach

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Probably the most popular view of proper names is that *proper names* are *directly referential* expressions. In other words, they refer to individuals irrespective of the properties exemplified by these individuals. Woody Allen would have been Woody Allen even if he had not directed Annie Hall and even if he had not been a director at all. His name is due to naming conventions, not the facts of his life. The principle to the effect that proper names are directly referential can be stated as follows:

$$(PD) \quad (\forall x)(PN(x) \rightarrow DR(x))$$

*PD* is simple and intuitive. Another seemingly plausible postulate says that *fictional names* are subsumed under proper names (perhaps because of their syntactic form). This can be stated in the following way:

$$(FP) \quad (\forall x)(FN(x) \rightarrow PN(x))$$

Moreover, it is plausible to assume that fictional names are not directly referential. Follow my simple line of reasoning: to begin with, take arbitrary proper name (say, the most popular fictional name *Sherlock Holmes*). First, if *Sherlock Holmes* fails to refer, it is not directly referential (since it is not *referential*). Second, if this name refers, its referent must be a tall man, a detective, must live on Baker Street, and must have properties explicitly ascribed to him, so it is not directly referential (since it refers, but not *directly*). Be it as it may, this name is not a directly referential expression.

The principle that fictional names are not directly referential can be captured as

$$(FD) \quad (\forall x)(FN(x) \rightarrow \neg DR(x))$$

Unfortunately, these three seemingly plausible postulates together with an assumption that there is at least one fictional name, lead to inconsistency:

1. $FN(h)$	<i>assumption</i>
2. $FN(h) \rightarrow PN(h)$	$FP, \forall E$
3. $PN(h)$	$MP, 1, 2$
4. $PN(h) \rightarrow DR(h)$	$PD, \forall E$
5. $DR(h)$	$MP, 3, 4$
6. $FN(h) \rightarrow \neg DR(h)$	$FD, \forall E$
7. $\neg DR(h)$	$MP, 1, 6$
8. $\perp$	5, 7

Given this, the task is to deny one of these three postulates (trilemma). I will choose the road less travelled and deny the postulate *FP*. However, as the opponent of *PD* needs to propose an alternative theory of proper names, the opponent of *FP* needs to propose an alternative theory of fictional names. Indeed, this is exactly what I will attempt to outline in the rest of my talk.

I claim that the semantic function of *Sherlock Holmes* is similar to that of definite descriptions. Whatever entity is the King of France (if any), it must satisfy certain properties (being a human, king, member of royal family...). Likewise, whatever entity is Sherlock Holmes (if any), it must satisfy certain properties too (being a man, detective, inhabitant of Baker Street...). I will borrow an intuitive notion of *individual office (role)*<sup>1</sup> from Pavel Tichý<sup>2</sup> to develop a quasi-realist approach to fictional entities. The notion of individual office belongs to Tichý's (rather complex) *Transparent Intensional Logic*, but it can be fully understood and fruitfully applied beyond the original theory. Intuitively, an individual office is something an individual can be. Importantly, an individual office has *requisites*, for instance "the property of being a king is a requisite of the office of King of France, such that every occupant must have the relevant property." (Duží – Jespersen – Materna 2010, 128) Furthermore, offices have *properties*: the President of France is an eligible office; the President of France exists (is occupied), the King of France does not exist (is not occupied).

I will employ the above distinction to explain the sentences typically discussed in the theory of fiction, such as

- (1) Holmes is a detective.
- (2) Holmes is famous.
- (3) Holmes was created by Conan Doyle.
- (4) Holmes does not exist.

Every sentence (1)–(4) has (at least) one reading according to which it seems to be true. On the other hand, it seems that no one can be a detective, famous, created by Conan Doyle, and non-existent at the same time. However, we can do justice to seemingly true readings of (1)–(4). Being a detective is a requisite of Sherlock

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<sup>1</sup> These two terms (office, role) are interchangeable.

<sup>2</sup> See Tichý (2004, 710-748), originally published in 1987 (in German).

Holmes. This means that if there is someone fulfilling the role of Sherlock Holmes, this entity is a detective. This is literally true: it does not matter that the office of Sherlock Holmes is not occupied. There are two readings of (2); the reading that is true says that the role of Sherlock Holmes is famous. Next, what does it mean to create fictional entity? I think that it is absurd to hold that abstract entities can be created in the sense of bringing to existence (as abstract artifactualists maintain). Intuitively, we mean by (3) that Doyle picked some expression or introduced a new one for his character and chose some initial properties. This can be captured as a role property of being firstly described by Doyle. The sentence (4) is again a role property (the role is not occupied).

Perhaps the most serious worry for this approach is Kripke's (1972, 157) objection: "The mere discovery that there was indeed a detective with exploits like those of Sherlock Holmes would not show that Doyle was writing *about* this man." I will offer two possible ways out.

From the metaphysical point of view, the approach I am suggesting adopts a middle way between realism and irrealism (as understood in Sainsbury 2009). It is not a genuine realist approach, since it does not claim that there is a "robust" Sherlock Holmes (occupying the individual office of Sherlock Holmes); and it is not a genuine irrealist approach, since individual offices are abstract entities (but are no more "exotic" than numbers and sets).

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## How to Pick Out Dragons

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Names for fictional characters create familiar obstacles to theories of semantic content that take the semantic contribution of a proper name to be constitutively dependent on the referent of the name. What strategies are available for circumventing the obstacle depend at least in part on what metaphysical commitments we are willing to make with respect to the ontological status of fictional characters, and the obstacle provides at least a reason to explore various *realist* positions. The purpose

of this talk is to provide a partial defense of a *possibilist* or *non-actualist* approach to fictional characters and show that certain well-known objections, in particular objections related to how the reference of a name for a fictional (possible) object is fixed and the definition of *truth-in-fiction*, can be overcome. My response to these objections also facilitates an account of the *creativity* involved in constructing a fictional narrative, and of the relationship between fictional and modal discourse.

Possibilism is in particular associated with David Lewis, according to whom *in fiction f, p is true* should be analyzed as (e.g.) *in the closest possible worlds in which f is told as known fact, p*. (It is worth noting that Lewis's definition is not necessarily committed to a particular view on the ontological status of fictional characters.) Possibilism, arguably better than its alternatives, accommodates our intuitions about fictional discourse, consistently assigns the correct truth-values and truth-conditions to sentences in fiction – both 'Sherlock Holmes does not exist' and 'Sherlock Holmes is a detective' come out having both true and false readings, for instance – and may even help explain the basis for important elements of literary criticism, such as speculations about the psychology of fictional characters and how we can *learn* from fiction about universal or existential themes.

Even so, possibilism is not a popular option. One very influential objection, associated in particular with Kripke, is the *selection problem*: If fictional characters are possible objects and names for these characters are referential, how do we ensure that the name 'Holmes' refers to the right object? There are many worlds in which different individuals satisfy the descriptions associated with Holmes, and no non-arbitrary way to distinguish the candidates; yet given that 'Holmes' – like ordinary names – is supposed to *refer*, there can be only one Holmes on pain of contradiction.

I endeavor to show how a possibilist can meet this objection. Although possibilism faces other challenges as well, in particular concerning the rather robust metaphysics of modality the possibilist seems committed to, the selection problem has often been thought to constitute a decisive objection to possibilism on its own. My argument, then, is that if possibilism fails, it does not fail because of the selection problem. To show this, I will defend a view according to which 'Holmes' directly refers to Holmes, a possible individual; although there are descriptively indistinguishable individuals in other worlds, 'Holmes' refers to Holmes and not to those individuals. Accordingly, I reject an assumption needed to run the selection problem, namely that the referent for 'Holmes' is *fixed* by the descriptions associated with 'Holmes' in the stories. Instead, I suggest that Conan Doyle fixed the reference by a simple, stipulative decision to refer to Holmes: Since there are many equally good candidates, it doesn't matter which possible object Conan Doyle selected. He could just pick one. That is Holmes. Like ordinary individuals, Holmes has modal properties, and Conan Doyle just needed an individual who would satisfy the descriptions eventually satisfied by Holmes in *one* world in which he exists, and since (virtually) *any* possible individuals would fill the bill Conan Doyle could in principle have selected (virtually) any possible individual. Conversely, if it *did* matter which one Conan Doyle picked, then the central premise for the selection problem, that there are multiple equally good candidates, is false.

Allowing reference fixing by stipulative decision may raise certain foundational questions concerning reference. I argue that any reasonable theory of reference should accept that reference to merely possible individuals can be fixed in this manner (at least assuming realism about possible individuals). Indeed, reference fixing by stipulative decision can, if desired, even meet a reasonable version of an *acquaintance condition* on reference (versions of acquaintance that rule out such reference fixing will also force us to recognize that *many* names in natural language are not referential but need a different analysis; if 'Holmes' is not referential, the selection problem will not arise), and with a *causal theory of reference* if understood – as it should – as a theory of how referential relations are maintained within a linguistic community, that various uses of a name is properly linked to the source of the name, rather than as a requirement that there is a causal link between an utterance of the name and the referent itself. (There is independent reason to think that the causal-historical theory of reference is plausible as the first, but implausible as the second.)

My account gives us the following picture: When constructing the narrative, Conan Doyle started with a context set consisting of all worlds where the selected individual exists. Then, over the course of the storytelling, he eliminated the worlds in the set in which Holmes is not a detective, did not meet Watson, and so on. Even at the end of the stories, there will be many worlds left – many of Holmes's properties are not specified in the fiction – but those will all be worlds in which the same individual, Holmes, has different properties. (Many discussions of the selection problem in the literature run together the claim that there are multiple, indistinguishable Holmes candidates with the observation that Holmes is *incompletely specified*; these are importantly different issues.)

The approach allows us, unlike some other possibilist accounts, to elegantly capture how, in constructing the narrative, Conan Doyle can be said to have been engaged in a genuinely *creative* process: he freely chose which properties to ascribe to the initially maximally incompletely specified characters. Holmes exists in many worlds where he has different properties, and Conan Doyle chose how to build the relevant (sets of) world(s) that would serve as truth-makers for the stories. This freedom of choice is also what distinguishes fictional and modal talk: the difference is not a matter of the metaphysics or referential relations involved, but of a difference in the *goals* of such types of discourse; counterfactual talk is ultimately talk about the actual world, and how the context set is managed is constrained by the pragmatic requirement that the set be centered on the actual world. Fiction is not so constrained. Perhaps most importantly, the account that emerges support a straightforward Lewisian definition of truth-in-fiction: Truth-in-fiction-*f* is simply a standard box operator defined over the restricted set of closest possible worlds in which the claims explicitly made in the fiction are true, and since there is no indeterminacy of reference we do not, as critics of possibilism have sometimes suggested, need to invoke potentially controversial strategies such as supervaluationism.

# Fiction Cannot Be True

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The general consensus among philosophers is this: nonfiction and fiction are not demarcated by truth and falsity, and a narrative's being true does not imply that it cannot be fictional. Fictionality, on many views, depends on the pragmatics of the speech situation. According to the dominant theory of intentionalism, fiction and non-fiction then are in a 'mix-n-match' relationship with truth and falsity: both fiction and nonfiction can be either true or false. Intentionalists about fiction making, such as Greg Currie and David Davies, hold that fictionality is a property of a narrative that is intended to elicit not belief but imagination or make-believe in virtue of the audience's recognizing that such is the intention of the fiction-maker. Regardless of what states-of-affairs obtain in the world, a narrative is fictional if the fiction-maker intends the audience to imagine or make-believe its content and the audience recognizes this intention of the fiction-maker. Such an intention is necessary for fiction-making but it is not sufficient. According to Currie (*The Nature of Fiction*, 1990), if something created with a fiction-making intention is true, it can only be accidentally true, that is, true without counterfactually depending on real-world facts. According to Davies, the intentional construction of a fictional narrative has to flout what he calls the 'fidelity constraint': the reason for including such and such events in such and such an order cannot be to be faithful to what actually transpired.

Therefore, they both claim that in unlikely circumstances fictions can turn out to be accidentally true. First, there could be a fictional story where the fiction-maker thinks that she invents fictional characters, and it turns out that there are or were existing individuals that satisfy all that is predicated of the supposedly invented characters. Consider the example of David Davies: 'An author, Smith, composes what she takes to be a short fictional narrative about a family named Brown living in Montreal, Canada, whose apartment catches fire in mid-January and who are forced to move into a shelter. As a matter of fact it turns out that, entirely unbeknownst to Smith, there is a real family named Brown of whom all of the things narrated in the story are true' (*Aesthetics and Literature*, 2007, p. 35). According to Davies, the story about the Brown family is an accidentally true fiction. Secondly, a fictional story can turn out to be accidentally true, when a fiction-maker makes fiction using only genuine proper names. Suppose there is a work of historical fiction that only uses names of individuals who did exist. Fictionality is in the imaginative predication: the fiction-maker ascribes characteristics or deeds to individuals without having historical evidence. She makes fiction using real individuals of the past. If then, due to new evidence, it turns out that whatever was fictionally ascribed to an historical person is actually true or that the events and actions did happen, it would count as an accidentally true fiction without invented characters. Against these views, I argue that fiction cannot be true. In other words,

'being fictional' and 'being true' cannot be ascribed to narratives at the same time – they are incompatible.

First, the argument goes as follows. For Davies to be right, it has to be possible to refer to an actually existing entity without the intention to do so. Even though the semantic reference of a name such as 'Browns' includes any actual or fictional families with that name, in making an utterance, it cannot be the case that the utterer refers to any and all families named 'Brown'. If semantic reference is ambiguous, it is reasonable to expect the intention to specify who or what is actually referred to. Moreover, without knowing who or what is actually referred to, the utterance cannot be assigned truth-value properly. Differently approached, Currie might still insist that it is possible to make a true utterance about something without referring to it. However, this seems implausible. You cannot utter truth about something without referring to it in the sense of talking about that specific thing. A fictional narrative cannot be accidentally true in this way, which also applies to narratives that use only general terms. Even if everything that a fictional narrative contains is satisfied by the real world, at most one can say that fiction maker would have uttered something true if and only if she intended to refer to actual individuals. She *could have* but she *did not*. She intended to make fiction, and so she invented characters.

Secondly, an historical fiction that contains no invented characters can turn out to be true because the imaginative predications about the real individuals are accidentally correct despite the intentions and process of the fiction maker. My argument here is that in such a case, the narrative is accidentally true, however, it is not fiction. I support this claim by making a distinction between the propositional attitude intended by the author and the propositional attitude that is reasonable to assume. Since intentions, even fiction-making ones, can fail, it is sometimes advisable to categorize narratives based on the propositional attitude that is reasonable to assume to their contents. In the case of an historical fiction, the author intends the reader to make-believe or imagine some of the content instead of believing it. However, if it turns out that this content is actually true, the intended attitude and the reasonable attitude diverge: even though the author intends the reader to make-believe the content, it is reasonable to believe it because it is true. Unlike historians, the fiction maker did not intend to tell a true story, she intended to spin a tale. She did not follow Davies's fidelity constraint, but still, despite her intentions and process, she accidentally stumbled into fact and out of fiction in this particular scenario. All in all, I argue in the paper that fictionality and truth are incompatible. In imaginative thought experiments, it could seem that accidentally true fictional narratives are possible, however, I argue that this is just seemingly so. A narrative is either fiction or accidentally true but not both.

# The Semantics of Empty Names (II): Counterfactual Reference

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Empty names present some persistent problems to theories of names. I conceive the issue as one between metaphysics and semantics: Whether a name is empty is a metaphysical question; yet, at least pre-theoretically speaking, the semantic behaviour of a name does not seem to differentiate upon its being empty or non-empty. The latter gives reason to why a unified account of empty and non-empty names is preferred. My account also assumes the rigidity of names and that empty names are names; hence, empty names are rigid designators.

In an earlier paper, I argued that the prospect for an object theory or a pretence theory to provide a satisfactory account of empty names is dim. Object theories face the following problems:

1. Ontological issues
2. Category mistake
3. Essential ambiguity
4. Negative existentials
5. The story operator
6. Collective intentionality

Pretence theories also face two problems:

1. What it is to pretend
2. Intention

I conclude that the metaphysical costs of employing an object theory is too high, yet we cannot give up on the notion of object because pretence by itself does not provide a semantic theory either. We still need object as the organising principle to explain the semantic function of names and to explain how empty names are cognitively distinct from each other even though they all refer to nothing. I think we should give up on positing alternative referents, but to embrace fully that empty names do not refer. I propose instead another function to explain the semantic behaviour of an empty name. I call such function counterfactual reference.

Counterfactual reference is reference should the term be placed under a different context of utterance, rather than the actual one. I consider Kaplan's function of character (1977) an example of counterfactual reference applied to demonstratives and indexicals. Names have counterfactual reference, too, and empty names can be explained by employing it. The counterfactual reference of an empty name is reference in case the name became denoting. There could be many situations under which a name became denoting, thus there are also many possible worlds in which a counterfactual referent could exist. The function from

worlds to these counterfactual referents can thus be used to explain the semantic behaviour of an empty name. For example, it can be used to individuate empty names. Different empty names have different set of counterfactual referents. So they do not have to be vacuously identical just because they all have no referents. Knowledge about empty names can also be explained as information organised under these possible objects, so no descriptive theory is necessary. Descriptions can just help fix the reference (factual and counterfactual), rather than giving the meaning of a name.

Kaplan's character is semantic in nature. However, I think counterfactual reference of names is not semantic but meta-semantic. It should not surprise us that counterfactual reference can have different natures when different expression types are concerned. The nature of counterfactual reference varies according to the different ways an expression type defines its contexts of utterance. Grammar requires that the context of utterance of a demonstrative is determined by features of demonstration in question and the context of utterance of an indexical is determined by those who utters it. Failing to shift contexts accordingly would constitute incorrect use of the expression. Therefore, character is semantic in nature. However, the context of utterance of names is determined by a different mechanism. It is complex and depends on intentionality. Grammar of names requires that once a name use practice is established, it normally does not vary according to who utters the name in particular situations, especially when the utterer is a consumer rather than a producer. It is thus hard to imagine shifting the context of utterance of names and so the counterfactual reference function seems covert. This also implies that counterfactual reference of names is meta-semantic rather than semantic in nature.

I employ the tools of two-dimensional semantics and free logic to explicate the operation of counterfactual reference. I identify six types of sentence usage concerning empty names.

1. Fictional context with content determinable by information given by the producers of the name, such as (a) 'Sherlock Holmes lives in Baker Street' and (b) 'Sherlock Holmes does not play any musical instrument'.
2. Fictional context with content not determinable by information given by the producers of the name, such as 'Sherlock Holmes is 6 feet tall'.
3. Literary criticism concerning empty names from different stories or contexts, such as 'Anna Karenina is more beautiful than Emma Bovary'.
4. Intensional context concerning multiple intensional relations between an empty name and actual people, such as 'Tony Blair admires Sherlock Holmes'.
5. Intensional context concerning one-place intensional predicates attributing to an empty name, such as 'Sherlock Holmes is famous'.
6. Negative existentials claiming the non-existence of the referent of an empty name, such as 'Sherlock Holmes does not exist'.

The analysis of each type is listed below.

(1a) Sherlock Holmes lives in Baker Street.

	<i>i</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>k</i>
<i>i</i>	N	N	N
<i>j</i>	F	T	F
<i>k</i>	F	F	T →

(1b) Sherlock Holmes does not play any musical instrument.

	<i>i</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>k</i>
<i>i</i>	N	N	N
<i>j</i>	F	F	T
<i>k</i>	F	T	F →

In both (1a) and (1b), the truth-values along the diagonal proposition are consistent except in the actual context. They are determined by information given by the producers.

(2) Sherlock Holmes is 6 feet tall.

	<i>i</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>k</i>
<i>i</i>	N	N	N
<i>j</i>	F	T	F
<i>k</i>	F	T	F →

Information given by the producers is not sufficient in determining the truth-value of this sentence across various contexts of utterance. Hence, there are both T and F in the diagonal proposition.

(3) Anna Karenina is more beautiful than Emma Bovary

	<i>i</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>k</i>
<i>i</i>	N	N	N
<i>j</i>	T	T	T →
<i>k</i>	F	F	F

Once a referent or a counterfactual referent is fixed in a context of utterance, the attribution is rigid. Hence truth-values on a horizontal proposition are consistent.

(4) Tony Blair admires Sherlock Holmes.

	<i>i</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>k</i>
<i>i</i>	N	N	N
<i>j</i>	T	F	T
<i>k</i>	T ↓	F	T

The truth of an intensional assertion is assured by the mental states of people in that context of evaluation. Hence, values in a vertical proposition except the actual context of utterance are consistent.

(5) Sherlock Holmes is famous.

	<i>i</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>k</i>
<i>i</i>	N	N	N
<i>j</i>	T	F	T
<i>k</i>	T	F	T

Whether Sherlock Holmes is famous depends on the context of evaluation. Thus, there are consistent values across vertical propositions. However, Holmes can be famous or not famous in the story. Thus, the values in the diagonal proposition vary.

(6) Sherlock Holmes does not exist.

	<i>i</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>k</i>
<i>i</i>	T	T	T
<i>j</i>	F	T	T
<i>k</i>	T	F	F

Existence depends on the context of evaluation, so an existential claim is bivalent. 'Sherlock Holmes' is an empty name in the actual context of utterance; hence, 'Sherlock Holmes exists' is false in the actual world and 'Sherlock Holmes does not exist' is true. Once a truth-value is determined on a context of utterance, it will remain constant across contexts of evaluation because empty names, like names, are rigid designators. The truth-values vary along the diagonal proposition and the vertical propositions, however, because whether something exists or not is a contingent matter.

I make some claims about the counterfactual reference theory of empty names (CR):

1. A context of utterance is explicated simply in terms of the associated object in such context. However, how such object is determined is an explanatory problem. I adopt a causal descriptive theory of naming to go with CR.
2. My theory is broadly Fregean in the sense that I admit more than one semantic notion. However, I am not committed to identifying counterfactual reference as Frege's sense, or embracing all features of the latter. In particular, I do not reduce sense to definite descriptions, which I find a wrong reading of Frege at all. Frege's sense is cognitive in nature; however, counterfactual reference is not necessarily epistemic. It is simply about how reference vary across contexts of utterance. In the particular case of names, I claim it can, and it does, involve a combination of internalist and externalist determinants. Hence, I advocate causal descriptivism.

3. CR does not defend classical descriptivism. Yet it does not agree that the semantic function of a name is *exhausted* by its having a bearer (Kripke 1979) but is also explained by its having counterfactual bearers; so CR is not Millian either. However, CR does agree with Kripke that names and empty names are rigid designators and an empty name in particular does not refer to a possible-but-not-actual individual (Kripke 1980: 158). An empty name does not *refer* at all; it only counterfactually refers to a possible object. CR occupies an intellectual geography somewhere between Millianism and Fregeanism.
4. CR is not a pretence theory *per se*. It does not employ the notion of pretence and it does not need to. However, CR can be employed by pretence theories to explain what it is to pretend. CR is not an object theory either because a counterfactual referent is not a referent of a name. However, CR retains all advantages of an object-oriented theory such as allowing people to ‘share an understanding of a public proper name without sharing much (perhaps) any information concerning their bearers’. (Sainsbury 2005: 99)
5. A counterfactual referent is an object, not a concept. This avoids the problem of confusing object and function, reference and sense, or semantics and psychology.
6. CR is metaphysically austere because it does not posit anything other than concrete possible objects which are required by many accounts of modality.
7. I agree with Stalnaker (2001, 2003) that two-dimensional semantics is not to be given an epistemological interpretation. However, whether it is semantic or meta-semantic depends on the expression type involved. Moreover, against Stalnaker, I believe that some possible worlds are closer than others in characterising an alternative scenario of naming. Hence, some counterfactual referents have a stronger power to express what an empty name could be if it were to denote.

I would not have enough time to explain all my claims in the presentation. Moreover, this is work in progress. Comments and discussions are extremely welcome.

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## The Ontology of Texts and Textual Elements

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In my talk, I will introduce and explain a partly revisionary perspective on texts and textual elements. I will present and defend the following theses.

- (1) Texts are not, as often assumed, verbal structures – that is an oversimplification. Texts are complexes of signs, but they are also physical phenomena and meaning phenomena.
- (2) The meaning of a text comes in at least three varieties: meaning as intended by the sender, meaning as understood by the receiver, and meaning as described by third-party commentators.
- (3) Meaning as intended by the sender and meaning as understood by the receiver are in the final instance mental entities. Meaning as described by third-party commentators is abstract in nature, but not abstract in the classical, paradigmatic sense. Such meaning can rather be described as being a crypto-mental abstraction.
- (4) Textual elements – for example, words when used in speech or writing, or fictional characters when viewed as parts of fictional discourses – are also in the final instance mental entities which can also figure as crypto-mental abstractions.

I will use *Madame Bovary* as a recurrent example. I take as my starting-point Jerrold Levinson's statement that "a paradigmatic literary work, such as Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, is a verbal-structure-as-indicated-by-a-specific-author-in-a-specific-historical-context" (Levinson 2013: 50–51). The concept of a verbal-structure-as-indicated-by-a-specific-author-in-a-specific-historical-context is no doubt important and useful, but such a structure should not be identified with a text. Complexes of words – which is what Levinson has in mind when he speaks of a

verbal structure – are abstract phenomena, but texts as ordinarily conceived are also physical entities, otherwise they could not be read: one cannot read something which lacks physical existence. Also, texts as ordinarily conceived contain meanings, and meanings are not just linguistic expressions. Charles Bovary forms part of *Madame Bovary*, and Charles does not consist of words.

A look at authentic examples of ordinary language will show that texts as ordinarily conceived are in fact physical objects which also contain abstract components like words and meaning. As such, texts as ordinarily conceived are logical and ontological monstrosities – something which few theorists have been willing to realize – but they are very fit for use in everyday contexts: very practical to operate with as long as no great intellectual burden is being put on them. In that respect, they are similar to many other everyday conceptions, such as, for example, the concept of a book, which fuses into one ontologically impossible unit both the physical book volume and its immaterial content (compare Alan Cruse’s analysis of the concept: Cruse 2004: 112–114). However, in theoretically demanding contexts it is much better to dissolve the contradictory ordinary conception of a text into a cluster of simpler and more logical components: physical copies, a complex of signs, a textual meaning.

To speak of one complex of signs and one textual meaning in connection with a text is again an oversimplification, though. Roy Harris has argued, quite correctly in my view, that texts do not have any objective sign structures or any objective meanings. Senders intend to introduce signs and meanings by the sounds or marks they produce, and their receivers establish an understanding of what was intended to be signed and meant, and the sender’s version and the receivers’ versions will no doubt very often coincide in large part. But when they do not there is, as Harris puts it, no higher court of appeal (see, especially, Harris 1998: 145). There is simply no source from which an objective sign-structure or an objective meaning can arise. It is often thought that linguistic conventions of different kinds will supply texts with a more or less determinate meaning, but that is no more than an unproven, and to my mind unprovable, assumption. Nobody has ever listed the conventions of language and explained how they are supposed to work together to determine the meaning of specific texts, and it is difficult to see how anything like that could be achieved.

Instead of one objective sign structure and one objective meaning, then, one will have several sign structures and textual meanings to take account of in connection with a text: the signs and the meaning intended by the sender, the signs and the meaning perceived by the receiver, and the various signs and meanings described by such third-party observers as linguists, or literary critics, or textual critics, or teachers, et cetera. Where does that leave the ontology of texts and textual elements?

It follows from what has been said that texts as ordinarily conceived do not really exist (just as little as books as ordinarily conceived). That idea, sometimes called “eliminativism” about texts (see, for example, Livingston 2013, sec. 3.2) has often been viewed as absurd: who can possibly deny that Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* exists? But, as John Searle has pointed out (compare Searle 1995: 1–2),

there is a distinction between things which exist by human convention or human fiat (like, for example, traffic rules) and things which exist independently of human minds (like, for instance, stones, or stars). If mankind were wiped out, there would still be (what we call) stones and stars, but all traffic rules would have ceased to exist. There would no longer be any *Madame Bovary* either, although the physical exemplars of the novel would persist and although the mental processes associated with its creation and its reading would once have enjoyed brute existence. On the other hand, of course, *Madame Bovary*, like so many of our social inventions of various kinds, exists as a mentally constructed and upheld entity, whether conceived of along ordinary lines or as a cluster of different components with different ontology.

The various components of a text do indeed differ ontologically. The physical copies of the novel are physical. Flaubert's intentions were mental facts, and his readers' perceptions of his novel's sign structure and meaning are (were; will be) mental facts too. The sign structures and meanings suggested by third-party commentators are mental, too, as long as they are merely regarded as mental contents in their originators' minds. Regarded as public facts they are abstractions of a variety which I call "crypto-mental abstractions".

Standard abstract objects, like, for example, the number eight, are not supposed to exist in time and space: it would be meaningless to ask when the number eight came into existence or in what place it can be found right now. However, many abstractions are not like that, not even according to realists about abstract objects. As Bob Hale once expressed it, some clearly "owe their existence to mental activity, and are in that sense mind-dependent" (Hale 1987: 1–2). I would like to point to two different kinds of non-standard abstractions: crypto-physical and crypto-mental abstractions. The average weight of British 25-years-old men in 2016 is clearly an abstraction, but what is being referred to when that average weight is mentioned is, indirectly, physical facts. That is an example of a crypto-physical abstraction.

Words, and word-meanings, on the other hand, are something I would like to see as crypto-mental abstractions. *Madame Bovary* opens with this sentence: "Nous étions à l'Étude, quand le Proviseur entra, suivi d'un nouveau habillé en bourgeois et d'un garçon de classe qui portait un grand pupitre." (Flaubert 2016) The French word "garçon" is an abstraction (not a physical or mental entity), and so is its word-meaning. But to say that the French word "garçon" exists and means "boy" (here, "servant") is to refer, indirectly, to contents in the minds of competent speakers of French. As Kent Bach and Robert Harnish observed (1979: 133), "what words mean is what we mutually believe them to mean".

What is true of words and word-meanings in abstracto is also true of words and sentences when used: they are ultimately manifestations of mental facts. The speaker's meaning of the first sentence of *Madame Bovary* was a mental fact in Flaubert's mind. The readers' meanings of the same sentence are in the minds of the respective readers. A commentator's construction of the meaning of the sentence – say, the explication of the meaning of the sentence produced in class by a teacher of French – is a crypto-mental abstraction indirectly referring to how the

sentence is (supposedly) understood by competent receivers and was (supposedly) meant to be understood.

A fictional character, like Charles Bovary, is first and foremost a component of the meaning of a text, here: of the meaning of *Madame Bovary*. The meaning of the novel can be seen (with much simplification) as a complex of representations of mainly fictional states of affairs. Charles Bovary forms part of such representations, as in the opening sentence, where he is being referred to as “un nouveau habillé en bourgeois”.

The fact that the novel contains representations of Charles Bovary does not imply that there really exists a certain something, Charles Bovary, which the representations represent. Much as the representation of a unicorn is not actually *a representation of something separately existing*, but a *special kind of representation*, namely, a unicorn-representation, so the representation of Charles Bovary is a Charles-Bovary-representation (compare Goodman 1968: 21–22). There is nothing in the world of brute facts that the representation of Charles Bovary is *about*. We should not fall prey to what Jody Azzouni has called “aboutness illusions” (Azzouni 2015: 67): the illusion that all singular terms figuring in true statements must have referents. In a fundamental sense, fictional characters, like Charles Bovary, simply do not exist. They lack brute existence. They exist as elements of mental representations in authors and readers, and also as abstract mental constructs: as crypto-mental abstractions being the referents of statements like “Charles Bovary is a shy, oddly dressed teenager arriving at a new school where his new classmates ridicule him.” (Anon. 2016).

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# Fictional Truths and Understanding

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The paper is organized in three parts: a) an analysis of fictional reception in terms of information, b) a closer look at the reliability of fictional information, c) the relevance of my conclusions so far for the understanding of the exceptional success of fictional narrative and some related issues.

Most scholars agree that the concept of narrative fiction must be approached either from the perspective of the author or of the reader – you cannot just look at the text. There are good reasons to choose the latter approach, as Kendall Walton does. He analyzes the reader's experience of fiction as an instance of make-believe, and this concept is then analyzed in terms of imagination. My first proposal is a specification of this idea – the words "imagination" and "to imagine" may be used about many well-known experiences, such as sleep dreams which are often taken to be processes of real events as long as they last, or complements of perceptions (I can only see parts of this matchbox but I imagine that the rest looks so-and-so) which are supposed to be correct. My proposal excludes both the option that the fiction reader's imagination is falsely taken to be real or true, and that it is supposed to be true.

My specification of fictional imagination in terms of imagination consists of two theses:

- 1) the reader of narrative fiction experiences himself/herself as being informed that so-and-so is the case, and he/she experiences this against the background of the insight that he/she is not informed that so-and-so is the case. (The "so-and-so" is the fictive content of the narrative.)
- 2) The second thesis can look as a specification of the first one, but a closer examination shows that the two theses are logically independent; the second one runs: the reader of narrative fiction experiences himself/herself as being *directly* informed that so-and-so is the case, and he/she experiences this against the background of the insight that he/she is not *directly* informed that so-and-so is the case. The word "directly" refers to any form of mediating signs, such as written words, pictures and so forth; nerves, eyes, and brains are not instruments of mediation according to this stipulation – media are outward, social, man-made things. I claim that the two independent theses together characterize the experience of reading narrative fiction, the first focusing on the concept of fiction, the second on the concept of narrative.

However, it might be objected that the crucial term in both these statements, "to be informed", is not clear enough. Sometimes we say that the reader of *Crime and Punishment* becomes informed (in a literal sense) that a man named Raskolnikov kills a pawnbroker with an axe. In my use of "inform" and "information" this

is not right because the described event, the pawnbroker, the axe and Raskolnikov himself are made up. As a first move I suggest that being informed means becoming literally convinced about something new and true. In the two theses the little word “as” indicates that “inform” and “information” are to be taken in a figurative sense. In addition to this difference between the term “to be informed” in fictional and factual contexts, there is difference in strength: there is no place for doubt in our reading that Raskolnikov kills the pawnbroker. If we read in a newspaper that a female pawnbroker has been murdered with axe and believe what we read, new information may easily make us revise and even completely reject this first conviction. Even if we seemingly witness a man striking a woman with an axe, we may be mistaken about the striking, the sexes of the persons involved, the tool used and more. Does this mean that that fictional narratives immune to rejection or revision? In the wake of David Lewis article “Truth in Fiction”, scholars in the field of fiction theory are aware of how the body of fictional truths generated by reading a fictional work is partly determined by factual knowledge. This infiltration of literally true (or hold to be true) statements in “the worlds” of fictional works has the consequence that a reader may reinterpret a fictional narrative afterwards – the fictional information will be revised. My conclusion will be that that fictional truths are not totally immune to later revisions, but that they are more resistant to revisions than factual convictions are, and that they are totally immune to complete rejections. The (fictive) existence of unreliable narrators in narrative fictions does not affect this conclusion. The dividing line between the vulnerability of factual and fictional convictions can be given in terms interpretation: the fictional truths of correct interpretations of a narrative fictional text can never be proven wrong by later factual information. An alternative formulation runs: the *basic* interpretation of a fictional stands, whatever new factual information are supplied. According to both formulations it is and will always be beyond doubt that Raskolnikov killed a female pawnbroker with an axe, but the key terms are problematic – the very idea of a correct interpretation is controversial and the delineation of a “basic” interpretation is far from clear.

Still, if interpretation is taken to be an expression of understanding (which seems reasonable) both formulations point to what I believe is an important fact about the reception of fiction: fictional truth and fictional understanding are inseparable for the fiction reader. This “epistemic” quality of narrative fiction can contribute to the explanation of its extreme success – fictional narratives bring the satisfaction of certainty to reader. The closeness between understanding and (fictional) truth further contributes to the explanation why narratives are so easy to grasp for small children, (the distinction between fictionality and factuality does not apply here – small children simply “read” the stories as true), and it also has something to tell us about the infantile roots of narrative.

## Bivalence and Fictional Creationism

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In telling stories, we create fictional objects. I can make it the case that there is a green giant by telling stories about it. Conan Doyle created Sherlock Holmes, and Tolkien created an entire fictional universe. The fictional characters come to life through our acts of telling stories. This idea is popular, and some find it more or less uncontroversial. A few such voices:

When a writer of fiction introduces a name (with the normal kinds of intentions appropriate to her task), she thereby creates a fictional character. No one will disagree. (Sainsbury 2005:100)

By pretending to refer to people and to recount events about them, the author creates fictional characters and event. (Searle 1979:73)

Fictional entities are created in a straightforward and unproblematic way by the pretending use of names ... (Schiffer 1996:157)

Yet it seems clear that it is a conceptual truth that using the name 'n' in writing a fiction creates the fictional character *n*. (Schiffer 2003:53)

Fictional characters should be considered entities that depend on the particular acts of their author or authors to bring them into existence. (Thomasson 1999:7)

Kit Fine likens the creation of a fictional statement with what the carpenter does when building a table (Fine 1982). Salmon (1998) and Van Inwagen (1977) also present and develop creationist views of fictional characters.

Some find this idea more problematic, as Brock and Yagisawa (see Yagisawa 2001 and Brock 2010). Brock:

the purported [creationist] explanation is more mysterious than the data it seeks to explain." (Brock, p. 338)

and Yagisawa:

There is no way to understand the fictionality of fictional individuals without making them non-existent. (Yagisawa, p. 170).

I think that these points are well-taken, and that creationism about fictional characters is a dead end. In my talk, I focus on a slightly different issue.

One difficulty that so far has been too little discussed is how to square fictional creationism with ideas about bivalence. As mentioned above, Fine likens creating fictional characters with a carpenter's creating something tangible. There are a few central differences, however. Ordinary physical objects are commonly thought of as being bivalent — even if we do not know the answer, the object either

has or doesn't have a given property. No one knows how many freckles De Gaulle had, but there either was one on his left shoulder or not, even if it by now is too late to find out. If I make a table, it will weigh an even or odd number of grammes. This will be the case even if I hadn't intended to create a table weighing an even number of grammes. Perhaps the thought had never crossed my mind.

It is a natural idea that fictional objects are lacking in this respect: no matter how closely we delimit our fictional creations, there will always be aspects of them where our story is silent, and our creative efforts leave answers undecided. How many children did Macbeth have?

But these two natural intuitions lead us to a vexing issue: why can't I create bivalent fictional characters? When creating a man in a fiction, I have created something that does have many of the properties that men have, such as having knees. The question whether Sherlock Holmes has knees strikes most as a bit silly, even if Sherlock Holmes's knees are never mentioned in Conan Doyle's works. Just by saying "There was a man who lived in a hut in the woods. Every morning he went out to chop up logs...", and so on, I apparently make it the case that this man is more or less equipped as ordinary men: he has legs (with knees), arms (to swing the axe and chop wood with), and so on. But such story-telling will not make my fictional character fully bivalent.

It is not even enough if I include "There was a fully bivalent man, who lived in a hut in the woods." A "fully bivalent man" is a man who for every property either has it or doesn't (like the physical table I created).<sup>1</sup> But how do such limits to my ability to create fictional characters work? It is not enough that I haven't thought of every conceivable property beforehand — when telling the original story, I perhaps haven't thought of the protagonist's knees, but we still feel confident that the protagonist has them.

One strict minimalist response to this is to say that only the properties that are explicitly stated in the creative act are possessed by the fictional character. This solves the problem, and provides a principled response, but it seems that no one really believes it. We accept that I have created a fictional man, but we don't think that *only* the property of being a man is thereby assured. One can be a man without having legs, without having arms, and so on. Our reading and understanding of fiction doesn't abide by this strict minimalism.

This problem highlights that our understanding of what creating fictional characters amounts to is a bit more complicated than proponents of fictionalism tend to think. There are apparently limits to our ability to create fictional characters (it is simply impossible for us to create fully bivalent characters),<sup>2</sup> but the nature of these limits is not well understood. I discuss various ways out, and finish with giving a tentative diagnosis of the situation.

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<sup>1</sup> For this talk, I will leave aside general questions about bivalence of the type Dummett raised.

<sup>2</sup> Though perhaps one could want to bite the bullet, and say that I always create fully bivalent characters, but it is always impossible for me to know *which* character I have created. This option will be discussed briefly in my talk.

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## Compliance, Not Truth: Explaining Our Practice of Correcting Statements about Fiction

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If someone says that Sherlock Holmes lives in New York City, we might correct her by saying, “No, he lives in London.” This perfectly normal response, which is part of a very common practice in our discourse about fiction, seems to imply that it is *true* that Holmes lives in London and *false* that he lives in New York.

However, I argue that both sentences are false: because there is no such person as Sherlock Holmes, the claim that he lives in London is just as false as the claim that he lives in New York. The difference between the two claims, I argue, is that the claim that Holmes lives in New York is defective in another way, in addition to being false. Specifically, the claim that Holmes lives in New York is *noncompliant* with the stories told by Arthur Conan Doyle, whereas the claim that he lives in London is *compliant*.

My primary aim in the paper is to spell out this notion of compliance and use it to explain our practice of correcting others’ statements about fiction, without having to claim that any sentences about fictional objects (aside from non-existence claims) are *true*. To do this, I will rely on the notion of *loose use*, and in particular, on the claim that we engage in loose uses of ‘true’ and ‘false’ when talking about fiction. A secondary aim of the paper is to show that relying on my notion of compliance is preferable to taking the view that sentences such as “Holmes lives in London” are true. Specifically, relying on compliance allows us to avoid the ontological strain that often accompanies attempts to understand how sentences about fiction could be true.

I begin with the claim that sentences about fictional characters, places, and events are always straightforwardly false (again, unless they are non-existence claims)—that’s what makes these items fictional, after all. I take this to be a fairly intuitive point. A key difference between Doyle’s stories about Sherlock Holmes and, for instance, a biographer’s story about Harriet Tubman, is that the claims Doyle makes about Holmes are false (and known to be false by Doyle as he makes them), but the claims made about Tubman are true, assuming that the biographer is competent.

My next step is to make another fairly straightforward, intuitive claim: we can think of the author of a fictional work as engaging in pretense to varying degrees. For example, Doyle pretended that there was a detective called ‘Sherlock Holmes,’ and that he lived in London, but the city of London itself was not a part of his pretense because it is a real place. Then, when I (and other readers) talk about Doyle’s story, we can choose whether to play along with his pretense by pretending that there is a detective called ‘Sherlock Holmes’ who lives in London. This notion of playing along with the pretense is all I mean by ‘compliance.’ If I pretend that all the things in Doyle’s story are true, I am complying with his story. If I don’t, I am not complying.

How, then, can this notion of compliance be used to account for our practice of correcting each other’s statements about fictional characters, places, and events? After all, if I say that Holmes lives in New York, someone who hears me might well tell me that what I said was false, and that the truth is that Holmes lives in London. I argue that these sorts of corrections are actually a kind of *loose use* of the terms ‘true’ and ‘false.’ Because it is obvious that we are talking about fiction, it is also obvious that nearly all of the statements we make will be false, and pointing out that any of them are false would seem rather pointless. This makes the conversational context very well suited to a loose use of ‘false,’ where calling something ‘false’ means not just that the statement fails to match reality, but also that it fails to comply with the relevant author’s pretense. Similarly, a loose use of ‘true’ is made possible in which it applies to more than just sentences that match reality: it also applies to sentences that do not match reality but *do* comply with the relevant author’s pretense. So our use of the terms ‘true’ and ‘false’ when talking about fiction are perfectly apt; they are just nonstandard, loose uses made possible by distinctive features of conversational contexts in which fictional stories are under discussion (on this notion of loose use, see Carston 1996 and Bezuidenhout 2001).

This approach to our practice of correcting each other’s statements about fiction has a significant advantage over many alternative views. Specifically, it allows us to avoid having to postulate entities to serve as the referents of terms that appear to refer to fictional objects. If we are going to treat the sentence “Sherlock Holmes lives in London” as true, the most straightforward way to do so is to postulate that there is some entity, Sherlock Holmes, who has the property of living in London. This leads to strategies such as David Lewis’s (1978) postulation of possible objects that have the relevant properties in their own possible worlds and Saul Kripke’s (2013) notion that authors *create* fictional objects when they tell

their stories. These strategies involve a great deal of ontological strain that can be entirely avoided by sticking with the simple claim that there are no fictional objects, and therefore sentences that use empty names introduced in fictional works are always false (again, aside from non-existence claims). Because the notion of compliance provides an explanation of our practice of correcting each other's statements about fiction without having to postulate such entities, an explanation using the notion of compliance is preferable.

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## Fictional Characters as Representations

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In this talk I shall argue that fictional characters are representations. The argument for this metaphysical conclusion is abductive in character: construing fictional characters as representations allows us to offer a smooth account of otherwise problematic discourse about fictional characters.

### The semantics of fictional names

One aspect of the philosophical problem of fictional discourse arises from the surface level inconsistency in our fictional discourse: on the one hand we say

- (1) Sherlock Holmes does not exist,

on the other that

- (2) Holmes was created by Conan Doyle,

a thought that seems to entail the existence of Holmes. Our fictional discourse, then, contains both realist and irrealist elements. Many approaches prioritize one element at the expense of distorting the other. A better approach, advocated by Saul Kripke (2013), explains away this inconsistency by holding that fictional names have uses on which they fail to refer, and uses on which they refer to fictional characters.

When Conan Doyle wrote his stories he merely pretended to refer with an initial use of the name, 'Holmes1'. We can then exploit this use of the name from a perspective outside the fiction to expose it as a fiction by giving the following treatment of (1)

(3) Holmes1 does not exist.

(1) is true if we assume the following: (i) 'exists' is an existence-entailing predicate such that if 'a exists' is true then a exists; (ii) that any subject-predicate sentence containing an empty subject term and an existence-entailing predicate is false; (iii) that (1) is the negation of 'Holmes1 exists'.

Although authors themselves merely pretend to refer, they thereby create a fictional character that we can refer to with a derived use of the name, 'Holmes2'. This then allows us to treat (2) as 'Holmes2 was created by Conan Doyle'.

But why should we believe that authors create, often unintentionally, fictional characters in this way, and that there is such a systematic ambiguity? Both questions are answered by construing fictional characters as representations. First, when authors write stories they create representations, namely, the stories they write. Fictional characters are parts of these stories and so they too are created. Second, one well attested source of systematic ambiguity is the represented for representation metonymy where nouns which purport to refer to what is represented can be used derivatively to apply to their representations. For example, we can say at a waxwork museum or portrait gallery that Elvis and Madonna are on the ground floor, whereas Peter Pan and Cinderella are in the basement. Thinking of fictional characters, then, explains the ambiguity of fictional names that resolves the above surface tension in our fictional discourse.

### The semantics of predicates used in fiction

Although the above approach fares well with respect to (1) and (2), how does it account for sentences that mix elements of our realist and irrealist thought such as

(4) Doyle's most famous creation, Sherlock Holmes, is a consulting detective?

What Conan Doyle created is not a detective, and what is a detective (according to the story) does not exist. Kripke suggests that predicates such as 'is a consulting detective', are also ambiguous, and so whilst Conan Doyle's creation is not a detective in the standard sense, he is a detective in some derivative sense.

Once again we can motivate this ambiguity, if we take fictional characters to be representations, since predicates that are represented to apply to what is represented can be used derivatively to their representations. For example, there are four sculptures on Budapest's Chain Bridge that represent lions (lions1), and we can speak of the sculptures as lions2 as in 'the stone lions2 of Chain Bridge carved by János Marschalkó are rumoured not to have any tongues2'.

## The semantics of 'fictional character'

One unfortunate feature of Kripke's own semantics is that it turns out that fictions aren't about fictional characters. This is because Kripke does not recognise a use of 'is a fictional character' that is not existence-entailing and so can combine with 'Holmes1' to form a true sentence. I argue that there is such a use. Following Tiedke (2011), I assume that names are associated with not only a referent (or are empty), but also a tag which marks how they were introduced. Empty names introduced within fiction are assigned the FIC tag. This allows us to provide the following truth conditions:

- (5) N is a fictional F1 iff Fictionally, N is F, and 'N' has the FIC tag.

Holmes1 is thus a fictional character1 since 'Holmes' has the FIC tag and fictionally, Holmes1 is a person i.e. a character. So we can save the datum that fictions are about fictional characters.

We can then explain why Holmes2 is a fictional character2, as in 'Conan Doyle's most famous fictional character2 is Holmes2', in terms of the metonymy that allow us to apply predicates that are true of what is represented in a derivative way to their representations. For example, we can refer to a waxwork of David Beckham as 'the former Man Utd no.7' even if he is not represented as being a former Man Utd no.7.

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So by taking fictional characters are representations we can explain the ambiguity of fictional names, predicates used in fiction, and 'fictional character', and so can provide a unified attractive solution to the problem of fictional discourse.

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## The Upper Limits of Fictional Truth?

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Properly coming to terms with the nature of truth in fiction requires addressing a variety of related questions. One such questions concern the *upper limits* of

fictional truth. Does fictionality have an upper bound – is there a limit on the maximum number of propositions that can be true according to a work?

Here, we argue that there is no such limit. More precisely, we contend that the upper bound is equivalent to the number of possible propositions. To show this, we argue, building upon previous work (Wildman & Folde *forthcoming*), that there are universal fictions – i.e., fictions within which every possible proposition is fictionally true. This immediately entails that there is no upper bound for fictional truth – the number of possible of fictional truths (for a given fiction) is the number of possible propositions.

We then examine two arguments that purport to undermine our proposal. First, our argument relies upon the assumption that there are implicit or secondary fictions truths, which has been recently questioned by D'Alessandro (2016). In reply, we demonstrate that, taken together, the premises of D'Alessandro's argument entail a contradiction; consequently, his objection fails (and does not threaten our argument).

Second, the existence of secondary-universal fictions entails the truth of the *principle of poetic license*

PPL Every proposition is such that it can be in the content of some fiction which has recently come under fire from Xhignesse (*forthcoming*); this is problematic since PPL's falsity entails the non-existence of secondary-universal truths, and hence of our argument. However, we show that Xhignesse's objections turn upon mistakenly conflating certain propositions being true *about* a fiction with their being true *in* the fiction. Consequently, this objection also fails. The upshot is that fictional truth has no upper limit.

## A Common Problem for Possible-Worlds Analyses of Deontic and Fictional Discourse

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In my presentation, I will bring together considerations from formal semantics and philosophy of language about two seemingly very different types of discourse. The first type, exemplified in (1) and (2) is *deontic modal* discourse (about what is necessary and possible according to a certain set of rules, e.g. rules of etiquette). The second type, exemplified in (3) and (4) is *discourse about fiction*:

Uttered in the context of Justin Bieber's infamous 2014 arrest for speeding while driving drunk:

- (1) Justin Bieber must (given U.S. traffic laws) face charges.  
(plausibly true)

- (2) Justin Bieber must (given U.S. traffic laws) be driving drunk.  
(plausibly false)
- (3) Anna Karenina is Russian.  
(true when prefixed by an “In/According to the relevant work of fiction” operator, but not true simpliciter)
- (4) Anna Karenina is a fictional character.  
(not true when prefixed with an “In/According to the relevant work of fiction” operator, but true simpliciter)

My aim is to show, through the following steps, that a common problem affects benchmark possible-worlds-based accounts of deontic and fictional discourse:

- (i) My starting point is a highly influential account of modality proposed by Angelika Kratzer (1981, 1991, 2012). Her proposal builds on the following *biconditional analysis of modality*: ‘It must be that  $p$ ’ is true iff in all of a certain set of possible worlds,  $p$  is true. In the case of (1)–(2), this set of possible worlds is restricted to those that make true certain (contextually salient) circumstances of the actual world (here: that Bieber is driving drunk), and (within that set) are closest to deontic ideality (here: maximally obey U.S. traffic laws).
- (ii) Extending my previous results about deontic conditionals (2002, 2006, discussed in Kratzer 2012), I will argue that the Kratzerian analysis yields a broad range of unwanted truths, including the plausibly false (2), thereby creating a thorny problem, one whose culprit is the ‘if’-direction of the biconditional analysis (universal truth across the most ideal worlds is *insufficient* for the truth of ‘must  $p$ ’).
- (iii) This result motivates positing (instead of the biconditional analysis) a special “according to the contextually relevant corpus or rules” operator (*corpus operator*, for short) when accounting for deontic modality. This operator bears key parallels with the widely discussed “in/according to the work of fiction” operator (*fiction operator*, for short, e.g. Thomasson 2009, Sainsbury 2010).
- (iv) But there is a twist: for the corpus operator to allow for a genuine alternative to the Kratzerian account, it cannot be modeled on a fiction operator that involves quantification over possible worlds, a view proposed by David Lewis (1983, see also Hanley 2004). I will argue that the parallels between the corpus and fiction operators run deep; indeed, the thorny problem for the Kratzerian account helps pinpoint an analogous objection to the Lewisian fiction operator, one that is more effective against it than recent objections (e.g. in Sainsbury 2013).

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