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## PROPER NAMES AND MODES OF EXISTENCE

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Adres redakcji: Krakowskie Przedmieście 3, 00-047 Warszawa
e-mail: studiasemiotyczne@pts.edu.pl
http://studiasemiotyczne.pts.edu.pl/

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From the Editor

PIOTR STALMASZCZYK [*]

# INTRODUCTION: PROPER NAMES AND MODES OF EXISTENCE

*Hasta los llamados entes de ficción tienen su lógica interna.*
(Even so-called fictional entities have their own internal logic.)
Miguel de Unamuno, *Niebla*

This special issue of *Semiotic Studies* is devoted to proper names, and continues to some extent the line of research discussed in the contributions to the special issue of *Organon F*, *28*(1), on names and fictions (Stalmaszczyk, 2021). Modes of existence of proper names pose interesting challenges and research problems for semiotics, philosophy of language, and philosophy of literature. Contributions to this issue concentrate mainly on fictional names, fictional discourse, and narrative fiction, but also on empty names, descriptive names, and names of institutions. The authors employ and compare different theoretical approaches, and the discussion may have important consequences for theories of meaning and reference, and for ontology.

In the opening text **Hanoch Ben-Yami** offers five theses on fictional characters and their names. He claims that fictional characters do not really exist and that names of fictional characters refer to fictional characters. Hence, names of fictional characters refer to things that do not exist, which is a strong argument in favour of divorcing the idea of reference from that of existence. Ben-Yami concludes that fictional characters affect real people and events through representa-

[*] University of Łódź, Department of English and General Linguistics. E-mail: piotr.stalmaszczyk@uni.lodz.pl. ORCID: 0000-0002-1407-7610.

tions in art, religion and other practices, and these representations, unlike the fictional characters, are real, and can unproblematically have real effects.

**Petr Koťátko** focuses in his contribution on fictional discourse, discourse about fiction, and the dynamic relations between them. The theoretical framework assumed by the author is connected with his interpretation and re-interpretation of the current work by Francois Recanati. The author's aim is not to replace one analysis by its rival but rather to show that the same set of data (connected with fictional discourse) can be used not only to perform various functions, but also to perform the same parafictional function in various ways. Koťátko pays special attention to the dynamics of relevant language games, including the fluctuation between "serious" and fictional modes of speech and re-evaluations of the status of previous utterances.

**Enrico Grosso** concentrates on the identity of fictional characters across different works of fiction. The main research question is connected with discovering the mental tools engaged in thinking about fictional characters, since we need to understand how we conceive of a fictional character in our mind. In search for the answer the author focuses on the cognitive aspect of the problem, and suggests that Recanati's theory of mental files might provide an appropriate cognitive tool. Following Recanati, Grosso employs the notion of the indexed file, which has a meta-representational function. Indexed files gather into networks according to the causal relations that subsist between literary works. This idea provides a useful criterion to determine whether a certain character is original or represents a new interpretation of a character already invented by another author and present in a different work.

**Maciej Tarnowski** discusses proper names as demonstratives in fiction. He compares several theories of proper name reference (including traditional descriptivism and causal-historical theories), and claims that the best account of proper names semantics is offered by indexicalism. In this approach it is possible to assign different values to a proper name across different contexts, hence indexicalism provides a uniform analysis of fictional, metafictional, and existential statements about fictional characters. Tarnowski further offers a modified account of inexicalism about proper names, and introduces the apparatus of hybrid expressions, which can be seen as an alternative to the more traditional Kaplanian semantics for demonstratives.

**Elisa Paganini** devotes her contribution to some methodological considerations underlying the choice between realism and irrealism. Within common sense approaches, fictional objects do not exist. On the other hand, philosophers discuss whether we should commit ourselves to fictional objects or not, whether we are committed to abstract objects or at least to possible objects (i.e., objects existing in other possible worlds). To put it crudely, philosophers divide into realists (according to whom we are so committed) and irrealists (according to whom we are not so committed). According to a widespread test, if fictional objects are required to give an adequate semantic/pragmatic analysis of either intra-fictional or extra-fictional sentences, then we are committed to them; if we can account

for this analysis without them, we are not so committed. Paganini demonstrates that this semantic/pragmatic analysis of fictional sentences is not a decisive test in favor of either realism or irrealism.

Commitment to the existence of entities is further discussed by **Mirco Sambrotta** who advocates the view that empty names are neither proper names nor any other kind of interpretable expressions. According to Sambrotta, a view of this sort usually makes it easy to account for the meaning of first-order sentences in which they occur in subject position: taken literally, they express no fully-fledged particular propositions, are not truth-evaluable, cannot be used to make assertions and so on. Yet, as noted by the author, semantic issues arise when those very sentences are embedded in the scope of propositional attitude verbs. Such intensional constructions turn out to be literally meaningful, truth-evaluable, and eligible for making assertions. The novel solution put forward by the author is to combine a version of sententialism with the idea that *de dicto* reports play a distinctive kind of metalinguistic expressive function. Under this analysis fictional names are then regarded as a mere subset of empty names.

**Amalia Haro Marchal** observes that one of the main questions related to the semantics of proper names (including proper names in fictional discourse) is how to explain the contribution they make to the truth-conditions of the utterances in which they appear: do they contribute with their referents? Or do they make a descriptive contribution with a descriptive sense? The author discusses the answer to these questions offered by Manuel García-Carpintero, and his Mill-Frege theory of proper names, and argues that the combination of both García-Carpintero's theory of proper names and his theory of fiction-making results in a flawed conceptualization of the speech act of fiction-making and the proposal needs further adjustments in order to explain how it is possible for sentences containing proper names to acquire meaning when used in fictional contexts.

**Filip Kawczyński** looks at descriptive names, rigidity, and direct reference, and he argues against Dummett's and Stanley's objections to the direct reference theory. As it is well known, Dummett and Stanley make use of the notorious descriptive names to formulate the objection against Kaplan's argument in favour of the direct reference theory. Kawczyński attempts to show that Dummett and Stanley made wrong assumptions about the modal properties of descriptive names and the descriptions that are used to fix the reference of such names. The author argues, contrary to Dummet and Stanley, that descriptive names and their mother descriptions (i.e., the descriptions which fix the reference of the descriptive name) have the same modal properties. He also shows that descriptive names are not "naturally" rigid like proper names or indexicals. Instead, they are designed to be rigid by founding them on their rigidified mother descriptions. Kawczyński concludes that descriptive names turn out to be neutral about direct reference—they do not support it, but they also do not undermine the idea.

**Katarzyna Kijania-Placek** concentrates on a different set of data to most studies in this volume, namely names of institutions. She advances the thesis that the proper names of some institutions, such as the names of universities, head of

state positions, or agencies, have semantics akin to that of names of cities or countries. A reference by those names may select particular aspects of institutions, in the same way that a city or a book selects the physical, legal, or informational aspects of objects in the extension of the nouns. In her discussion she employs Asher and Pustejovsky's conception of dot-type semantics, where a dot-type is formed by two or more simple types but is not their ordinary sum. In the conclusion, Kijania-Placek mentions further possible applications of this approach: an explicit semantics for other institutional names, and for other artifacts, such as artworks.

The last contribution adds a historical dimension to the issue. **Ben Caplan** discusses the achievements of E. E. Constance Jones, one of the first women to study philosophy at the University of Cambridge. Jones distinguishes between "existence in fiction" (e.g., "Dorothea" in *Middlemarch*), and "existence in imagination" (e.g., "fairies"), and proposes a novel account of negative existentials, on which "fairies are non-existent" is both meaningful and true, given that there are at least two kinds of existence: one that fairies have (so that we can talk about them) and another that they lack (so that we can truly say that they "are non-existent"). Caplan argues that her view has the resources to respond to Bertrand Russell's objections—accounting for negative existentials does not require distinguishing existence and being, nor does it require rejecting the existential theory of judgment (according to which every sentence is about something that exists). According to Caplan her views about existence in fiction and imagination fit with some of our ordinary thought and talk about fictional characters and imaginary creatures.

Though the individual contributions employ different theoretical approaches and theories it is hoped that this special issue offers a coherent account of proper names (especially fictional names), their internal logic and mode of existence.

I wish to extend thanks to all the authors and the reviewers who have made this issue possible, and to Dominik Dziedzic for his excellent editorial support.

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Article

HANOCH BEN-YAMI [*]

# FICTIONAL CHARACTERS AND THEIR NAMES

SUMMARY: Fictional characters do not really exist. Names of fictional characters refer to fictional characters. We should divorce the idea of reference from that of existence (the picture of the name as a tag has limited applications; the Predicate Calculus, with its existential quantifier, does not adequately reflect the relevant concepts in natural language; and model theory, with its domains, might also have been misleading). Many puzzle-cases are resolved this way (among other things, there is no problem assigning negative existential statements the appropriate truth values). And fictional characters, although not existing, have real powers through their representations, which are real.

KEYWORDS: fiction, fictional characters, fictional character names, reference, existence, negative existentials.

1. Fictional characters do not really exist.
    1.1. Neither do they exist as abstract entities, mental entities or other things which have been suggested.
    1.2. There is no need to introduce different kinds of being, like Meinong's *sein* versus *sosein* (1904), or existence versus being, and say that fictional characters have the latter but not the former. No need to ascribe to fictional characters a kind of attenuated mode of existence: they simply do not exist.

[*] Central European University, Department of Philosophy. E-mail: benyamih@ceu.edu. ORCID: 0000-0002-4903-854X.

1.2.1. If we were to introduce such a distinction of kinds of being, what is meant by the would-be attenuated kind of being would be defined as whatever should be ascribed to fictional characters. This might create the illusion of an explanation and prevent us from resolving what bothers us.

1.3. I wrote above that fictional characters do not *really* exist, and not simply that they do not exist, because this is what we commonly say in this context. This is presumably because, when we talk of a play or story, there might be a character that is fictional in the story itself: in *Hamlet*, Rosencrantz is real while Gonzago is merely fictional. When there is no such possible ambiguity involved in what we mean, we drop the qualifier "really": "King Alfred existed, King Arthur did not" (Strawson's example, 1974, p. 210).

1.4. Moreover, to say that Hamlet did not really exist is not to imply that he had a different kind of existence, a non-real one. If a painting is not really Rembrandt it is not a different, attenuated kind of Rembrandt.

2. Names of fictional characters refer, to fictional characters.

2.1. So, names of fictional characters refer to things that do not exist.

2.2. And names of fictional characters *are not empty names*, since they *do* refer. To name nothing is not to name something that does not exist.

2.3. Referring to things that do not exist is done, for instance, like this: "One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin". That is, we use names, pronouns, definite descriptions, and other parts of speech in a way resembling that in which we use them when talking about real things, yet there are no real things to which we refer.

2.4. "Refer" is used here as doing similar work to that done in ordinary language by "mention" and "talk/write about", when they apply to uses of names, pronouns, definite descriptions, and demonstrative phrases. One says, "In our last class, we discussed the temperaments of fictional detectives, and mentioned Holmes and Miss Marple as examples"; or, "She wrote an excellent essay about Achilles and his attitude to Patroclus"—I am not attempting to introduce a *technical* sense of "reference": the puzzles in the literature arise from reflection not on any technical use but on the ordinary one. In this ordinary use, we certainly refer to, mention, and talk about fictional characters.

3. We should divorce the idea of reference from that of existence.

3.1. Some have figuratively described naming as putting a tag on the thing named, and reference as pointing by means of words. "When philosophising, it will often prove useful to say to ourselves: naming something

is rather like attaching a name tag to a thing" (Wittgenstein, 2009, §15; cf. §26); "proper names serve as a long finger of ostension over time and place" (Barcan Marcus, 1993, p. 203; cf. Black, 1971, p. 629). Since tagging and pointing usually tag or point at things that exist, this might have suggested that naming and reference too pertain only to things that exist (whether concrete, abstract, or of some other kind). Instead, we should acknowledge the limitations of these pictures of naming and reference. Moreover, we tag fictional characters by writing their names under their images in a book, or point at them in a film (namely, by tagging or pointing at their representations).

3.2. Another misleading factor has been the formalisation of natural language sentences in the Predicate Calculus and the interpretation of these formulas according to that calculus' standard semantics. From $\varphi(a)$ we can infer, $\exists x\varphi(x)$, in which the quantifier is considered existential, ascribing existence to something which satisfies $\varphi$. Accordingly, from "Hamlet killed Polonius", $K(h, p)$, we can infer, *there is someone who killed Polonius*, formalised $\exists xK(x, p)$, and this is interpreted as ascribing existence to someone who killed Polonius. Similarly, from "John (a real person) admires Dumbledore", we can infer, *there is someone whom John admires*, or $\exists xA(j, x)$, and again existence of that someone—Dumbledore—is thought to follow. The truth of statements about fiction and about fictional characters seems therefore to commit us to the existence of the fictional characters referred to in them.

3.2.1. We can see this reasoning at work in Kripke's writings. Kripke gives convincing examples which lead him to think that with respect to "fictional entities, such as fictional characters", "ordinary language has the full apparatus of quantification and identity". With this I agree. However, the applicability of this apparatus makes him claim, "everything seems to me to favor attributing to ordinary language an ontology of fictional entities", namely, "that there are certain fictional characters in the actual world, that these entities actually exist" (Kripke, 2013, pp. 69–70). It is clear that, for him, either the terms do not designate or they designate existing things:

> So in this sense, instead of saying that the name "Hamlet" designates nothing, we say that it really does designate something, something that really exists in the real world […]. When we talk in this way, we use names such as "Hamlet" to designate abstract but quite real entities. (Kripke, 2013, p. 78)

Earlier, Kripke mentioned the inference from $F(a)$ to $\exists xF(x)$ (Kripke, 2013, p. 56; see also Kripke, 2011, pp. 62–63). But this reasoning is flawed in several ways.

3.2.2. The Predicate Calculus does not represent adequately the logic of quantified sentences in natural language. I have argued for this in my work on the Quantified Argument Calculus and elsewhere (Ben-Yami, 2004; 2014; 2021), and here I shall be concise. The Predicate Calculus merged three structures which are distinct in natural language: particular quantification; "there is" sentences; and ascriptions of existence.

3.2.3. Natural language has no existential quantifier. Particular quantification has no *existential* import but *instantial* one, namely, it presupposes that the noun following the quantifier has instances, not that these instances exist. (This presupposition is not specific to particular quantification but is a common feature of quantification). "Some characters in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* did exist, but some did not" is idiomatic, and it assumes that "characters in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*" has instances, not that all these characters existed.

3.2.4. The interpretation of "there is" sentences as ascribing existence is also problematic. Consider, for instance, the idiomatic "There are several Biblical characters who never existed". Accordingly, interpreting "There is someone who killed Polonius" as ascribing existence to someone is not mandatory. If we are talking about reality, as we do when we say, "There was someone who murdered Caesar", then the murderer *is* supposed to have existed; but if we are talking about fiction, this need not be the case. Although existence is occasionally implied by the *topic* of discourse, it is not part of the meaning of the "there is" sentence.

3.2.5. "There is" statements amount to different things in different contexts. "There are prime numbers greater than 10", "There are good reasons for living in Europe", "There are circumstances one should avoid", "There are keys in the drawer": the kinds of being—if this is how we should call it—which these statements ascribe to their subjects differ widely. And likewise, the kind of being which "There are many literary characters who committed suicide" ascribes to literary characters is of yet another sort, namely, being mentioned in fiction.

3.3. Tarskian model-theoretic semantics might also have been misleading in this respect, because it assumes that reference involves a domain that contains the referents; accordingly, if we refer to fictional characters there must be a domain containing them. Construing this domain on the model of a domain of real things, the conclusion then is that if we refer to fictional characters they must exist in some sense. However, *if* we wish to use Tarskian semantics, we should also allow domains to contain things that do not exist, for instance the "worlds" of stories and

mythologies. In addition, if truth-valuational semantics is instead used, the very temptation to postulate a domain of objects containing the things talked about, whether existent or not, does not arise (see Ben-Yami, 2022 on truth-valuational semantics).

4. Many puzzle-cases are resolved this way.
   4.1. *In* fiction. When Tolstoy writes, "Anna Karenina was …" he is referring (writing about), and to the fictional character he invented, Anna Karenina. We do not consider what he writes as either true or false, probably because there is no independent fact to which it should answer. It is *the substrate* of truth and falsity as related to fiction.
      4.1.1. Fictional characters and their fictional worlds are only partly determined by what is said and assumed in the story, they are not partial descriptions of some fully determined possible characters. Moreover, although the story often describes a possible situation, sometimes it contains contradictions, either intentionally or not, and then the story does not describe a possible situation or world. But even then, a character might still be a possible character, if it would have been the same character even if the author had not included a contradiction in its description.
      4.1.2. (I am not using the idiom of possible worlds as adopted from the extension of model theory to modal logic. I think this semantics does not provide an adequate representation of our ordinary modal discourse and is therefore at least not helpful for our purposes here. My reservations are due to more general considerations than those specific to fiction discourse, and I shall therefore not elaborate on them in this paper).
      4.1.3. Tolstoy is not *pretending* to refer to Anna Karenina, nor does fiction generally involve pretence, if by that we mean "a way of behaving that is intended to deceive people" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). If the fiction is intended to mislead and be taken as history, then it does involve pretence, but this is rare.
      4.1.4. When a character within a story says something, this can be true or false, in the story, according to the way the author builds the story. Here there may be facts according to the story that determine truth and falsity.
      4.1.5. There are more and more complex cases. For instance, the author might put in the mouth of a character something intended as a reflection on life not only as it is in the play but also in reality. When Macbeth asserts, "Life's but a walking shadow …", we might understand this as a claim which not only expresses Macbeth's view in the play but Shakespeare's as well, and asses it as such. Also, an actor in a play can address people in the audience

and say something about them, and again this can be true or false. There is no exhaustive list of what can be done with fiction.

4.2. When someone says *of* a fiction, “Hamlet killed Polonius”, they are referring to Hamlet and Polonius, and what they say is true or false according to what is written in the play.

4.2.1. There are differences here in possibilities of truth values compared with talk about real things. While “Hamlet knew Rosencrantz” is true, because this is how it is according to Shakespeare’s play, “Hamlet was taller than Rosencrantz” is neither true nor false, because the play does not contain anything explicit or implicit about it. This kind of indeterminacy does not exist with respect to real things.

4.2.2. It is not that “Hamlet killed Polonius” has an implicit operator preceding it, say “according to the play”, the sentence’s logical form being “according to the play, Hamlet killed Polonius” (whatever might be meant by “implicit operator”). Rather, the sentence has the same form as “Brutus killed Cesar”, but while the latter is determined as true or false according to what really happened, the former is determined as such according to what is said or implied by the play.

4.2.3. When there are several stories about the same character, all equally authoritative (e.g., different versions of the legends of King Arthur), we relativise and consider the statement true according to this story but false according to that one: the statement is not simply true or false.

4.2.4. This relativization to a version again does not show the existence of an implicit modifier, “according to the story”, when there are not several versions of the story. Rather, the non-modified sentence, “Hamlet killed Polonius”, can be said to *presuppose* a unique authoritative fiction.

4.2.4.1. Many statements presuppose some facts for them to make sense. By presupposing these facts, they do not claim them to hold. For instance, when I say “The soup is delicious!”, I presuppose an agreement in taste between people, but I do not claim that people agree in their tastes. If it turns out that someone else does not like the soup, I might replace my former statement by, “The soup is tasty for me”, but this does not mean that an adverbial modification like “for me” is in some sense implicitly present already in the former statement. Rather, the former statement was made on certain assumptions, which, if shown wrong, might make it necessary to retract it and replace it by a relative assertion.

4.2.5. There are also cases such as reality vs. fiction, or authoritative version vs. fanfiction, in which a modifier is not needed when making statements about the former, but it is for statements about the latter. For instance, "Although Sharon Tate was murdered by Charles Manson's people, in Tarantino's *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, she was not". It is not that the first conjunct involves, in some sense, an implicit "in reality" modifier.

4.3. When one says, "The Romans worshiped Jupiter", one is referring to that mythical god, Jupiter, who did not really exist, and says something about the Romans' attitude to him. This is either true of false.

4.3.1. The fact that this reference does not involve any commitment to existence allows us to say in one and the same statement, "In this temple, the Romans worshipped both Jupiter and Augustus", referring to a real as well as to a mythical object of worship, without any ambiguity in the verb we use.

4.4. Negative Existence Statements. "Hamlet did not really exist"; "King Alfred existed, king Arthur did not": as reference is independent of existence, these are non-problematically true. We refer, e.g., to Hamlet, that non-existent fictional character, and truly say of him that he did not exist. Similarly, we might be wrong in an affirmative existential when we say, for instance, "Noah did exist, although Adam and Eve did not".

5. The Power of Fiction. We say of fictional characters that they have influenced our culture and people's life. How can non-existent things have such powers? Fictional characters affect real people and events through their *representations* in art, religion, and possibly other practices. (By contrast to fictional characters, real people influence us not only through their representations). The representations, unlike the fictional characters, *are* real, and can unproblematically have real effects. This is what we count as real powers of fictional characters. And the representations are themselves produced by real people.

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Article

PETR KOŤÁTKO *

# FICTIONAL NAMES, PARAFICTIONAL STATEMENTS AND MOVES ACROSS THE BORDER (DISCUSSION WITH FRANÇOIS RECANATI)

SUMMARY: The paper focuses on fictional discourse, discourse about fiction and dynamic relations between them. The immediate impulse came from François Recanati and his recent analysis of parafictional statements (performed by uttering sentences like "In Conan Doyle's stories, Sherlock Holmes is a detective who solves mysteries"). Confrontation of basic theoretical assumptions concerning functions of fictionals names, status of fictional characters, the role of pretence, etc. (Sections 1 and 2) results in an alternative analysis: unlike Recanati's version, it does not assume the switch to the mode of pretence as an ineliminable part of parafictional statements (3, 4). The author's aim is not to replace one analysis by its rival but to show that the same sentence can be used not only to perform various functions, but also to perform the same (here: parafictional) function in various ways—and generally to demonstrate the variety of language games going on in this sphere (5). Special attention is paid to their specific dynamics, including fluctuation between "serious" and fictional mode of speech and re-evaluations of the status of previous utterances, serving to preserve the continuity of conversation or restore it on a new basis (6).

KEYWORDS: narrative fiction, fictional names, parafictional statements, pretence, mixed discourse.

* Czech Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy. E-mail: kotatko@flu.cas.cz. ORCID: 0000-0002-7090-5783.

This paper was inspired by François Recanati's analysis of a special kind of statements familiar from our discourse about fiction—statements we can make when uttering sentences like

($1_{FO}$) In Conan Doyle's stories, Sherlock Holmes is a detective who solves mysteries,

or simply

(1) Sherlock Holmes is a detective who solves mysteries.

If nothing unexpected happens in the following pages, we will have opportunity to appreciate Recanati's proposal, but this appreciation will not amount to saying that it provides us with *the* correct analysis of what is going on when we use such a sentence to make a parafictional statement. Rather, it will amount to saying that it properly specifies *one of the moves* which may but need not be present in making a parafictional statement by uttering such a sentence. The move consists in a switch to the mode of pretence, serving to *demonstrate* (rather than describe in an uninvolved manner) a portion of pretence prescribed by Conan Doyle's stories to their readers. I will argue that such a move is not necessary and in some cases is either blocked or simply missing due to the circumstances. Obviously, that is not a reason to reject Recanati's analysis in general, in favor of its straightforwardly descriptive rival, which does not include any shift to the mode of pretence, nor any simulation of such a move. Instead, I will suggest to approach both kinds of analysis as showing that one and the same sentence can be used not only to perform various functions,[1] but also to perform the same function in various ways.

Before this happens, we will have to go through some basic assumptions concerning the functions of fictional names in their primary use, i.e., within the texts of narrative fiction, the role of pretence in this sphere, the status of fictional characters etc. (Sections 1 and 2). An interpretation of parafictional uses of sentences like ($1_{FO}$) or (1), resulting quite straightforwardly from these assumptions, will be confronted with the use of the same sentences within a "parasitic" fictional discourse inspired by Conan Doyle's stories (Section 3). Then we will be in a position to appreciate Recanati's analysis (in Section 4) as a combination of elements recognizable in fictional and parafictional use of sentences like ($1_{FO}$) or (1), when analyzed in a way suggested in Section 3. The confrontation of both approaches will result in a pluralistic outcome advertised above (Section 5). Then we will pay attention to examples of a dynamic kind of discourse fluctuating be-

[1] As Recanati reminds us, "one and the same sentence containing a fictional name can be used in different ways, just as the fictional name itself can be used in different ways. Thus the same sentence can be fictional in some uses, parafictional in others, metafictional in yet others" (2018, n. 1).

tween parafictional and fictional mode of speech (Section 6). After our appreciation of Recanati's analysis in previous sections, this will serve as another example of the permeability of the border between fictional and "serious" discourse.

## 1. Fictional Names and the Role of Pretence

Recanati shares the widely (though not commonly) adopted view that the use of a fictional name such as "Sherlock Holmes" within a fictional text does not serve to refer to anything, neither to a real person of flesh and blood nor to an abstract entity. But, as he adds, we can and typically (for good reasons) do pretend that it has a referent and what results from this pretence is "fictitious reference to an ordinary object, rather than genuine reference to a fictitious object" (Recanati, 2021, p. 4).

Outside the fictional context the same name can be used to refer to an abstract artefact, like in the metafictional statement

(0) Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character created by Conan Doyle in 1887.

So far it seems that we are in full agreement concerning the role of pretence with respect to fictional names. However, a closer look shows that this agreement has its limits. For instance, Recanati says:

> According to the simulation view, these names [that is, fictional names used in fictional contexts] do not actually refer to anything. Reference is merely simulated: the author does as if he (or the narrator whose role he is playing) was referring to particular individuals using these names. (2021, p. 14)

The disagreement I have indicated concerns the role of pretence in the author's creative acts. Recanati makes a similar point in various places—here is one concerning assertions: "[t]he author of the fiction pretends to make assertions, i.e., to report facts of which s/he has knowledge" (2021, p. 4).[2] And here is, for comparison, David Lewis' classical formulation to which Recanati appeals: "[s]torytelling is a pretense: the author pretends that what he does is truth-telling about matters whereof the teller has knowledge" (1983, p. 266).

These are just examples of what I take to be a widely shared myth assigning a crucial role to the empirical author's pretence in the constitution of narrative fiction, a myth ratified by the biggest names in the field, including John Searle (e.g., 1975, pp. 327, 331), Gareth Evans (e.g., 1982, p. 353), Stephen Schiffer (e.g.,

[2] In a previous paper on this topic Recanati also speaks about the author's pretended assertions, but then he adds: "[o]r rather: the utterance is presented as made by someone (the fictional narrator) who has knowledge of the fact which the utterance states" (2018, p. 2). This is compatible with the view I defend below. Nevertheless, after this (promising) turn the text continues by speaking about the alleged author's pretending to refer to real individuals.

2003, p. 52), Amie Thomasson (e.g., 2003, p. 149), Saul Kripke (e.g., 2013, p. 17), to mention just a few. I believe, on the contrary, that the author's only relevant achievement, necessary and sufficient for creating a literary work of narrative fiction, consists in writing a text whose literary functions *require response* in the mode of pretence on the part of its readers (see, e.g., Currie, 1990; Friend, 2011; Walton, 1990 for a similar view). On the most general level, the relevant response can be specified as follows:

**Scheme (*N*).** The literary functions of a text of narrative fiction require that the reader approaches$_{AI}$[3] its sentences as records of utterances of an inhabitant of the real world—the narrator, who tells us what has happened in this world. The role of the reader further includes her assigning$_{AI}$ a priori but not irrevocable credibility to the narrator's utterances.[4]

To create a text requiring and prompting such moves in the mode of pretence (i.e., to write a text of narrative fiction) certainly does not depend on the author's participating in these moves.[5] Nobody will deny that a well-trained liar can produce in his audiences a belief that *p*, without himself believing that *p*. Why not to admit that a writer can deliberately produce in her readers a belief$_{AI}$ that *p* without herself believing$_{AI}$ that *p*? Correlatively, the reader's approaching a text as a piece of narrative fiction does not require the assigning of any kind of pretence to its author: it simply amounts to approaching the text as designed to function in the way specified above.[6]

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[3] The subscript AI attached to a noun, verb or adjective will indicate the mode of pretence or, as I will occasionally say, the *as if* mode. In accordance with widely shared practice, I will use synonymously expressions like: "to pretend to believe that *p*", "to believe$_{AI}$ that *p*" (to be read: to believe that *p* in the *as if* mode), to "make-believe that *p*" and to "imagine that *p*" (in the sense of propositional imagination, rather than mental imagery). This verbal abundance will prove necessary in our reactions to various authors with differing terminological preferences.

[4] It will be withdrawn if the narrator proves to be unreliable in some respect(s); and it will be pointless if the whole picture of the world, presented in the text, will not leave space for anything like facts which could make our utterances true (as is the case, e.g., in Beckett's later prosaic works; cf. Koťátko, 2012; 2016). Needless to say, the requirements specified in *Scheme N* apply solely to narrative fiction in the strict sense and not, for instance, to texts presenting themselves as providing the reader with direct access (unmediated by any narrative performance) to what is going on in somebody's mind (cf. Chatman, 1978, Chapter 4 about "stream of consciousness" and other cases of "nonnarated stories").

[5] No doubt, the author is free to pretend whatever he or she wishes when working on the text. For instance, he can imagine that he is Casanova writing his memoirs (and hence that what he does is "truth-telling about matters whereof he has knowledge"), that the Italian names he uses refer to his real amanti, etc. This might be inspiring but is totally irrelevant for the status of the resulting text.

[6] If we insist that the assumed author's intention is relevant for our approaching her text as a piece of fiction, then it is the intention to produce certain make-believes on the

The assumption$_{AI}$ that the sentences we find in a text of narrative fiction are records of utterances of a real inhabitant of our world (the narrator), telling us what happened in this world (cf. *Scheme N* above), includes the assumption$_{AI}$ that the names occurring within these sentences function in the same way as the names used in everyday conversation. In other words, the reader is supposed to assume$_{AI}$ that the persons spoken about by the narrator were given their names in some kind of baptism, quite independently of the narrator's performance, were then continuously referred to by means of those names and the narrator has simply joined in this practice. Presented as a demand imposed by the narrative functions of the text on the reader, it amounts to this:

**Principle (*R*).** The occurrence of an expression which looks and behaves like a proper name in a text of narrative fiction indicates that the reader should assume$_{AI}$ that in this stage of narration the narrator utters a proper name to refer to that individual which has been assigned that name at the beginning of the chain to which this narrator's utterance belongs.[7]

This provides us with a simple principle of identification$_{AI}$ of, let us say, the person we are thinking about under the name "Emma" when reading Flaubert's text. It is the person uniquely satisfying *Description D* of the kind specified above in *Principle R*:

**Description (*D*).** The person to whom the name "Emma" has been assigned at the beginning of the chain to which these narrator's utterances belong.

The world to which this description is to be applied$_{AI}$ is fixed in advance as the actual world—by our locating$_{AI}$ the narrative performance and entities referred to by the narrator in this world. However, we are supposed to assume$_{AI}$ that *D* identifies the referent of the name "Emma" rigidly: in other words, with respect to all possible worlds it identifies Emma as that person who satisfies the *Description D* in the actual world. Within this framework, it should be clear that the *Description D* plays just the reference-fixing role, rather than the role of the

part of the readers. That is one of the basic assumptions of the "fictive utterance theory of fiction" (cf., e.g., Davies, 2012).

[7] Let us imagine someone asking: "You are just saying what we are required to *pretend* concerning an expression like 'Emma Bovary', namely that it is a proper name used by the narrator to refer to a real person. But what is it *in reality*?" The answer is quite straightforward: "You have just said that: it is an expression such that its functions within a text of narrative fiction require that it is interpreted$_{AI}$ as …" (cf. *Principle R*). This is a complete semantic characteristics specifying (not specifying$_{AI}$) the role played by this expression in its primary use.

meaning of the name "Emma". Hence, by appealing to *D* we do not re-establish the traditional descriptive theory of names in the field of narrative fiction.[8]

The *Description D* could be called "parasitic", "nominal" or "formal", because its identificatory force is parasitic upon the reference$_{AI}$ to the narrator's utterances and to the general mechanism of the functioning of names. Its informational content is extremely poor—but precisely owing to this deficit it enables us to identify$_{AI}$ the individual we think about as Emma (and distinguish her among all the Emmas in the universe) from the first occurrence of the name "Emma" in Flaubert's text. And to that very individual we then assign$_{AI}$ all the non-parasitic descriptions we collect when reading the text—while assuming$_{AI}$ that she is fully determinate also in all other obligatory respects not mentioned in the text.[9] In other words, we learn something new about Emma on almost every new page; yet we can think about her in quite a determinate way from the first encounter with her name in the text, due to the *Description D*.

## 2. Assumed$_{AI}$ Referents of Fictional Names Versus Fictional Characters

When Recanati specifies the relation between the fictional use of fictional names (primarily their use within the texts of narrative fiction) and their metafictional use (in our "serious" talk about fiction), he presents the former kind of use as basic and says, among other things: "[t]he practice of fiction, based on pretence, is what gives birth to the abstract artefacts which supervene on it and can in turn be referred to in metafictional sentences […]" (Recanati, 2021, p. 4). I cannot but agree—with the addition that, if my comments in Section 1 are right, the phrase "the practice of fiction based on pretence" should be unpacked as referring, on the author's side, not to her alleged "initial pretence"[10] but to her creating a text with literary functions requiring and prompting pretence on the part of its readers. On the readers' side, "the practice of fiction based on pretence" refers to their moves in the mode of pretence made in response to that requirement. Let me now say a few words about my understanding of the relation between these moves (in particular those consisting in assuming$_{AI}$ the real flesh and blood referents of fictional names) and literary characters, understood as elements of the construction of the literary work and hence as abstract artefacts.

[8] The descriptivist account of fictional names has been defended, e.g., by García-Carpintero (2015; cf. Koťátko, 2016 for my reply).

[9] For the discussion of the last point, see Koťátko, 2010, Section 4. Moreover, it makes good sense for us as cooperative readers to imagine alternative scenarios in which the assumed$_{AI}$ referents of fictional names have acted differently than we are told in the book, and different things have happened to them (cf. Friend, 2011, p. 188 and the note 27 bellow).

[10] Evans (1982, p. 353) speaks about "the author's deliberate initial pretense" which consists in "pretending to have knowledge of things and episodes".

First of all, both should be strictly distinguished.[11] For the readers are certainly not supposed to assume, either straightforwardly or in the *as if* mode, that the name "Emma", as it appears in Flaubert's text, refers to an abstract entity which had a love affair with another, equally promiscuous abstract entity called "Rodolphe", deceiving thereby a pitiable abstract entity called "Charles". However, we should admit that when reading Flaubert's text, we can not only assume$_{AI}$ the existence of Emma as a *real human being* of flesh and blood, in order to make sense of the story—but at the same time (in the same act of reading) appreciate the *fictional character* called "Emma" as an ingenious literary construct. To be sure, there is a direct connection between these two moves. On the one hand, the literary functions of Flaubert's text require us to assume$_{AI}$ the existence of Emma as a real person (identified$_{AI}$ in a way specified in Section 1) and attribute$_{AI}$ to her the properties we find described in the text. On the other hand, precisely the fact that the literary functions of the text require us to make such moves, makes Emma Bovary one of the characters of Flaubert's novel, that is, one of the elements of its literary structure. Correlatively, Emma as a literary character can be identified precisely by listing the demands which this element of the structure of the novel imposes on us. As follows from our preceding discussion, the list includes assumptions the reader has to accept$_{AI}$ in order to let this element of the composition of the novel do its work for her, namely:

(1) the assumption that there exists precisely one person referred to by the narrator's utterances of the name "Emma" (namely the person to whom that name has been assigned at the beginning of the chain to which these utterances belong);

(2) the assumption that that person married a young doctor called "Charles Bovary", etc.

As for the non-parasitic properties of the kind mentioned in (2), they belong to the character called "Emma" in the way just specified; however, one might prefer some simpler and more elegant way of expressing this complex relation. Perhaps we can borrow Edward Zalta's well-known terminological distinction between two kinds of predication, *exemplify* versus *encode*, interpreting it for our purposes in the following way. First, as Flaubert's readers, we are supposed to assume$_{AI}$ that Emma, a person of flesh and blood, *exemplifies* the non-parasitic properties $P_1$, $P_2$, …, $P_n$, which we collect when reading the text. Second, this

[11] Here is an example supposed to illustrate the practical importance of this distinction. The question, "Is Dante's Ulisse (to be found in the 26th Canto of *Inferno*) identical with Homer's Odysseus?" has two different readings: (1) Do the literary functions of Dante's *Inferno* require that we take$_{AI}$ the occurrences of the name "Ulisse" as referring to the same person as the occurrences of the name "Ὀδυσσεύς" in *The Odyssey*? (2) Is Dante's Ulisse the same character as Homer's Odysseus? I suppose everybody will agree that the reply to the first question is "yes", while the reply to the second is "no" (for more on this, see Koťátko, 2017, pp. 329–330).

entitles us to say that Emma as a fictional character, i.e., as a unique literary construct, *encodes* the properties $P_1$, $P_2$, …, $P_n$. In other words, it was part of Flaubert's construction of the character called Emma that he "encoded in it" the properties $P_1$, $P_2$, …, $P_n$. And he did so by writing a text which would function only for the reader who assumes$_{AI}$ that there exists a real person called Emma who *exemplifies* the properties $P_1$, $P_2$, …, $P_n$. So, the reader's "decoding" this part of the construction of the novel consists in her accepting$_{AI}$ this assumption.

The essential relation between the flesh and blood individuals assumed$_{AI}$ as the referents of fictional names (in their use within fiction) and fictional characters as components of the structure of a work of narrative fiction might motivate us to approach both as one entity viewed from two different perspectives. Recanati (2018, Section VI) discusses a specific version of this approach, based on the concept of "dot-objects" involving various "facets" (e.g., Pustejovsky, 1995). Then the distinction we have been speaking about takes the form of a difference between two facets of the same composed object: the contrast itself does not thereby become less sharp or less theoretically important. As to the relation between both "facets", Recanati presents it so that "the flesh and blood individual […] is the internal facet of the cultural object" (2018, p. 18). Analogically, from the perspective of the theory of mental files, Recanati approaches the concept of a particular fictional character as a "metafictional file (about the abstract artefact) containing a pointer to the fictional file (about the flesh and blood individual portrayed in the fiction)" (2018, p. 22).

These are useful specifications of the relations holding within certain theoretical frameworks. However, neither these, nor the distinction between exemplifying and encoding, taken in themselves, can be regarded as an explanation of the functional tie between the roles played by abstract entities called fictional characters and by the assumed$_{AI}$ referents of fictional names, within the way in which works of narrative fiction perform their functions. My understanding of this tie is based on the assumption continuously applied throughout the discussion in this section: fictional characters taken as components of the literary structure of a work of narrative fiction (and hence as abstract artefacts) will not do their work for us unless we assume$_{AI}$ the existence of flesh and blood individuals referred to by fictional names and exemplifying such and such sets of properties. If you feel inclined to object that this is not the way in which readers are used to thinking about fictional characters, consider the following dialogue. (The question to be answered is whether *B*'s replies strike you as totally improbable or *A*'s questions as utterly manipulative).

A: Why it is right to say that Flaubert's novel includes the literary character called "Emma Bovary"?

B: Just read the book: it is part of what it says that there was a person with that name having such and such properties.

A: Does this mean that the book provides us with reliable information about such things and hence tells us something we should believe?

B: No, it tells us something we should pretend to believe if we want to make sense of (and to indulge in or even become immersed in) the story.

This fictitious dialogue, like the whole discussion in this section, assumes a certain functional relation which would collapse if we blurred the sharp distinction between its components. However, due to this essential relation it is certainly true that "we do not lose track of the flesh and blood individual when we refer to the artefact" (i.e., the fictional character as abstract artefact; Recanati, 2018, p. 23). Or that "we can hardly think of the fictional character Sherlock Holmes without thinking of the flesh and blood individual Sherlock Holmes" (p. 25) and conversely, that "talk about the flesh and blood individual is another way of talking about the artefact" (p. 24). Correspondingly, it is quite natural that if asked to characterize some fictional character, we say things like, "it is a detective who smokes a pipe, wears a cap, solves mysteries", etc. Should we interpret it so that we think about a fictional character "as about a pipe-smoking, cap-wearing, mystery-solving flesh and blood individual" (Recanati, 2018, p. 23)? That, I am afraid, would mean to impute a thread of incoherence into quite an innocent way of speaking which allows a perfectly consistent reading. To enable such a reading, we do not have to ascribe to ordinary speakers the exemplifying-encoding distinction. We can simply approach their utterances as cases of indirect predication, in which the property specified in the predicate-term is not ascribed to the referent of the subject-term, but to another entity related to it in some easily identifiable way.[12] In our case we characterize a certain artefact, namely a literary character, by listing some of the assumptions$_{AI}$ required of readers by this component of the literary structure of Doyle's stories. The enumeration of properties ascribable only to human beings can serve as the characteristics of a literary character only within this (typically implicitly assumed) framework.

## 3. Speaking About the Game of Make-Believe Versus Playing the Game

### (A) Parafictional Use of (1) And (1$_{FO}$)

Our interpretation of parafictional statements made by means of sentences like (1) or (1$_{FO}$) follows quite straightforwardly from the outcomes of our discussions in Sections 1 and 2. If we accept them, we have no choice but to insist that the parafictional use of the sentence:

[12] Similarly, when saying that some symphonies are noisy, we mean that their standard performances (rather than the compositions themselves, i.e., abstract artefacts) are noisy; when saying that some sentence is clever, we mean that the thought it expresses is a result of a clever way of thinking; when saying that some sauce is ingenious, we mean that it was an ingenious idea to combine such and such ingredients in such and such proportions, etc.

(1) Sherlock Holmes is a detective who solves mysteries

serves to identify some of the assumptions which the reader has to accept$_{AI}$, in order to let Doyle's texts fulfil their literary functions for her. Then the content of the statement made can be identified as follows:

($1^+$) The literary functions of Conan Doyle's texts require us to assume$_{AI}$ that the name "Sherlock Holmes", as it occurs in these texts, refers to a real person who is a detective and solves mysteries.

If you find this analysis too bombastic or "overstretched" or "theory-laden" in comparison with our intuitive approach to narrative fiction and its characters, consider (again) a short dialogue with a reader of Conan Doyle's stories:

A: Do you really assume that there was an ingenious detective called Sherlock Holmes?

B: No, I just pretend to assume that.

A: But why?

B: Because otherwise the book would not make sense to me. (Or: because I want to enjoy the story. Or: because this is what I am supposed to do as a reader).

A: So, when you say that Holmes was an ingenious detective you describe what you pretend to believe for the reasons you just mentioned?

If you feel that the likely reply to the last question is "yes" and are ready to admit that the whole dialogue properly reflects the readers' intuitive approach to narrative fiction (so that it cannot be dismissed as an artificial construct or as pure manipulation from my side), the same should be said of our interpretation of (1) in terms of the moves required by the literary functions of the text. The only difference is that theoretical analysis, unlike the fictitious dialogue above, is not supposed to mimic the way in which "ordinary" readers would speak about their moves and attitudes.

Another possible objection to ($1^+$) might point to the fact that the utterer of sentence (1) can forget Conan Doyle's name or simply need not know who wrote Sherlock Holmes stories. Then, of course, we should not ascribe to her the statement specified in ($1^+$), but some version of it reflecting her cognitive situation, e.g., something like, "the literary functions of the stories about Sherlock Holmes require us to assume$_{AI}$ that the name 'Sherlock Holmes', as it appears in the text …", etc. There are various ways of identifying the relevant text without mentioning the author—but the reference to the text itself and to occurrences of the name "Sherlock Holmes" in it seems to be (for our present purposes) unavoidable. The same objection can be raised against most of the following examples and I will not return to it, since the problem it points to is, as we see, easily resolved.

Thus, let us return to our specification of the statement made by the use of (1) within a conversation about literary characters. Since the name “Sherlock Holmes”, as it occurs in the paraphrase ($1^+$), is mentioned rather than used, it cannot be said to refer to an assumed$_{AI}$ flesh and blood person, nor to a literary character, nor to anything else besides the name itself. Nevertheless, this should not obscure the fact that the assumptions$_{AI}$ specified in ($1^+$) are directly related to the fictional character called “Sherlock Holmes”: they belong to the set of assumptions$_{AI}$ required by the literary functions of that construct. So, another possible paraphrase of the statement made by a parafictional use of (1), equivalent to ($1^+$), but this time including explicit reference to fictional character, would be:

($1^{++}$) Sherlock Holmes, as Conan Doyle’s literary character, encodes the properties of being a detective and solving mysteries.[13]

Thus far we have discussed a possible use of sentence (1) to make a claim about a portion of pretence licensed and prescribed by Conan Doyle’s stories, in other words, about certain parameters of their fictional world. Hence, a fiction operator (such as “in Conan Doyle’s stories”, or “in the stories about Sherlock Holmes, do not ask me who wrote them”) is implicitly present in the statement made by this kind of use of (1)—and its explicit occurrence in the sentence ($1_{FO}$) does not change the situation. Hence, the paraphrase ($1^+$) as well as ($1^{++}$) is to be taken as our proposal just as much for ($1_{FO}$) as for (1), in their parafictional use.

**(B) Fictional Use of (1) And ($1_{FO}$)**

It will be useful to add a few words about fictional use of the same sentences, not only to get an illuminating contrast. First, we will soon have the opportunity to identify elements of both parafictional and fictional use of ($1_{FO}$) and (1), as interpreted in this section, in Recanati’s analysis of parafictional statements.[14] Second, in Section 6 we will pay attention to a dynamic kind of discourse fluctuating between parafictional and fictional mode of speech.

Nobody would deny that sentence (1) finds an equally natural use within a discourse continuing in the pretence licensed or at least loosely inspired by Conan Doyle’s stories. This is not to say that sentences uttered within such a discourse function in the same way as they would if uttered within the original text of narrative fiction. There the author inserts a special construct—narrator between himself and the reader. And he does so by creating a text which will work only for the reader who approaches$_{AI}$ its sentences as records of utterances

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[13] The term *encodes* should be unpacked in the way specified in Section 2—in terms of the requirements which a literary character imposes on the reader.

[14] Needless to stress, this is just how things appear from the perspective of our account of parafictional and fictional statements, as presented in this section. Recanati himself approaches parafictional statements as a combination of metafictional and fictional elements. Cf. note 16 bellow.

in which a real person (the narrator) makes genuine assertions (rather than assertions$_{AI}$) about what happened in the real world (cf. *Scheme N* in Section 1 of the current paper). In contrast to this, in a conversation in the mode of fiction the speaker speaks for himself (if he does not play for the audience the role of some fictitious or real person, e.g., Holmes or Churchill)—and it is him to whom the audience is supposed to ascribe (not ascribe$_{AI}$) assertions$_{AI}$ (not assertions). Indeed, the audience can go one step further (as it happens in some examples in Sections 6 and 7) and accept the invitation to participate in the game of make-believe. Then she approaches$_{AI}$ the previous utterance as a serious assertion and demands the same approach$_{AI}$ to his own reply.

In any case, when using the sentence (1) within the parasitic fictional discourse inspired by Conan Doyle's stories, we pretend to be speaking about a real person of flesh and blood instead of speaking about a literary character, as it was in case (A). In other words, we continue in the game of make-believe initiated by Conan Doyle—and we can do more than that: we can creatively develop this pretence in a way which exceeds the original framework. Thus, I can, for example, say:

($1_{ext}$) Sherlock Holmes is a detective who solves mysteries and I am off to meet him for a consultation.

It may seem that this kind of extension will be blocked, once sentence (1) is preceded by the words "in Conan Doyle's stories", as in the sentence ($1_{FO}$). However, that is not the case, since within a creative game of the kind exemplified by the sentence ($1_{ext}$), I can also say:

($1_{FOext}$) In Conan Doyle's stories, Sherlock Holmes is a detective who solves mysteries; but in fact he is a policeman and I am just going to meet him in Baker Street.

Or consider the following conversation:

A: Holmes is a brave policeman.

B: In Conan Doyle's stories, Holmes is a detective who solves mysteries. But I think you are right and Doyle is wrong.

Obviously, in such cases we cannot say the same about the relation between (1) and ($1_{FO}$) as we did in case (A). It is not so that ($1_{FO}$) just makes explicit the fiction operator implicitly present in the statement made by the use of (1), since now the phrase "in Conan Doyle's stories" does not function as a fiction operator: it is just used (within a new game of make-believe) to refer$_{AI}$ to Conan Doyle's texts as a source of factual information about real people, places, events, etc., whose reliability is to be assessed. Thus, instead of claiming that (1) and ($1_{FO}$)

can be used to make the same statement (as was the case in (A) above), here we should just admit that ($1_{FO}$) can be used within the same kind of pretence as (1).

## 4. Bridging the Dichotomy

Now we are ready to appreciate Recanati's analysis of the parafictional use of sentence ($1_{FO}$), suggesting an option we have not yet considered. Its core consists in the assumption that part of what the speaker does when uttering ($1_{FO}$) is a continuation of the pretence initiated by Doyle's stories: the speaker pretends that by using the name "Sherlock Holmes" she refers to a real man and specifies one of his properties, like in our version (B) in Section 3. However, unlike in our case, the speaker does so not in order to keep the game of make-believe running and to enjoy her engagement in it: rather, the point is to demonstratively identify a certain component of the fictional world of Doyle's stories. As Recanati says: "the parafictional statement *embeds a piece of pretence* (corresponding to the fictional statement) *for demonstrative purposes* and says, truly or falsely, that this is what the world of the fiction is like" (Recanati, 2021, p. 18, emphasis in the original).[15]

As one might also put it, this analysis presents the statement made by use of ($1_{FO}$) as an efficient fusion of a straightforward assertion (like in our case (A) above), and a move in the mode of pretence (like in (B)), both combined in a way which allows (and calls for) truth evaluation.[16] So, the result can be viewed as one of the cases in which pretence is "used for serious purposes", to borrow words which Recanati (2018, pp. 6–7) quotes from Evans (1982, p. 364). We should just keep in mind that it is not a case of a homogeneous speech act made in the mode of pretence which, on the level of non-literal meaning, pragmatically implies a homogeneous serious statement about the relevant piece of fiction.[17] It is, on the level of literal meaning, a serious true or false statement

[15] Or: "[t]he general idea is that the parafictional speaker engages in pretence (e.g., pretends to refer to Sherlock Holmes and to predicate properties of 'him') but does so *in order to show what the fictional world of the story is like*" (Recanati, 2021, p. 18, emphasis in the original).

[16] This is so due to the fact that the move in the mode of pretence takes place within the framework set up by the metafictional introduction: "[t]he irreducible metafictional component involved in parafictional discourse is located in the reference to the fiction conveyed by the tag (when that tag is made explicit, as in our example); all the rest is a continuation of the pretence that is constitutive of fictional thought and talk" (Recanati, 2018, p. 26).

[17] This is how Recanati (2018) presents another case, the parafictional statement made by uttering a sentence which, like (1) and unlike ($1_{FO}$), does not contain an explicit fiction operator: "Sherlock Holmes is a clever British detective who plays violin and investigates cases for a variety of clients, including Scotland Yard". According to that interpretation (inspired by Walton), by uttering this sentence the speaker engages in pretence licensed by Doyle's stories. Hence, on the level of literal meaning, he does not express any proposition (since the name "Sherlock Holmes" fails to refer). However, due to the mechanism of prag-

including a switch to the mode of pretence, in which the content of what is literally and seriously asserted (about some piece of fiction) is specified via demonstration.

The question arises of whether the demonstrative presentation of the relevant portion of pretence initiated by Conan Doyle's stories really requires switching to the mode of pretence (so that the statement can be said "to embed a piece of pretence"). Perhaps the demonstration in question could rather be understood as an act of "putting a piece of pretence on display",[18] taken as something which one can do in an indifferent, uninvolved mode, without pretending anything and without presenting oneself as doing so. But let us stay with the authentic Recanati's proposal and with its thought-provoking element of combining (or switching between) two modes of speaking. Recanati leaves us in no doubt that he takes the switch to the mode of pretence to be unavoidable. Cf., for example:

> But the fictional approach insists that in order to do that (talk about the flesh and blood individual and thereby specify the properties which the fictional character encodes), the speaker has to engage in the pretence or simulate it by going along with the practitioners of the fiction and speaking as they do (that is, by pretend-referring to the flesh and blood individual and pretend-predicating properties of him). (Recanati, 2018, p. 18; cf. p. 24)[19]

Similarly, he insists that "the only way to access the internal content of a fiction is to actually imagine what the fiction prescribes its practitioners to imagine" (Recanati, 2018, p. 24).

I believe, on the contrary, that one can "talk about the flesh and blood individual" and thereby specify part of "what the fiction prescribes its practitioners to imagine"; in other words, identify a portion of the pretence required by the literary functions of a text of narrative fiction, without participating in that pretence, as well as without simulating such participation.[20] This is what happens in case (A) in Section 3 above. Initiating some pretence (by writing a text whose functions require and prompt moves in the mode of pretence on the part of its readers),[21] as well as specifying the content of that pretence in a subsequent talk about fiction, does not depend on our personal engagement in pretence: in both cases, it should be enough to use the right words in the right way and let them do their work. It would be strange to suppose that they would fail to provide their services to anyone who attempts to specify the pretence that she does not share

matic implication (more on this in Recanati, 2018, pp. 8–9), his act conveys, on the level of non-literal meaning, a true message about the relevant fiction. Cf., for contrast, our presentation of case (A) in Section 3, where everything takes place on the level of literal meaning.

[18] I borrow the term "putting on display" from Sainsbury's (2012, Section II).

[19] That is not all. For the communication to succeed, the other party cannot stay out of the game: "[t]he audience too has to engage in the pretence" (Recanati, 2018, p. 24).

[20] And as part of it, without simulating the simulation of reference, in the case of fictional names, cf. (Recanati, 2018, p. 21).

[21] Cf. our polemics with "the myth of the author's initial pretence" in Section 1.

or is even unwilling or unable to share (typically due to some insurmountable mental blocks).

Let us imagine somebody saying "In this novel, Goethe was a secret police agent in Weimar at the time he wrote *Egmont*, but I certainly will not force myself into imagining such blatant nonsense". Or somebody saying "This novel invites us to pretend that there was a man called N., the most faithful follower of …,[22] who committed terrible crimes because of wealth and power: but I am unable to play this game, refuse even to try, and recommend the same to everyone". I do not suppose anyone would be inclined to cite such utterances as examples of communicative failure, arguing that the speaker is (for reasons she herself makes clear) unable to specify the content of the pretence she wants to speak about. Or to classify them as self-defeating acts, since in performing them the speaker is doing precisely the things she presents herself as unable to do.[23] Rather, in both cases we would probably say that although the speaker succeeded in identifying a portion of the pretence prescribed by the novel, she also made it clear that this piece of fiction would not work for her.

Finally, here are two more straightforward cases in which the shift to the mode of pretence is not blocked, but simply does not have opportunity to take place. Suppose that somebody opens a book, scans the first two lines and says: "Here I read that a man called 'K.' was arrested one morning. Wait, it's a novel … so I am supposed to imagine that. Well, perhaps next time". As far as I can see, nobody would argue that the speaker did not suceed to specify a portion of pretence prescribed by the novel to its readers or that what she said is in some way incoherent or paradoxical. Or: somebody tells me that in one famous novel a wife of a country doctor deceives her husband and wastes all family money. Hence, now I am able to identify a (small) portion of pretence prescribed by that novel to its readers, simply by repeating what I have heard, without ever finding myself in a position which would require that I share that pretence.

## 5. Preliminary Summary: A Tribute to Plurality

Despite some points of disagreement on the level of general assumptions and despite the fact that the interpretation proposed by Recanati and my alternative suggestion (cf. case (A)) seem to be in sharp opposition, they treat sentence ($1_{FO}$) as serving the same purpose, namely identifying one particular component of the pretence initiated by Conan Doyle's stories—the assumption$_{AI}$ that there is a real man called "Sherlock Holmes" who is a detective solving mysteries. Both of us understand this assumption$_{AI}$ as part of the pretence required of readers by the narrative functions of the text: no appeal to the author's alleged pretence (cf. our

[22] Fill in the name of whichever ideology or political movement first comes to mind.

[23] It should be clear that the question of whether and under what conditions one may be unable to pretend certain things is irrelevant here. The point of the argument is that were the above (Recanati, 2018, pp. 18, 24) claims right, the speech acts presented in our examples would come out as defective, contrary to our communicative intuitions.

polemics in Section 1) is involved. In this context, Recanati explicitly speaks about "what the fiction prescribes its practitioners to imagine" (2018, p. 24; 2021, p. 20) or "what the story mandates its readers to imagine" (2021, p. 20). Furthermore, in both cases the result is a straightforward statement with full assertive force, and hence something truth-evaluable, as it should be. Finally, in both cases the "semantic innocence" is preserved in the relevant respect, emphasized in Recanati's introductory remarks preceding his analysis (cf. 2021, p. 14): no shift in the semantic value of the term "Sherlock Holmes" in the transition from (1) to ($1_{FO}$) is assumed.

So, in the end, the whole difference between the two interpretations of the parafictional statement made by uttering sentence ($1_{FO}$) is that in Recanati's version the content of the relevant pretence is *demonstrated* in an act in which the speaker herself switches to the mode of pretence, precisely for demonstration purposes, while in my version the content of the same pretence is simply *descriptively specified*. This can be summarized in two alternative schematic paraphrases of the statement made by the parafictional use of sentence ($1_{FO}$):

FR: Conan Doyle's stories prescribe to the readers, among other things, the following pretence (or: require what I will now show you; or simply: require this:[24]) (what follows is a performance in the mode of pretence, presented as a demonstration of a move required by Doyle's stories: this demonstration consists in uttering embedded sentence (1) in the mode of pretence—like in our case (B)).

PK: Conan Doyle's stories require the readers to $\text{assume}_{AI}$ that the name "Sherlock Holmes", as it appears in Doyle's texts, refers to a real person (that person who has been assigned that name at the beginning of the chain to which the relevant narrator's utterances belong) and that that person is a detective who solves mysteries (cf. our case (A) in Section 3 and our discussion in Section 2).

This was just a confrontation of Recanati's analysis of the statement made by uttering sentence ($1_{FO}$) and our presentation of case (A) as two ways of accomplishing the same task: to identify a certain element of the fictional world of Conan Doyle's stories. There is no real conflict or competition: as far as I can see, both ways (demonstrative and descriptive) make good sense and can be successfully applied by ordinary speakers, "successfully" meaning that the audience is given the intended information about Doyle's fiction. For this to happen, the audience need not care about which of these two ways was implemented in the speaker's utterance of ($1_{FO}$). And the speaker need not deliberately choose between them: she can simply utter a sentence suitable for sending the message

[24] This element corresponds to Davidson's treating "that" as a demonstrative used to refer to the utterance of the following sentence in his analysis of cases like "Galileo said that the earth moves" (cf. Davidson, 1984).

(about the relevant piece of fiction) she intends to deliver, hoping that it will do its work. If things go this way, what the speaker does is subjectively indifferent to the distinction between the two acts we took some care to distinguish above.[25] But the distinction remains sharp and potentially relevant even on a phenomenological level (i.e., noticeable on the level of experiences accompanying our communicative acts). For instance, the utterers of the sentences presented as examples at the end of Section 4 are far from being indifferent in this sense: Recanati's version is not available to them, for reasons they themselves make clear.[26]

Finally, we should not neglect the possibility of uttering (1) or even ($1_{FO}$) within the continuation (or creative development) of the game of make-believe initiated by Conan Doyle's stories, motivated by a "mere joy of the game" rather than by the intention to provide some information about Doyle's fiction (cf. our case (B) in Section 3). Even if, in this case, pretence is not applied for demonstrative purposes, it may still make sense to say that the pretence is demonstrated (or: performed in an ostentatious way), meaning thereby that it is presented as an overt invitation to a joint game of make-believe. And it may easily happen that an utterance in which (1) or ($1_{FO}$) is used to make a parafictional statement will *ex post* turn into a move in such a game, switching thereby from "serious" to fictional mode of speech. This motif will occupy us in the next section.

## 6. Serious/Fictional: A Transit Border

As we had to admit in the last section, the speaker uttering sentences like (1) or ($1_{FO}$) need not deliberately opt for one of the possibilities offered by these instruments: she can simply do what suggests itself as a natural move within the kind of discourse in which she is currently engaged. It is then the preceding and subsequent course of communication and its broader context that can (under favourable circumstances) enable us to properly classify the function of her act or the way in which this function has been performed. And since the utterance of

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[25] However frustrating this might be, it is nothing exceptional. Here is an analogical case: I intend to say something about some person and use a sentence including a definite description as, under the circumstances, the only available means of identifying that person. Then my act so described (uttering a sentence I find suitable for delivering the intended message) is subjectively indifferent to the distinction between (i) expressing, on the level of literal meaning, the intended singular proposition and (ii) expressing the complex Russellian quantified proposition, while implicating (in the Gricean sense) a singular proposition as the message I intended to send. Cf. Stephen Neale's attempt to reconcile, on the level of Gricean implicatures, the orthodox Russellian theory of descriptions with our communicative intuitions (Neale, 1990, pp. 89–90) and my criticism in (Koťátko, 2009, pp. 556–557).

[26] For the same reasons, the corresponding interpretation is not available to the audience. And this will not change even if the speakers' inability or reluctance to imagine certain things will not be made explicit in the utterance but will be known to (or even shared by) the audience.

a sentence like (1) or ($1_{FO}$) fits into various language games, it can be smoothly integrated into various versions of the development of conversation, even if it takes some unpredictable turn (like a switch from the serious to the fictional mode or the other way round). So, the choice between the available alternatives can be made *ex post* or be revised, either in order to preserve the continuity of the conversation or to re-establish it on a new basis.

For instance, person *A* says "Flaubert's Emma is more impulsive than Tolstoy's Anna", intending to compare the construction of two literary characters, and hence applying two corresponding fiction operators, which relate the statement to two literary works. *A*'s audience, *B*, recognizes this due to the context, which is a "serious" discussion about Flaubert's and Tolstoy's literary achievements. Nevertheless, *B* wants to play a bit and so replies, "That might be true, but when I last met Emma and Anna, I got the opposite impression", switching thereby from "serious" to fictional discourse and shifting there also *A*'s original utterance. This move can be obvious to both sides and *A* can approach it as an invitation to join the game, rather than as a misunderstanding. Then *A*, accepting the game, can confirm (authorize, ratify) this shift, for instance by saying, "That only means that Emma feels uneasy in your presence".

Or: *A* can start a conversation by saying, "In Conan Doyle's stories, Lestrade is a bit of a hardened inspector, unable to follow Holmes' deductions". It should be clear from the context and *A*'s explicit use of a fiction operator within that context that she intends to speak about the way in which the author construes the relation between his characters, and hence to make a serious parafictional statement. *B* is aware of this but does not feel obliged to supress her playful mood. Hence, she replies, "Yes, but in reality, it was Lestrade who solved all those cases and Holmes reaped all the glory, owing to his devoted companion Watson".[27] And *B*, accepting the game and thereby also the re-evaluation of her original communicative contribution, replies, "That is precisely what I would have added, if you had not interrupted me".

Such conversations certainly deserve the label "mixed discourse". Those who are inclined to approach this kind of mixing, in the form of *ex post* shifting the mode of one and the same utterance from serious to fictional (or the other way round), as a disturbing move, blurring the boundaries which should remain sharp, should consider cases, in which the mixing takes the form of moves con-

[27] As follows from our discussion in Section 2, this is not a case of imagining (and presenting) an alternative ("counterfictional") version of Doyle's fictional character, but imagining that the $assumed_{AI}$ referent of the name "Lestrade", as used in Doyles's stories, has properties incompatible with those described in those stories. Hence I do not share Stacie Friend's way of presenting a similar case: "I might imagine what the Samsa family's life would have been like had Gregor never changed into a vermin. Even though I imagine contrary to what Kafka's story prescribes—I continue to imagine about the same character" (Friend, 2011, p. 188). Another thing is that I can consider the possibility that Kafka or Doyle construed their fictional characters in an alternative way and I can even imagine that this happened (e.g., as a reader of a story about Kafka or Doyle).

densed in a much tighter space: the form of co-predication or of anaphoric dependencies (see, e.g., Semeijn, Zalta, 2021 for recent discussion of both cases) or even the form of fusion, as presented in Recanati's analysis of parafictional statements (cf. Sections 4 and 5 above).

## 7. Some More Examples as a Possible Challenge for Analysis

As I have said, I appreciate Recanati's analysis as pointing to a possible use of sentences like ($1_{FO}$) omitted in our preceding discussion (focusing, in Section 3, on the contrast between cases (A) and (B)). However, let us consider what this kind of analysis would give us when applied to some other cases, slightly more complex or intricate than ($1_{FO}$). The point will not be to show that the performance (the move in the mode of pretence) ascribed by Recanati to the utterer of ($1_{FO}$) is somehow flawed, but that it might be more demanding in some other cases. Let us start with an interfictional statement, obtained from a combination of two parafictional statements: [28]

(4) In Austen's novel, Emma is a wealthy young woman living with her father nearby Highbury, while in Flaubert's novel, Emma is the wife of a country doctor in Yonville.

The utterer of this sentence gives, if we apply Recanati's analysis, a double demonstrative performance in the mode of pretence, switching, within one statement, from one game of make-believe to another and, thereby, from one fictional world to another. This may seem rather demanding but still not unfeasible; but let us consider another statement, again both parafictional and interfictional (it already appeared within one of the fictitious dialogues described in Section 6).

(5) Emma in Flaubert's novel is more impulsive than Anna in Tolstoy's novel.

If we again apply Recanati's interpretation, based on the idea of continuing pretence, the speaker deserves even more admiration than in the case of sentence (4). He must compare the degree of exemplification of one mental property during switching between two states of pretence, so to speak, on the road between two fictional worlds—the world of *Madame Bovary* and the world of *Anna Karenina*. I say "on the road" because this is not a case of comparing two fictional worlds from one external stand, but a case of alternately accepting (i.e., treating as real) two different fictional worlds, although "merely" in the *as if* mode.

[28] The point of the following remarks is not to open the problem of interfictionality as a special topic. Rather, they continue in confronting two accounts of parafictional statements discussed in Sections 4 and 5, this time focusing on cases when parafictional statements take on an intertextual dimension. The question is what the moves assumed by these two accounts would look like in such cases (for recent discussion of interfictional statements, see Stokke, 2021, Section 5.1).

And because of the application of two fiction operators, this fluctuation cannot be eliminated by postulating a new fictional world which includes both Emma and Anna, exposed there to our comparison: hence, like in case (4), travelling between two worlds is unavoidable.

The situation radically changes if we interpret the statements made by uttering (4) and (5) in the same way as case (A) in Section 3, i.e., if we read (4) and (5) simply as comparing two fictional characters, and hence abstract artefacts situated in one, namely actual world, among other cultural products. What we compare in such cases are elements of the literary composition of two novels requiring from their readers acceptance$_{AI}$ of two different sets of assumptions. Our task presupposes identification, rather than alternating acceptance$_{AI}$ of these assumptions; in other words, no switching between two states of pretence and two corresponding fictional worlds is necessary. On the contrary, we compare, from a stable standpoint, moves in the mode of pretence, prescribed by two different texts of narrative fiction—and we do so without pretending anything, without demonstrating or simulating any kind of pretence for our audiences and without inviting them to participate in any kind of pretence. Then the content of the statement made by uttering (4) can be specified as follows:

($4^+$) Austen's novel requires the reader to assume$_{AI}$ that the name "Emma", as used in Austen's text, refers to a wealthy young woman living with her father nearby Highbury, while Flaubert's novel requires the reader to assume$_{AI}$ that the name "Emma", as used in Flaubert's text, refers to the wife of a country doctor in Yonville.[29]

And since a literary character, taken as an element of a composition of a literary work, can be identified by specifying the set of requirements it imposes on the reader (cf. the discussion in Section 2), we can put the same in the following way:

($4^{++}$) Austen's novel includes, under the name "Emma", a character encoding the property of being a wealthy young woman living with her father nearby Highbury, while Flaubert's novel includes, under the name "Emma", a character encoding the property of being the wife of a country doctor in Yonville.

Similarly, for (5):

[29] Cf. our attempt to demonstrate the compatibility of such analyses with our intuitive approach to works of narrative fiction and their characters in the short fictitious dialogue in Section 3.

($5^{+}$) The person we are supposed to assume$_{AI}$ as the real bearer of the name "Emma Bovary", as it appears in Flaubert's novel, is endowed with a greater degree of impulsiveness than the person we are supposed to assume$_{AI}$ as the real bearer of the name "Anna Karenina", as it appears in Tolstoy's novel.[30]

Finally, let us consider the sentence

($5_{ext_2}$) Our boss is less impulsive than Emma Bovary but more impulsive than Anna Karenina.

As far as I can see, uttering this sentence can function in (at least) three ways:

(a) as a serious statement comparing the (assumed) degree of impulsiveness of a real person (the speaker's boss) and the degrees of impulsiveness encoded by two literary characters (i.e., belonging to what we are supposed to ascribe$_{AI}$ to assumed$_{AI}$ referents of the names "Emma Bovary" and "Anna Karenina", as they occur in the relevant texts);

(b) as a creative development of the pretence initiated by Flaubert's and Tolstoy's novels, via pretending that the real world includes, as its inhabitants, besides our boss also Emma and Anna (endowed with properties encoded by relevant literary characters), all of them being exposed to our psychological assessment;[31]

(c) as a conditional statement about what we would discover if Emma and Anna were real inhabitants of our world (endowed with properties encoded by the relevant literary characters) and if we had the opportunity to compare their temperament with that of our boss.

The point of making statement (a) could be to say something about the boss, by comparing his temperament with that encoded by two well-known fictional

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[30] Version ($5^{++}$) would simply mimic ($4^{++}$).

[31] Let us compare this with Mark Crimmins' account of the statement made by uttering the sentence "Ann is as clever as Holmes and more modest than Watson". By pretending to be speaking about three real people (our case b), we make, according to Crimmins, a genuine statement about one real person (Ann)—a statement with a content corresponding to our case (a), specified by Crimmins in a way which he himself classifies as "laborious" (1998). Honestly speaking, I find this "facilitating" maneuver (another example of "using pretence for serious purposes") more complicated than a straightforward comparison of one real person with two fictional characters (not to speak about the problem of truth-evaluation, cf. Crimmins, 1998, pp. 4–5). My proposal is to approach (a) and (b) as two self-contained acts, such that (a) need not be mediated by (b) and making (b) need not serve as an auxiliary step for making (a). Cf. also Recanati's interpretation of Crimmins' example as involving exploitation of the mechanism of pragmatic implications, bringing us from (b) to (a) (Recanati, 2018, pp. 8–9). Like in the case discussed in the footnote 17 above, I take it that everything is settled on the level of literal utterance meaning.

characters. Or it could be the other way around: the (assumedly well-known) temperament of the boss is taken as a yardstick for characterizing the temperament (degree of impulsiveness) encoded by two literary characters. In any case, no pretence (and hence no continuation in the game of make-believe initiated by the relevant novels) is involved.[32] We compare three (in principle easily accessible) components of our world: one person of flesh and blood with two abstract artefacts. Statement (c) can serve, in its own way, the same purposes as (a), while (b) would most naturally function as part of a creative game of make-believe, played just for entertainment. The moves made in (b) and (c) should not be confused: to assume, in the mode of pretence, that a certain counterfactual state of the world is real, is clearly not the same as to consider, in the hypothetical mode, what would have happened (here: what we would find out about some individuals) if a certain counterfactual state of the world were real.

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[32] Needless to add, the utterance of ($5_{ext_2}$), in all suggested readings, can be meant and understood as implicating (in the Gricean sense) an ironic message: that the boss is absolutely incapable of anything like impulsive behaviour, so that, as far as impulsiveness is concerned, there is nothing to be comparatively assessed.

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ENRICO GROSSO [*]

# THE IDENTITY OF FICTIONAL CHARACTERS

SUMMARY: Fictional characters elicit *prima facie* conflicting intuitions. On the one hand, a fictional character seems linked to the particular work of fiction (a novel, a poem, a movie, etc.) in which it appears: Ulysses is described in one way in Homer's epic poems, in another way in Virgil's *Aeneid*, and in a still different way in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It is natural to distinguish Homer's Ulysses from Virgil's and Dante's ones, since each of them has specific properties. On the other hand, we have the strong temptation to think that Ulysses is the same fictional character that persists in the passage from one poem to another, despite the change of features. The article tackles this kind of problems by focusing on the cognitive side. By adopting the theory of mental files, I will argue that all issues on the identity of literary characters here presented can be addressed without assuming the existence of fictional objects. Presumption of co-reference between multiple depictions of a given literary character is represented in our mind by means of a network of files, each one indexed to a work of fiction in which the character appears. Indexed files have a meta-representational function, so they do not need acquaintance with real objects. Linked indexed files do not refer, but still a unique reference is presuppose. They would have the same referent, if there was one.

KEYWORDS: mental files, indexed files, fictional characters, identity, co-reference.

[*] University of Genova, FINO [Northwestern Italian Philosophy Consortium]. E-mail: en.grosso@unito.it. ORCID: 0000-0003-3882-2299.

## 1. Introduction

Consider the following sentences:

1) Ulysses spent ten years by sea to return home.
2) Ulysses is Penelope's husband.

Following the terminology provided by Voltolini and Kroon (2016), I will call (1) and (2) *fictional sentences*, namely sentences that could easily occur in the body of a narrative. Such sentences say something about the fiction from an inner perspective and have merely fictional truth-conditions.[1]

Consider now the following sentences:

3) Ulysses is a fictional character.
4) Ulysses is famous all over the world.

What is interesting about (3) and (4) is that they predicate something about Ulysses from a perspective that is external to the Greek myth Ulysses belongs to and, for this reason, they seem to have genuine truth values, regardless of any specific practice of pretense or make-believe.[2] Following Voltolini and Kroon (2016), I will call (3) and (4) *metafictional sentences*.[3]

The distinction between fictional and metafictional sentences is useful when we talk about the identity of fictional characters. As an example, let us take Stevenson's novel *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. In the book, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are represented in very different ways as two distinct characters and, nonetheless, at the end of the story the author reveals that they are the same person. Thus, we are tempted to think as true the following fictional sentence, since it states an identity that is stipulated by Stevenson inside his novel:

5) Jekyll is Mr. Hyde.

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[1] Many philosophers think that (1) and (2) do not express any genuine truth or falsehood about real events in the world, since they contains empty names—"Ulysses" and "Penelope"—names that, if one is not realist about fictional entities, have no reference. According to Everett (2003), we may say that (1) and (2) express a "gappy" or "incomplete proposition". Or we may say, following Walton (1990) and Curire (1990), that (1) and (2) are true (or false) only within a context of pretense and making believe.

[2] Contrary to fictional sentences, these later sentences seem to carry ontological commitment to literary and mythological entities (Kripke, 2013).

[3] We could push the analysis even further, by distinguishing between internal metafictional sentences and external metafictional sentences (Voltolini, 2010, pp. 100, 107; Voltolini, Kroon, 2016). An alternative, but equivalent, terminology is proposed by Bonomi (2008): fictive, parafictive, metafictive sentences. For the purpose of this work, I will limit my attention only to external metafictional sentences.

We can also wonder about the identity of a literary character from a metafictional perspective. It is not unusual, especially when a certain literary character is widely known, to find several versions of it: the same character can move from one work to another, by appearing in very different stories (sequels, remakes or parodies), and even migrate from one media to another (from a book to a comic or a movie, from a text to a picture to a sculpture). Ulysses is a good case. Many poets and writers were inspired by this character. In Greek epic poems, under the name of Odysseus, he is one of the heroes who fight in the Trojan War and the unlucky traveller who tries to come back to his homeland Ithaca. Also Virgil mentions him in *Aeneid*. After centuries, he appears as a damned soul that Dante meets on his journey to *Hell*. Even in recent time, his fame does not decrease. James Joyce suggests us to see in his Leopold Bloom a new, modern, Ulysses. Given that it presupposes the comparison between (at least) two separate fictions, the following identity statements must be consider as a metafictional sentence:

6) Homer's Odysseus and Dante's Ulysses are the same fictional character.

However, it is not easy to evaluate a sentence like (6). There is not a thing like the authority of a writer to which one can appeal. Nevertheless, it seems that we have the intuition that we still deal with the same character, although multiple stories in which it appears assign to it different properties, sometimes in contrast to each other or even contradictory. But at the same time, we have another equally strong intuition: that, in a certain way, there is one Ulysses belonging to *Iliad* and another one belonging to Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Now let us focus on a more complex example: the famous dispute between Cervantes and Avellaneda. The fist part of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* was published in 1605. The success of the novel was such that an anonymous author, under the pseudonym of Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda, released a sequel in 1614. Cervantes then decided to write another adventure of Don Quixote, published in 1615. In the *Preface* that introduces this second part of *Don Quixote*, Cervantes criticizes the spurious sequel and promises to conclude all hidalgo adventures until his death and burial, therefore discrediting Avellaneda's work. Therefore, how must be consider the following sentence?

7) Avellaneda's Don Quixote and Cervantes's Don Quixote are not the same fictional character.

Contrary to the previous example, is (7) a fictional or a metafictional sentence? It presupposes the comparison between two different texts on Don Quixote, but at the same time it is a sentence that claims something internal to Cervantes's story.

The examples presented above can be addressed from either a semantic or a cognitive point of view. As regards the semantic approach, we can ask which is the meaning of sentences from (1) to (7), which kind of proposition they express and under which conditions they are true. Then, we can explore metaphysical

implications, by wondering whether fictional characters really exist and, if so, which kind of entities they are. The cognitive approach deals with different questions: what kind of intuitions do all these cases elicit? How can we account for them? And, above all, which mental representations are at state?

This paper adopts a cognitive perspective: it aims to provide an analysis of the cognitive tools we use to represent literary characters in our mind. I think that this perspective should not only be separated, but it is also preliminary to the semantic and ontological one. The nature of fictional objects, as well as their very existence, is controversial. Equally debated is the semantic analysis of sentences. But one thing is safe to say: fictional objects are closely connected with what we think about them. Literary characters are something which lives in our imagination, which influences our acts of pretense, and that probably would not exist if we had not depicted them in some literary works or in other types of media. For all these reasons, I think we need to understand, first of all, how we conceive of a fictional character in our mind. Only after addressing this preliminary task, we can offer some answer to the semantic and metaphisical debate. I think that our intuitions may be explained, from a cognitive point of view, within the framework of the theory of mental files.

## 2. Mental Files

The theory of mental files has been elaborated by several philosophers in different ways. The term "mental file" has been firstly introduced by Perry (1980) and, since then, it has been widely used, even if forerunners notions may be found in Grice's (1969), which uses the word "dossier", in Strawson's (1974) and Evans' (1973). One of the most influential account has been provided by Recanati (2012).

According to Recanati, the notion of mental file translates, at the cognitive level, the Fregean idea of the sense of a proper name or a singular term (see also Pagin, 2013). He distinguishes between regular and indexed files. As regards the former, their main function is to store information, in the form of a list of predicates, that we take to be about a single object of the outside world. It is a cognitive structure that we use to create a mental representation of that particular object. Reference of a regular file is determined in a non-descriptive way through the relations of acquaintance that the subject has with the object of the mental representation.[4] The paradigmatic case of relation is perceptual acquaintance. We have perceptual acquaintance when we perceive an object directly with our senses (sight, hearing, touch). But acquaintance can also be "mediated" through the existence of a communicative chain, as is the case of people that we do not know directly or that lived in the past, or by means of contextual relations, as in the

[4] "What they refer to is not determined by properties which the subject takes the referent to have (i.e., by information—or misinformation—in the file), but through the relations on which the files are based. The referent is the entity we are acquainted with (in the appropriate way), not the entity that best 'fits' information in the file" (Recanati, 2012, p. 33).

case of indexicals (2012, pp. 33–34; see also Recanati, 2014; and, with regard to the notion of mediated acquaintance, Recanati, 2013a; for a deeper discussion about indexicals, see Recanati, 2013b). To sum up, the function of a regular file is to store information about an external object and to ensure that our mental representation has that object as its referent, since the existence of a mental file depends on the existence of a relation of acquaintance, direct or mediated.

Indexed file, as name suggests, are characterized by an indexed structure, since they have a meta-representational function (Recanati, 2012, pp. 145–148; 2013b, pp. 4–9). They are used to represent thoughts of other people:

> An indexed file is a file that stands, in the subject's mind, for another subject's file about an object. An indexed file consists of a file and an index, where the index refers to the other subject whose own file the indexed file stands for or simulates. (Recanati, 2012, p. 146)

An indexed file, $<f, S_2>$, is thus a file that a subject $S_1$ uses to represent a files $f$ that stands in the mind of another subject $S_2$ (or in the mind of $S_1$ in a past time; for a discussion on indexed files, see Stojanovic, Fernandez, 2015). Its structure is virtually recursive: "the file component of an indexed file may itself be an indexed file. Thus $S_1$ may think about $S_2$'s way of thinking some entity, and to that effect may entertain the indexed file $<<f, S_3>, S_2>$" (Recanati, 2012, p. 147). Unlike regular files, they do not presuppose any norm of acquaintance, since they are mere simulative devices that do not guarantee reference to objects of the real world (Recanati, 2012, p. 200).

Files may be linked to each other. *Horizontal linking* operates between regular files: it occurs when we discover that two files refer to a single object, as in the case of Hesperus and Phosphorus. This connection enables information to flow freely between files and it can ultimately culminate in a merging of the files (Recanati, 2014, p. 475; for the notion of linking, see also Perry, 2002). On the contrary, *vertical linking* takes place between regular files and indexed files, or between indexed files of different degrees of embedding. The type of connection is such that it preserves data encapsulated in each single file. In fact, since indexed files are used to stand for some other subject's body of information about an object, this function could not be served if, through linking between the subject's regular files, the indexed files were contaminated by the subject's own information about that object (Recanati, 2012, p. 184).

Thus, there are two possibilities for a given indexed file:

> Either the indexed file, which represents some other way of thinking about some entity, is linked to some regular file in the subject's mind referring to the same entity (and corresponding to the subject's own way of thinking of that entity); or it is not. If it is not, the subject only access to entity in question is via the filing system of other subjects. (Recanati, 2012, p. 184)

An indexed file is *loaded* when it is vertically linked with a regular file: it inherits the referent of the regular file, allowing us to figure out how other subjects think about objects of the world. Instead, when the indexed file is not linked to any regular file, we have what Recanati calls a *free-wheeling*, or *unloaded*, use of indexed file. In this situation, the subject can think about an object only through the filing system of other subjects: all information at her disposal is the one stored in the indexed file.

According to Recanati, we can think about a non-existing object by using an indexed file with meta-representational function. This is what happens when we consider a sentence like:

8) Leverrier believed that the discovery of Vulcan would make him famous.

The sentence ascribe, with success, a pseudo-belief to Leverrier (for an in-depth analysis of the notion of pseudo-singular belief, see Recanati, 2000, p. 226; 2012, pp. 63–64; 2013c): we attribute to Leverrier a thought that has a singular form, but that does not express any proposition at all.[5] We are thinking about the representation of someone else and not about the referent of that representation. As regards mental files applied to non-existing and fictional objects, Recanati does not push his analysis further (for later development of the theory, see Recanati, 2016; 2018). Many questions remains unanswered, especially with regard to the connection between the level of thought and semantics (for some critiques to Recanti's notion of pseudo-singular thought, see Crane, 2013, pp. 158–162; Lo Guercio, 2015; Ninan, 2015; Stojanovic, Fernandez, 2015).

## 3. Identity at the Fictional Level

I think that we can use some tools from Recanati's theory to answer the question: how do our mental representations of literary characters relate to each other?

I take for granted the distinction between regular and indexed files, but I think that the latter are much more useful for our purposes. Indeed, all the problems on the identity of fictional characters that we have mentioned in the first part of the article can be addressed by adopting an antirealist perspective: there are not fictional characters, but representations of them. If we do not assume the existence of fictional objects, we only have indexed files, for regular files can be generated only in the presence of a relation of acquaintance, and we cannot have acquaintance with non-existent objects.[6]

[5] Or, at most, a "gappy proposition" (Everett, 2003).

[6] However, it is worth noting that the cognitive account proposed here is also compatible with a realistic perspective. If we admit the existence of fictional objects, then we must have some sort of acquaintance relation allowing for the creation of regular files. With regular files we refer to literary characters as fictional entities (either meinongian objects or abstract artefacts), while with the indexed files we refer to their multiple representations deriving from the stories in which they appear. The idea is developed in Grosso's (2019).

Contrary to Recanati, I think that we should distinguish fictional characters from other types of non-existent objects, such as those originating from errors.[7] When we deal with fictions, we think or talk about things that we know do not exist, at least in the same sense as ordinary objects do. The situation is different when we deal with errors: things which have been genuinely supposed to exist, but do not (Crane, 2013, p. 15). Errors do not presuppose pretense: in talking about the alleged planet Vulcan, Leverrier truly aimed to describe an actual states of the world, even if he was mistaken. Instead, a fictional object is always linked to a specific world of fiction, that is, to a specific story. It does not matter if the story has been created by an author or it belongs to myths and folk traditions, as in the case of Ulysses or Santa Claus. Furthermore, while errors are always related to individual subjects, as in Leverrier's case, fictional characters are not.[8] A character may initially appear in the work of a single author, then be taken up by other authors in more or less canonical stories (sequels, remakes or parodies), and even migrate from a media to another (from a book to a comic or a film, and so on), to the point of becoming a collective production to which anyone can contribute. It is sufficient to think of the various literary versions and movies on Sherlock Holmes, not to mention the countless fan stories. For these reasons, as long as we deal with fictional characters, I suggest that we do not need to index mental files to any individual subject, since we can index them directly to the fiction itself. One may object that, according to the theory of mental files, indexed files are tools that we have at disposal for representing, in our mind, the point of view of other people. An indexed file simulates the mental state of the indexed subject, so it does not make sense to index files to fictions, for fictions are not that sort of things having a mental life. However, I see no theoretical obstacle in stretching the notion of indexed file so to include also such kind of cases.[9] When we take part in a game of make-believe, we are urged to imagine a specific situation and to adopt specific mental attitudes, for instance, by accepting the told story as unquestionably true,[10] no matter whether it involves non-existent people and events that are bizarre and unrealistic. In the files we store information that we associate to the world of the story, as participants of that game. More precisely, we could say that, by indexing the file to a fiction, we mean to participate to a certain practice of make-believe, in which we put our-

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[7] I thank an anonymous reviewer who prompted me to clarify this point.

[8] It could be argued that some errors also have a collective dimension, in the sense that they belong to specific cultural or scientific traditions. Examples are the philosopher's stone, the fire-like element called phlogiston, or the epicycles postulated by Ptolemaic astronomers to explain the apparent motion of the planets. I think these errors should be treated in the same way as folkloric or mythological beliefs like ghosts, elves or Olympic gods. Although there is no conscious world of fictions, collective errors are still tied to particular world-views, such as outdated scientific or alchemical theories.

[9] In a recent work, Recanati adopts a similar conception of indexed files in order to account for parafictional utterances (2018).

[10] With the exception of unreliable narratives.

selves in the mind of someone that is not pretending, but truly believes in the facts depicted by the story. Similarly, in standard, non-fictional, situations, we put ourselves in the mind of an external subject to represent her mental states. It is just the same act of simulation (for a discussion on this topic, see Grosso, 2019).

I will begin the analysis by considering the identity of the literary characters inside a single work of fiction. When the author introduces new characters, we open new files storing information that the story tells us: their physical appearance, sex, age, actions and any other kind of properties. All our files on literary characters created by reading a novel are indexed to that world of fiction. We label the file with the name of the character it aims to refer to. So, for instance, we come to have in our minds the files <SHERLOCK HOLMES, *A Study in Scarlet*>, <RASKOLNIKOV, *Crime and Punishment*>, and so on.

So far, so good. But things are not always simple. Sometimes we do not know how a certain character is called. The name may remain unknown because the author wishes to leave a mystery about one individual and the absence of proper name is an integral part of the story. A famous example is the *Innominato* in Manzoni's *The Betrothed*. This case is fairly straightforward. We can open a mental file and use some definite descriptions as a label to identify the character,[11] such as <THE UNNAMED, *The Betrothed*>. Often a character does not have a name because its role in the plot of the story is not important enough. It is, so to say, a mere background actor. Let us consider this situation: we are walking down the street and meet several strangers passing by: we do not know their names but nonetheless we may identify people around us by using indexicals or demonstratives, like "that guy in front of me", or definite description like "the tall man with the hat". Similarly, we can use indexicals, demonstrative or definite description to individuate secondary characters in novels, for instance: "the man the protagonist was talking with in the first chapter of the book".

An interesting case of unnamed character is presented in the novel *In Search of Lost Time*. Here, the protagonist of the story and the narrator overlap: the book is a sort of autobiography, in which a first-person voice tells us the protagonist's recollections of experiences from childhood to adulthood. Suppose that, in the whole *narration*, his name is never told. This does not represent a problem: for our purposes, it is sufficient to open a file like <THE NARRATOR, *In Search of Lost Time*>. Such case, once again, helps us to clarify the usefulness of having indexed files, since the narrator of *In Search of Lost Time* must not be confused with its author. Even if a few details in the book are directly inspired by Marcel Proust's real life, *In Search of Lost Time* is a fictional novel, not a trustworthy biography: many events, characters and places are invented or freely gathered from reality. The use of the first person does not allow to overlap

[11] The description is used referentially, and not attributively. We have a referential description when it is used only to pick out an object, but the referent is determined by a relation of acquaintance that already exists, as in Donnellan's example "the man drinking a martini" (1966).

the real Marcel Proust with the fictional storyteller of the novel (at this regard, see Bonomi, 1994, pp. 14–16).

As we have seen, in the vast majority of novels it is easy to individuate fictional characters, regardless of whether we know their names or not, just as in ordinary life it is easy to recognize objects around us. But, just as in real life there are exceptional cases that originate misunderstandings, so there are in fictions. A subject, without any astronomical background, may open two separate files HESPERUS and PHOSPHORUS for planet Venus. Once the mistake is recognized, i.e., that names "Hesperus" and "Phosphorus" refer to a single celestial body observed in two different moments, the subject links the two files. Situations like this have already been widely commented by philosophers. Let us now analyse a literary variant of the Hesperus/Phosphorus case: the *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. In the novel, a character is depicted as two distinct ones: sometimes he appears as the gentle and kind Dr. Jekyll, sometimes as the violent and brutal Mr. Hyde. Only at the end of the reading we learn that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are alternative personalities of the same fictional character. Misled by the narration of the events, we open, at first, two files, one for Dr. Jekyll and one for Mr. Hyde. Later, we link the two files, even if the characters of the novel seem very distant from each other. But which kind of connection are we using? According to Recanati (2013, p. 155), in addition to the two forms of linking that we have already presented—horizontal and vertical linkings—indexed files require the introduction of some other forms of linking. The one that matters for our case is *internal linking*, that represents a connection existing only in the mind of another subject, or in the speaker's mind at a certain time in the past:

> Internal linking reflects *the subject's belief in some identity*, whether the subject is the speaker/thinker or some other subject whose point of view the speaker/thinker is representing. It is only in the case of internal linking that is it possible to represent linking by entering identity information into the linked file. (Recanati, 2012, p. 191, emphasis in the original)

To illustrate this point, Recanati proposes the following example. Mistakenly, Paul used to believe that there were two distinct people, Bert and Tom, while in fact there is one single person. Now he has discovered the truth, so he believes that Bert is Tom. But we, who are skeptical about the identity, report his doxastic state by saying:

9) Paul believes that Bert is Tom.

The two files respectively associated with the names "Bert" and "Tom" are indexed to Paul, since it is Paul who accepts the identity "Bert = Tom". They are represented as linked in Paul's mind, not in ours. We cannot use horizontal linking, because it is a connection that works only for regular files, and our regular

files are not linked. Nor vertical linking can be useful for this task, for we are not connecting an indexed file with a regular one.[12] The case posed by Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is similar. We, as readers, do not know the identity between the two characters until we get to the end of the story, in which it is told that Jekyll and Hyde are the same person. After discovering this revelation, we can use internal link to represent identity within the story, in the same way as we represent a connection that occurs in the mind of another subject.

We can conclude that even when we know the names of all the characters, we may doubt about how many characters there are.[13] In the reality, empirical investigations determine whether two names refer to the same object. On the contrary, within the fiction we completely defer to the author's choices. It happens as if we come to believe that "Bert" and "Tom" refer to a single individual just because Paul thinks they do. The situation is not so bizarre, at a closer insight. In fact, we really do not have regular files on Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: the only files in our mind are those indexed to the story.[14] Therefore, I agree with Tim Crane:

> But there is a very important additional fact about the fiction: the author's stipulation that they are nonetheless identical. This is itself a representation with a very special role of trumping all these differences in representations […]. Representing things as identical is the ultimate way of representing them as similar, despite other dissimilarities. But this has to be something claimed in the story. No sense can be made of the idea that two characters in a story might "really" be one, if the author of the story does not say so. (Crane, 2013, p. 167)

Thus, sentence:

5) Jekyll is Mr. Hyde

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[12] Nor we are linking indexed files with a different degree of embedding. We will see how to use the vertical link in relation to identity issues at the metafictional level.

[13] Other interesting literary cases are twin, look-alike, double or doppelganger characters. Here the mechanism is the opposite: we start with the belief that there is a single character and then we discover that they are two or more.

[14] It could be argued that internal linking is used to represent co-reference between files in another subject's mind, when we do not accept such co-reference with regard to our regular files, which remain separate, as in Tom and Bert's example. But when the author establishes an identity between two characters, there is no point in denying it: we accept the author's authority and take for granted that, for instance, Jeckyll and Hyde are the same character. Then, this is not a case of internal linking. However, it must be noted that in the case of fictional characters no regular file is involved. We only have files indexed to the story and so, through internal links, we represent co-reference according to a specific world of fiction. We do not merge Jekyll's and Hyde's files, for there may be alternative stories in which the two characters are distinct individuals. Another objection may concern unreliable narratives. In that case, even if the narrator identifies two characters, we would not link the files as in the previous case. Unreliable narratives are particular cases that deserve a separate analysis. As for the present article, I leave aside this topic. I thank an anonymous reviewer for helping me focus on these points.

is true in the world of the fiction: despite the fact that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are described as two distinct people, with different and almost opposite features, they are one single individual because of the author's stipulation. Once we link files, information can be shared. So file <DR. JEKYLL, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*> contains information "being Mr. Hyde", and file <MR. HYDE, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*> contains information "being Jekyll", as it is explicitly stated in the story. Precisely because it is claimed inside the novel, the identity between Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, expressed by (5), is a fact concerning the fiction, that we must accept as true.

## 4. Identity at the Metafictional Level

Problems of identity arise not only within a single story but also in the comparison between two (or more) works of fiction. These cases are much harder to treat, since there is not a thing like the authority of one single writer to which we can appeal. Consider the sentence:

6) Homer's Odysseus and Dante's Ulysses are the same fictional character.

As we said, (6) generates conflicting, if not even opposed, intuitions. On one hand, we have the idea that there are two Ulysses, one belonging to the *Odyssey*, the other to the *Divine Comedy*. On the other hand, we are tempted to say that a unique fictional character persists in the transition from one work to another. I will analyse the case of a hypothetical subject who believes in the identity between the two Ulysses, despite differences in the representations. I am not claiming that everyone would evaluate (6) in the same way and for the same reasons. Differences of opinion may arise according to the type of person involved. An inattentive or inexperienced reader may agree with (6) simply because she has not sufficient data to distinguish between the two versions of Ulysses. A competent reader may disagree with (6) because she judges that Odysseus is the product of a well-defined and homogeneous tradition, which finds expression in the Homeric poems of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and consider Dante's Ulysses as a new character belonging to a different historical and cultural context. The point in question is not how real individuals would judge sentence (6), but what happens in the mind of someone expressing this thought.

When we believe in the identity between Homer's Odysseus and Dante's Ulysses, we are claiming that one and the same character appears in two different works of fiction, thus generating alternative versions of itself. I call migration[15] the idea that a character can move through multiple stories. Migration presup-

[15] This notion is derived from Thomasson's (1999; see also Voltolini, 2010; Voltolini, Kroon, 2016). Often the term "importation", and the related verb "to import", is used instead of "migration". However, this can give rise to misunderstandings, as the word "importation" is also used to talk about Walton's *Reality Principle* (Walton, 1990).

poses a causal connection between the two stories, i.e., the intention of an author to pick up a character from a pre-existing story and use it in a new one.[16] Are there other conditions, besides the author's intention, for migration to take place? Probably yes, but it is hard to determine which they are.

Resemblance is a good candidate. In fact, an author may not succeed in importing a fictional character into a new work of fiction because the features of the character in the new story are too far from the original one. For instance, even if Gregory House, the main character of the TV series *Dr. House*, is clearly is inspired by the figure of Sherlock Holmes, we do not say that Gregory House and Sherlock Holmes are the same fictional character, for there is not a sufficient similarity between the two characters. At most, we can say that the latter character is inspired by the former one, and that is all. However, many objections can be raised against the similarity criterion. First of all, it is not clear what criteria this resemblance should be based on, nor how many properties should be shared between the two versions of the character. Moreover, resemblance is not transitive, in the sense that if we compared all literary versions of a character like Ulysses, we would probably not find any property in common. For the sake of argument, suppose that there are similarities between Ulysses so as depicted in the *Iliad* and in the *Odyssey*, as well as Ulysses so as depicted in the *Odyssey* and in the *Divine Comedy*, but no shared property between all these representations taken together. Thus, how do we justify the idea that Ulysses migrated from the *Iliad* to the *Odyssey* to the *Divine Comedy*?[17]

Perhaps, the strongest objection against the similarity criterion is represented by the following case: suppose the a man, that we can call Pierre Menard,[18] wrote a novel which is, word by word, identical with Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. Note that Menard knows nothing about Cervantes's life, nor is he aware of the existence of his masterpiece: it is not plagiarism, but a case of simple, however absurd, coincidence. Even if we have two stories depicting a fictional character with exactly the same properties, we can distinguish between Cervantes's and Menard's Don Quixote because, ultimately, there are two independent acts of authorial generation.

Another option to consider is a criterion of legitimacy. Legitimacy may be intended either in a legal sense, namely who owns the copyright of a character, or in a more general sense according to which a certain audience may accept as canonical a new story about a character. For instance, we accept that Sherlock Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet* is the very same fictional characters that appears in *The Sign of the Four* because both novels were written by Conan Doyle, and he

[16] According to Thomasson: "*x* and *y* are the same fictional object *F* only if the author of the second work *W'* is competently acquainted with *x* of the previous work *W*, and intends to import *x* into *W'* as *y*" (1999, pp. 67–68).

[17] A similar objection can be moved against the idea that there is an Ulysses *in general*, not linked to any specific work of fiction (Section 6 of the current paper).

[18] The example is derived by the famous J. L. Borges' novel *Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote* and it was originally proposed by Voltolini (2003; 2006).

is certainly qualified to write multiple stories about this character, for being Sherlock Holmes' creator. But criteria of legitimacy changes from time to time. Ariosto did not invented the figure of Roland, yet he wrote an entire work of fiction about this character, and no one questioned his legitimacy in doing so. The same goes for Dante and his Ulysses.

Further investigations on this matter are needed. For the present work, it is not important to precisely determine when and on what basis migrations of a fictional character take place. I will take for granted that, sometimes, people believe migrations to occur and, when it happens, people recognize the existence of a causal connection between the stories. i.e, the author's intention to take a character from a pre-existing story and put it in a new one (although further conditions may be added).

Migration gives rise to a presumption of co-reference: if we believe that a given character appears in multiple works, despite different associated properties, we are assuming that the related representations, deriving from the various stories, concern the very same individual. At a cognitive level, we can translate the idea by saying that indexed files gather together into a network. We need a clear criterion to determine whether a file belongs to a network or not:

> Two indexed files, *A* and *B*, belong to the same network when they presume the same referent, i.e., when they are used by the subject with the intention to refer to the same fictional character.

So, for instance, in the mind of a subject who believes (6), a file *A* and a file *B* are part of a unique network because both files aims to refer to Ulysses, but one, file *A*, refer to Ulysses as presented by Homer in the Greek poem *Odysseus*, while file *B* refer to Ulysses as presented by Dante in his *Divine Comedy*.

According to mental files theory, co-reference between files is expressed by means of linking: we link files when we recognize that they refer to the same object. But there is an important difference between regular and indexed files: while regular files require actual reference, as they are based on relations of acquaintance, indexed files do not have this constraint, as they have a meta-representational function. Now, the main type of connection that operates between indexed files is vertical linking. I claim that a linked indexed file inherits the referent of the other file, *as long as reference is possible*. When an indexed file is loaded, i.e., linked to a regular one, it acquire its referent. But in the case of literary characters we have no regular file,[19] so indexed files are unloaded and

[19] We have no regular file, unless we take a realistic position on objects of fiction. See note 6. In case fictional characters exist, it follows that the networks of files not only presume, but actually refer to these objects: we just have to add a regular files at the top of the network. With the regular file we refer to the literary character as a fictional entity (either meinongian object or abstract artefact), while with the indexed files we refer to its various representations, each based on the story in which characters appears. In any case,

they do not refer, but still a unique reference is presupposed. *They would have the same referent, if there was one.* Moreover, due to the vertical form of the link, the content of each file is preserved. We do not mix information deriving from separate fictions. In Homer's poem, Ulysses, after a journey lasted ten years, comes back to Ithaca and restores his reign, whereas, in the *Hell*, Ulysses tells Dante that he set out with his men from Circe's island for a journey of exploration beyond the Pillars of Hercules and then he died after a shipwreck. We are not surprised by these inconsistencies, because we look at the two stories as two alternative versions of the myth of Ulysses. Although we can import some pieces of information from the Greek poems into the *Divine Comedy*, in order to enrich our comprehension and appreciation of Dante's work, importation is not automatic: it only takes place as long as the *Divine Comedy* allows us to do so.

I suggest that vertical linking between files can be represented by means of their indexed and recursive structure. For the sake of argument, suppose that Dante was inspired for his Ulysses solely by the *Odyssey*. The original file is <ULYSSES, *Odyssey*>. Now, the *Divine Comedy* depicts a personal interpretation of Homer's Ulysses. Thus, according to Dante's fiction, we are provided with an alternative way of imagining the hypothetical referent of the file <ULYSSES, *Odyssey*>. We obtain a recursive file <<ULYSSES, *Odyssey*> *Divine Comedy*>.[20]

I maintain that, in virtue of their linking, indexed files gather into networks, whose each individual knot is given by a file indexed to a fiction in which the character in question appears. Other authors have already used the notion of network, but with different meanings and purposes. Perry (2001), Everett (2013) and Friend (2011; 2014), in fact, use the term "network" to explain the phenomenon of co-identification in the case of empty names and to give an account of how more people can share the same mental representation. These issues are beyond the scope of the paper. It should be emphasized, however, that these authors conceive networks as sets of relations between regular files. Instead, in my perspective, there are no regular files associated with empty names, but only files indexed to fictions. Networks develop at the level of indexed files.

By relying on the notion of network, we can justify all the different intuitions on the identity of fictional characters that we exposed above. On one side, we provide an account for the idea that there is a Ulysses belonging to the *Iliad*, one Ulysses to the *Odyssey*, another one to the *Divine Comedy*, and so on, by saying that each version of Ulysses corresponds, in our mind, to a specific file indexed to the relevant fiction. On the other side, we can also explain the intuition that the same fictional character persists in the transition from one work to another, a character that is Ulysses and not just "the Ulysses of some fiction". The continui-

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the structure of the network, i.e., the configuration of indexed files, remains unchanged. Networks only develop at the level of indexed files.

[20] The original file tells us how to represent Ulysses according to the *Odyssey*, the second one how to represent, according to the *Divine Comedy*, the very same Ulysses previously presented in the Odyssey.

ty between the various literary characters is given by the presence of a single network that links all the files together. All these files, vertically linked to each other, aim to refer to the same individual and they would do so, if such individual existed.

By means of the recursive structure of indexed files we can also explain in which ways network develops. Consider the example of paladin Roland. His epic adventures and death are told for the first time in *The Song of Roland*. By this old French poem of the 11th century was later inspired Boiardo, an Italian poet of the Renaissance. Boiardo wrote the *Orlando Innamorato*, whose Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* is a further continuation. The network of mental files has here a linear expansion from *The Song of Roland* to the *Orlando Furioso*:

a) <ROLAND, *The Song of Roland*>

b) <<ROLAND, *The Song of Roland*> *Orlando Innamorato*>

c) <<<ROLAND, *The Song of Roland*> *Orlando Innamorato*> *Orlando Furioso*>

This network describes how an experienced reader may organize files in her mind. Still other files can be added to the network, in case we consider other literary works, for instance Pulci's *Morgante*. But a subject does not need to have all these files in his mind. An inattentive or limited reader may recognize only a vague connection between the French ballad and Ariosto's poems, by having just two files vertically linked. Or she may mistakenly believe that *Orlando Innamorato* is inspired by *Orlando Furioso*, and thus link the files incorrectly. At the same way, instead of creating different indexed files for each Sherlock Holmes novel, one may have just one file, vaguely indexed to the fictional world created by Conan Doyle. Everyone has their own mental representations. However, the more it increase our knowledge about a character and the various literary works, the more precise and articulated it becomes the network in our mind.[21]

We can now consider the more complicated case of Ulysses. Let us say, even if we simplify the story, that the character appeared for the first time in the *Iliad*, then in the *Odyssey*, and finally in the Latin *Aeneid* by Virgil. After centuries Dante, who could not read the Greek poems, took inspiration from Virgil and from other Latin sources[22] for the damned soul appearing in the *Divine Comedy*. Finally, James Joyce wrote his *Ulysses*, but taking as a model for Leopold Bloom not the figure of Ulysses of the *Divine Comedy*, but the one of the *Odyssey*. The network has, at first, a linear development:

[21] I thank an anonymous reviewer who helped me to develop this point.

[22] Another important source of information for Dante was Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, but I leave Ovid aside from the analysis.

a) <ULYSSES, *Iliad*>

b) <<ULYSSES, *Iliad*> *Odyssey*>

c) <<<ULYSSES, *Iliad*> *Odyssey*> *Aeneid*>

At this point, it splits into two branches: in one branch we have Dante's Ulysses, linked to Virgil's poem:

d) <<<<ULYSSES, *Iliad*> *Odyssey*> *Aeneid*> *Divine Comedy*>

In the other branch, we have Joyce's novel, which is inspired by the *Odyssey*.[23] Leopold Bloom is at the same level as Virgil's Ulysses, for both are vertically linked to the same file:

c') <<<ULYSSES, *Iliad*> *Odyssey*> *Ulysses*$_{\text{Joyce}}$>[24]

It is now time to move on to the case in which a file cannot be part of a preexisting network, therefore giving rise to a new fictional character. We can recall the example of Pierre Menard that we have already presented: as a result of Cervantes's and Menard's works, we have two different fictional characters, independently created, sharing the same set of properties. The puzzle is usually presented as an objection to Meinongian and neo-Meinongian theories (see also Voltolini, 2006, pp. 32–35; Voltolini, Kroon, 2016). In fact, given that Cervantes's and Menard's Don Quixote share the same properties, according to (neo)Meinongian theories there should be a single character, whereas the goal is precisely to distinguish them in some way. My view does not suffer from this objection. Under the assumption that Pierre Menard does not mean to refer to any other work, we cannot qualify his character as a new version of Don Quixote, no matter how many properties they have in common. Menard's Don Quixote is not linked to the network of files that is originated by <DON QUIXOTE, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*>. It is, indeed, an entirely new Don Quixote, which at best will produce an alternative network of indexed mental files.

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[23] Of course, I am here describing the case of a subject who believes that Leopold Bloom is Ulysses. If we reject this identity, we simply do not connect the file on Leopold Bloom to the network. It is like the example of Gregory House and Sherlock Holmes that we discussed above. At most, we can say that the latter character is inspiered to the former, and that is all.

[24] One might wonder whether Dante's and Joyce's characters should be considered as two versions of the same character, since the related files are not directly linked to each other. The notion of networking is useful precisely because it allows us to account for a character appearing in several works, even if there is not a direct causal relationship between each single work. What matters is that the files are part of the same network, namely that, going up through the chain of vertical linkings, there is a file in common.

### 5. Mixed Cases: Fictional and Metafictional Perspectives Compared

We discussed about literary characters both at the fictional and at the metafictional level. As for the fictional level, we defer to the author's authority to determine the identity of literary characters. We said that two indexed files are internally linked when they refer to the same character according to a certain work of fiction. As regards the metafictional level, we proposed the notion of network between indexed files to account for identity problems in the passage from one text to another. We can now recall the dispute between Cervantes and Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda and see how to address this ambiguous case. Coherently with the position I have expressed, I argue that, at a metafictional level, Avellaneda's Don Quixote is as legitimate as Cervantes's one, since both the authors took as a model the story of 1605, in which the character of Don Quixote appeared for the first time. In terms of mental files, we have:

a) <DON QUIXOTE, *Don Quixote* $_{1605}$>
b) <<DON QUIXOTE, *Don Quixote* $_{1605}$> Avellaneda's *Second Part* $_{1614}$>
<<DON QUIXOTE, *Don Quixote* $_{1605}$> Cervantes's *Second Part* $_{1615}$>

The latter two files are vertically linked to <DON QUIXOTE, *Don Quixote* $_{1605}$> and are part of the same network of mental files. Therefore, it is not a case like Pierre Menard's. But this fact does not clash with what Cervantes claims in the *Preface* of 1615. Here, Evans's[25] distinction between conniving and non-conniving uses plays a crucial role. In fact, sentence:

7) Avellaneda's Don Quixote and Cervantes's Don Quixote are not the same fictional character.

may be either true or false. In its conniving use, as a fictional sentence uttered inside the fiction created by Cervantes, (7) is true because the author himself states it. But (7) is false, according to my perspective, if we interpret it in a non-conniving way, as a metafictional sentence.

These considerations allow me to say that identity (or non-identity) between two characters, as established by an author within a novel, does not necessarily reflect the situation at the level of network of indexed files. Let us recall our previous analysis on Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde:

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[25] According to Evans (1982, pp. 365–366), the utterance of a sentence is conniving when the utterer is engaged in a practice of make-believe and the truth-values of the sentence are merely fictional. A non-conniving use is when the sentence is uttered with the intention to tell genuine truths that transcend the context of pretense. As Voltolini observes, non-conniving uses "are intended to enable people to speak about the fiction rather than within the fiction" (2006, p. 118).

5) Jekyll is Mr. Hyde.

Even if (5) is true inside the story, it does not guarantee that the relevant indexed files are actually vertically linked.[26] There may be a discrepancy between the identity of characters in the novel and the network of files at a cognitive level. We can say that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are two different characters that correspond to two distinct representations or indexed files. The figure of Hyde, after all, is more fascinating than Jekyll and certainly had more success than its good "twin". Why should we take them as a single character, when we can claim that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are two distinct characters that in the novel coincide with one?[27] Moreover, the identity of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, precisely because it is claimed inside the novel, appears to involve a fact concerning the fiction, and not a metafictional truth. As in Don Quixote's example, sentence expressed by (5) with a conniving use is not the same sentence expressed by (5) with a non-conniving use: in the first case, one utters a fictional sentence, in the second a metafictional one, and these sentences have different truth conditions since the context of evaluation changes.

## 6. Reply to Possible Objections

I want now to consider some objections that can be moved. One might ask: why do not we consider the idea that, beyond the various fictional works, there is a sort of essence that determines a particular character? For example, some nuclear properties that remain stable and make the character recognizable?

I think that the main reason to refuse such questions is the example of Pierre Menard mentioned above. However, there are still other considerations that can be done. As Voltolini points out (Voltolini, 2010, pp. 77–78), characters from different literary works never share the whole set of properties, no matter how many similarities they have. In this respect, Homer's Odysseus and Dante's Ulysses are not identical. One may propose that there is a sort of general character that subsists beyond all the single representations on Ulysses. So here is the question: is there a *general* character, i.e, a character not related to any particular story but which it is, so to say, the Ulysses in general? And if the answer is yes, how can we qualify this general character?

For me, the question has a negative answer if we understand it as a request to individuate a file with a label like "the Ulysses in general". Such file would be either too broad or too tight. It would be too broad if it should contain all pieces of information of all files on Ulysses, because much of this information would be

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[26] Probably they are, but what I want to claim is that internal linking does not merge files. We still keep separate Jekyll's and Hyde's files.

[27] Suppose that there was a network for Jekyll and a network for Hyde, and then Stevenson decided to import the two characters as a single one in his novel. We would deal with a phenomenon of fusion. Superman and Clark Kent is a comparable example (Friend, 2014; Salis, 2013).

contradictory. It would be too tight if it should contain only the “essential” data of Ulysses, i.e., the information about a general Ulysses not belonging to any particular story. Since each author is free to interpret the characters of Ulysses as he or she likes, there are no properties that can truly be regarded as essential or nuclear. I can, for example, write a novel on Ulysses, taking inspiration from Homer’s poems, in which the protagonist is not a Greek hero and has never travelled by sea (Joyce’s book is indeed a proof of what I am saying). However, one can argue that, in order for my new Ulysses to be recognized as such, there must be some similarities between it and a pre-existent Ulysses.

The objection is sound, but which similarities must be considered relevant or essential? The set of properties that my Ulysses and Homer’s Odysseus share is arbitrary, there is no essential property that I have to keep. The differences would be even greater if I would compare my character with all the other Ulysses in literature. I could arrive at the situation in which between my personal interpretation of Ulysses and that of another author there are no shared properties. And indeed, which properties are in common between, let us say, Joyce’s Leopold Bloom and Homer’s, Virgil’s, Dante’s, Tennyson’s, Derek Walcott’s characters, without considering Guido Gozzano’s parody *Ulisse naufraga ... a bordo d’un yacht* [Ulysses is shipwrecked … on board of a yacht]?

It could then be assumed that the *real* Ulysses must be individuated at the metafictional level, and precisely with the first mental file of the network, to which all other indexed files are directly or indirectly connected. This position does not seem so good. In fact, nothing guarantees that the first book in which a literary character appears is also the most culturally significant and cognitively relevant. For example, in the creation of *Dracula*, Bram Stoker was inspired by John Polidori’s *The Vampire*. Our file about Stoker’s character will then have the structure <<Vampire, *The Vampire*> *Dracula*>. Nevertheless, we do not refer to Polidori’s novel, in most cases, when we talk or think about vampires, but to the one written by Bram Stoker. Our mental file <<Vampire, *The Vampire*> *Dracula*> has a more cognitive importance than <Vampire, *The Vampire*>, to which the first is vertically linked. Similarly, many people who never read the Greek poems will give a greater cognitive weight to Dante’s Ulysses than to Homer’s one. It makes little sense to wonder which is the *real* Ulysses, as it makes little sense to ask which is the *real* Roland, whether the one in *The Song of Roland*, or the one in *Orlando Innamorato*, or the one in *Orlando Furioso*. Each of us will grant his preference to a certain Roland, and maybe will have in mind, for instance, the specific figure described by Ariosto rather than the character in *Orlando Innamorato*, or in the *The Song of Roland*, but that does not mean that the file of Orlando Furioso has a general value, is the file of the real Orlando.

So, what does exist? There exists the continuity between a fiction on Ulysses to another, the chain of co-reference presumption that creates a network by means of which indexed files are embedded in our minds. From this network we should not expect to derive a single overall concept—an essence—of Ulysses.

## 7. Conclusion

In this paper, I tackled the problem of identity of fictional characters from a cognitive point of view. Taking a cue from Recanati's work, I suggested that the presumption of co-reference is expressed through vertical linking between indexed files. Thus, when we use files with the intention to refer to a unique character, we link them within the same network. My idea of network differs from those already present in literature by the fact that networks arise not between regular files, but between files indexed to fictional stories. By means of this conceptual apparatus, we can put order among the various and *prima facie* conflicting intuitions we have about the identity of literary characters at the fictional as well as at the metafictional level. We account for the intuition that there are multiple manifestations of a literary character, each related to single story: in fact, there are as many indexed files as many representations of a character we know. We also address the intuition that there is a single fictional character that moves from one story to another: since files are embedded within the same network, all of them presuppose the same referent. And they would have, if there was one.

There still remain some issues that could not be addressed here and that are a stimulus to continue the research. For instance, the problem of how files can be shared inter-subjectively, a topic widely debated in the literature. Do networks of files only exist inside a subject's mind or they have a public dimension? Another topic concerns the notion of migration: the author's intention to import a character is certainly a condition for character identity across works, but, as said, other criteria may be taken into consideration. Finally, a more specific question concerning my work is how the notion of network can be used to address semantic issues. Now that we have a more complete account of how we represent fictional characters in our minds, we can move to further fields of investigation.

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Article

MACIEJ TARNOWSKI *

# PROPER NAMES AS DEMONSTRATIVES IN FICTION

SUMMARY: In this article, I argue for two theses. The first is that, among different existing accounts of proper name semantics, indexicalism—a stance that treats proper names as indexical expressions—is best suited to explaining various phenomena exhibited by the use of proper names in fictional discourse. I will discuss these phenomena and compare the solutions offered by traditional descriptivist and causal-historical theories of proper name reference with those proposed by indexicalists. Subsequently, I will offer a novel account of indexicalism about proper names, which uses the apparatus of so-called hybrid expressions (Ciecierski, 2020; Künne, 1992; Predelli, 2006) as an alternative to traditional Kaplanian semantics for demonstratives. I offer an argument explaining why, among the variety of indexical views, one should favour such a hybrid theory over other available ones (e.g., Pelczar, Rainsbury, 1998; Rami, 2014) based on the analysis of "distributed utterances" (McCullagh, 2020) and statements that employ more than one fictional context.

KEYWORDS: fiction, reference, proper names, indexicals, demonstratives, hybrid expressions.

## 1. Introduction

David Kaplan reportedly complained that "proper names were a nightmare for semantics, and if it were not for their use in calling the kids for dinner, he would as soon junk the whole category" (Korta, Perry, 2011, p. 74). Among these "nightmarish" properties of proper names, one obviously should point to their

* University of Warsaw, Faculty of Philosophy. E-mail: m.tarnowski3@student.uw.edu.pl. ORCID: 0000-0003-3824-4134.

widespread use in fictional discourse; all of the most popular approaches to proper name semantics—causal-chain theory, descriptivism, and predicativism—have significant trouble providing an intuitive description of the functioning of proper names in fiction. The mere variety of different uses of fictional names—fictional, parafictional, metafictional, or existential—seems to demand different referents across these uses: fictional characters, abstract objects, or no referents at all. Therefore, the mainstream semantic theories that take proper names to be uniformly referring across these uses face serious difficulties in accounting for the truth of the statements in which they appear. In this article, I will argue that one of the usually overlooked stances, *indexicalism* about proper names, may work better in providing a uniform mechanism of reference for many classes of examples and thus may be a preferable semantic treatment of fictional uses of names.

In the following article, I will argue for two theses. The first is that, among the different existing accounts of proper name semantics, indexicalism—a stance that treats proper names as (or at least alike to) indexical expressions—is best suited to explaining various phenomena exhibited by the use of names in fictional discourse. I will discuss these phenomena and compare the solutions offered by traditional descriptivist and causal-historical theories of proper name reference with those proposed by indexicalists. Specifically, I will argue that the theories that treat fictional proper names as akin to demonstratives (rather than "pure indexicals") are best suited to explaining the mentioned phenomena. Subsequently, I will offer a novel account of indexicalism about proper names, which uses the apparatus of so-called "hybrid expressions" (Ciecierski, 2020; Künne, 1992; Predelli, 2006) as an alternative to traditional Kaplanian semantics for demonstratives. If the reader finds my first argument convincing and agrees that indexicalism is a promising approach to explaining the functioning of fictional names, I would like to offer an argument explaining why, among the variety of indexical views, one should favour such a hybrid theory over other available theories on the philosophical market (e.g., Pelczar, Rainsbury, 1998; Rami, 2014) based on the analysis of "distributed utterances" (McCullagh, 2020) and statements that employ more than one fictional context.

## 2. Indexicalism and Fiction

Briefly speaking, the term "indexicalism" names the family of views that state that proper names ought to be treated as a class of indexicals—contextually dependent expressions of which the reference varies across contexts (such as "I", "here", "that", etc.). A widely held justification for the construction of such theories is that treating proper names as indexicals allows the accommodation of both their directly referential character (both "pure" indexicals and demonstratives are traditionally viewed as directly referential and modally rigid expressions) and the phenomenon of "name sharing" or interconnected cases of so-called proper name ambiguity or "nambiguity" (Korta, Perry, 2011), as witnessed in sentences like the following:

(1) John has the same name as John.

(2) If John would quieten down, John could hear what John is saying.

(1) seems intuitively true and (2) ambiguous until we learn which of the Johns present in the room at some meeting the speaker has in mind (or points at when they speak). These claims are, however, impossible to defend if one accepts the causal-historical theory of proper name reference, which takes names to be distinctly referring devices that may be likened to logical constants. Under such a theory, on the one hand, (1) ought to be regarded as false since the first and the second token of "John" are distinct proper names referring to two different people.[1] On the other hand, (2) may be regarded as ambiguous only lexically and not semantically—the interpreter, according to causal-chain theorists, needs to know only the proper lexical form of the words used in (2) (whether the first use of "John" was of the name type uniquely referring to $John_1$)[2] to interpret the sentence appropriately. Causal-chain theorists therefore deny that the process of disambiguation of (2) in principle involves the semantic investigation of the referents of particular "John" tokens. This unintuitive consequence of causal-chain theory was regarded by many as a motivation for predicativism—the view according to which proper names are (metalinguistic) predicates of the form "the bearer of *N*". Predicativism may provide us with an intuitive analysis of (1)'s truth and treat (2) as ambiguous by interpreting them as predicating the same property ("the bearer of *John*") to different individuals. Predicativism is, however, widely regarded as problematic in explaining the nature of proper names as rigid designators:[3] according to the standard predicativist reading, the name *N* refers to its referent only in the possible worlds in which it bears the name *N*. Therefore, indexicalism, which explains both of these phenomena quite intuitively—since different objects may be referred to by the same indexical type ("it", "that", or "I") and simultaneously all of their tokens refer to them rigidly, is seen by some as a promising contender among theories of proper name reference.

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[1] One of the most prominent defences against such an argument from the perspective of causal-chain theory is provided by Kaplan (1990), who argues for a distinction between "common-currency names" (uniquely referring proper names in the classical sense) and "generic names" (lexical forms of proper names, which are not used to refer to anyone). It is unclear, however, how the existence of "generic names" may account for the truth of (1), if, by definition, neither of the Johns is the referent of the generic name "John" (see Ridley, 2016 for a discussion).

[2] This is what Kaplan calls "the real ambiguity of proper names" (1989a, p. 562). Without delving further into the discussion on what constitutes "real" ambiguity, I want to note that the claim that the possibility of different interpretations of (2) stems only from our inability to interpret the lexical form of this sentence correctly (whether it is *really* a sentence of the form "if *a* would quieten down …" rather than "if *b* would quieten down …") seems implausible.

[3] For that reason, some predicativists argue that proper names are, in fact, non-rigid and try to explain away this intuition (see Bach, 2002, pp. 85–88).

Not much has been said, however, about how indexicalism about proper names may deal with the fascinating group of examples that are the uses of proper names in fictional discourse, such as “Sherlock Holmes” as used in Arthur Conan Doyle’s short stories and novels or “Antonio Salieri” as used in Forman’s 1984 film *Amadeus*. At least since Russell’s *On Denoting* (1905), the existence of such uses has widely been regarded as evidence for a descriptivist or predicativist analysis of proper names. Since causal-chain theory requires the object to be named via some actual procedure, it seems that it is committed to the claim that all fictional uses are empty (Braun, 1993), which makes it an undesirable way of analysing fictional reference. Conversely, the descriptivist and predicativist theories make it hard to treat empty and fictional and metafictional uses of proper names uniformly—they still hold that the semantic input of a proper name to statements’ content remains uniform regardless of the context of utterance.

Let us take a look at three different statements (which I label respectively *fictional*, *metafictional*, and *existential*) containing the fictional name “Sherlock Holmes”:

(3) Sherlock Holmes lives at 221B Baker Street.

(4) Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character.

(5) Sherlock Holmes does not exist.

There are circumstances in which we would like to regard all of them as true, at least in some sense. In Arthur Conan Doyle’s short stories or while discussing facts regarding them, we would certainly agree that (3) expresses truth; (4) and (5) seem like valuable information for someone who is wondering whether Doyle’s stories are fiction or whether they describe the life of a real person. At the same time, though, it seems that they cannot simultaneously be true: if Sherlock Holmes does not exist, he cannot live in Baker Street; if he is a fictional character, he seems to exist at least in some sense. If (5) is true, then (3) is false, and if (4) is true, then (5) is not.[4, 5]

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[4] This may be elaborated further to produce the “wrong kind of object” family of problems; see Klauk (2014) and Semeijn, Zalta (2021). Although these considerations fall outside the scope of this paper, I believe that the problem pointed out by Klauk is similarly dependent on the assumption that all uses of “Sherlock Holmes” in (3)–(5) need to have the same referent.

[5] An anonymous referee suggested that the following sentence might also be regarded as true: “Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character who lives at 221B Baker Street but doesn’t exist”. I think that the literal reading of this sentence makes it false for reasons similar to the ones indicated in the previous paragraph, unless one is determined to adopt a neo-Meinongian metaphysics of *ficta*. Although I do not subscribe to such a view, arguing against it is beyond the scope of this paper, so the reader is free to treat the content of this paper as contingent on this metaphysical premise.

This conclusion is true only if we agree that the uses of the proper name "Sherlock Holmes" present in (3)–(5) need to have the same referent. That is not the case if proper names are taken to be indexicals: although the same indexical type "Sherlock Holmes" is used in (3)–(5), their referents may very well be distinct. Treating proper names as indexicals allows us to treat (3)–(5) as context-dependent expressions and evaluate their truth with respect to the different contexts of intended interpretation: (3) in the world of Doyle's fiction but (4) and (5) in the actual world. This aligns with the general intuition that talking about fiction requires a context shift—that some statements may be *fictionally* but not *factually* true and vice versa. Let us consider another statement (an example from Predelli, 1997, p. 69):

(6) Salieri commissioned the *Requiem*.

This sentence seems to be a perfect example of a statement that might be fictionally (in the world of Forman's *Amadeus*) but not factually (in the actual world) true—it is highly unlikely that Antonio Salieri commissioned Mozart's *Requiem*, although this alternative course of action is one of the main plot points in Forman's film and Shaffer's play about the two composers. However, is the truth of (6) dependent on the notion of truth that we apply to it (one being fictional truth) or the context in which we evaluate it? It seems intuitive that the second option is more desirable and, if so, (6) must contain some contextually dependent expression, the semantic value of which changes across worlds. The natural candidates, in this case, are the proper names "Salieri" and "*Requiem*". Note that such a strategy is in principle unavailable to causal-historical theoreticians—the proper names used in (6) are uniquely referring and cannot change their referent across worlds. We might tackle this problem by treating statements like (3) and (6) as being silently prefixed by some story operator (e.g., "in fiction *f*, …"), but such an approach still rules out the possibility of treating (4) and (5) as simultaneously true since neither in Doyle's fiction nor in the actual world (assuming that [5] is true) is Sherlock Holmes a fictional character. Predicativists also need to maintain that the utterance of (6) in fictional and actual contexts does not differ with respect to their truth conditions unless they welcome the indexicalist conclusion that being the referent of the predicate "being called *Salieri*" is contextually dependent (following, e.g., Tyler Burge [1973], who takes singular uses of proper names as complex demonstratives).[6] In the following section, I will investigate different possible indexicalist instalments of this strategy.

[6] As pointed out for example by Justyna Grudzińska (2007) and Ora Matushansky (2008), who regard Burge as an indexicalist. Such a view, which considers referential uses of proper names as complex demonstrative with a hidden determiner "the" or "that", is, however, not without its problems; see Jeshion's (2017).

### 3. Which Indexicalism?

After discussing the general prospects of indexicalism as a family of views for solving certain problems concerning the interpretation of fictional names, we should ask the following question: which type of indexicalism is best suited to solving more specific problems with the interpretation of fictional discourse? Among the variety of indexicalist views, one may broadly outline two different versions: "purism", which likens proper names to "pure indexicals" with a fixed character determining its reference in a given context, and "demonstrativism", which takes proper names to resemble demonstratives, the reference of which is determined in part by the speaker's intention or an act of demonstration. Although purism is more widely represented in the discussion on proper name semantics (e.g., by Pelczar, Rainsbury, 1998; Recanati, 1993; Tiedke, 2011), I will argue that it does not allow us to keep the given promise of indexicalism. Then, I will assert that the most popular demonstrativist approach (Rami, 2014) and its counterpart, developed to deal with fictional discourse (Voltolini, 2014), overcomes some of the obstacles of purism, although it does not easily counter the problem of sentences utilizing names from more than one fictional work.

According to purists, the referent of a proper name is determined by some contextually salient parameter independent of the speaker's intention or demonstration (e.g., contextually salient *naming conventions* [Recanati, 1993] or *dubbings-in-force* [Pelczar, Rainsbury, 1998; Tiedke, 2011]).[7] This is either explicitly or implicitly formalized in the classical Kaplan-style semantics (Kaplan, 1989a) for indexical expressions—the sentence type containing an indexical is paired with the ordered tuple consisting of relevant parameters of the context of its utterance (called simply the context set). By pairing indexical expressions present in the sentence with the appropriate parameter, we provide a semantic interpretation of a given utterance.

To see how this might work in practice, let us again compare the following two statements:

(3) Sherlock Holmes lives at 221B Baker Street.

(4) Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character.

According to purists, they should be interpreted as:

[7] Tiedke applies the notion of *dubbing-in-force* (although not explicitly mentioning or subscribing to Pelczar and Rainsbury's theory) to fictional uses. According to her view, the relevant *dubbing-in-force* is picked by the context of use being referential or fictional, which in turn determines whether the name ought to be paired with an individual or some set of properties. Although Tiedke's formalism is different from the one discussed below, I take this view to be susceptible to a similar objection to purist views as well as the "co-predication" objection developed against the Rami-Voltolini account.

(3’) <“Sherlock Holmes lives at 221B Baker Street”, <$a$, $t$, $l$, @, $d_f/c_f$>>

(4’) <“Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character”, <$a$, $t$, $l$, @, $d_@/c_@$>>

where $a$ stands for an agent of context, $t$—time, $l$—location, @—the world of utterance, and $d$ or $c$—the appropriate dubbing or convention salient in the context. If we take the name “Sherlock Holmes” to be an indexical, the semantic value of which is determined by the referent of the $d$ or the $c$ parameter, then we can regard (3) and (4) as simultaneously true provided that these two sentences are uttered in different contexts.

Is this, however, unproblematic? Although the existence of distinct actual naming conventions—for example, calling Donald Davidson and Donald Trump the name “Donald”—seems plausible, the existence of two actual naming conventions, one of which is empty while the other denotes a fictional object, does not. Remember that purists hold that the name refers to an object picked by the contextually salient convention or dubbing regardless of their intention; how then can these two different conventions, even if we grant their existence, be brought to salience? Imagine a person who is wondering whether Arthur Conan Doyle’s stories are true and asks another, who has never read these stories, “does Sherlock Holmes really exist?”.[8] Which dubbing or convention is salient in this situation? The lack of a clear answer here means that we also do not have any explanation for the mechanism operating behind the reference of the name “Sherlock Holmes” in (3) and (4) other than guessing.

This problem might be tackled better with another approach to indexicalism about proper names, which takes proper names to be complex demonstratives. Dolf Rami’s (2014) theory, formulated in this spirit, was aimed at improving the flaws of Pelczar and Rainsbury’s approach by tying the referents identified in the context with a particular occurrence of a proper name within an utterance and listing three principles of identification of the referent, which replace the dubbing-in-force or a naming convention. Rami presents his idea of establishing the reference of a contextually sensitive proper name in the following manner:

> $[[N_x]]_{c,\ <w,\ t>}$ is the object that is identified *demonstratively*, *descriptively or parasitically* in $c_w$ in respect to the occurrence $x$ of “$N$” by $c_a$ and that is a bearer of “$N$” at $c_t$ (Rami, 2014, p. 139).

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[8] As evidenced by the number of letters written to Sherlock Holmes at 211B Baker Street (some of them actually asking for a solution to a detective mystery), this question is not merely a philosopher’s fantasy. Numerous letters indicate that the detective’s ontological status is an unresolved and pressing issue for many: “[o]ne man wrote that the only dispute he and his wife had ever had was over whether Sherlock Holmes had actually existed. The writer wanted the argument settled, even if it ended in divorce” (Sherlock Holmes’s Mail: Not Too Mysterious, *New York Times*, 5 November 1989, p. 20).

In his characterization, it seems clear that proper names are no longer conceived as "pure" indexicals, as in Recanati's or Pelczar and Rainsbury's works, but as a class of complex demonstratives. According to Rami, demonstrative, descriptive, or parasitic identifications are ways of determining the referent by the speaker in a given context. These types of identification are mechanisms available to the speaker to single out his desired reference: demonstrative identification concerns cases of the direct presence of the named object, while descriptive and parasitic identifications are indirect forms of unique identification. The speaker may use a definite description or an intention "to use the name '*N*' in the same way as […] a certain person or a certain group of people" (Rami, 2014, p. 127).

In this approach, the way in which the speaker determines or intends to determine the referent of the proper name plays an important semantic role. Instead of assuming that the identification procedures, like the dubbing-in-force or naming convention, are somehow present or salient in the conversational context, Rami believes that they are dependent on the speaker's intention to employ them in the determination of reference. Therefore, at least at first sight, the puzzling case of someone wondering whether Sherlock Holmes actually exists is given a fairly straightforward and intuitive solution. Since the speaker employs a parasitic identification, relying on the way in which the name "Sherlock Holmes" is used in Conan Doyle's short stories, we may interpret this question as an inquiry regarding whether the fictional character Sherlock Holmes, who is the referent of the name in the novels, is an actual person.

How could one provide a similar analysis of our puzzling sentences (3)–(5)? In his paper, Alberto Voltolini (2014) proposes a way of utilizing indexicalism in the analysis of fictional discourse. His "indexiname" account bears similarities to Rami's.[9] Instead of acts of identification, he introduces an *acquisition parameter*, which serves as part of an enriched narrow context:

> According to my proposal, a proper name "N.N." is an indexical whose character is roughly expressed by the description "the individual called 'N.N.' (in context)", where this description means "the individual one's interlocutor's attention is called to by means of 'N.N.' (in context)" […]. Such contexts are *enriched* narrow

[9] Of course, these theories are not entirely convergent—Voltolini bases his interpretation on his earlier indexicalist view presented in Voltolini (1995), which he himself later likens to Pelczar and Rainsbury's theory (2014, p. 299, n. 13). However, in his later paper (2014), Voltolini makes it clear that his view, while incompatible with Pelczar and Rainsbury's theory, bears many similarities to Rami's and exploits many points raised by Rami (see Voltolini, 2014, pp. 302–306, 319–320). As one of the reviewers rightfully remarked, it is problematic to classify Voltolini's account as either purist or demonstrativist since it utilizes parameters of a narrow context to determine the indexical's content. However, Voltolini holds a somewhat non-classical view on the analysis of demonstrative expressions: "I hold that among [indexical] expressions, proper names are closer to demonstratives like 'that' rather than to pure indexicals like 'I', *provided however that demonstratives are taken as indexicals that are to be paired with an enriched yet still narrow context of interpretation*" (2014, p. 299, my emphasis).

> contexts, for they also include an "acquisition" parameter, i.e., a parameter filled by a naming practice constituted by a dubbing, which consists in calling via the name one's interlocutor's attention to something (if any), and usually also by a certain transmission chain. (Voltolini, 2014, p. 294, emphasis in the original)

To ensure that the acquisition/identification parameters are right, Voltolini ties them to a *context of interpretation* parameter. Utterances containing proper names should therefore be analysed as pairs of a sentence type and an enriched context:

$<a, t, l, w, i_1, i_2, \ldots, i_n>$,

where $a$, $t$, and $l$ stand for an agent, time, and location, $w$ represents a world of utterance (be it actual, @, or fictional, $f$)[10] or the intended interpretation of the utterance (cf. Predelli, 1997; 1998) and appropriate acts of identification/acquisition ($i_1, i_2, \ldots, i_n$) that match the context of interpretation. Adding this parameter to the narrow context likens proper names to demonstratives in Voltolini's analysis since, unlike pure indexicals, the character of proper names is only a partial function from contexts to contents (that is, proper names may have empty uses and, unlike pure indexicals, such as "I", are not guaranteed to refer to a particular person) and the way in which the additional parameter is picked might be sensitive to the speaker's referential intention (Voltolini, 2014, pp. 301–304).[11]

Following this analysis allows for the provision of a satisfying account of the same proper name being used as an empty and referring fictional name:

(5'') <"Sherlock Holmes does not exist", $<a, t, l, @, i_1>$>

(3'') <"Sherlock Holmes lives at 221B Baker Street", $<a, t, l, f, i_{f1}, i_{f2}>$>

These two sentences are simultaneously true in their respective worlds of interpretation—@ and $f$—and acts of identification present in these worlds—$i_1$ and $i_{f1}$ and $i_{f2}$ (identifying Sherlock Holmes and 221B Baker Street in the world of Conan Doyle's fiction). Therefore, we obtain the intended result, according to

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[10] Here I assume the existence of *worlds of fiction*—denoted by $f$—as qualitatively distinct from possible worlds. In the literature, proponents of this distinction point out that, unlike possible worlds (characterized by their maximality and consistency), worlds of fiction may be incomplete and, in specific cases, satisfy contradictory statements. The discussion on how one may describe these properties coherently in a more precise formal setting (usually by appealing to the notion of *impossible worlds*, cf. Berto, Jago, 2019; Priest, 2005) unfortunately is far beyond the scope of this article.

[11] Voltolini concedes that specific methods of acquisition of referential uses of a proper name are "attentional callings and their progressions" (2014, p. 304). Although this might be conceptualized as a further refinement of the procedure of putting dubbings into force, I think that it might also be minimally reconciled with Rami's notion of parasitic identification.

which sentence (3) is true and sentence (5) false when uttered by John Watson in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* or someone else who intends to discuss the contents of Conan Doyle’s stories, while (5) is true and (3) false when the speaker intends to discuss Sherlock’s properties in the actual world. While interpreting sentence (4) might be more problematic, these troubles might be explained away by regarding “fictional” as an indexical expression as well (in a way similar to David Lewis’s treatment of the expression “actual”: Lewis, 1970):

(4’) <“Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character”, <*a*, *t*, *l*, @, $i_{f1}$>>

While the indexical expression “Sherlock Holmes” is tied to the act of identification present in the fictional world, the expression “fictional” is interpreted with the actual world in mind. (4) would then be true if there is an act of identification picking out the referent of “Sherlock Holmes” in a world of fiction *f* accessible[12] from the actual world @.[13] Although, according to Voltolini, the acquisition parameter ought to be tied to the world of utterance or intended interpretation, we might stipulate that the presence of the expression “fictional” allows us to look for the act of identification in the accessible fictional worlds.

Although the potential metaphysical problem of commitment to a fictional naming convention or acts of identification still exists (namely that, in the respective fictional world, there needs to be a distinct fictional act of identification, which might be a step too far for someone who holds less robust views on the properties of fictional worlds), the success of such a theory in providing the accurate truth conditions for (3)–(5) might be seen as a “best-explanation” argument for accepting such stances. If the Rami-Voltolini account gives us a correct interpretation for different uses of fictional proper names without appealing to different reference mechanisms (as the causal-chain and descriptivist theories of proper name reference do), then it should be adopted regardless of its slightly controversial metaphysical cost.

The demonstrative or indexiname account is therefore accurately suited to providing a satisfying analysis of the functioning of proper names in fictional statements, actual statements about fictional characters, and metafictional

[12] As noted earlier, since fictional worlds are qualitatively different from possible worlds, the characteristics of the accessibility relation are not as straightforward as they might seem. One might stipulate that the accessibility here means simply that the existence of the respective world of fiction is known from the perspective of the relevant possible world or that the world of fiction was created by the individual in this possible world (e.g., the world of Sherlock Holmes’s stories would be accessible only from possible worlds in which Arthur Conan Doyle wrote them).

[13] One might also suppose that, in such cases, we refer to *actual fictional characters* in line with Thomasson’s (1999) or Zalta’s (2003) characterization, if one is prepared to accept such a metaphysical stance; this seems, however, to run into problems with reconciling the truth of (4) and (5) (for further discussion, see Klauk, 2014; Semeijn, Zalta, 2021). I thank an anonymous referee for this suggestion.

statements. This property, as demonstrated earlier in the paper, is what drives the general promise of indexical treatment of fictional proper names, and these accounts fulfil this promise fairly effortlessly. When compared with other proposed views on proper name semantics, which are committed to the view that the name's reference is identical in all of its uses across these contexts, it proves to be significantly advantageous.

Such an account is not, however, entirely free of problems. Several authors point out that Rami's account proves to be problematic in cases in which the naming convention changes over time, and it seems not to be entirely free of pragmatic components (Ridley, 2016). Another problem might be highlighted in the analysis of more complex statements employing fictional names—one that I shall call here "the distributed context problem". Recall that, in Voltolini's analysis, the acts of identification or acquisition are tied to a certain context of interpretation and that the whole sentence needs to be analysed from the perspective of a certain world. As we have seen, metafictional statements akin to (4) prove to be challenging for such a theory—and, although a fitting refinement of Voltolini's original claim might be developed, we may take a step further in this direction and think of similar constructions that require an analysis that takes two or more fictional contexts into account simultaneously. Let us imagine that, for example, I would like not only to state something about the properties of a certain fictional character but also to compare it with another, as in the following examples:

(7) Sherlock Holmes and Hercules Poirot are both famous detectives.
(8) The Joker is a far scarier villain than Doctor Octopus.

Similar statements might be also produced when we take into account common discourse about the relationship between events occurring in the actual and the fictional world, as visible here:

(9) If Arthur Conan Doyle had set his short stories in Edinburgh, Sherlock Holmes would not have lived on 221B Baker Street.
(10) The story of Salieri who commissioned Mozart to write the *Requiem* is based on the life of the composer Salieri who did no such thing.

Voltolini's and Rami's demonstrative approach has no easy way of dealing with these kinds of examples.[14] If these sentences should be evaluated with respect to only one context of interpretation, we interpret (7)–(8) either from the point of view of the actual world and actual acts of identification (and in which

[14] A similar problem occurs for solutions (e.g., Currie, 1986) that take sentences like (3) to have an inarticulated component in the form of a preamble: "in the fiction *f* …" or "it is a part of fiction *f* that …". For a wider and more in-depth criticism of such a view, see for example Predelli's (2008).

both acts of identification are empty) or from the point of view of only one of the fictional worlds, where only one of the acts of identification has a referent. Similarly, with (9)–(10), the context of interpretation belongs either to the actual world or to the world of fiction—for example, in the world of Sherlock Holmes stories, the proper name "Arthur Conan Doyle" lacks a referent, and, in the world of Forman's *Amadeus*, the proper name "Salieri" is tied to a different identifying procedure.

The problem evidenced here seems to lie deeper than the lack of a simple adjustment of the chosen theory to accommodate this phenomenon. What proves to be troubling here, as I will show, is the Kaplanian architecture of the formal theory used to analyse these statements, which pairs the whole sentence type with a single context (be it the context of utterance or the context of intended interpretation). In the next section, I will examine a strategy for dealing with similar problems in recently developed theories of "hybrid expressions" and try to apply a similar solution to the puzzle posed by sentences (7)–(10).

## 4. Hybrid Demonstrative View

The above-mentioned problem with the Kaplanian formalism is not new—Kaplan himself discusses some of the troubling cases in his *Afterthoughts* (1989b);[15] it was reinforced by David Braun's (1996) discussion of Kaplan's treatment of sentences containing more than one demonstrative expression. Such problematic cases were referred to by McCullagh (2020) as "distributed utterances", the name coming from the fact that their troubling nature consists of the distribution of utterances of the sentence across varying contexts. One may consider the following example (McCullagh, 2020, p. 114):

(11) It is cold here, but it is warm here,

where the first occurrence of "here" was used when the speaker was standing near the open window, while the second was used when they approached the stove standing at the back of the room. Notice that it is impossible to regard such utterances as true (although intuitively they might be) if we agree with the Kaplanian way of analysing contextually dependent utterances as pairs of sentence types and contexts of utterance—the indexical "here" is then interpreted rigidly by pairing it with the location parameter $l$ of the context, which is the location either near the open window or beside a warm stove.

The puzzling nature of (11) bears certain similarities to examples (7)–(10). Similarly, the formal problem lies in the commitment to analysing the whole sentence paired with one determinate context set. Although it might not be clear for statements (7)–(8) that the within-utterance context shift occurred, it

[15] He discusses the statement containing five "you" demonstratives—"you, you, you and you can leave, but you stay"—and sentences containing multiple occurrences of "today" (Kaplan, 1989b, pp. 586–587).

becomes much more profound in cases (9)–(10). Let us compare (10) with a similar sentence in which the name “Salieri” is replaced by the pronoun “he”:

(12) *He* commissioned the *Requiem*, while *he* did no such thing.

Imagine that the first occurrence of “he” was accompanied by the pointing gesture demonstrating F. Murray Abraham’s snapshot from *Amadeus* while the second was accompanied by a presentation of the real-world Salieri’s portrait. Unless some context shift occurred during the utterance, (12) ought to be regarded as false since F. Murray Abraham did not commission the *Requiem* (any more than the real-life Antonio Salieri); the first part of the sentence was uttered by utilizing the context of fictional pretence (via a deferred ostensive act), while the second used the historical context. If we believe that proper names should be treated as demonstratives and therefore take (12) to be analogous to (10), then we should regard the utterance of (10) as employing a mid-utterance context shift similar to cases of distributed utterances.

Tadeusz Ciecierski (2019; 2020) and Carlo Penco (2021)[16] note that the problems of interpreting distributed utterances in the Kaplanian Logic of Demonstratives may support another approach to the nature and formalization of indexicals.[17] This view, which I label here “the hybrid approach” (after Künne, 1992 and Ciecierski, 2019), takes the relevant parameters of context to be composite parts of uses of expressions—hence, specific uses of indexicals are regarded as composite “hybrid” objects consisting of tokens of indexicals and extra-linguistic objects that are the context parameters. From the formal point of view, instead of pairing sentence types with their contexts of utterance/interpretation, we analyse the sentence tokens containing these hybrid expressions. Let us look at an exemplary analysis of (11) in the hybrid spirit:

(11’) [It is cold] $[<)\mathit{here}(_{<l1,\, t1>}, l_{\text{window}}>]$, [but it is warm] $[<)\mathit{here}(_{<l2,\, t2>}, l_{\text{stove}}>]$.

The square brackets are used to represent a syntactic regimentation of (11) (cf. Predelli, 2006) and the inverted brackets are a device for talking about the specific “here” token produced at location *l* and at time *t* (which is a way of using Reichenbach’s [1947] token quotes[18] to refer to specific tokens at distinct

[16] A similar discussion of informative identity statements containing two demonstrative expressions “that” may be found in Textor (2015).

[17] Braun (1996) and McCullagh (2020) try to modify Kaplan’s Logic of Demonstratives to accommodate these kinds of utterances. As Ciecierski (2020, n. 11) notices, these modifications are either incomplete or depart significantly from the original Kaplanian project by distinguishing the linguistic meaning and character of an expression. Although Voltolini himself does not state how his approach may deal with utterances similar to (7)–(10), he seems to accept Braun’s proposal for dealing with cases of “distributed utterances” (2014, p. 302).

[18] The use of inverted quotes is borrowed from Czeżowski (1958).

times and locations; cf. Ciecierski, 2019; 2020). The whole expression, formalized as $<)\mathit{here}(_{<l1,\ t1>},\ l_{\text{window}}>$, is a composite object consisting of the "here" token produced in $l_1$ at $t_1$ and the extra-linguistic part, being the location of the token's utterance, which is also its referent. This regimentation of (11) allows us to accommodate the fact of the change in location parameter during the sentence's utterance and to pair the two tokens of "here" adequately with their respective referents. The indexicality is, in this view, captured by the phenomenon of introducing extra-linguistic objects or acts as parts of utterances (called, after Künne, *hybrid proper names*) instead of the change of content in differing contexts. Treating proper names as indexicals would mean, in the hybrid approach, representing their different utterances as pairs of their tokens and referents or demonstrations. On such a view, the same name type "John" might be used to refer to $John_1$ and $John_2$, and this fact is captured by representing the two referring utterances of "John" as pairs of its token and either $John_1$ or $John_2$ themselves or uniquely referring demonstrations of them. Two tokens of a single indexical expression "John" might therefore be employed as part of two different hybrid proper names; we can then distinguish a single name type "John", different hybrid name types composed of tokens of this name type and their referent, and specific tokens of this hybrid name composed of a specific token of "John" and its referent.

Since the objective of this paper is to offer a treatment of proper names as indexicals and the most promising way to do so is to approach them as demonstrative expressions, one might wonder how to formalize demonstratives in a hybrid manner that suits the purpose of regarding the proper names as such. Among the theorists of the hybrid approach, there is a disagreement on whether, in the case of demonstratives, the corresponding extra-linguistic part of an expression is a corresponding *demonstration* (e.g., Ciecierski, 2019; Künne, 2010; Penco, 2021; Textor, 2015) or simply *the intended referent* (e.g., Künne, 1992; Predelli, 2006). In the case of proper names, the latter view seems to be more appealing: most uses of proper names lack any associated pointing gesture—this could be the case only in situations in which (to borrow Rami's phrase) demonstrative identification is possible. It is even more profound in the case of fictional proper names. The concept of "demonstration" would have to be stretched highly artificially if it were to serve the purpose of saying that, when someone utters (3), they somehow demonstrate the fictional character not present in the actual world. The utterance-referent view of hybrid demonstratives' composition is therefore preferable.

Borrowing from both Rami's and Voltolini's accounts and the hybrid approach, we may formalize utterances of proper names of type $N$ in the following manner:

$$\langle )N(_{\langle l,\, t\rangle}, n\rangle$$

where $)N(_{\langle l,\, t\rangle}$ represents the utterance of a proper name type $N$ at location $l$ at time $t$ and $n$ is the referent fixed by the speaker's demonstrative, descriptive, or parasitic referential intention—which is the reflection of Rami's condition on the acts of identification associated with the use of a proper name.[19]

As one may easily see, such an approach is a form of intentionalism about demonstrative reference, which yet again is a controversial matter; however, since I ruled out the possibility of supplementing the use of a fictional proper name with a demonstration, it seems fairly obvious that making use of the speaker's intention to determine its reference is the only viable alternative. A further clarification needs to be made to picture how these referential intentions work if a speaker wants to refer to a fictional object. One could, in my opinion, formulate two plausible mechanisms of reference depending on one's views regarding the metaphysics of fiction. The first and metaphysically more neutral method would be to utilize Rami's notion of the descriptive act of identification—the speaker might intend to refer to a certain fictional object as an object satisfying certain properties in the world of fiction. My success in referring to Sherlock Holmes as the protagonist of Conan Doyle's stories is then grounded in my intention to refer to the object that satisfies the description that I became acquainted with while reading Conan Doyle's stories in the world of his fiction. This explanatory mechanism is available both to possibilists, who view fictional worlds as possible worlds (in the spirit of Lewis, 1978), and creationists, who take fictional worlds to be qualitatively distinct creations of their authors (Ingarden, 1931; Thomasson, 1999). However, if one supports the latter of these stances, I believe that a more appealing way of explaining the referential mechanism here would make use of the demonstrative and parasitic referential intentions. If one takes worlds of fiction to be creations of authors, it seems that one may easily grant the existence of privileged epistemic access of fiction's authors to this world, allowing them to refer to a given object demonstratively.[20] My success in referring to Sherlock Holmes would then rest on intending to refer to whatever object Conan Doyle intended to refer to when he used the name "Sherlock Holmes" in his short stories and novels.

Now consider statements (3)–(5) again. The hybrid demonstrative picture of proper name reference in the shape presented here might approach them in the following manner:

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[19] I develop this theory in further detail and provide more general objections to existing indexical theories of proper name reference in Tarnowski's (2022).

[20] A doubt could arise at this point as to how an abstract being (a fictional world) can be created or demonstratively referred to (and thus enter into a causal relationship with the creator's action) if it is causally isolated. The answer to a similar objection and the way of approaching the theory of abstract artifacts (based on the example of words), which I consider to be acceptable, can be found in Irmak's (2019).

(3’’’) [<)*Sherlock Holmes*($_{<l1,\ t1>}$, $s_f$>] [lives at] [<)*221B Baker Street*($_{<l2,\ t2>}$, $b_f$>].

(4’’’) [<)*Sherlock Holmes*($_{<l1,\ t1>}$, $s_f$>] [is a] [[<)*fictional*($_{<l2,\ t2>}$, @>] [character].

(5’’’) [<)*Sherlock Holmes*($_{<l1,\ t1>}$, _>][21] [does not exist].

The difference in how the “Sherlock Holmes” token is formalized across (3’’’)–(5’’’) of course depends on the referential intentions of the speaker. If I utter the name “Sherlock Holmes” with an intention to refer to a fictional character (as in [3]), then the token that I utter will have this fictional object as its composite part; if I intend to talk about a real-world person (as in [5]), then the token that I produce will have an empty part as its component and eventually empty reference. The hybrid demonstrative view is therefore suited to explaining and predicting correctly the truth value of (3)–(5) as well as the demonstrative approach of Rami and Voltolini. The cases that prove to be problematic for the latter theory are, however, easily resolved with the hybrid analysis:

(7) [<)*Sherlock Holmes*($_{<l1,\ t1>}$, $s_{f1}$>] [and] [<)*Hercules Poirot*($_{<l2,\ t2>}$, $h_{f2}$>] [are both famous detectives].

(8) [<)*The Joker*($_{<l1,\ t1>}$, $j_{f1}$>] [is a far scarier villain than] [<)*Doctor Octopus*($_{<l2,\ t2>}$, $o_{f2}$>].

The reason for this is that both characters mentioned are picked out as referents of the respective utterances independently and may be predicated with the property of being a famous detective or a scary villain without interpreting them as part of the same context of intended interpretation. Similarly, the cases in which the fictional and the actual context are mixed within one utterance are given an intuitive analysis that allows us to talk freely about the relationship between actual and fictional events:

(9) [If] [<)*Arthur Conan Doyle*($_{<l1,\ t1>}$, *a*>] [set his short stories in] [[<)*Edinburgh*($_{<l2,\ t2>}$, *e*>], [<)*Sherlock Holmes*($_{<l3,\ t3>}$, $s_f$>] [would not have lived at] [<)*221B Baker Street*($_{<l4,\ t4>}$, $b_f$>].

(10) [The story of] [<)*Salieri*($_{<l1,\ t1>}$, $s_f$>] [who commissioned] [[<)*the Requiem*($_{<l2,\ t2>}$, $r_f$>] [is based on the life of the composer] [<)*Salieri*($_{<l3,\ t3>}$, *s*>] [who did no such thing].

An interesting objection to this view might be that it remains insufficiently fine grained for some purposes.[22] Certain proper names are used in more than

[21] I follow here the convention used by David Braun (1993) to denote the empty part of a proposition being expressed by the sentence containing an empty name. By “_”, I mean that the referent part of the hybrid indexical is empty.

one fictional work—say, the name “Sherlock Holmes” in the Conan Doyle stories and the 2010 BBC series *Sherlock*, set in contemporary London.[23] Let us say that sentence (5) is uttered twice, first in a discussion of the original series of stories and second in the discourse concerning the BBC series:

$(5^{CD})$ [<)*Sherlock Holmes*($_{<l1,\, t1>}$, _>] [does not exist].
$(5^{BBC})$ [<)*Sherlock Holmes*($_{<l1,\, t1>}$, _>] [does not exist].

It seems that one may, for example, deny $(5^{CD})$ and assert $(5^{BBC})$ if one is convinced that the works of Conan Doyle describe actual events while the BBC series does not—although one of those beliefs is false, it seems that one may accept it without falling short of rationality. Nevertheless, since such a speaker both accepts and denies the very same sentence, they seem to possess contradictory beliefs, which may mean that in fact we are dealing here with two different types of utterances.

Such a scenario clearly seems to be a variation of Kripke’s (1979) puzzling case of Peter. As such, it seems clear that the puzzle is wider in scope; however, I think that two possible solutions may be provided. The first would be to revise the proposed theory and opt for the inclusion of intentions themselves as the corresponding non-linguistic composite part of the token of the hybrid name. Then $(5^{CD})$ and $(5^{BBC})$ would be interpreted as:

$(5^{CD}{'})$ [<)*Sherlock Holmes*($_{<l1,\, t1>}$, $i_{@CD}$>] [does not exist].
$(5^{BBC}{'})$ [<)*Sherlock Holmes*($_{<l1,\, t1>}$, $i_{@BBC}$>] [does not exist].

This would allow for distinguishing the linguistic form of the two utterances, which, of course, comes at a cost—to secure the modal rigidity of such tokens, one would need to commit to the view that such intentions are object dependent in the sense proposed by Evans (1982; see also Adams, Fuller, Stecker, 1993). This would liken this approach to the “demonstration” view of hybrid expressions represented by Ciecierski, Penco, and Textor, although it would contain the referential intention in place of an ostensive act (which, as I noted before, seems at least to be controversial if we are to regard proper names as hybrid demonstratives). I think, however, that this option needs to be treated as a last resort; in fact, I believe that the claim that $(5^{CD})$ and $(5^{BBC})$ should be interpreted differently merely because one of them may be accepted and the other rejected can itself be rejected on principled grounds. The analogy with Kripke’s Peter seems partic-

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[22] I would like to thank an anonymous referee for bringing this objection to my attention.

[23] In theory, a similar example may contain even qualitatively identical works of fiction, as pictured for example in Jorge Luis Borges’s “Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote”. One may also note that the presence of similar ambiguities in fictional contexts seems to deepen the problems of causal-chain treatment of proper names discussed with respect to examples (1) and (2).

ularly elucidating here. In Kripke’s example, Peter is acquainted with the name “Paderewski” via two epistemically isolated contexts—once as the name of a Polish politician and once as the name of a famous pianist and composer. Since he additionally believes that no politician can develop a taste in music, he is ready to assent to the following statement:

(13) Paderewski is a great musician,

when he believes that the token “Paderewski” in (13) refers to the politician, while he dissents to (13) if he believes that this token refers to the musician. Approaching this puzzle from a hybrid demonstrative perspective, one may follow Kaplan (1990) in noting that the perceived contradiction stems from Peter’s inability to recognize that he actually uses/encounters the same name twice. If that is the case, it no longer seems puzzling that, although the name “Paderewski” is tokened in the form of $<)Paderewski(_{<l1,\, t1>}, p>$ in both circumstances, he mistakenly believes that the form of the token differs between the dissent condition and the assent condition. Similarly, we may uphold that the cognitive difference between ($5^{CD}$) and ($5^{BBC}$) stems from not properly recognizing the form of the token present in them rather than any other condition. If one is ready to admit that the referents of our referential intentions are not always transparent to us and that such referents are parts of tokens of hybrid demonstratives, then such a conclusion should be seen as acceptable.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

The general conclusion of this article may be regarded as twofold—as a general methodological remark regarding the approach to proper name semantics in fictional discourse and as an endorsement of an increasingly popular way of viewing indexical expressions, called the “hybrid expressions” approach. In the first part of the article, I proposed and defended the view that indexicalism about proper names (the thesis according to which proper names should be interpreted as indexicals) is promising for the uniformity of analysis of proper name uses in fictional contexts. Its crucial feature being the ability to assign different values to a proper name across different contexts, indexicalism may provide a uniform analysis of fictional, metafictional, and existential statements about fictional characters without the need to postulate the existence of independent fictional proper names as they occur in works of fiction. From a variety of different indexical views (e.g., the popular “purist” views of Recanati [1993], and Pelczar and Rainsbury [1998]) regarding proper name reference, I singled out the demonstrative approach of Dolf Rami (2014) and a similar application of indexicalism to a fictional discourse of Alberto Voltolini (2014) as being the most promising, although not entirely unproblematic, stance regarding fictional proper names.

In the second part of the paper, I showed that the problems of Rami’s and Voltolini’s theories concerning the interpretation of cases of “mixed contexts”

may be thought of as a subproblem of Kaplan-style semantics for indexicals with the interpretation of so-called "distributed utterances" (McCullagh, 2020). As evidenced by the recent works by Ciecierski (2019; 2020) and Penco (2021), these problems may be solved by replacing Kaplan's paradigm of interpreting contextually dependent utterances by pairing the sentence type with a uniform context of utterance with a novel approach to indexical semantics called the "hybrid approach". Departing from this point, I pictured the alternative way of formalizing uses of fictional proper names as pairs of tokens and intended referents and demonstrated how this procedure may deal with the cases proven to be problematic for the Rami-Voltolini approach.

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Article

ELISA PAGANINI *

# WHERE NOT TO LOOK FOR FICTIONAL OBJECTS[1]

SUMMARY: Philosophers discuss whether we should commit ourselves to fictional objects or not. There is a test—quite widespread among philosophers—to settle the matter: if fictional objects are required to give an adequate semantic/pragmatic analysis of either intra-fictional or extra-fictional sentences, then we are committed to them; if we can account for this analysis without them, we are not so committed. I am going to consider this test and I will claim that on its own it cannot be considered a definitive test.

KEYWORDS: fictional names, fictional objects, abstract objects, realists/irrealists about fictional objects, intra-fictional sentences, extra-fictional sentences.

It is common sense that fictional objects do not exist, and by this we mean—at least—that they are not physical objects we will run into while moving around in our world. But philosophers discuss whether we should commit ourselves to fictional objects or not, and when they quarrel about this, they are not debating whether there are physical fictional objects around but considering whether we are committed to abstract objects or at least to possible objects (i.e., objects existing in other possible worlds). As is well known, philosophers divide into real-

* University of Milan, Department of Philosophy "Piero Martinetti". E-mail: elisa.paganini@unimi.it. ORCID: 0000-0003-4011-9092.

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ists (according to whom we are so committed)[2] and irrealists (according to whom we are not so committed).[3]

Now, the interesting question is: is there a test able to settle the debate? There is in fact such a test, which is quite widespread among philosophers: it concerns the truth conditions of intra-fictional and extra-fictional sentences.[4] Supposing that we need a uniform and intuitively adequate way to distinguish between true and false sentences (or, at least, adequate and inadequate sentences) using fictional names (i.e., names introduced for the first time in fiction), the criterion is the following: if fictional objects are required to give an adequate semantic/pragmatic analysis of such sentences, then we are committed to them; if we can account for the analysis without them, we are not so committed. I am going to consider this test and I will claim that on its own it cannot be considered a definitive test.

The general aim of my paper is not to settle the matter in favor of either realism or irrealism, nor to claim that either realist or irrealist theories are unsound, trying to find subtle objections for any theory.[5] My aim is more delimited: I claim that the semantic/pragmatic analysis of fictional sentences is not a decisive test in favor of either realism or irrealism. This is compatible with there being good and consistent realist and irrealist theories; my claim is that the reason to choose one instead of the other is not to be seen in a semantic/pragmatic analysis which forces one instead of the other. And this is what I mean when I say that the semantic/pragmatic test is not conclusive.

## 1. Truth-Conditions of Sentences Including Fictional Names

There are assertions made within fiction and evaluated within it, i.e., intra-fictional assertions, as for example "Sherlock Holmes is a detective". And there are assertions on fiction made outside fiction and evaluated outside it as "Sher-

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[2] Among realist philosophers, Meinongians include Rapaport (1978), Parsons (1980), Zalta (1983), Priest (2005), Berto (2011); creationists include van Inwagen (1977), Schiffer (1996), Salmon (1998), Thomasson (1999; 2003), Kripke (2011; 2013); role Platonists include Wolterstorff (1980), Currie (1990), Stokke (2021).

[3] Among irrealist philosophers, see: Walton (1990), Brock (2002), Sainsbury (2010), Everett (2013), Friend (2011), Salis (2013; 2021), García-Carpintero (2018; 2020).

[4] By intra-fictional sentences I mean sentences included in fiction or concerning the content of a fiction (as for example, "Sherlock Holmes is a detective" or "according to Doyle's stories, Sherlock Holmes is a detective"); by extra-fictional assertions I mean assertions made about fiction from the outside (as for example "Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character" or "Sherlock Holmes is smarter than any real detective"). The terminology is not uniform in the literature, I will make my interpretation explicit later in the presentation.

[5] My proposal is therefore compatible with different semantic and pragmatic analyses of fictional names when they do not force the existence of fictional objects. For example, my proposal is perfectly compatible with the semantic and pragmatic analyses of fictional names in Adams, Fuller and Stecker's (1997), Adams and Dietrich's (2004), Adams and Fuller's (2007).

lock Holmes is a fictional object", i.e., extra-fictional assertions. Let us start with the first type of assertion.

### 1.1. Intra-Fictional Assertions

The first thing to consider is whether the truth-conditions of an assertion such as "Sherlock Holmes is a detective" are to be considered comparable to those of an assertion such as "George Clooney is an actor". As is well known, the extensional assertion "George Clooney is an actor" is true if the person denoted by the name has the property of being an actor, it is false if such a person does not have this property, but the sentence is neither true nor false if the name does not refer to anything[6] or the sentence is false if the name is an abbreviation of an unsatisfied definite description.[7] Supposing that "Sherlock Holmes is a detective" is an extensional assertion, we need an object (even an abstract one), to which the name refers or which will satisfy the description associated with the name, to attribute the value true to it. An idea, which was originally proposed by Meinongian philosophers, is to introduce abstract objects (i.e., non-existent objects) to allow reference for names introduced for the first time in fiction, and to permit all the truth-values applying to the sentences including them.[8]

One of the problems with this approach is that it presupposes that, when we use language within fiction, we use it in the same way we use it outside fiction. The general intuition is instead that whenever we are committed to fiction, we pretend, and we are not seriously committed to what we read or say. Now, how can we characterize pretense? There are two possible ways to do so (Sections 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 of the current paper), and it is important to note that neither commits to fictional objects.

#### 1.1.1. Intra-fictional assertions within games or false presuppositions.

A possible way to analyze fictional sentences is to say that they are not really intended to be true or false, they are instead assertions made within a game or at least assertions to be interpreted within false presuppositions.

The idea that fictional assertions are to be interpreted within games of make-believe was introduced by Walton (1990) and it has been approved and developed by others.[9] The idea is interesting and fascinating: it is quite evident that if we accept that fictional assertions are made within games, they are not real assertions, they may be characterized by conditions which authorize their use or not. If this is the case, fictional assertions come with rules of adequacy and do not

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[6] This is the semantic analysis defended by Frege (1997).

[7] This is the semantic analysis defended by Russell (1905).

[8] Among Meinonghians adopting an extensional interpretation of fictional assertions, see: Rapaport's (1978) and Parsons' (1980).

[9] Among philosophers who follow Walton's game-theoretic approach, see: Everett's (2013) and Friend's (2011).

have truth-conditions. Not having truth-conditions, they are not committed to anything making them true and therefore they do not commit in any sense to fictional objects.

A variant of the fictional stance is to assume that fictional assertions are made within false presuppositions. On certain occasions we may want to fantasize on what we would do if we had more money or more spare time or were living in a different country. In all these cases we make assertions within false presuppositions, and we are not committed to the truth or falsity of such assertions outside these presuppositions. In the same way, according to the presuppositional approach to fiction, whenever we read a story, we understand it within the false presupposition that we are talking about real entities and real events, but the presupposition is in fact false and therefore we are not committed to fictional objects according to this approach.[10]

#### 1.1.2. Intensional intra-fictional assertions.

Certain philosophers believe instead that assertions within fiction may be true or false. To develop this intuition, one promising way is to assume that any assertion *P* within fiction is an assertion within the implicit operator "within fiction *F*, …", and therefore equivalent to "within fiction *F*, *P*" (i.e., it is an intensional and not extensional assertion). If we allow this assumption, David Lewis presents an effective way to establish the truth conditions of any fictional sentence *P* (Lewis, 1978). The idea is to consider all the possible worlds more similar to the actual one where the fiction *F* is reported as a known fact and not within pretense: if in all these worlds the sentence *P* is true, then "within fiction *F*, *P*" is true; if there is at least one of such worlds where *P* is false, then "within fiction *F*, *P*" is false.

It is now interesting to consider why this analysis of fictional sentences does not commit to fictional names referring to fictional objects, nor even to possible objects. Let us consider the sentence "according to Conan Doyle's stories, Sherlock Holmes is a detective" and let us apply David Lewis' method. The sentence is true because, in all the possible worlds more similar to the actual one in which someone tells Conan Doyle's stories as known facts, the person referred to by the narrator with the name "Sherlock Holmes" is a detective. Let us now consider the following question: is any possible man named "Sherlock Holmes" in any of the possible worlds more similar to the actual one in which someone tells Conan Doyle's stories as known facts, the reference of the name used within fiction in our world? The answer is "no", there is no possible man the name refers to in our world. The reason is not that the semantic analysis of the intensional sentence allows for the name to refer to different persons in different possible words, there not being therefore a single referent for the name "Sherlock Holmes" in all possible worlds; the reason is deeper than this: we must distinguish between the

[10] This is the approach introduced by Sainsbury (2010) and recently defended by Salis (2013), Orlando (2021) and García-Carpintero (2018; 2020).

semantic analysis of an intensional sentence and the reference of the names included in it; as Kripke writes: "One should not identify what people would have said *in* certain circumstances, had those circumstances obtained, with what we would say *of* these circumstances, knowing or believing that those circumstances *do not* obtain" (Kripke, 2013, p. 40, emphasis in the original).

To appreciate the difference between the tools used to give a semantic analysis of an intensional sentence (which appeals to what we would have said in certain circumstances, had they obtained) and the reference of the names included in it (which instead appeals to what we say of circumstances we know do not obtain), let us consider the following example of another type of intensional sentence. Suppose that a child (Rose) is convinced that a horrible, black-hearted man named Bluebeard is going to kidnap her. How can we evaluate the truth-value of the sentence "Rose believes that Bluebeard is going to kidnap her"?

We may want to analyze any sentence of the form "*X* believes that *P*" in the following way: "*X* believes that *P*" is true if and only if all the worlds more like the actual one compatible with all *X*'s beliefs are such that *P* is true in them. Let us now apply this analysis to "Rose believes that Bluebeard is going to kidnap her"; the statement is true because in all the worlds compatible with her beliefs the statement "Bluebird is going to kidnap Rose" is true. But when we assert "Rose believes that Bluebeard is going to kidnap her" we are saying something true without being committed to the existence of Bluebeard in our world, nor being committed to the name "Bluebird"—as used by us—referring to any object or person in any other possible world. Possible worlds and the objects in them may be just postulated to evaluate the truth-value of intensional sentences, without commitment to the actual reference of the names in our world to such objects. In the same way, we do not need commitment to fictional objects to account for the truth-conditions of intra-fictional sentences if it is allowed that they are intensional sentences.

Once extensional analysis of fictional assertions is dismissed for the above-mentioned reasons (Section 1.1 of the current paper), any other analysis of fictional assertions does not commit to fictional objects. We may therefore conclude that assertions within fiction do not establish that there are fictional objects. Some philosophers have claimed that extra-fictional sentences constitute the adequate test for fictional objects, and this is what is now worth considering.

## 2. Extra-Fictional Assertions

It is quite generally accepted that whenever we are telling a tale or reading a fiction, we are interested in what is asserted within the pretense of fiction.[11]

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[11] As I wrote above, it is generally disputed what it means to assert within pretense: it may mean to make an intensional assertion, it may mean to make an assertion within a game of make-believe or to make an assertion within a false presupposition. As I argued, in any of these interpretations, there is no commitment to fictional objects.

Our intuitions are quite different when we consider extra-fictional assertions, they are assertions like "Sherlock Holmes is a fictional object", "Sherlock Holmes is smarter than any real detective" or "Anna Karenina is cleverer than Madame Bovary". Let us consider why these sentences look different to us. When we say "Sherlock Holmes is a fictional object" we are not pretending, we are saying something we consider true. When we compare Sherlock Holmes with real detectives, we are interested in our world and Sherlock Holmes becomes an object of comparison for real people. When we compare Anna Karenina with Madame Bovary, we are not talking inside any of the two fictions in which the names originated, and we are comparing them from the outside. It is quite common to maintain that extra-fictional assertions are different from intra-fictional ones. These intuitions are not easy to settle. The point at issue is how to account for the difference between intra-fictional assertions and extra-fictional ones.

### 2.1. Extra-Fictional Assertions Within Games or False Presuppositions

Some philosophers claim that extra-fictional assertions, even if different from intra-fictional ones, are still different from simple extensional assertions; they are assertions made within a pretense a bit different from the one adopted in intra-fictional assertions. And within this assumption, the corresponding semantic analysis does not commit to fictional objects.

For example, philosophers adopting the game-theoretical analysis first proposed by Walton are happy to allow games to be played both inside and outside fiction. Without going into the details, the idea is that we can play outside fiction with the rule of make-believe that there are fictional objects in our world and all our speech should be interpreted within this rule. The rules of a game do not commit to any real object (Everett, 2013; Friend, 2011; Walton, 1990). And it is even possible to analyze a sentence like "Sherlock Holmes does not exist" as making explicit the game within which the name has being used in fiction: saying that we have been using the name "Sherlock Holmes" with the intention to pretend reference without referring to anything (Evans, 1982).

The other variant of the fictional stance is equally available when using extra-fictional assertions, just as false assumptions, which—according to the proposal—we adopt when talking within fiction, may also be adopted outside fiction. When we say that "Sherlock Holmes is a fictional object" we may talk under the assumption we consider false that there are fictional objects in our world, allowing us to talk of an object, while we do not believe—but we simply fictively assume—that there really is such an object (see again Sainsbury, 2010, but also García-Carpintero, 2018; 2020; Orlando, 2021; Salis, 2013).

According to the fictional stance, in both its variants, the difference between intra-fictional and extra-fictional sentences is a difference in the type of pretense: either the game we play when asserting intra-fictional sentences is different from the game we play when asserting extra-fictional ones, or the false assumptions we adopt when using intra-fictional assertions are different from the false as-

sumptions we adopt when using extra-fictional ones. In both analyses, the claim is that speakers are not committed to fictional objects, which are simply pretended, but not really referred to.

## 2.2. Extensional Extra-Fictional Assertions

Some philosophers claim that extra-fictional sentences are not used within pretense. They claim therefore that extra-fictional assertions should be taken as literal assertions committing to fictional objects. This is the proposal which is now to be considered.[12]

The point is now to find a justification for the fact that an extra-fictional assertion is to be interpreted literally and extensionally. As a matter of fact, once it is allowed that extra-fictional assertions are to be interpreted literally, then commitment to fictional objects is quite straightforward. The problem is therefore not to explain how it is that the literal interpretation of extra-fictional assertions commits to fictional objects, but the relevant question can be expressed in the following way: how is it the case that fictional objects come into existence and are explicitly referred to by extra-fictional assertions? Two answers have been offered in the literature and defended against criticisms: the role-theorist answer and the abstract artifact creationist answer. I am going to consider each of them and explain why—in my opinion—they do not settle the matter.

### 2.2.1. The role-theorist answer.

According to role theorists, fictional objects are roles or abstract rules.[13] The idea is clearly expressed as follows:

> Intuitively, someone occupies the role of pope when she has certain properties, such as having been elected, being the head of state of the Vatican, being the bishop of Rome, and so on. Similarly, among role-realist views of fictional characters it is common to say that a role is constituted by a set of properties. For instance, the role of Anna Karenina is constituted by properties such as being a woman, being Russian, being a countess, being called “Anna Karenina”, being married to Alexei Karenin, and so on. The properties that constitute Anna Karenina are determined by the fiction *Anna Karenina*. (Stokke, 2021, p. 7833)

[12] It is quite interesting to note that the language itself does not grant the interpretation of extra-fictional assertion; as von Solodkoff and Woodward observe, the distinction between fictional objects really possessing (having) and their fictionally possessing (holding) properties “is not semantically encoded and does not force us to hold that the copula ‘is’ is ambiguous between the ‘is’ of predication and the ‘is’ of ascription” (2017, p. 424).

[13] As already mentioned, role Platonists include: Wolterstorff (1980), Currie (1990), Stokke (2021).

In compliance with this theoretical stance, the author of fiction individuates a set of properties through the fiction, and it is this set of properties that is the referent of fictional names: a set of properties which may be instantiated.

This proposal has a well-known objection first raised by Kripke[14] and then reconsidered by (Lewis, 1978). Consider that, when Conan Doyle wrote the Holmes fictions, he wrote them with the intention of pretending to refer by the name “Sherlock Holmes”, not having heard of anybody who had this name nor had done anything he attributed to Holmes. Suppose that—unknown to him—there were a person who had done everything he attributed to Holmes and was even named “Sherlock Holmes”. In such an improbable, but not impossible, situation, we would consider the name “Sherlock Holmes”, when used by Doyle, as not referring to any person satisfying all the properties attributed to Holmes in the fiction. And this is different from what happens when Tolstoy uses the name “Napoleon” in *War and Peace*, because the actual reference of the name is relevant to the fiction. It is therefore evident that the set of properties individuated by a fiction cannot be the simple reference of a fictional name; the intention of the user and the causal relations between the fictional use of the name and other uses are relevant for establishing whether the fictional author introduces a fictional object or not. This observation requires a revision of the role-theorist proposal and transform it into a new theory. [15] It is with this objection in mind that abstract artifact creationist philosophers advance their proposal.

### 2.2.2. The abstract artifact creationist answer.

The general idea proposed by the abstract artifact creationist supporter of fictional objects[16] is that the pretense attitude with which a name or a description is introduced by a fictional author is what allows fictional objects to come into existence. To evaluate this idea, it is worth considering an argument in its support, an objection to it and the reply that has been offered to the objection. My final contention is that this proposal is not adequately supported.

Thomasson (1999; 2015) argued that many abstract objects (fictional objects included) may be derived from basic claims and trivial inferences. For example, we may derive the existence of properties through the following argument (see Thomasson, 2015, p. 261 for this and the following arguments):

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[14] Presented for the first time in the addenda to Kripke’s (1980) and then discussed at greater length in his (2013).

[15] Stokke (2021) considers the objection and allows the intention of the user and the causal relations among different uses to be part of the semantic analysis of extra-fictional sentences. This is an interesting integration of role-theory with the abstract artifact creationist proposal. But before being assessed, we need to consider whether the abstract artifact creationist proposal is obligatory due to the semantic/pragmatic analysis of fictional sentences.

[16] As already mentioned, creationists include van Inwagen (1977), Schiffer (1996), Salmon (1998), Thomasson (1999; 2003), Kripke (2011; 2013).

- Uncontroversial claim: the bowl is blue,
- Linking principle (LP1): if *x* is *Q*, then *x* has the property of *Q*-ness,
- Derived claim: the bowl has the property of blueness,
- Ontological claim: there is a property (namely of blueness).

For deriving the existence of number, she proposes the following argument:

- Uncontroversial claim: there are five stumps in the back yard,
- Linking principle (LP2): if there are N *x*'s then the number of *x*'s is N,
- Derived claim: the number of stumps in the back yard is five,
- Ontological claim: there is a number.

And for deriving fictional objects, she proposes the following argument:

- Uncontroversial claim: Jane Austen wrote a novel using the name "Emma" to pretend to refer to and describe a woman,
- Linking principle (LP3): if an author writes a story using a name *N* to pretend to refer to and describe someone, then the author creates a fictional character,
- Derived claim: Austen created a fictional character,
- Ontological claim: there is a fictional character.

The supporter of the fictional stance may refuse to interpret the linking principle literally, allowing the principle only within a game of make-believe or within a false presupposition. This line of attack has been developed by Yablo (2002; 2005) to defend the view that our talk of numbers is only to be interpreted within pretense (see also Yablo, 2014). According to Yablo, we should interpret the linking principle (LP2) within pretense, and we are not therefore committed to numbers outside pretense. It may be argued that the same line of reasoning is also adopted to claim that the linking principles (LP1) and (LP3) are to be accepted only within pretense and any ontological commitment—the one to fictional objects included—is only to be interpreted within pretense. This line of reasoning is adopted by Walton (1990) and Brock (2002) against any realist claim of fictional objects.

To avoid this contention, Thomasson (2015) observed that, as "real" requires a contrast to be mastered (e.g., to meaningfully apply "real" to a duck, a contrast is necessary with what fails to be a duck, for example a toy duck), "pretend" equally requires a contrast to be mastered. She writes that

> to make sense of the idea that we merely pretend that *P* requires presupposing that there is some difference between what we commit ourselves to in pretending that *P*, and what we would commit ourselves to in asserting that *P* really is the case. (Thomasson, 2015, p. 265)

For example, we make sense of pretending that the bowl is blue, when there is no bowl or when there is a bowl which is not blue, because we understand what we would commit ourselves to, when saying that the bowl is blue. But let us now consider what we commit ourselves to in asserting "if *x* is *Q*, then *x* has the property of *Q*-ness": we commit ourselves to the abstraction of properties from instances. And when we pretend this, we are just pretending that properties may be abstracted from instances. The idea is that in the case of properties, we may infer an abstract property (for example, the property of blueness) from the real instantiation of the property (the bowl being blue). And obviously we may pretend that there is a property instantiation (for example we may pretend that there is a blue bowl) and we may pretend to infer an abstract property of blueness from property instantiation.

In a similar way, when we assert "if there are N *x*'s then the number of *x*'s is N" we are committing ourselves to the possibility of abstracting numbers from a multiplicity of objects and, when we pretend this, we pretend that this is the case. The idea is again that from the real instantiation of a number of objects we may infer that there are abstract objects as numbers, but we may also pretend that there is an instantiation of a number of objects, and we may pretend to infer that there are numbers.

Let us now consider the linking principle (LP3): "if an author writes a story using a name *N* to pretend to refer to and describe someone, then the author creates a fictional character". There is an important difference between the literal interpretation of this principle and the one of the other linking principles under consideration: while in the other principles, we infer abstract objects from real instantiations or real multitudes, in this case we are required to infer an abstract object from pretense. Now, in the case of fictional objects the linking principle requires a connection to be made between a pretense attitude and an abstract object, and the observation I am making is that in this case it is not at all clear whether from a pretense attitude towards a certain content we may infer a real or a pretended object.

This means that the literal interpretation of (LP3) is itself problematic: does it require inferring *real abstract objects from pretense*? or does it require inferring *pretended abstract objects from pretense*? It is not clear what the answer should be because there is no indisputable literal reading of (LP3). And with this last observation, it is claimed that the trivial inference is not a definitive way to establish whether there are fictional objects or not. My claim is simply that both realists and irrealists may allow (LP3) as the acceptance of (LP3) does not favor one thesis instead of the other.

Thomasson's observation that we may make sense of pretense only within a contrast is relevant to understanding the antecedent of the conditional (LP3): we understand what it means to pretend to refer by a name because we know what it means to refer by a name. But once the antecedent of the conditional is grasped, it is not clear whether the pretense in the use of names mentioned in the antecedent of (LP3) is transferred to the created objects or not. It is this ambigui-

ty in (LP3) which allows the debate on fictional objects between realists and irrealists to continue growing, showing that the traditional test for fictional objects is inadequate. If there are good reasons to look for fictional objects, the actual semantic/pragmatic analysis of intra-fictional and extra-fictional assertions is not the right place to look for them.

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Article

MIRCO SAMBROTTA [*]

# ARE EMPTY NAMES ALL THE SAME?[1]

SUMMARY: The chief purpose of this paper is to advance a defence of the old-fashioned view that empty names are neither proper names nor any other kind of interpretable expressions. A view of this sort usually makes it easy to account for the meaning of first-order sentences in which they occur in subject position: taken literally, they express no fully-fledged particular propositions, are not truth-evaluable, cannot be used to make assertions and so on. Yet, semantic issues arise when those very sentences are embedded in the scope of propositional attitude verbs. Such (intensional) constructions, indeed, turn out to be literally meaningful, truth-evaluable, and eligible for making assertions. The novel solution put forward here is to combine a version of sententialism with the idea that de dicto reports play a distinctive kind of metalinguistic expressive function. Roughly, that of enabling the ascriber to make explicit a mismatch between the way the embedded sentences are used by the ascribee and the way they are ordinarily used−and, in turn, a mismatch between the way the (empty) names occurring in them are used by the ascribee and the way they are ordinarily used. Fictional names are then regarded as a mere subset of empty names. Accordingly, the above strategy is applied to account for the meaning and use of parafictional (and fictional) sentences and fictional vocabulary in general.

KEYWORDS: empty names, attitude reports, sententialism, fictional vocabulary.

[*] Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy. E-mail: filomisa@savba.sk. ORCID: 0000-0001-6962-4207.

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## 1. Introduction

What are we doing when we use empty names, and when we recognize others using them? Are they always used in the same way? Are empty names all the same? This paper aims to address these thorny (and long-standing) issues by providing a naturalist account of the meaning of empty names, that is, an account that does not necessarily ontologically commit us with respect to entities that hardly fit into the world as described and explained by science.[2] I assume that a name is empty if is devoid of its semantic function (i.e., that of referring).[3] Hence, empty names, as empty, are not proper names at all.[4] If so, they are not proper names in any kind of discourse in which they occur: neither in extensional nor in intensional (or hyperintensional) contexts—such as those created by propositional attitude verbs. In other words, neither when they occur in first-order sentences, nor when they occur in sentences embedded in the scope of those verbs. Central to this antirealist position, however, is the fact that empty names do not stand for any other kind of semantically interpretable expression either. It follows that they are not to be understood in terms of some kind of description either outside or inside intensional constructions.[5] What it will be argued is ra-

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[2] Providing arguments in defence of *ontological scientism* is beyond the scope of this paper; I define the present proposal as naturalist only in the weaker sense that it is not necessarily engaged with entities whose existence is inferred independently of any empirical inquiry, fact or evidence.

[3] Throughout the paper, I presuppose the direct reference theory and the related Millianism about proper names—the view that proper names have denotation but not connotation, in the sense that they are non-descriptive and have as their function simply that of referring to a specific individual. Regarding direct-reference theories, see among many Kripke (1980), Devitt (1981), and Kaplan (1989).

[4] Of course, the emptiness of names is not a feature that could be easily recognized just by "looking at them". Empty names have a lot in common with proper names: they conform to the phonetic, the graphic (with their characteristic capitalized first letter and all the rest), and syntactically occur in the same particular positions. Yet, semantically, they do not raise to the status of proper names, since they are not tokened by a process supported by any actual launching. Empirical facts determine reference and content. To use a term from Keith Donnellan (1974), the causal chain that carries the name "Vulcan" contains a *block*. And a referential chain ends in a block when it ends with the introduction of a name in a work of fiction, a mistake, an act of imagination, etc. That is, the launching misfired, so that no name was launched. The problem is especially acute with respect to names about which we simply do not know that they are empty. In any case, though, only through empirical investigation we can find out whether a referential chain ends in a block or with the introduction of a name. And, of course, we can also make mistakes and get wrong results. I thank an anonymous reviewer for prompting me to add this clarification.

[5] In other words, the present proposal does not collapse into a version of descriptivism concerning the meaning of empty names, which treats empty names as disguised descriptions.

ther that, in *de dicto* attitude reports, empty names are merely mentioned.[6] At the same time, though, this enables the ascriber to make explicit key features of the way they are used by the asribee (i.e., as proper names in unsuccessful or pretend acts of reference).

This paper will be structured as follows. In section 2, I will present a classic example in the literature of a sentence in which an empty name occurs. I will then outline the problems that arise when it is taken literally, as well as those that arise when it is embedded in a larger context in which a propositional attitude is expressed. In section 3, I will maintain that the function that the latter plays is of a distinctive kind: namely, a metalinguistic expressive function relative to the use of the former. In section 4, I will show how this account may help us to shed light on the relationship between fictional and parafictional sentences. In section 5, I will suggest that in metafictional sentences (i.e., in the external context), a kind of expressive metalinguistic function relative to the use of fictional names is instead played by fictional vocabulary—as well as by intentional vocabulary relative to the use of empty names in general. Finally, in section 6, I will briefly recap the main results achieved.

## 2. Vulcan

Let us consider the following sentence:

(1) Vulcan is the intra-Mercurial that causes perturbations in the orbit of Mercury.

(1) is a classic example in the literature on empty names of what Strawson has called "radical failure of the existence presupposition" (1964, p. 81). Radical in that "there just is no such particular item at all" as the speaker purports to be talking about (p. 81). But, a sentence's existential presupposition is always a precondition of its making an evaluable claim.[7] A presupposition failure is then said to be "catastrophic" in that it has the result that the sentence makes no claim, so that "the question of truth and falsity does not arise" (Strawson, 1954, p. 225). (1), taken literally, suffers from a catastrophic presupposition failure; as a result, it does not make an evaluable claim in the business of being true or false. In other words, it does not encode any fully-fledged proposition;[8] therefore, it is not

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[6] On the other hand, according to the present account, in the *de re* mode, names are used rather than mentioned. For this reason, empty names cannot occur in such constructions: for their use would (mistakenly) presuppose that they have a reference.

[7] Following Frege (1892, p. 162), "[i]f anything is asserted there is always an obvious presupposition that the proper names used have reference".

[8] According to some Millians, sentences containing empty names encode gappy or unfilled propositions (Adams, Fuller, Stecker, 1997; Braun, 1993; 2005). This view clearly shares important insights with the present account. Nevertheless, unlike the present account, on the Gappy Proposition Theory, gappy propositions are proposition-like entities that can be objects of belief and assertion. Moreover, they are often regarded as false.

in the business of content-transmission and a loss of asserted content inevitably results from an utterance of it.[9]

Nevertheless, when we embed it in a larger context in which a propositional attitude is expressed, we are faced with a different scenario. Let us symbolize "*x* believes that …" by "B*x*: …". Then we have:

(2) BLV: Vulcan is the intra-Mercurial planet that causes perturbations in the orbit of Mercury.

In this case, although "Vulcan" is still an empty name (i.e., a name that does not name, so not a name at all) we do have a literal content in the business to be true or false (indeed literally true), that is, we do have a semantic content that can be subject to a full semantic treatment. But, if the embedded sentence (due to the existence presupposition failure) does not encode any fully-fledged proposition, how can we attribute such a belief to Le Verrier? What are we attributing to him then?

As a first stab, we might try the following solution: if (2), then we can at least attribute to Le Verrier the belief that there is something that is the unique intra-Mercurial planet and it causes perturbations in the orbit of Mercury. Indeed, for the so-called principle of existential generalization (PEG), if a predicate applies to a specific individual, then that predicate applies to something (i.e., if $a$ is $F$, then there is something that is $F$):

$$\text{PEG: } Fa \rightarrow \exists x(Fx)$$

Given PEG, (1) entails the following:[10]

(1*) There is something that is the unique intra-Mercurial planet and it affects the orbit of Mercury.

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Quite the contrary, according to the present account, sentences containing empty names do not encode any kind of proposition at all, that is, they are devoid of any literal content and, therefore, they are neither true nor false. However, the issues of whether those sentences encode gappy propositions or no propositions at all, and whether gappy propositions may count as propositions of some sort lie beyond the scope of this paper.

[9] Here I simply consider an assertion to be a kind of speech act in which a full-fledged proposition is presented as true or claimed to be true.

[10] Since (1) is semantically empty, it does not seem entirely correct to apply the notion of entitlement here. It is rather an utterance of it that may strike us as making an evaluable claim and, therefore, it would be more appropriate to maintain that an utterance of (1) somehow implicates (1*). Perhaps, the relevant notion here is that of "entitled conversational implicature". However, whether entailments can count as implicatures, and whether it makes sense at all to talk about such a kind of implicatures, is still the subject of a huge and interesting debate (see, among others, Moldovan, 2019). For the sake of clarity, I will leave this further complication aside here.

Unlike (1), (1*) does not suffer from the existence presupposition failure, so we can evaluate it. (1*) is false and is false for Russellian reasons: namely, it is equivalent to a conjunction of which at least one of the conjuncts is false. In short, since one of its conjuncts (i.e., there is a unique intra-Mercurial planet) is false, (1*) turns out to be false. But (1), although undefined (due to the existence presupposition failure), says, in part, (1*). Hence, (1) may also count as false.[11]

As a consequence, one might be tempted to read (2) as follow:

(3) BLV: there is something that is the unique intra-Mercurial planet and it causes perturbations in the orbit of Mercury.

Nevertheless, (3) cannot be a literal rendering of (2). At most, (3) can be merely implicated (or entailed) by (2). That is to say, what the latter literally reports is not Le Verrier's belief in the propositional content expressed by (1*)—i.e., that there is something that is the unique intra-Mercurial planet that causes perturbations in the orbit of Mercury. At most, this is what it can implicate (or entail).

In using the sentence (1), Le Verrier's intention hardly was to make a quantificational and hence purely descriptive claim. He most likely did not take it as encoding a particularized or general proposition,[12] but rather a singular proposition about a particular individual. Nor he intended to use the term "Vulcan" as standing for a certain description (e.g., a disguised definite description) to denote whatever satisfies it. In other words, "Vulcan" was not intended to be used by Le Verrier *attributively* (Donnellan, 1966). Rather, "Vulcan" was intended to be used by Le Verrier *referentially*—albeit unsuccessfully. Le Verrier presumably intended to appeal to particularity in using it, that is, he intended to pick out and deal with something in particular, the putative particular he attempted to refer to. Furthermore. in his unsuccessful act of reference, he presumably aimed to refer rigidly, that is, his intention was to use it as a device for singular reference to rigidly refer and purportedly say something about its putative referent. Indeed, he expected to have discovered something new, that was not known before, and by launching "Vulcan", to have given it a name, to have baptized it as it were, and

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[11] Must be noticed that (1*), which has a certain quantificational and hence purely descriptive proposition as content, is not a way of expressing the literal content of (1), because it has none. At most, an utterance of (1) conveys in part, the evaluable claim (1*), whose asserted content really is what (1) only appears to be, that is, false. That is, such communicative effects are pragmatically achieved by virtue of the act of speaking. Predelli (2021) grounds such contentful results on the idea of "impartation". In the paper, I do not rely on this notion, speaking instead of "asserted content", "pragmatically conveyed content", or "implied content".

[12] Particularized and general propositions are propositions that are quantificationally understood. A particularized proposition is indirectly about an individual in virtue of that individual satisfying a condition that is a constituent of the proposition (e.g., "the best football player is Italian"). A general one is not about any particular individual (e.g., "most Italians are not vaccinated").

not to have described it. In a nutshell, he most likely took the term to be directly referential: as a term that does not secure its reference by means of a descriptive meaning. In turn, upon hearing a token of the expression "Vulcan", we infer that Le Verrier is not thinking about some planet or other uniquely satisfies the condition of being intra-Mercurial and affecting the orbit of Mercury. Instead, we infer that he is thinking via a singular, non-descriptive mode of presentation. His intentional state has, so to say, the property of singularity and aboutness.

If that is correct, (3) is not in a position to do justice to Le Verrier's intention to use "Vulcan" as a proper name and purportedly to utter (1) to express a fully-fledged singular proposition about its putative referent. For this reason, (3) cannot be understood as a literal rendering of (2)—although the latter can somehow implicate (or entail) the former—and a different account is needed.

### 3. The Metalinguistic Reading

As a way out, one might view (2) as metalinguistic: in the sense that what is literally attributed to Le Verrier by (2) is the belief that the sentence "Vulcan is …" encodes a true fully-fledged particular proposition. Nevertheless, this one too would probably be a sloppy solution, since the latter is unlikely what Le Verrier literally believed. For all we know, he may not have had any background in semantics! What I try to defend in this paper is instead the idea that (2) can indeed be understood as playing a metalinguistic function but of a distinctive kind: a metalinguistic expressive function that operates primarily at the level of pragmatics. Roughly, (2) shows what Le Verrier is doing in saying (1)—or what he would be doing if he were saying (1): mistakenly using the sentence to make an assertion. In other words, it articulates Le Verrier's wrong commitment to using the sentence (1) to make an assertion. But here Le Verrier is mistaken not because he presents as true or claimed to be true a false proposition,[13] but rather because the sentence he utters does not express any proposition at all (due to the existence presupposition failure) and therefore is not eligible to be used to make an assertion.

Accordingly, with (2), we (i.e., the ascribers) make explicit the way Le Verrier (i.e., the ascribee) meant to use the term "Vulcan", namely, as a proper name, although this is not the way we would use it, since we acknowledge that there is no individual which "Vulcan" refers to. Otherwise, if it had been a proper name (and we acknowledged that), then we would have been in a position to export it outside the scope of the attitude verb, attributing to Le Verrier a *de re* belief *of* Vulcan. In the *de dicto* belief attribution (2), we do not use or intend to use the expression "Vulcan" referentially: indeed we do not use it at all, but rather we merely mention it.[14] At the same time, though, by mentioning it in the subject

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[13] Such a mistake, if possible, would have instead been expressed by means of a *de re* attribution of belief.

[14] On the other hand, it would definitely make sense, in some circumstances, to attribute *de re* beliefs regarding the term "Vulcan". But those will be literally metalinguistic attributions and, therefore, totally different cases with respect to the ones at stake here.

position of the that clause, we articulate the way we think Le Verrier uses it: in an unsuccessful act of reference. Generalizing, a *de dicto* belief attribution such as (2) makes explicit that a subsentential expression (i.e., the subject of the that clause) is used (or would be used) by the ascribee differently than the way the ascriber would use it. In other words, it discloses a mismatch between the way the expression is used (or would be used) by the ascribee and the way the ascriber would use it. The former does not necessarily coincide with the latter: the ascribee can have the intention of referring to an individual other than the one who actually bears the name in question (if any), she can be mistaken about who/what the actual referent of a proper name is, she can ignore some relevant *substitutional commitments*[15] regarding the name that she adopts in making a statement (which are instead acknowledged by the ascriber)[16], and so on.[17]

It must be pointed out that this is not at odds with direct reference theories and the claim that proper names are rigid designators. An uttered public name in our actual practice refers to the individual or thing to which it was given, independently of the speaker's intentions. However, there could be a gap between what an individual believes their words to mean and the semantic values that those words actually have.[18] This is not to contend that a given name does not have the same reference (if any) in all the different kinds of discourse where it occurs, nor is it to postulate any semantic ambiguity. At most, it is the speaker or speech act rather than the sentence or the proposition expressed that *pragmatically* may convey a different content (i.e., the asserted content) from the one it is semantically expressed by the sentence (i.e., the semantic content; about the distinction between *asserted content* and *semantic content*, see Yablo, 2006, p. 175). Therefore, in (2), we do not have a kind of case where an empty name really has reference, but an elucidation of Le Verrier's unsuccessful act of reference. It shows that "Vulcan" is used by him as a proper name in an unsuccessful act of reference. It follows that the embedded sentence is mistakenly taken by him to encode a fully-fledged proposition that has an individual as a direct constituent and thus uttered by him in an unsuccessful assertive speech act. Hence, (2) articulates the way Le Verrier (mistakenly) takes (1): as encoding a fully-fledged singular proposition, and the way he (unsuccessfully) uses or would uses (1): to make an assertion. This forces us to accept that there could be important

[15] Following Brandom, simple material substitution inferential commitments are "commitments associated with equivalence classes of subsentential expressions" (1994, Chap. 6; 2000, Chap. 4).

[16] A classic example might be the Superman/Clark Kent case in Frege's version of the puzzle about belief reports (but, of course, mine is not Frege's solution).

[17] On the other hand, with a *de re* belief attribution, we make explicit that the propositional content of the embedded sentence is understood and grasped by the ascribee to be the same that we (i.e., the ascribers) understand and grasp.

[18] Regarding the case in which the semantic reference of a proper name does not match the speaker's reference, see the well-known example of "Gödel and Schmidt" in Kripke's (1980) and that of "Smith and Jones" in Kripke's (2013).

differences between the (semantic) content expressed by means of a sentence and the content that one who sincerely assents to that very sentence grasps or understands. The function of a *de dicto* attribution of belief such as (2) is precisely to show such differences: it makes explicit that the content that the ascribee takes to be the content expressed by the embedded sentence is different from the content that, for the ascriber, that very sentence expresses (if any).

All in all, the result of *de dicto* belief reports such as (2) is a sort of cognitive opacity when it concerns what is believed. According to the present strategy, a way of accounting for this phenomenon characteristic of the intensional contexts created by belief ascriptions such as (2) is then to understand them as aimed at showing a mismatch between the content that the ascribee takes to be expressed by the embedded sentence and the content that, for the ascriber, that very sentence expresses (if any). At the same time, though, a *de dicto* attribution of belief such as (2) fails to express any stand on the propositional content of the belief. Or better, it does not need to be understood as reporting someone's belief in the propositional content of the embedded sentence. To say of someone that she is in some state (e.g., believing) with respect to a sentence does not need to be in general understood as ascribing to her belief in the propositional content of that sentence (if any). Nevertheless, they do not count as the sort of reports that are incoherent in principle. By ascribing to Le Verrier the *de dicto* belief that Vulcan is so and so, we do not ascribe to him belief in the content of the embedded sentence, that is, in the proposition encoded by that sentence–since, according to us, there is not such a proposition. Rather, we attribute to him belief in the very sentence "Vulcan is …" (i.e., the one to which he assents or would assent). Thus, (2) is seen to attribute to Le Verrier a belief whose content is captured by the embedded sentence "Vulcan is …" (again, which he assents or would assent to). So to say, in (2) the embedded sentence is not used, but only mentioned. But in doing so, features of its use (hence, pragmatic features) are displayed: specifically, a mismatch between the way it is used by the ascribee and the way it is ordinarily used in practice—or better, the way it would be ordinarily used by the ascriber (in no way indeed).

The idea is then that, in principle, *de dicto* belief reports usually have general or particularized propositions as argument. When they have singular propositions as argument, or they are exportable into *de re* constructions or, if not, their argument turns out to be a *dictum* (i.e., a sentence) rather than a proposition. In a nutshell, the present strategy can be defined as a version of *sententialism*, roughly inspired by Carnap's analysis of belief sentences (1958), according to which what we have been calling "propositional attitudes" are really attitudes towards sentences.[19] "Believes", "believes-true", and its fellows are therefore understood to express a primitive two places relation between an agent and

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[19] Quine (1956) was also a proponent of this view, Davidson (1968) has put forward a more complex version of sententialism called "the paratactic account" and, perhaps, Crimmins and Perry's (1989) account of propositional attitude reports as involving unarticulated constituents moves in this direction as well.

a sentence. But this, as already mentioned, does not exhaust the function played by *de dicto* belief ascriptions of that kind: what they play in discursive practice is more of a metalinguistic expressive function relative to the use of the sentences they embed.

### 4. *De Re*/*De Dicto* Pretense Reports

There may be reasons why a speaker may utter a sentence without believing it to be true—other than, of course, lying. One might be fictionalizing. According to the present proposal, a fictional sentence about a real individual (i.e., a fictive use of a sentence containing an ordinary proper name) encodes a false fully-fledged particular proposition about that very individual. However, since the teller/author neither believes that that proposition is true nor she aims to express the belief that that proposition is true, she does not make an assertion in uttering the sentence. Rather, she expresses the mock belief that that proposition is true. Accordingly, we (as audience/readers) cannot attribute to her the belief that that proposition is true, but rather the fictive belief that that proposition is true. In other words, we are only in the position of attributing to the teller/author the pretend or simulated belief in the content of that sentence. The latter turns out to be the same content that we grasp as the content of that very sentence, that is, the false proposition about the real individual in question. Let us call them "*de re* attributions of pretense". For example, consider the following sentence from the fictional story of Macbeth by William Shakespeare:

(4) Macbeth is killed by Macduff at the Battle of Dunsinane.

Taken literally, (4) encodes a false fully-fledged particular proposition about the historical figure Macbeth. However, there Shakespeare is not using (4) to make an assertion. With (4), he is not expressing the false belief that that proposition is true. Rather, he is expressing the fictive belief that that proposition is true. A way of reporting this is by means of the following sentence:

(4*) In the relevant body of a (fictional) story, Macbeth is killed by Macduff at the Battle of Dunsinane.

Sentences like (4*), which purport to say how things stand in (or according to) a certain fiction, are usually called "parafictional sentences" (Recanati, 2000)[20] of fictional discourse.[21] The qualifier "in the relevant body of a story …" (e.g., "in

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[20] Sentences of this form are also called "paratextual sentences" (Bonomi, 2008) or "internal metafictional sentences" (Voltolini, 2006).

[21] It must be pointed out that, according to the present account, fictional sentences like (4) are not to be taken as elliptical sentences that get full expression in metafictional sentences like (4*). Rather, the latter are to be taken just as reports of what one would express with the former.

the tragedy *Macbeth* …") is instead a so-called story-operator (or "narrative operator", see Künne, 1995). We can then make sense of the indirect context introduced by the story-operator in (4*) invoking a *de re* kind of pretense and paraphrasing it in the following way:

(4**) In the relevant body of a (fictional) story, Macbeth is killed by Macduff at the Battle of Dunsinane.

(4**) expresses a relationship between the author and the proposition encoded by (4), which he imagines to be true and, in turn, pretends to believe to be true (albeit literally false).

On the other hand, a fictional sentence about a fictional individual (i.e., a fictive use of a sentence containing a fictional name) does not encode any fully-fledged proposition. Indeed, according to the present proposal, a fictional name is nothing but an empty name[22] and thus a sentence in which it occurs in the subject position, due to the existence presupposition failure, makes no claim that we can evaluate. As a result, we cannot even attribute to the teller/author the fictive belief in a certain proposition. But it does not follow from this that we cannot attribute to her the fictive belief in the sentence in question.[23] Let us call them "*de dicto* attributions of pretense".

One might, for instance, utter a sentence about Vulcan, but without committing herself to the truthfulness of what she is saying. As an example, consider the following sentence from the fictional television series *Star Trek*:

(5) Vulcan is the planet inhabited by Vulcans.

Due to the existence presupposition failure, (5) does not encode any fully-fledged proposition. But from this, it does not follow that in uttering it the author is not expressing anything at all. We can report what she is expressing in uttering (5) by means of the following parafictional sentence:

(5*) In the relevant body of the story, Vulcan is the planet inhabited by Vulcans.

Here the story operator "in the relevant body of the story …" (e.g., "in the television series *Star Trek* …") creates an intensional context, wherein the principle of substitution does not hold for extensionally equivalent expressions (i.e.,

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[22] In this respect, the present view also diverges from Currie's. Like him, I deny that fictional names such as "Holmes" are proper names; but unlike him, I do not claim that fictional sentences in which "Holmes" occurs should be taken literally as jointly forming a long conjunction in which the occurrence of "Sherlock Holmes" is replaced with a variable bound by an initial existential quantifier, that is, as work-bound roles (Currie, 1990). I thank an anonymous referee for pressing me to add this clarification.

[23] Nor it does not follow from this that we (as audience/readers) cannot somehow relate to the proposed (fictional) scenario.

for co-referential expressions) but only for intensionally equivalent expressions (i.e., for synonymous expressions). In a way, the opacity of the oblique context introduced by the story operator in (5*) can be understood as merging and indivisibility of form and content. We can then make sense of this kind of indirect context, and related opacity, invoking a *de dicto* kind of pretense and paraphrasing (5*) as follows:

(5**) The author imagines that Vulcan is the planet inhabited by Vulcans.

What is important to notice here is that (5**) does not express a relationship between the author and a proposition, but rather between the author and the sentence (5), which she imagines (and, in turn, pretends to believe) to be an instance of a fully-fledged singular proposition-encoding sentence. Accordingly, we (as audience/readers) are in no position to imagine the proposition encoded by the sentence that the qualifier embeds (i.e., the depicted state of affairs), since there is not and cannot be any.[24]

The function played by *de dicto* pretense ascriptions thus turns out to be of a distinctive kind: a metalinguistic expressive function that operates primarily at the level of pragmatics. In particular, they show what one is doing (i.e., pragmatic aspects) in endorsing fictional sentences about fictional individuals (i.e., the sentences that appear within the scope of the story-operators): not just pretending to commit to using them to make assertions (as in the case of *de re* attributions of pretense), but rather pretending to commit to the fact that they can be used to make assertions. At the same time, they make explicit that the teller/author does not commit herself to using the empty names therein as proper names, but rather she commits herself to using them *as if* they were proper names. Hence, they articulate how she intends to use them: not to refer, but merely to pretend to refer.[25] In a nutshell, they show that the teller/author is acting as though she were

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[24] However, again, it does not follow from this that we (as audience/readers) cannot somehow relate to the proposed (fictional) scenario.

[25] These insights clearly stem from the work of Kendall Walton, which allows a proper name like "Holmes" to be both genuinely empty, carrying no commitment to any fictional entity, but also genuinely non-descriptive–focusing instead on the element of make-believe, or pretense, inherent in the telling of a fictional story by the author and the listening to it by the audience. However, following Walton (1990) and the so-called "pretense view", works of fiction deploy a very peculiar kind of imagination: propositional imagination of the make-believe, variety. Fictional sentences encode propositions that in certain contexts (i.e., in fictional contexts) we are to imagine to be true and, within those contexts, fictional names directly refer to individuals (i.e., the individuals existing in the world of the relevant pretense). But if we fully endorse the view that empty names are neither proper names nor any other kind of interpretable expressions, then sentences in which they occur in subject position, due to the existence presupposition failure, turn out to be devoid of any propositional content. So, how can the imagination deployed by works of fiction be propositional? According to the present account, unlike Walton's, what they literally invite us to imagine is not that certain propositions are true (hence, that certain

taking them to be and to be used as referring expressions. It follows that she is acting as if she were taking the relevant sentences to encode fully-fledged singular propositions, that is, grasping and understanding their content to be fully-fledged singular propositions.

In general, this conception is consistent with a non-descriptive view of second-order expressions.[26] According to the latter, the function of those expressions is not to describe, that is, they are not used to talk about how the world is. Rather, they expose features of the inferential potential of the things we say: what comes of our assertion/thought and what comes from (Frápolli, Villanueva, 2012; 2015; 2018).[27] It follows that "believe", "pretend", "imagine", "suppose", "hypothesize", etc. are not to be understood as truth-conditional functions that, by adding conceptual components, modify the truth-conditions of what falls within their scope. Instead, in attributing an intentional state to someone (e.g., a thought that *p*), we locate the relevant state of the person *in the logical space of reasons*. Following Sellars (1956, §36; 1963, p. 169), in characterizing an episode or a state "we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says".[28] This is to place it within the "vast network of possible intentional state and action-types related to each other by normative relations of inference […] sensitive to standards of correctness and appropriateness" (deVries, 2020). Attributing, say, a belief to an agent is not describing the agent, but it is holding the agent responsible for a stand. Thus, inferential relations are exposed: the relations of entailment (and incompatibility) that entitle the agent to hold that belief and the consequences of holding that belief.[29] However, as mentioned above, with a *de dicto* ascription of belief the attributor ascribes to the agent the endorsement of the sentence that appears within the scope

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states of affairs are the case) but at most that certain sentences are instances of fully-fledged singular proposition-encoding sentences. I thank an anonymous reviewer for pressing me to add this clarification.

[26] From the syntactic point of view, second-order predicables are sentence operators, that is, functional expressions that have complete sentences as arguments within their scope. Higher-order functions are, among others, modal operators (e.g., "necessarily", "possibly"), epistemic operators (e.g., "*x* believes that", "*x* knows that"), normative operators (e.g., "it is good that", "it is right that"), semantic operators (e.g., "it is true that", "it is false that"), temporal operators (e.g., "tomorrow", "yesterday"), logical connectives (e.g., "no", "if …, then …").

[27] In turn, "the meaning of these expressions is exhausted once their inferential potential is indicated" (Frápolli, Villanueva, 2012, p. 485): namely, when we are justified in using them, and what commitments are involved in their use.

[28] In this passage, Sellars is focusing on the specific case of characterizing an episode or a state as that of knowing.

[29] In turn, this commits the attributor to the relations of entailment (and incompatibility) that entitle that attribution and to the consequences that can be derived from the attribution–that is, it commits the attributor to attribute to the agent further beliefs and plans to act on them.

of the operator (i.e., her acceptance of or assent to that very sentence)—rather than the proposition that it encodes (if any). This means that it precludes some of the relations of entailment (and incompatibility) to which one is entitled as well as the further ascriptions to which one is committed by the related *de re* construction. In doing that, it shows that the agent uses the sentence differently from the way it is ordinarily used in practice–or better, differently from the way the attributor would ordinarily use it. As such, unlike a *de re* report, it does not articulate a mismatch between the way a proposition is entertained by the agent and the way it is entertained by the attributor, but rather it articulates a mismatch between the way the sentence is grasped or understood by the agent and the way it is grasped or understood by the attributor. Accordingly, it makes explicit that a subsentential expression is used by the agent differently from the way the attributor would use it. Thereby, it articulates a mismatch between the way the expression is deployed by the agent and the way it is ordinarily deployed in practice—or better, the way the attributor would ordinarily deploy it. I defined this function played by *de dicto* constructions as a distinctive kind of metalinguistic expressive function.[30]

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[30] The present proposal might be considered questionable when faced with the phenomenon of translation. Indeed, I have claimed that, due to the existence presupposition failure, it is misleading to say that first-order sentences involving fictional names, taken literally, encode fully-fledged propositions, and hence have meaning at all. Therefore, strictly speaking, we cannot deliver a literal translation of the linguistic meaning of those sentences. Nevertheless, I have maintained that they can still imply and pragmatically convey certain propositional contents (e.g., some quantificational and hence purely descriptive ones)—albeit those will not be their literal contents. The purpose of a (good) translation then is not to report those propositional contents into a different language, but to provide, in that language, a sentence that, although (like the original one) does not encode a particular fully-fledged proposition, is however able to render those communicative effects. This could be achieved merely by providing a literal word-for-word translation, but not necessarily. The same applies to the second-order sentences that embed them. A (good) translation of them will be one that expresses a relationship between the teller/author and a sentence that, while different from the original, is still able to render its communicative effects into another idiom. At the same time, though, the translated higher-order sentence will have to be able to retain the same metalinguistic expressive function played by the original one. In short, according to the present account, it is, strictly speaking, impossible to translate a (first or higher-order) sentence involving an empty name: the only possible result would be a mere repetition or a new different sentence. This somehow echoes McGregor's notion of literary thickness and his idea that a translation is a different work of literature (McGregor, 2014; 2016). However, this is certainly an extreme conclusion that seems to be contradicted by countless counterexamples. What I am suggesting here, though, is that they are still translatable, but in a less strict sense–albeit something will be inevitably lost in translations. I thank an anonymous reviewer for pressing me to add this clarification.

## 5. Fictional and Intentional Vocabulary

The above strategy can also be applied to fictional vocabulary in external predications,[31] that is, when moving from inside to outside the scope of story operators, in the so-called "metafictive" use of sentences containing fictional names.[32] The predicate "… (is) fictional" and the related sortals (e.g., "Mr. Spock is a fictional character", "USS Enterprise is fictional spacecraft", etc.) can indeed be understood as playing a kind of metalinguistic expressive function relative to the use of fictional names. Consider the following sentence:

(6) Vulcan is a fictional object.

(6) does not allow the move of adding the narrative operator. At the same time, though, (6) is not entirely correct from a semantic point of view. In fact, as in (1), if we take the expression "Vulcan" to be used and not mentioned, its use presupposes that it has a reference, but since this presupposition fails, (6) does not express an evaluable claim. Nevertheless, whoever understands the way the author speaks in her novel/story (e.g., in the TV series *Star Trek*)—namely, that she only behaves as if she were using the term "Vulcan" to refer—already knows that (6) is true in some sense. Or better, (6) says something that is not said but only elucidated (or shown, in Wittgenstenian sense) in the story (e.g., in *Star Trek*). This is why (6) can be somehow re-formulated meta-linguistically:

(6*) "Vulcan" is not a proper name, but it is presented as a proper name in a story.

(6*) means nothing but that "Vulcan" is (intended to be) used *as if* it were a proper name, as a term that *acts the part* of a proper name, that behaves *as though* it were a proper name, and so on. Hence:

(6**) "Vulcan" is a term used in a pretend act of reference.

If we follow Roman Ingarden (1973), fictional objects can be understood as a subset of purely *intentional objects*. Intentional objects are usually defined as nonexistent or "pseudo" objects that depend on intentional acts or states—including the intentional acts that make up the contexts of fiction (for a more detailed analysis of intentional objects, see, among others, Brentano, 1911; Crane, 2001; Scruton, 1970–1971). That is to say, they are mere projections from intentional acts or states, which is why they have the status of nonexistent

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[31] The external context is here simply understood as the real context, as opposed to the context of fiction.

[32] Those are usually called "metafictional sentences" (Recanati, 2000). Other common labels for sentences of this form are "external metafictional sentences" (Voltolini, 2006) or "metatextual sentences" (Bonomi, 2008).

(Moltmann, 2015, p. 145). As such, they are not part of the ontology. "Object" in this sense makes sense only relative to some subject or thinker (i.e., relative to the ascribee but not to the ascriber).[33] We can therefore broaden the above strategy as follows:

(7) Vulcan is an intentional object.

(7) can be re-formulated meta-linguistically:

(7*) "Vulcan" is an empty name.

(7*), in turn, as follows:

(7**) "Vulcan" is a term used as a proper name in an unsuccessful or pretend act of reference.[34]

Nevertheless, those are not to be understood as deflationary metalinguistic paraphrases. *Being fictional*, *hypothetical*, *intentional*, etc. are not object language predicates that should be given metalinguistic analyses, that is, covertly metalinguistic predicates.[35] Instead, intentional vocabulary in general (and fic-

[33] Notice that "intentional object" must not be taken to mean intensional objects, in the sense in which propositions and other intensions are. Even though some scholars endorse the view that there are intensional objects (Lamarque, Olsen, 1994, pp. 42–43), such entities are not what is meant here by talking of intentional objects. When Le Verrier considers the planet Vulcan, he is not thinking about an intension. He is thinking about a planet. So, even if there are intensional objects, this is not what intentional objects are.

[34] Similarly, according to the present proposal, the subject of negative existentials such as "Vulcan does not exist" is empty and, as already pointed out, empty names are expressions that make no separate ontic-semantic contribution. This forces us to give a metalinguistic rendering of those sentences (i.e., "'Vulcan' designates nothing", or better "'Vulcan' is not a semantically meaningful term"). Or better, the predicate "being non-existent" can be understood as playing a metalinguistic expressive function of the above-mentioned distinctive kind. But it does not necessarily follow from this that, according to the present account, sentences like "Vulcan does not exist" either express the same proposition as sentences like "there is no such true proposition as that Vulcan exists", or that they convey them pragmatically (see mainly Kripke, 2011; 2013 for a defence of this approach, and Hausmann, 2019 for a criticism of it). Moreover, such negative existentials may strike us as true also due to the truth of some other fully-fledged propositions that an utterance of them may engender or imply, but which are not their literal content. Those related propositions might simply depict the fact that no individual has the properties necessary for "being Vulcan", that is, no individual is actually occupying the role of Vulcan. I thank an anonymous referee for pressing me to add this clarification.

[35] In Carnap's technical terms, metalinguistic predicates in the material mode of speech are called "quasi-syntactical" predicates, where "the correlated syntactical predicate is that which designates the appertaining expressional genus" (Carnap, 1967, p. 297). An example is "1 is a number" whereby the "correlated syntactical predicate" is "number

tional vocabulary in particular) plays a distinctive metalinguistic expressive function relative to the use of empty names (e.g., fictional names): it shows what one intends to do in employing those expressions. Or better, it makes explicit fundamental aspects of their use that are already implicit in their principal use (e.g., in fiction). In short, the use of intentional/fictional vocabulary articulates essential features of the framework within which makes sense to use empty/fictional names. At the same time, though, the use of the former somehow derives and depends on the way the latter are used. Paraphrasing Brandom (2015), its use is explicative of practices-or-abilities necessary for the deployment of those expressions and is elaborated from those very practices-or-abilities.[36]

The present account can be therefore understood as a reconstruction of what is going on in explicit discourse about fictional/intentional objects. As such, it aims to provide an insight into the function played by fictional/intentional vocabulary, which is, I suggest, to make explicit what one is doing in deploying empty/fictional names: using them as proper names in unsuccessful/pretend acts of reference. Thus, their function turns out to be that of explicating how those expressions are used (i.e., as proper names in unsuccessful or pretend acts of reference), and how they should not be used (i.e., as ordinary proper names).

This expressivist treatment, though, does not collapse the contrast between talking about intentional and fictional objects and talking about linguistic types or inscriptions. Indeed, from the fact that what one is doing in saying, for example, "Vulcan is an intentional/fictional object" is classifying "Vulcan" as an empty/fictional name (i.e., as an expression used as a proper name in an unsuccessful/pretend act of reference), it does not follow that that is what one is saying. It certainly does not follow that that is all one is saying–albeit the latter has to be understood against the background of the former, that is, in light of its primarily expressive function. In other words, its content supervenes on its function–which is, again, to show what one is doing in deploying the term "Vulcan"—and "[n]o additional notion of content is required" (Köhler, 2017, p. 16).[37]

From the meta-semantic point of view, explicit talk about fictional/intentional objects is meaningful exactly *by virtue of* expressing what one is doing in deploying empty names (e.g., fictional names). As a result, in order to account for the meaning and truth of our claims about intentional/fictional objects, we do not need to countenance some sort of ontological category or seek some reductive

word". On his analysis, what appear to be claims about objects disclose themselves to be claims about linguistic types. Hence, they are "quasi-syntactic" (or "pseudo-object") sentences formulated in the material mode of speech (or elucidations, in Tractarian terms).

[36] It must be pointed out that, since Brandom (2015) defines this distinctive kind of expressive role as that played by nondescriptive vocabulary in relation to the use of ordinary empirical descriptive vocabulary, he mainly focuses on modal vocabulary, normative vocabulary, and ontological-categorial vocabulary.

[37] In that paper, Köhler defends the idea that meta-normative expressivism is best seen as a meta-semantic, rather than a semantic view.

view of what entities they really are.[38] There simply is no further question to be asked about whether there really are entities of some sort to serve as truthmakers for those claims, that is, as posits or touchstones that explain the meaning and the truth of the sentences about them. Therefore, what I am opposing here is not the hypostatization of those entities, but rather the notion of "correspondence" or "representation": in order to account for the meaning of explicit talk about fictional/intentional objects, raising metaphysical questions about substantive criteria for referring or truthmaking, as well as seeking a deeper theoretical explanation, is neither received nor needed.

As mere projections from intentional acts or states, we can describe fictional/intentional objects as David Pears (1951) describes universals: "shadows cast by words". In fact, even though *Vulcan* is not reducible to a linguistic type or inscription, we do not have here a case where an empty name really has a reference or stands in some referential relation—at least not as a paradigmatically referring term. The present account cannot be summed up by stating that, say, fictional objects dissolve into fictional names, nor into any other kind of metalinguistic reading. But it is not committed to the claim that they are possible concrete things either (Lewis, 1978; 1986; Priest, 2005). And, of course, empty names are not seen as picking out entities that hardly fit with any naturalist account, such as various Meinongian nonexistent objects. The same holds for the claim that fictional names denote full-fledge abstract particulars whether abstract artefacts (Kripke, 2013; Salmon, 1998; Schiffer, 1996; 2003; Searle, 1979; Thomasson, 1999; Voltolini, 2006)[39] or Platonic abstracta (Pelletier, Zalta, 2000; Zalta, 1983). As such, it also diverges from all those views, currently of high relevance in philosophy of fiction, which take fictional names to denote concepts of some sort.[40] Ultimately, this is not an account of what those entities are, since it does not need to be ontologically committed to the existence of any of such entities. Not being so committed, this view needs neither to endorse a non-naturalist ontology nor to provide a metaphysical explanation for the nature of any extravagant entities.

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[38] Accounts of fictional names that, like the present one, aim at avoiding esoteric ontologies and sui generis entities are usually classified as "fictionalist positions".

[39] Presumably, elements of that position can be also found in van Inwagen's (1977) theory of fictional objects as posits of literary criticism and in the work of Ingarden (1973).

[40] There are currently different versions of what we can call conceptualism. Among them is the so-called role-realism, according to which fictional names are disguised definite descriptions that pick out roles/offices, understood as sets of properties or requisites (Currie, 1990; Glavaničová, 2018; Lamarque, Olsen, 1994; Wolterstorff, 1980). Others conceive fictional names as denoting individual concepts (Abbott, 2011; Ciecierski, Grabarczyk, 2019; Glavaničová, 2021; Sainsbury, 2009; Stokke, 2020), namely intensions of individual expressions or individual description (Carnap, 1958, pp. 7–9; Church 1951, p. 111). Still, others account for fictional entities in terms of denoting concepts (Cocchiarella, 1982; Landini, 1990; Orilia, 2012) or concept-correlates (Cocchiarella, 2007; Evans, 1985, p. 402; Landini, 2012), where concept-correlation is the cognitive capacity humans have to represent a concept, which is not an object, as if it were an object.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

This paper has aimed to advance a non-reductionist naturalistic view of empty (and fictional) names. I have, therefore, tried to account for the features of the discursive practice involving those expressions without postulating any kind of entities that hardly fit into the world as described by science. Trivially, empty names, as empty, are not names at all. But they are not any other kind of semantically interpretable expression either. It follows that first-order sentences in which they occur in subject position, taken literally, do not express any fully-fledged propositions, are not truth-evaluable, are not eligible for making assertions and so on. Yet, different is the case with intensional constructions that embed those very sentences, which turn out to be literally meaningful, truth-evaluable and eligible for making assertions. How do explain this phenomenon then?

According to the present solution, in *de dicto* attitude reports, the embedded sentences are merely mentioned, rather than used. At the same time, though, they make it possible to show what an agent intends to do in using those sentences. In particular, they make explicit a mismatch between the way she uses (or would use) those sentences and the way they are ordinarily used in practice–or better, the way the attributor would ordinarily use them. However, what they reflect is not a difference in the way the propositions expressed by those sentences are entertained– since there are no such propositions. Rather, they make explicit a mismatch in the way of meaning those very sentences. Accordingly, they make explicit a difference between the way the names in the that clauses are meant to be deployed by the ascribee versus that of the ascriber. When empty names are involved, what they show is that the former uses (or would use) those expressions as proper names in unsuccessful acts of reference, although that is not the way the latter would use them. I have defined this function played by *de dicto* reports as a kind of metalinguistic expressive function relative to the use of the embedded sentences and, in turn, relative to the use of the (empty) names that occur in them.

The same function, I have then argued, is then played by parafictional sentences, insofar as they are understood as *de dicto* ascriptions of fictive belief or pretense. In particular, they play the function of articulating what one is doing in saying something fictional, in the sense of fictively using a sentence containing a fictional name. Fictional names, as a subset of empty names, are not names at all–nor any other kind of interpretable expression. What distinguishes them is merely the kind of propositional attitude within which the sentences involving them are embedded. In any case, the happenings of a story about fictional objects are always trapped within propositional attitudes. It follows that fictional objects–as well as all the contradictions and impossibilities that usually arise within fictional stories–live in intentionality and, as such, are not at all objects to which we ought to be ontologically committed.

When fictional names are deployed in external predications (i.e., in metafictional sentences), I have suggested that the same sort of metalinguistic expres-

sive function relative to the use of those expressions is instead played by fictional vocabulary (i.e., predicates such as "being fictional" and the like). Ultimately, this solution has been extended to the intentional vocabulary in general (i.e., predicates such as "being hypothetical", "intentional", "fictional", etc.), thus providing an overall insight into the distinctive kind of explicative function that it plays relative to the use of empty names.

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Article

AMALIA HARO MARCHAL *

# THE SPEECH ACT OF NAMING IN FICTIONAL DISCOURSE[1]

SUMMARY: This paper argues that García-Carpintero's theory of proper names (the Mill-Frege theory) and his theory of fiction-making do not work well together. On the one hand, according to the Mill-Frege theory, proper names have metalinguistic senses which are involved in ancillary presuppositions. These metalinguistic senses and the name-bearing relation depend on acts of naming that create words for referential use. On the other hand, his theory of fiction-making claims that when the creator of a fiction uses sentences, she is not really performing the speech acts that one typically performs with those uses in default contexts; instead, they are merely pretended acts. Specifically, when she uses the sentences that typically perform *speech acts of naming* in default contexts, she merely pretends to do so. In this situation, these acts do not establish a name-bearing relation and thus these acts do not have a semantic significance. This result entails a flawed conceptualization of the speech act of fiction-making; specifically, one where such speech act is rendered defective.

KEYWORDS: acts of naming, proper names, pretense, Manuel García-Carpintero, fiction-making.

* University of Granada, Department of Philosophy I. E-mail: amaliaharo@ugr.es. ORCID: 0000-0003-3232-976X.

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## 1. Intoduction

The debate surrounding the characterization and definition of proper names revolves around, among other things, their appearances in fictional discourses, especially when they do not refer to anything. One of the main questions related to the semantics of proper names is how can we explain the contribution they make to the truth-conditions of the utterances in which they appear: do they contribute with their referents? Or do they make a descriptive contribution with a descriptive sense? This question has spread to proper names that appear in fictional discourses.

Manuel García-Carpintero offers his own answer to the questions above mentioned. In his paper *The Mill-Frege Theory of Proper Names* (2017), he argues that they do both types of contribution. On the one hand, proper names contribute their referent to the content of the main speech acts performed. On the other hand, proper names contribute their metalinguistic senses which figure in ancillary presuppositions (2017, p. 1107). The first feature makes his theory Millian, while the second one makes his theory Fregean. The ancillary presuppositions mentioned are conveyed in any use of a name created by what García-Carpintero calls *speech acts of naming*, which bestow a conventional meaning to an expression. This is a crucial aspect for García-Carpintero's theory of proper names which, as we will see below, conflicts with his fiction-making proposal.

As to the latter, García-Carpintero extends his theory of proper names to the analysis of fictional proper names that appear in fictional discourses. He proposes a pragmatic fiction-making theory in which what an author does when creating a fiction is characterized as a proposition or invitation to a certain audience to imagine a certain content (2013). In order to characterize the specific type of speech act performed by an author, he adopts a normative account in which the correctness of a speech act of fiction-making depends on compliance with a constitutive norm, i.e., the norm of fiction-making ($FM_N$). In contrast to the speech act of fiction-making, what would be the speech acts typically performed by the speaker in default (i.e., non-fictional) contexts, are merely pretended acts in fictional contexts. The pretended speech acts that contain a proper name are associated with a speech act of naming, which is also pretended (2017, p. 1122): the audience is prescribed to imagine that a speech act of naming has taken place.

In this paper I will argue, contrary to García-Carpintero, that his theory of proper names (2017) and his theory of fiction-making (2013; 2019a; 2019b) do not work well when they are put together. García-Carpintero connects his two theories by claiming that both the speech acts that the creator of a fiction would be typically performing with the use of sentences in default contexts (e.g., assertions) as well as the speech act of naming are merely pretended acts, as opposed to those that appear in non-fictional discourses. I will argue that it would be difficult for García-Carpintero to explain how readers can imagine what the creator of a fiction invites them to imagine through directive speech acts of fiction-making. This is so because what would be the proposition (or collection of

propositions) that the audience is prescribed to imagine, insofar as they contain fictional proper names, would not be meaningful. In this way, we will see how the combination of both his theory of proper names and his theory of fiction-making results in a flawed conceptualization of the speech act of fiction-making.

The paper is structured as follows. Firstly, in section 2, I will present García-Carpintero's Mill-Frege theory of proper names. In section 3, I will introduce his fiction-making proposal. After that, in section 4, I will show how García-Carpintero connects both his theory of proper names and his theory of fiction-making. In section 5, I will present what I consider the main concern regarding the application of his theory of proper names to his theory of fiction making. I will argue that when the former is applied to the latter, the combination of both theories yields unwelcome results, i.e., it yields to a flawed conceptualization of the act of fiction-making. Finally, in section 6, I will summarize the main conclusions of this work.

## 2. The Mill-Frege Theory of Proper Names

In his paper *The Mill-Frege Theory of Proper Names* (2017), García-Carpintero proposes an account of proper names based on some principles of Fregean approaches together with some assumptions of Millianism. According to García-Carpintero, his account is built upon two constitutive theses (2017, p. 1107):

1. Proper names contribute their referents to the contents of the primary speech acts they help to perform.
2. Proper names have metalinguistic senses known by competent speakers which figure in ancillary presuppositions.

The first thesis is the one that makes his theory Millian (2017, p. 1107), while the second is the one that confers it a Fregean character (2017, p. 1007). In García-Carpintero's view, "the name-bearing relation […] depends on acts of naming with a semantic significance" (García-Carpintero, 2017, p. 1107). In the metalinguistic account that García-Carpintero proposes, proper names have Fregean senses associated with them (2017, pp. 1118–1119). For García-Carpintero, the linguistic sense of a certain proper name *N* would be "whoever is called *N*" (2017, p. 1119).

According to García-Carpintero, the correctness of the utterance of sentences containing proper names, and the successful performance of the speech acts like asserting, ordering, etc. containing those names, depends on the successful performance of what he calls *speech acts of naming*, which create particular words for referential uses (García-Carpintero, 2017, p. 1107). Speech acts of naming are directive speech acts "intended to grant permissions to members of the relevant linguistic community to use the name in the subsequent acts" (García-

Carpintero, 2017, p. 1121).[2] Their function is to establish certain linguistic conventions associated with names: the appellative practices. The constitutive goal of the speech acts of naming is "to coordinate acts of (speaker-)reference to an object" (García-Carpintero, 2017, p. 1121). He contends that, if these acts are carried out successfully, then the object would "become the semantic referent of the thereby created name" (García-Carpintero, 2017, p. 1121).

Therefore, speech acts of naming are carried out in order to bestow a conventional meaning to an expression, and this conventional meaning would be the basis on which subsequent uses of the same expression in other speech acts are sustained (2017, p. 1120). They have a semantic constitutive role, namely, they contribute to fix "the semantic value, the truth-conditional import of a given class of expressions in ordinary speech acts" (García-Carpintero, 2017, p. 1131). A standard form that a speech act of naming can adopt is "let us introduce a name articulated as '*N*' for *x*" (2017, p. 1124). To illustrate this, let us consider the following example. When someone seriously (i.e., non-fictionally) utters (1):

(1) John is hungry

she is performing a specific type of speech act (in this case, we can consider it an assertion) whose successful performance depends on the happy performance of a speech act of naming by means of which an expression has acquired a conventional meaning. The form adopted by the speech act of naming could be "let us call this man John". What the speech act of naming allows the members of a linguistic community to do is to use the name "John" in subsequent speech acts, such as assertions about it. Their aim is to coordinate the acts of the linguistic community of referring to a certain object.

For an object to bear a name, it is only necessary for the speakers to coordinate their acts of reference by relying on the speech act of naming (2017, p. 1130). In this sense, if a speech act of naming has been performed satisfactorily, the object named becomes the bearer of the name. According to García-Carpintero, speech acts of naming share certain features (2017, pp. 1122–1124). Firstly, they can be explicitly performed, or they can remain implicit. The second case occurs, for instance, when the speakers presuppose that they have already taken place (2017, p. 1122). Secondly, speech acts of naming can occur inadvertently, and they can start existing just because we presume that they exist (2017, p. 1124).[3] Thirdly, speech acts of naming can be unsuccessful. They can be

[2] García-Carpintero recognizes that the speech act of naming, as he defines it, could also be considered a declarative speech act. Regarding declarative acts, he contends that "a distinctive feature they have is that for their conventional effect to occur, the speaker should have some special position, status, or role, as defined by nonlinguistic rules, conventions or institutions" (García-Carpintero, 2017, p. 1120). But, as he points out, there are many situations in which this is not necessary for a speech act of naming to take place.

[3] This case is illustrated by García-Carpintero (2017, p. 1124) by using the following example offered by Mark Sainsbury (2005): "a parent calls a spindly child a beanpole,

failed, as Austinian abuses, or putative, as Austinian misfires (2017, p. 1121). Austinian abuses and misfires are embedded in what Austin (1962) calls the Doctrine of Infelicities, which will be explained in more detail in section 4.

In García-Carpintero's approach, proper names have metalinguistic senses which "figure in ancillary presuppositions" conveyed by any use of a proper name created by the corresponding speech act of naming (García-Carpintero, 2017, p. 1107). On the one hand, in García-Carpintero's account, the contribution of "John" in (1) to the content of the main speech act (i.e., the assertion) is his referent (2017, p. 1107). On the other hand, proper names like "John" have metalinguistic senses associated with a semantically triggered presupposition: that John is the unique individual picked out in the act of naming instituting the $N_i$-appellative practice to which "John" belongs (2017, p. 1132). The conventional rule for proper names provided by García-Carpintero and that allows the speakers to obtain the metalinguistic senses above-mentioned is the following (2017, p. 1132):

Ni: For any use *n* of proper name $N_i$, *n* refers to *x* if and only if *x* is the unique individual picked out in the act of naming instituting the $N_i$-appellative practice to which *n* belongs.

A notion closely related to the speech act of naming is the notion of *appellative practices*. They are defined by García-Carpintero as "a subset of the conventions constituting natural languages […] instituted by means of speech acts which I call acts of naming" (García-Carpintero, 2017, p. 1119). Appellative practices and speech acts of naming are different in the sense that the former have a purely nominal character (2017, p. 1127). This means that their task is to make salient an act of naming; the information disclosed by them, for instance in (1), is that the referent (in this case, the person) is called a given name ("John") (2017, p. 1129).

Similarly to other types of speech acts, acts of naming can be unsuccessfully performed. In order to characterize the conditions for a successful and unsuccessful performance of a speech act of naming, García-Carpintero adopts an Austinian framework (2017, p. 1121). García-Carpintero argues that for the successful performance of a speech act of naming some conditions must be fulfilled (2017, p. 1123). Among these conditions are the following:

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using the word as a common noun and with no intention to originate a practice, but it sticks as a nickname and for years is used as a proper name of the child" (García-Carpintero, 2017, p. 1124). Another example proposed by García-Carpintero is one in which a certain speaker "mishears an existing name, and inadvertently starts a new referring practice with the name he uses, wrongly thinking he is just following established practice" (García-Carpintero, 2017, p. 1124).

i. We are in a need of a name in order to be able to refer to an object that we have to name (2017, p. 1123). This would allow us to use it to perform different types of speech acts.
ii. It is possible for the speaker to introduce the name (2017, p. 1123). This means that the speaker is in an appropriate position or has the authority to do it.
iii. For the speech act to be successful, it is necessary that the community agrees on the use of the name for a certain object (2017, p. 1123).

In this respect, if one of these conditions is not fulfilled, then the speech act of naming would be unhappy, and the naming practice that should have been established because of its performance would not have been established.

## 3. The Fiction-Making Theory

In several papers (2013; 2019a; 2019b), García-Carpintero presents his own theory of fiction-making. He develops an account in which what a creator of a fiction does when creating a fiction is carrying out a specific type of speech act: the speech act of fiction-making. In this sense, and following Currie (1990), he claims that acts of fiction-making are not mere "acts of speech". They are specific types of speech acts which have a particular force and content (2019b, p. 87). García-Carpintero adopts a normative account of speech acts for the characterization of the speech act of fiction-making (2013, pp. 340, 351). He contends that having a normative speech act account avoids some issues associated to a purely intentional one and to those approaches to fictional discourse in which the only thing an author does is merely pretend or make-believe to carry out a certain speech act.

According to García-Carpintero, a fiction is "a proposition or collection of propositions […] which has been put forward under the norm ($FM_N$)", that is, the norm of fiction making (2013, p. 351). The normative speech act account that he adopts in order to characterize the speech act of fiction-making is the one proposed by Alston (2000). Specifically, he defines the speech act of fiction-making as a directive speech act. According to Alston, a directive speech act is an illocutionary act "typically intended to direct or influence the behavior of the addressee" (Alston, 2000, p. 97). The category of directive speech acts includes illocutionary acts such as ordering, commanding, requesting, suggesting or inviting. As far his proposal is a normative one, it includes some conditions and norms that must be fulfilled in order to carry out a successful directive speech act. In this way, Alston proposes the following model for the analysis of directives (2000, pp. 102–103):

DI: *U* (the speaker) *D*'d in uttering *S* (where "*D*" is a term for some directive illocutionary act type, a purporting to be producing a certain kind of obligation on *H* to do *D*) iff in uttering *S*, *U R*'d[4] that:

1. Conceptually necessary conditions for the existence of the obligation are satisfied. (These include such things as that it is possible for *H* to do *D*, that *D* has not already been done, etc.).
2. Circumstances of the utterance of S are appropriate for the production of the obligation in question. (This includes the appropriate authority for orders, the right kind of interpersonal relationship for requests, etc.).
3. By uttering *S*, *U* lays on *H* a (stronger or weaker) obligation to do *D*.
4. *U* utters *S* in order to get *H* to do *D*.

Alston proposes this model under the consideration that there are some differences between the illocutionary acts that belong to the category of "directives" (2000, pp. 98–99). As a result of taking these differences into account, he distinguishes between strong and weak directives (2000, pp. 100–101). For instance, ordering and commanding would be strong directives, whereas requesting and inviting would be considered as weak directives. The difference between strong and weak directives has to do with the type of obligation they impose on the addressee. Whereas the obligations imposed by a strong directive are categorical, the obligations imposed by a weak directive are disjunctive (2000, p. 100). In the case of weak directives, the disjunctive obligation consists in that the audience has the possibility to accept the obligation imposed or give acceptable reasons to not follow the obligations (2000, p. 100).

The speech act of fiction-making would be an example of a weak directive. In this case, it is characterized by García-Carpintero as a proposal or invitation to imagine a certain content (2013, p. 339). In order to present his own proposal, García-Carpintero presents the Alstonian's one, but introducing some modifications. García-Carpintero formulates the constitutive norm provided by Alston for a directive speech act to be correctly performed as follows (2013, p. 347):

(D) For one to order *A* to *p* is correct if and only if one lays down on *A* as a result an obligation to *p*.

Although García-Carpintero follows Alston in his characterization of the speech act of fiction-making in normative terms, his proposal differs from the Alstonian's one in considering the obligations imposed by the directive illocutionary act as conditional instead of disjunctive: the obligations imposed by the

[4] Alston (2000, pp. 54–55) characterizes the notion of "*R*'d" as the speaker taking responsibility for the 1–4 conditions being satisfied in uttering the sentence by means of which the speaker would be performing a directive illocutionary act.

speech act of fiction-making depend on some contextually available presumptions about the preferences of the audience (2013, p. 348). In this sense, García-Carpintero reformulates the Alstonian's norm for directives in the following way (2013, p. 348):

(D') For one to enjoin *A* to *p* is correct if and only if one lays down as a result on *A* (given one's authority, or conditionally on *A*'s presumed good will towards one's wishes, or on *A*'s presumed wishes, etc.) an obligation to *p*.

Based on these considerations about the normative Alston's theory, García-Carpintero applies the Alstonian account in order to characterize the speech act of fiction-making, understood as a weak directive by means of which the author proposes or invites the addressee to imagine something (2013, p. 339). As a result of the adoption of the Alstonian model, García-Carpintero defines the speech act of fiction-making in terms of the following constitutive norm (2013, p. 351):

($FM_N$') For one to fiction-make *p* is correct if and only if *p* is worth imagining for one's audience, on the assumption that they have the relevant desires and dispositions.

In this regard, García-Carpintero argues that "in putting forward a fiction one presents oneself as having an authority to prescribe to that audience the imagining of *p*, bestowed on the presumption that doing so will be worth the audience's while" (2013, p. 351). Insofar as he characterizes the speech act of fiction-making from the Alstonian normative account and, specifically, as a directive, some conditions that Alston advances for directives speech acts to be successful must be fulfilled. These include, as I mentioned above, conceptually necessary conditions such as that it is possible for the hearer to do what the speaker has prescribed her to do, and that what is prescribed has not been done. It is also required that the circumstances of the utterance are appropriate for the creation of the obligation, and these includes the appropriate authority of the speaker for issuing orders, and the right kind of interpersonal relationships for requests.

Thus, the application of the Alstonian model to García-Carpintero's account of fiction shows that, in the case of fiction-making, it would be necessary for the audience to be able to do what the speaker has prescribed them to do. This condition would then include that it is necessary for the audience to grasp D, namely, the directive illocutionary act of fiction-making understood as an invitation to imagine. Accordingly, the directive illocutionary act performed must be graspable or, in other words, meaningful: the audience must be in a position to understand what is being directed (in a strong or weak sense). In the case of fiction-making, this means that the audience must be in a position to understand the uttered sentence that it is prescribed to imagine.

Let us illustrate this with an example. According to García-Carpintero's account, when Lewis Carroll fictionally (i.e., non-seriously) utters (2):

(2) Alice is in the garden,

he is carrying out a speech act of fiction-making by means of which he is inviting the audience to imagine the content of (2) under the condition that the content of (2) is worthy of being imagined. However, taking into account the Alstonian model that García-Carpintero applies for the characterization of the speech act of fiction-making, for a proposition to be imagined it has to be meaningful. This would mean that, for the directive illocutionary act to be successfully performed, the audience must be able to grasp what is to be imagined. And the fact that the sentence to be imagined contains a fictional name poses several problems. In this sense, the question we should ask would be the following: how is it possible to imagine a sentence that contains a referential expression that does not refer to anything, such as "Alice" in example (2)? In the next section, I will present García-Carpintero's answer to this question.

## 4. The Mill-Frege Theory in Fictional Discourse

In this section, I am going to show how García-Carpintero applies his theory of proper names to his fiction-making proposal. Because of its Fregean character, according to García-Carpintero, his theory of proper names is able to accommodate empty proper names (2017, p. 1119). This is so because what is needed for a sentence that contains an empty name to be meaningful is the recovery of the semantically triggered presupposition "being named *N*". The metalinguistic sense of any proper name (including empty names) that would figure in the presupposition would be "whoever is called *N*". In this regard, it is not necessary for a sentence that contains a proper name to have a referent for it to be meaningful. What is necessary is to "grasp how it is descriptively presented" (García-Carpintero, 2019b, p. 88). But what about fictional proper names?

García-Carpintero argues that the speech acts that one typically performs by uttering certain sentences in default contexts, when uttered in a fictional context they should be characterized as pretended speech acts (2019b, p. 79). Thus, when Lewis Carroll utters (2), he is carrying out a speech act of fiction-making by means of pretending to perform a certain speech act. In this case, it constitutes a pretended assertion. However, to the extent that the sentence uttered contains a fictional proper name, "Alice", he is doing something else. He is also playing an implicit narrator who presupposes an "Alice"-naming practice established by means of a speech act of naming (2019, p. 87). As far as the context in which (2) is uttered is fictional, García-Carpintero contends that this speech act of naming is merely pretended (2017, p. 1122; 2019b, pp. 87–88). In this case, the audience is prescribed to imagine that a speech act of naming has taken place. The semantically triggered presupposition in the case of utterances that contain proper names would be that a speech act of naming has taken place and, by means of this act, the intended object has been called "Alice", but merely in a pretended way.

As we saw in section 2, the correctness of the utterance of sentences containing proper names depends on the successful performance of a speech act of naming. This act of naming is a directive speech act which establishes a naming practice on which the use of a name depends on. And, as it occurs with any type of speech act, it can be unsuccessfully performed too. As I have previously mentioned, García-Carpintero (2017, p. 1121) argues that a speech act of naming can be failed, as Austinian abuses, or putative, as Austinian misfires. Insofar as the characterization of the happiness or unhappiness of the act is made in Austinian terms, it is necessary to make explicit what are the conditions under which an act can be unhappy according to Austin's proposal. Austin (1962, pp. 14–15) offers what he calls the Doctrine of Infelicities. He gives some necessary conditions that must be met for a happy performance of a speech act:

(A. 1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect; that procedure has to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further

(A. 2) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.

(B. 1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and

(B. 2) completely.

(*Γ*. 1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further

(*Γ*. 2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently.

As Austin puts it, a speech act can be unhappy in two ways. First, it can be considered an abuse when one of the (*Γ*) rules is not met. Second, a misfire occurs when one of the (A) or (B) conditions is not fulfilled. García-Carpintero follows this Austinian account in order to characterize the ways in which a speech act of naming could be unhappy. These conditions do not seem to pose a problem for the theory of proper names proposed by García-Carpintero. As we will see in the next section, the problem arises when this account is applied to the speech acts carried out in a fictional discourse.

## 5. A Problem for García-Carpintero's Proposal

As I have already pointed out, the speech acts that the creator of a fiction would be typically performing with the use of sentences in default contexts (e.g., assertions such as [2]) and the speech act of naming associated with them are just pretended in fictional contexts. This means that they are not actually

performed. In the case of fiction, they are not carried out with the aim of being evaluated as actual speech acts. As García-Carpintero points out, in the case of utterances such as (2),

> In such cases, the sentences are used in some form of pretense, like the acts that actors perform on stage: they do not need to be actually drinking whisky, rather they merely pretend to do so; hence, we do not evaluate them by invoking any norms we would apply to non-pretend uses. (García-Carpintero, 2019b, p. 79)

Insofar as pretended speech acts are not actual acts, i.e., they cannot bring about the illocutionary effects that would be associated with the use of the sentences in default contexts, it seems difficult to believe that they can be appraised with respect to the Austinian conditions. In order to see how the speech act of naming poses a problem for the García-Carpintero's characterization of the speech act of fiction-making when the utterances of a fictional discourse contain proper names, let us remind of the conditions for the successful performance of the speech act of naming provided by García-Carpintero:

i. We are in a need of a name in order to be able to refer to an object that we have to name (2017, p. 1123). This would allow us to use it to perform different types of speech acts.
ii. It is possible for the speaker to introduce the name (2017, p. 1123). This means that the speaker is in an appropriate position or has the authority to do it.
iii. For the speech act to be successful, it is necessary that the community agrees on the use of the name for a certain object (2017, p. 1123).

Bearing these conditions in mind, we can now see why the act of naming carried out in a fictional context could not fulfil them and what consequences it poses for his proposal. If, as García-Carpintero points out, the speech acts performed in a fictional discourse (including the acts of naming and other speech acts that depend on the initial speech act of naming) are merely pretended (2019b, pp. 79, 87), then they do not constitute genuine speech acts. In this sense, the conditions provided by García-Carpintero for the performance of an act of naming (and the Austinian conditions regarding the possible ways in which a speech act of naming can be unhappy) do not apply to these pretended, and hence non-actual, speech acts. Therefore, we can say that, when performed as a part of a fictional discourse, no speech act of naming has taken place.

Let us consider again example (2). When Lewis Carroll utters (2):

(2) Alice is in the garden,

he is pretending to perform an assertion (2019b, pp. 79, 87). According to García-Carpintero's account, the meaningfulness of an assertion containing a proper name would depend on the successful performance of a speech act of naming

that would constitute the basis on which subsequent uses of the same expression (for instance, “Alice”) in other speech acts are sustained (2017, p. 1120). This is a necessary condition insofar as the sentence contains a referential expression. As we have seen, it is by means of an act of naming that an “Alice”-naming practice would be created, and that an expression would acquire a conventional meaning. Hence, the actual (and also successful) performance of a speech act of naming would be a precondition for the uttered sentence to be meaningful. However, this does not occur in the case of fictional utterances that contain proper names. This is so because, as we have seen, the speech act of naming in fiction is a merely pretended act for García-Carpintero (2019b, pp. 79, 87), so the conditions that must be fulfilled in order to appraise it as happy or unhappy do not apply to it. Therefore, there would not be any actual act of naming proper, and the sentences uttered in fiction which contain proper names would not be meaningful.

As we have already pointed out, the speech act of fiction-making is defined by García-Carpintero as a directive speech act. More specifically, he characterizes it as a proposal or invitation to imagine (2013, p. 339). At this point, the question we should ask is the following: how can a directive speech act of fiction-making be successfully performed if what an audience (a reader, in this case) is prescribed to imagine is not meaningful? In other words: how can an audience grasp what is prescribed to imagine by a speech act of fiction-making if the sentences are not meaningful?

As we have already pointed out, according to García-Carpintero, the correctness of the speech act of fiction-making depends on the norm of fiction-making proposed by him:

($FM_N$’) For one to fiction-make *p* is correct if and only if *p* is worth imagining for one’s audience, on the assumption that they have the relevant desires and dispositions.

As we have seen, this norm is formulated following the Alstonian model of directive speech acts (Alston, 2000). This involves that certain conditions must be satisfied for the directive speech acts to be successfully carried out. As I have previously remarked, one of these conditions is that it must be possible for an audience to do what the speaker is directing them to do and, thus, they must first be able to understand what is being prescribed by the speaker.

If this is applied to the analysis of fiction, this condition would imply that the readers must be able to do what the creators of the fiction invite them to do, i.e., they must be able to imagine the content of the speech acts that appear in fiction, such as the pretended assertion made by the utterance of (2). This would involve the understanding by the readers of the content they are prescribed to imagine. However, how can this latter condition (and thus the former one) be met in the case of sentences containing fictional proper names if there is no actual speech act of naming? If a speech act of naming has not really taken place, and therefore the uttered sentence which contains a proper name would not be meaningful,

then the condition that the reader must be able to grasp what is prescribed to imagine would not be met. Consequently, the directive speech act of fiction-making would be unhappy.[5]

Let us illustrate this with an example. As I have shown, a sentence uttered in fiction that contains an empty proper name, like (2), would be meaningless for the reasons I have already pointed out above. Its lack of meaningfulness would be analogous to the lack of meaningfulness of the following ones.

Let us consider that someone orders me the following:

(3) Bake the number three!

(4) Do not asdfgzxcv!

In this case, we can clearly see that these alleged directives are unfeasible. The reason is that the sentences used by the speaker and by means of which she has intended to perform the directive speech acts are meaningless in the following sense.[6] Taking into account the Alstonian's conditions, in the case of (3), the directive speech act could not be happy because it would not be possible for me to do what the speaker has directed me to do. Although I can understand each word of the sentence separately, the whole sentence that apparently constitutes an order does not make sense. Thus, the utterance cannot constitute a directive speech act at all. Example (4) could not constitute an order either, but for slightly different reasons. In this case, I could not comply with the order because what I would be ordered to do does not constitute a word at all. Here, "asdfgzxcv" is something unintelligible, so I would be ordered to do something that is meaningless.

In order to see how these considerations are applicable to utterances that contain a prescription to imagine, let us consider the following example in which someone is inviting us to imagine the content expressed by an utterance of (5):

(5) asdfgzxcv to smoke sunglasses.

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[5] An anonymous reviewer offered the following suggestion regarding the possible ways in which García-Carpintero could make his both theories work. An option for García-Carpintero could consist in characterizing the naming practices, on which the use of a proper name (e.g., the name "Alice") depends on, as introduced not by pretended speech acts of naming, but by actual acts of naming. In this way, it would be possible to attribute to the creator of a fiction the performance of two actual acts: the speech act of fiction-making and the speech act of naming. This could make it possible to overcome the issues associated with the pretended character of the speech act of naming. Of course, this would need further elaboration, but I will not address it here because it would exceed the purposes of this paper.

[6] It should be stressed that (3) does not constitute a case of a metonymy in this example. We can imagine a context in which, for instance, a pastry chef orders a worker to bake the cake that appears in the menu as the cake number three. So the directive speech act performed by the pastry chef would not be unfeasible. But this is not the case in our example.

In this example, what the speaker would be inviting us to imagine would also be something meaningless, so the directive speech act would be unfeasible, as it is in (3) and (4). Firstly, the alleged directive of inviting someone to imagine (5) would be unsuccessful because, as in example (4), the sentence contains something that would not constitute a word, namely, “asdfgzxcv”. So it seems difficult (if not impossible) to comply with the invitation to imagine the sentence that contains the non-word “asdfgzxcv”. Secondly, the directive would be considered unsuccessful for the same reason that (3) is: “smoking sunglasses” is something that simply cannot be done. As in (3), we can understand the words “smoke” and “sunglasses” separately, but when they are put together in the form of a sentence, it does not make any sense. In this regard, we would be invited to imagine something that would be meaningless, so the directive illocutionary act cannot be performed in a successful way.

These examples would be analogous to sentences uttered in a fictional context such as (2) as far as they are also meaningless in the sense specified above. Regarding García-Carpintero’s proposal, if the sentences uttered by means of which we perform certain speech acts are meaningless, then the speech acts performed cannot be successful. If I am not able to understand what a speaker is prescribing me to do, then I cannot comply with the directive. And if the condition of the meaningfulness of the sentences uttered is not met, then the directive speech act would be unsuccessful. In this case, no speech act has been performed.

This is the case with the directive speech act of fiction-making. Thus far we have seen that, according to García-Carpintero, for a sentence to be meaningful, it must contain meaningful terms. In our example, for the sentence (2) to be meaningful, “Alice” must be an actual name, i.e., a name created by means of the successful performance of a speech act of naming. However, as we have seen, if the speech act of naming is merely pretended, as it is for García-Carpintero, then no act of naming would have been actually performed, and thus the sentence (2) would be as meaningless as (3), (4) or (5).

This, in turn, has further consequences for the speech act of fiction-making; namely, that the directive speech act of fiction-making would be unsuccessful. For a speech act of fiction-making to be successful, the reader must be invited to imagine meaningful sentences, that is, sentences that can be grasped by the audience. However, as we have shown, this cannot be accomplished by García-Carpintero’s account. When we consider his theory of proper names together with his theory of fiction-making, the result is that what the readers are invited to imagine would be the content of the utterance of a sentence that is not meaningful, and thus it cannot be grasped by them. Therefore, the author’s directive speech act of inviting to imagine (2) would be as unsuccessful as the speaker’s alleged directive speech act of prescribing me to do (3), (4) or (5). The consequence of this is that, for García-Carpintero, it would be difficult to explain how the readers can imagine what the author invites them to imagine through directive speech acts of fiction-making containing fictional proper names. In this way, we can see how both García-Carpintero’s theory of proper names and his

theory of fiction-making do not work well when the first one is applied to the second one.

## 6. Conclusion

Tu sum up, in this paper, I have argued that the combination of both García-Carpintero's theory of proper names and his theory of fiction-making results in a flawed conceptualization of the speech act of fiction-making. This is so because what makes utterances of sentences containing a proper name meaningful is the presupposition of the performance of a speech act of naming, and when performed in the context of a fictional discourse, this speech act would be merely pretended (that is, it would be a non-actual speech act). The result of this pretended speech act of naming is that the utterance of the sentence containing a proper name that would depend on this speech act would not be meaningful. And this has an important consequence: that what an audience is prescribed to imagine by means of a speech act of fiction-making would be meaningless. As matters stand, it would seem that García-Carpintero's proposal needs further adjustments in order to explain how it is possible for sentences containing proper names to acquire meaning when used in fictional contexts.

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Article

FILIP KAWCZYŃSKI [*]

# DESCRIPTIVE NAMES, RIGIDITY, AND DIRECT REFERENCE

SUMMARY: In the paper, I argue against Dummett's and Stanley's objections to the direct reference theory. Dummett and Stanley make use of the notorious descriptive names to formulate the objection against Kaplan's argument in favour of the direct reference theory. Kaplan argued that difference in modal behaviour of sentences is a reason to regard some singular terms appearing in the sentences as directly referential. Dummett ad Stanley argue, on the other hand, that in the case of descriptive names and the descriptions used to fix the reference of the names, the modal difference between sentences arises merely from the fact that descriptive names are rigid, while descriptions are not. There is no reason then to claim that being directly or indirectly referential has anything to do with the modal differences between sentences. What I attempt to show in the paper is that Dummett and Stanley made wrong assumptions about the modal properties of descriptive names and the descriptions that are used to fix the reference of such names. In Section 1, I characterise descriptive names and discuss some controversies that they create. Section 2 is devoted to the review of Kaplan's argument for the direct reference theory, while Section 3 presents Dummett's and Stanley's arguments against direct reference. In section 4, I raise two preliminary objections against Dummett's and Stanley's positions. In Section 5, I discuss in detail "the great mystery" of rigidity of descriptive names which in my opinion lies at the bottom of the whole issue of descriptive names and direct reference. I argue, contrary to Dummett and Stanley, that descriptive names and their mother descriptions have the same modal properties. The last section includes conclusions and presents how the results from the previous parts of the paper affect the arguments of Dummett and Stanley.

KEYWORDS: rigidity, descriptive names, proper names, modality, direct reference.

[*] University of Warsaw, Faculty of Philosophy. E-mail: f.kawczynski@uw.edu.pl. ORCID: 0000-0001-7960-4795.

## Introduction

In the paper, I argue against Dummett's and Stanley's objections to the direct reference theory. Dummett and Stanley make use of the notorious descriptive names to formulate the objection against Kaplan's argument in favour of the direct reference theory. Kaplan discusses pairs of true sentences of the form "*a* is *φ*" and "*b* is *φ*" in which "*a*" and "*b*" are coreferential singular terms. He argues that if two such sentences, which have the same truth value in the actual world, have different truth values in different possible worlds it is the evidence of some significant semantic difference between these sentences and between singular terms included in these sentences. Such a difference occurs when "*a*" is a directly referential term, while "*b*" is not. Thus, eventually the argument leads to the conclusion that some singular terms (eg. proper names or indexicals) are directly referential.

Dummet and Stanley develop arguments of different sorts, however, they both undermine Kaplan's theory in a similar manner. Namely, they argue that it is not always the case that the difference of truth values in various possible worlds reveals some semantic difference between sentences. In particular, such a modal difference does not provide a reason to claim that "*a*" is directly referential and "*b*" is not. According to their view, when "*a*" is a descriptive name and "*b*" is a description used for introducing the descriptive name, sentences "*a* is *φ*" and "*b* is *φ*" indeed can differ with respect to their truth values in possible worlds but the reason for that is not that "*a*" is directly referential, and "*b*" is not. The reason is that although "*a*" and "*b*" do not differ with respect to the way they refer to objects, they differ regarding their modal properties: a descriptive name is rigid, while description is not. In Dummett's and Stanley's views such a modal difference between singular terms is a sufficient explanation of the modal difference between "*a* is *φ*" and "*b* is *φ*", and claiming that "*a*" is directly referential as opposed to "*b*" is unjustified.

What I attempt to show in the paper is that Dummett and Stanley made wrong assumptions about the modal properties of descriptive names and the descriptions that are used to fix the reference of such names. I argue that in fact these expressions have *the same* modal properties. In consequence, what is necessary for the explanation of the modal difference between "*a* is *φ*" and "*b* is *φ*" is the claim that "*a*" and "*b*" differ in another way—namely that the former is directly referential, while the latter is not.

In Section 1, I characterise descriptive names and discuss some controversies that they create. Section 2 is devoted to the review of Kaplan's argument for the direct reference theory, while Section 3 presents Dummett's and Stanley's arguments against direct reference. In section 4 I raise two preliminary objections against Dummett's and Stanley's positions. In Section 5, I discuss in detail "the great mystery" of rigidity of descriptive names which in my opinion lies at the bottom of the whole issue of descriptive names and direct reference. The last section includes conclusions and presents how the results from the previous parts of the paper affect the arguments of Dummett and Stanley.

## 1. Descriptive Names

Think of the three following names: “Saul Kripke”, “Sherlock Holmes”, and “Jack the Ripper”. For an average language user, they are probably just three typical proper names—written with capital letters and referring to individuals. For a philosopher of language, these expressions differ radically. The first one is an *ordinary proper name*—it refers to an existing object and was introduced to language (probably by Kripke’s parents) as referring to that particular object. On the other hand, “Sherlock Holmes” is a so-called *fictional name*—it is an empty expression by design. We can assume that when Arthur Conan Doyle introduced the name, he has no intention that the name would refer to any real individual. It was stipulated as an empty name so it is impossible that it would turn out that it is not empty. The last name is the most controversial. “Jack the Ripper” was introduced by the London Police as referring to an alleged killer who committed such-and-such crimes. Unlike “Saul Kripke” it was not brought in to refer to a known, existing individual—the name was introduced at a time when the identity of the killer was unknown (as we know it remains unknown). And unlike “Sherlock Holmes” it was not assumed that it is an empty name. It was quite opposite—the detectives made up the name to refer shortly to a person that they supposed does exist although they did not know exactly who s\he is and probably they also left open the possibility that there is no single person who committed all those crimes (in such a case the name would eventually appear to be empty). Reference of “Jack the Ripper” was fixed by the definite description “the person who committed such-and-such crimes” and it was unknown which object (if any) satisfies the description and thus which object (if any) is the reference of the introduced name. Names of that kind are called *descriptive (proper) names*.

“Descriptive names are usually seen as exotic birds or semantic mutants”. That is how Robin Jeshion (2004, p. 593) sums up the nature of descriptive proper names. They are famous among philosophers of language and have a rather bad reputation. The reputation comes from the fact that descriptive proper names are extremely elusive when it comes to characterising their semantic nature. It seems that the nest of these exotic birds is located exactly on the borderline between descriptive and non-descriptive directly referential expressions, and that makes them so hard to define.

A lot has been written about descriptive names and I am not going to give here a comprehensive picture of all the problems they pose.[1] Instead, I am going to focus on their features associated with the issue discussed in this paper, i.e., their relation to the direct reference theory. Let us start with the basics. Descriptive names are a peculiar subspecies of proper names. They look like proper

[1] Usually, Evans’s works (1982; 2002) are considered to be the main benchmark for the discussion on descriptive names and his works are still the main historic background for this topic (however, it should be notice that Kaplan in his [1968] analyses name “Newman 1” which is something like a descriptive name). For a detailed review of issues associated with descriptive names see Reimer’s (2004) and Jeshion’s (2004).

names and behave like proper names in many aspects. Classic examples of descriptive names are: “Jack the Ripper”, “Vulcan”, or “Deep Throat”. These names have been introduced to language via descriptions. For instance, the introduction of “Jack the Ripper” could possibly take the form of:

Let us call *the person who committed such-and-such crimes* “Jack the Ripper”

The description in italics fixes the reference of the descriptive name. Hereafter I will call such descriptions *mother descriptions* of descriptive names. The detectives introduced the name to refer with it to the person who committed such-and-such crimes, whomever s/he is. They did not have (and even could not have) any particular person in mind—what they wanted to refer to is the object that satisfies the mother description, whichever object it is. Mother descriptions are always used *attributively*. That is the indispensable feature of descriptive proper names that their reference is fixed attributively, i.e., without pointing at any particular object but with the intention to refer to an object which possesses definite properties. Basically, that is what we use descriptive names for—to refer to objects in a proper-name-like way but without knowing the identity of the objects.

Now we can see the crucial “genetic” difference between an ordinary proper name and a descriptive name. The former is introduced to the language in a referential way.[2] The reference of a proper name is fixed within the baptism ceremony either by ostension, or referentially used definite description or another proper name of the object in question. An ordinary proper name is given to an object the existence of which raises no doubts and the object is very often pre-

[2] This statement should be treated as descriptive—not normative. It is basically the observation—made by Kripe, among others—that standard proper names are always given to particular objects, perceptually or causally accessible. The object that is supposed to be given an ordinary proper name is always somehow pointed at—either via gesture or via referential linguistic tools. A case that may be somehow doubtful in this context is the allegedly possible scenario in which the reference of a new name is fixed by some attributive description and the description is treated merely as reference-fixing and not as the meaning of the name. However, in fact, such a scenario is not possible, since it entails a proper name lacking any semantic value. That there is no meaning is simply assumed by this scenario. That there is no reference comes from the fact that attributive description does not fix a particular object as the reference. The description refers to whichever object that has such-and-such properties (maybe none has them) and there is an obvious crucial difference between this-particular-object and whichever-object. In other words, attributive descriptions do refer, but they do not fix the reference, as their nature involves the possibility of reference change. If there is no meaning, and no object being the reference of the name, such a name is semantically invalid in inefficient. Furthermore, if we like to treat an attributive description as a some kind of an instruction for identifying the reference of a name, we end up with a standard descriptive name, because whether we call this instruction a meaning of a name or not is a purely terminological issue. And if we understand meaning standardly (i.e., as the medium between word and object, which is supposed to determine the reference) we definitely ought to call such an instruction a meaning.

sent at the baptism ceremony. In the case of descriptive names, the object is never present at the baptism ceremony, its existence is merely alleged and its identity is unknown. And as history shows, things can go in various directions with descriptive names. According to the popular story, French astronomer Urbain Le Verrier introduced two famous descriptive names of alleged planets before anyone observed these planets—Le Verrier put forward hypotheses about the existence of Neptune and Vulcan based solely on mathematical calculations. The introductions of these descriptive names can be pictured as follows:

Let us call the planet responsible for the irregularities of Uranus "Neptune".

Let us call the planet responsible for the irregularities of Mercury "Vulcan".

As it was confirmed later, there really exists the planet that satisfies the description "the planet that is responsible for the irregularities of Uranus", i.e., Neptune does exist and today we use the name "Neptune" as an ordinary proper name. On the other hand, later investigation falsified the hypothesis concerning the existence of Vulcan and today we use the name "Vulcan" as an empty name because nothing satisfies the mother description of that name. However, for some time both these names were descriptive names, with alleged references the identity of which is unknown.

The descriptive factor is crucial for the semantics of descriptive names—if nothing fulfils the mother description, the name is considered empty; if there is an object that fulfils the mother description, the name somehow transfers into an ordinary proper name.[3] On the other hand, in the case of ordinary proper names descriptive elements that may occur during the baptism ceremony can play some pragmatic auxiliary role, but they do not contribute anything to the semantics of an ordinary proper name. The indispensable semantic property of ordinary proper names is that their reference is everything they have—no descriptive, intensional or attributive elements are involved. As John Searle famously put it—"proper names […] enable us to refer publicly to objects without being forced to raise issues and come to agreement on what descriptive characteristics exactly constitute the identity of the object" (1958, p. 172). Ordinary proper names do not convey any descriptive content while it is obvious that descriptive names do. The semantic constitution of descriptive names is genetically descriptive and attributive since they are brought into the language via the use of attributive mother descriptions.

Now, it seems reasonable to ask why there are any controversies about descriptive names if it looks like they were just unproblematic abbreviations of their mother descriptions. The controversies come from the fact that descriptive names behave very similarly to ordinary proper names with regard to significant

[3] Probably the easiest way to explain how such a transfer happens is to say that when the object in question starts to be referentially accessible, then the following uses of the name as referring to that object play the role of some kind of proper baptism.

semantic aspects. The most important is that they appear to be rigid. It seems plausible to claim that a sentence uttered by Le Verrier: "I was wrong, Neptune is not responsible for the irregularities of Uranus. It is responsible for the irregularities of Earth!" is not self-contradictory. And if "Neptune" meant nothing more or less than "the planet that is responsible for the irregularities of Uranus" the sentence should be considered self-contradictory.[4] In other words, the world in which Neptune does not cause the irregularities of Uranus is possible and when we speak about that world we refer to Neptune when using the name "Neptune". And so we do in all possible worlds. Their rigidity is one of the most useful properties of descriptive names—we use such names because we want to speak in a rigid manner about the individuals, the existence and identity of which we are not sure.

There are other reasons for considering descriptive names not merely abbreviations of descriptions but more like semantic siblings of ordinary proper names. For instance, Gareth Evans (1982; 2002) claims that what descriptive proper names contribute to truth-conditions/propositions of sentences including them is "stated by means of the relation of reference" (Evans, 2002, p. 180). The same can be said of ordinary proper names as opposed to descriptions whose contribution to the proposition involves an intensional, descriptive condition that is supposed to be satisfied by the object about which is the proposition. Jeshion (2004) points out another similarity between descriptive names and ordinary proper names—they both are *psychologically neutral*. Users introduce them in order to refer to an object "without necessarily thinking about the [object] via any particular mode of presentation" (Jeshion, 2004, p. 600). It corresponds well with the thesis about the rigidity of descriptive names—we want to refer to *the object*, putting aside (at least partially) its characteristics. Marga Reimer (2004, pp. 597–598) puts forward the "epistemological" argument in favour of the similarity of descriptive names and ordinary proper names. Imagine a situation in which Le Verrier tells his parents that his research concerns the planet called "Neptune". He does not reveal any further details about the irregularities of other planets, and so on. Later on, Le Verrier's parents tell their friends that "our son is now looking for the plant Neptune". It seems that the parents used the name correctly and they actually referred to Neptune, although they did not know the mother description of that name and as a matter of fact they were not able to give any uniquely identifying description of Neptune. This scenario is very similar to the Kripkean "Feynman" example in which Kripke (1972, pp. 91–92) argues that since we can use proper names without knowing any precise description of their reference, proper names are semantically independent of descriptions and in particular are not abbreviations of descriptions.

I consider most of the above arguments disputable. However, the intuition that descriptive names do something different than just being shortened versions of

[4] It is worth to mention that such a scenario is very close to Kripke's (1972, pp. 83–85) "Gödel-Schmidt" argument against descriptive account of ordinary proper names.

descriptions is very strong. The aspect of their hybrid “descriptive and referential” nature that is crucial for my considerations is their rigidity. The rigidity combined with their descriptive charge poses a serious problem for the theory of direct reference. In particular, descriptive names can be used to construe an objection against David Kaplan’s famous argument in favour of the direct reference theory.

## 2. Kaplan’s Argument for the Direct Reference Theory

Kaplan’s (1989, pp. 512–514) argument concerns indexicals and is aimed at showing that indexicals are directly referential expressions, i.e., expressions whose contribution to a proposition is their reference (and not any descriptive condition, concept, etc.). Imagine that Alfred is hosting a party and two of his friends have already come: Maria, who sits at the table, and Wanda, who lies on a couch. When new guests arrive Alfred wants to introduce his friends to the guests; he says that “Wanda lives in Cracow” and then points at the woman sitting at the table and utters:

(A) She lives in Warsaw.

Intuitively the proposition $\alpha$ expressed by (A) is about Maria and not about any woman who happens to be sitting at the table. The proposition $\alpha$ is true iff Maria lives in Warsaw, not iff *any woman sitting at the table* lives in Warsaw. The direct reference theory is consistent with such an interpretation of $\alpha$. If we assume, in accordance with this theory, that “she” is a directly referential expression then what this pronoun contributes to the proposition is Maria herself. Thus, $\alpha$ is a singular proposition, i.e., it includes Maria as one of its constituents: <☺, *living in Warsaw*>, where “☺” symbolises Maria herself (the real human being, the concrete macroscopic object). According to the rival descriptive account, (A) does not express a singular proposition since the indexical “she” is not considered directly referential but descriptive. Descriptivist claims that (A) expresses the proposition $\beta$: <*the woman that Alfred is pointing at*, *living in Warsaw*> which does not include Maria herself, but instead, it includes attributive condition and so the proposition is about the woman pointed by Alfred, whomever she is. This proposition is true iff the person who satisfies the description “the woman that Alfred is pointing at” lives in Warsaw—it does not matter which particular person it is.

Let us assume that it is the case that Maria lives in Warsaw. Now, it may be said that since both $\alpha$ and $\beta$ appear to be true there is no criterion for choosing which of them is the actual proposition expressed by (A) and maybe they differ only formally, and actually, they are the same proposition. Kaplan refers to counterfactual situations/possible worlds to justify the directly referential account and to show that the descriptive position is wrong. Think of the possible world *W’* in which Maria and Wanda switch their places and for some reason, they also dressed up for each other—probably to make a joke of Alfred. The joke turned

out to be successful and Alfred believes that Maria sits at the table, while in reality, it is Wanda dressed up for Maria. How would we interpret the proposition expressed by (A) with regard to *W*'? Kaplan (1989, p. 513) emphasises that we do not interpret a proposition that would be expressed by Alfred in that possible world. We take into account the proposition actually expressed in the real world and evaluate it with regard to the world *W*'. And it appears that with regard to *W*' the proposition expressed by (A) should be considered true. In (A) Alfred stated that Maria lives in Warsaw, and with regard to *W*', it is still true that Maria lives in Warsaw (no matter where she sits or lies, to say so). So while there is no reason to deny that $\alpha$ is true with regard to *W*', it is obviously incorrect to assess $\beta$ as true with regard to *W*'. If we agree that in (A) Alfred stated that the woman at whom he is pointing, whoever she is, lives in Warsaw, then with regard to *W*' he said something false, because now it is Wanda at whom he is pointing and Wanda does not live in Warsaw.

For Kaplan, the fact that $\alpha$ and $\beta$ have different truth values with regard to various possible worlds is an undeniable reason to claim that they are not the same proposition. Identical propositions are supposed to share the same modal profile, i.e., they have the same truth values with regard to possible worlds. If two propositions do not share the same modal profile, they are different and the difference comes from the difference in semantics of expressions that build up sentences expressing these propositions. Hence, $\alpha$ and $\beta$ are different propositions and they cannot be expressed by the same sentence. The proposition $\beta$ is supposedly expressed by (B) "the woman that Alfred is pointing at lives in Warsaw". The predicate is obviously the same in (A) and (B), yet the role of the grammatical subject in (A) is played by the indexical and by the definite description in (B). The difference in the modal behaviour of the propositions expressed by those sentences must then be a consequence of the different modal properties of the expressions playing the role of grammatical subjects. Since $\alpha$ is true with regard to both the real world and *W*', while $\beta$ is true only in the real world, it seems natural to consider indexical "she" to be rigid and the description appearing in (B) to be non-rigid. That led Kaplan to the conclusion that indexicals are directly referential expressions. Kaplan did not think that every rigid expression is directly referential (1989, pp. 494–495). He excludes *rigidified expressions*—i.e., expressions made rigid by the use of artificial formal methods (for more on this topic, see Section 5)—from the class of directly referential expressions. However, whenever we observe some natural—i.e., not introduced by formal rigidifying, but being a consequence of the semantic constitution of a given type of expression—we should consider these expressions directly referential. If an expression is naturally rigid it means that its only contribution to proposition is its reference.

## 3. The Descriptive Names Argument Against the Direct Reference Theory

The twofold nature of descriptive names happened to be one of the main problems for the direct reference theory. In what follows I present two versions of the descriptive names argument against the direct reference. Both of them focus on undermining the point of Kaplan's reasoning in which he claims that the difference in modal profiles of propositions is sufficient to consider these propositions not identical. The arguments by Michael Dummett and Jason Stanley are aimed at showing that in the case of propositions expressed by a sentence with a descriptive name and a sentence with the mother description of that descriptive name, we can speak of the same proposition which nevertheless has different truth values in various modal contexts.

### 3.1. Dummett's Argument

Dummett distinguishes the *assertoric content* of a sentence and its *ingredient sense* (1991, pp. 47–50). To know the assertoric content of a given sentence is to know which among adequate specifications makes this sentence true and which makes it false. An adequate specification for a given sentence is, roughly, a description of the world that is detailed enough to judge if the assertion conveyed by the sentence is correct or not. On the other hand, the ingredient sense is the content that a simple sentence contributes to the assertoric content of a complex sentence. According to Dummett, two sentences with the same assertoric content can express different ingredient senses. For instance, sentences like "Catiline was accused by Cicero" and "Catiline was accused by Tully" have the same assertoric content—they are true (resp. false) in virtue of exactly the same set of adequate specifications. However, these sentences can differ with respect to the ingredient senses they express, since similar complex sentences including these simple sentences may have different assertoric content. For example, "Alfred knows that Catiline was accused by Cicero" can be true in virtue of some adequate specification which for "Alfred knows, that Catiline was accused by Tully" will appear inadequate or will turn this sentence false. Dummett believes that ignoring the difference between assertoric content and ingredient sense was responsible for Kripke's mistake in the analysis of modal contexts. Dummett illustrates this with the following example including the descriptive name "St. Joachim":

> [Kripke] maintains that even if the name "St. Joachim" is introduced as denoting the father of the Blessed Virgin, whoever that may have been, the sentences "St. Joachim had a daughter" and "the father of Mary had a daughter" have a different modal status, since "St. Joachim" differs from "the father of Mary" in being a rigid designator, and we may therefore truly say, "St. Joachim might not have had a daughter", but not, "the father of Mary might not have had a daughter". He infers that "St. Joachim had a daughter" and "the father of Mary had a daughter" express different propositions. The word "proposition" is treacherous. What the two unmodalised sentences share is a common assertoric content; if Kripke is

> right about the modalised sentences with "might have", the unmodalised ones differ in ingredient sense, being (logically) subsentences of the modalised ones. The difference between them lies solely in their different contributions to the sentences formed from them by modalisation and negation; in a language without modal operators or auxiliaries, no difference could be perceived. (Dummett, 1991, p. 48)

Dummett's argument boils down to pointing out that two sentences, one of which includes a descriptive name and the other includes the mother description, do not differ concerning their assertoric content. They differ solely with regard to the ingredient sense that they convey in modal contexts. What is crucial here is that it is the assertoric content that should be identified with what is traditionally regarded as a ("treacherous") proposition or a semantic value of a sentence. Assertoric contents are truth-bearers and play the role of terms of logical relations (e.g., entailment)—these are functions by which the notion of proposition is usually defined. It may be said that the assertoric content of a sentence reflects the "essential semantic nature" of the sentence.

Kaplan considered the fact that two sentences have different truth values in different possible worlds to be proof that there exists some significant semantic difference between these sentences and between singular terms included in these sentences. Namely, he claimed that sentences in question express different propositions while the singular terms appearing in these sentences refer to objects in virtue of different semantic mechanisms. In particular, Kaplan claimed that the semantic mechanism of some terms is directly referential. Dummett thinks that it is a hasty judgment. He states that there is no significant semantic difference and that the difference in truth values can be explained with the notion of ingredient sense. Thus, Dummett's solution stands in opposition to Kaplan's theory—if there is no semantic significant difference, there is no justification for the thesis concerning direct reference.[5]

### 3.2. Stanley's Argument

Stanley (2003) developed an updated and somehow modified version of the descriptive names argument against the direct reference. He appeals to Gricean pragmatic approach to language and makes use of the distinction between *what is said* and *what is communicated*. Stanley does not provide definitions of these notions as he claims that in pragmatics we deal with some kind of "local holism" when it comes to terminology and that the notions in question are mutually de-

[5] It should be be noted that a conception very similar to Dummett's solution was presented by Evans in his (2002). Evans put it in more epistemological terms, however, the main idea is basically the same as in Dummett's and it leads to a similar conclusion: "[r]ather we should accept that the two sentences are composed out of different parts of speech—quantifier versus a name—and that this is a difference in their construction to which modal operators are sensitive even though it leads to no difference in content" (Evans, 2002, p. 178).

fined by describing relations between them. These relations are captured in what Stanley calls *The Expression-Communication Principle* (2003, p. 329). In the shortest form the principle states that if two sentences are always used to communicate the same, they express the same proposition. In detail, the principle goes as follows:

> For all *S*, *S*', *c*, *c*', such that *c* and *c*' agree on all contextual features relevant for determining what is said by *S* and *S*', *S*, relative to *c*, and *S*', relative to *c*', express the same proposition if and only if an utterance of *S* would communicate the same thing as an utterance of *S*' in every context *c*'' meeting the following four (sic!) conditions:
>
> (a) *c*'' agrees with *c* and *c*' on assignments to all contextually sensitive items in *S* and *S*'.
>
> (b) It is common knowledge that all participants understand the terms in *S* and *S*' and know the values of the context-dependent elements in *S* and *S*' relative to *c*''.
>
> (c) It is common knowledge that each lexical item in *S* and *S*' would be intended to be used in accord with its actual literal meaning.
>
> (d) It is common knowledge that the speaker would be perspicuous (i.e., not flout the maxim of Manner). (Stanley, 2003, p. 329)

Stanley (2003, p. 333) refers to Evans's example of the descriptive name "Julius" which was introduced to the language via the mother description "whoever who invented the zip" (Evans, 2002, p. 181) and examines the following pair of sentences:

(1) Julius like figs.

(2) The inventor of the zip likes figs.

According to Stanley (1) and (2) express the same proposition and why it is so is well explained by the *Expression-Communication Principle*. Since "Julius" is a descriptive name semantically equal to the mother description, (1) and (2) are always used to communicate the same and they meet conditions (a)–(d). However, these sentences can have different truth values in various possible worlds, since "Julius" is assumed to be a rigid designator, while "the inventor of the zip" is a non-rigid description. For example, consider a possible world in which Kripke is the inventor of the zip. When the name was introduced to the language in the actual world—in which Kripke did not invent the zip—its reference was fixed to someone else than Kripke. Thus, as the name is a rigid designator it refers to someone else than Kripke in every possible world. Imagine that in the possible world in question Kripke likes figs, while Julius, the man who invented the zip in the actual world, hates these fruits. With regard to such a possible world (1) turns out to be a false while (2) is true. But still, due to the

*Expression-Communication Principle* (1) and (2) should be regarded as expressing the same proposition.

Similarly to Dummett, Stanley breaks up the connection between propositions and modality. If two sentences function differently on the modal ground, it does not mean that they express different propositions, but rather that propositions should not be considered bearers of modal properties. In other words, different behaviour in possible worlds reveals nothing about propositions. So if for Kaplan modal differences were a reason for some claims about propositions and eventually about the semantic characteristic of singular terms, Stanley knocks the modal weapon out of Kaplan's hands.

## 4. Minor Problems

In what follows I am going to present several doubts concerning the validity of Dummett-Stanley's argument from descriptive names against the direct reference. I start with minor issues that somehow dull the edge of Kaplan's argument but I think are not knocking-down objections. Then I move to the heart of the whole problem, namely the rigidity of descriptive names, which seems to be the biggest challenge for the adherent of the direct reference theory.

### 4.1. Inaccuracy

Let us start with a very general remark that the descriptive names argument actually does not undermine the direct reference itself—it undermines only the universality of Kaplan's argument. Shortly speaking, from the fact that some expressions are rigid designators Kaplan derived that they are directly referential. According to the descriptive names argument, on the other hand, there are expressions—namely descriptive proper names—which are not directly referential even though they are rigid. However, that there are some rigid and not directly referential expressions does not entail that there are no directly referential expressions. Ordinary proper names, demonstratives or descriptions used referentially can still be considered directly referential. The descriptive names argument diminishes the power of Kaplan's argument but it does not reject it.

### 4.2. Methodological Concerns

It is always a risky philosophical strategy to use an example of some extraordinary objects against a theory of ordinary objects. This strategy is adopted in the descriptive names argument. As I said in section 1 descriptive names are extremely odd semantic creatures. The question concerning their more-like-descriptions vs more-like-proper-names nature remains unanswered. And both answers seem equally justified. On the other hand, the direct reference theory is well established and quite commonly accepted (at least for some expressions).

Arguing against it with such unusual semantically wobbly expressions like descriptive names is not fully convincing.

According to the descriptive account of descriptive names (Jeshion, 2004), a descriptive name is semantically equal to the mother description. And since the mother description is not a rigid designator, the name itself also is not rigid. In such a case the descriptive names argument fails because the essential part of the argument is breaking up the connection between modal properties of sentences and propositions expressed by them. If a descriptive name and the mother description, both non-rigid, behave in the same way in possible worlds, there is no reason to break up the connection. Of course, even within the descriptive account, it can be stipulated that descriptive names are rigid even though the relevant descriptions are not. Such a strategy, however, is utterly unjustified and the alleged rigidity appears to be a rabbit from a hat.

In the referential account of descriptive names, they are considered a very special type of referential expression. Like all proper names, also descriptive names are then regarded as rigid designators. In such a case the descriptive names argument stays relevant. However, as said before it appears to be methodologically dubious because it turns out to be relevant only for this very special type of expression and irrelevant for the vast majority of them.

## 5. The Main Problem: Rigidity of Descriptive Names

It is clear that the heart of the descriptive names argument is the issue of the alleged rigidity of descriptive names. Denying that descriptive names are rigid completely undermines the argument. In my opinion, regardless of whether we accept a descriptive or referential approach to descriptive names, there are no good reasons to admit that these names are rigid.

In the case of expressions commonly considered rigid, like ordinary proper names, demonstratives or referentially used definite descriptions, there exists a reasonable explanation as to where their rigidity comes from.[6] Namely, they are rigid in virtue of how they are introduced to the language (proper names) or because of the specific way in which they are used (demonstratives, referential descriptions). Although some differences between them are obvious, what is common is that in the process of introducing/using those expressions it is always the object itself that is at the centre of attention. Reference is fixed to one particular object, not to some object, whichever it is, or to an object reached via some mode of presentation. Expression is stuck to the thing itself. For descriptive names, things appear radically different. One of their indispensable features is that the object that is supposed to be their reference is absent when the name is introduced. And there is no way to fix a name's reference to a particular object when the only way to access the object is via some mother description which is always used attributively. If Jack the Ripper or Neptune were present at the nam-

[6] This explanation was provided mainly in Evans's works (1973; 1982; 2002).

ing ceremonies, there would be no reason to give them a descriptive name instead of an ordinary proper name. Furthermore, in many cases, speakers who introduce a descriptive name have serious doubts if the intended object even exists. Descriptive names are used to refer to objects that hung somewhere between fiction and reality. It appears inadequate to say that a speaker can stick a name to these alleged objects in such cases. Thus, the claim that descriptive names are rigid is highly dubious as it remains very vague where the rigidity of descriptive names comes from.

Edward Kanterian (2009) proposed an approach to descriptive names which is supposed to explain their rigidity. Kanterian claims that descriptive names are so extraordinary concerning their semantics properties, that in their case we should rather speak of *super-rigidity* than mere rigidity (Kanterian, 2009, pp. 414–416). Super-rigidity is ascribed to the expressions whose reference mechanism is defined by the following schema:

$$\forall y \text{ (“}e\text{” refers to } y \leftrightarrow y = \iota x\, \psi x)$$

According to Kanterian descriptive names are super-rigid since—as he claims—the object they refer to is not crucial for their reference mechanism. In other words, he thinks that a descriptive name fulfils its semantic function (i.e., its use is not defective) even if the object it is supposed to refer to does not exist.[7] So the alleged rigidity does not have its source in the baptism ceremony at which the object is present. I think that although the idea may seem quite intriguing it eventually boils down to the claim that descriptive names are rigid regardless of the existence of their reference. Kanterian says that *ordinary rigidity* is a feature of non-empty descriptive names, but it would be incorrect to say that an empty descriptive name is [ordinarily] rigid—if a name does not refer to anything, it is obvious that it cannot refer to some object in all possible worlds. Hence, Kanterian concludes that *ordinary rigidity* is a contingent property of some of the descriptive names, while *super-rigidity* is the indispensable property of all of them.

Let us now try to figure out are there any expressions other than descriptive names that are *super-rigid*. It seems quite natural to say that rigidified definite descriptions are super-rigid. For example, take the rigidified description “the planet *actually* responsible for the irregularities of Uranus”. If there is such a planet in the actual world, the description would refer to this particular planet in every possible world. Thus, the description is super-rigid. It is now quite tempting to consider such rigidified descriptions to be the mother descriptions of descriptive names,[8] e.g.:

[7] As opposed to ordinary proper names which function properly only if their reference does exist (Evans, 1982, p. 378).

[8] It should be mentioned here that this idea was firstly introduced by Donnellan (1981).

> Let us call the planet *actually* responsible for the irregularities of Uranus "Neptune".

In such a case it seems that because the mother description of "Neptune" is a rigidified *super-rigid* description, and it is said that descriptive names inherit semantic features from their "mother descriptions", Neptune inherits rigidity from "the planet that is actually responsible for the irregularities of Uranus".

However, things are not that simple. Kanterian (2009, pp. 416–419) distinguishes and discusses two ways of rigidifying descriptions. The first one involves Kaplanian "dthat" (Kaplan, 1975). Description "the planet responsible for irregularities of Uranus" rigidified by the use of "dthat" has the following form:

> dthat[planet responsible for the irregularities of Uranus]

Kaplan introduced "dthat" as a "substitute of demonstration" so it has no descriptive content. According to Kaplan, the descriptive content of the description in the bracket does not belong to the proposition expressed by a sentence including the description. The proposition expressed by "dthat[planet responsible for the irregularities of Uranus] is composed of gas" can be presented as $<$◎, $G>$ where "◎" symbolises the planet itself—a huge sphere of gas, not any concept or idea or description of the planet. There is no intensional descriptive content in the proposition that would correspond to the description "the planet responsible for the irregularities of Uranus". Roughly speaking, "dthat" makes descriptions *descriptively transparent*—a description rigidified by "dthat" is just a demonstration device and it does not bear any descriptive content. Therefore, as noted by Kanterian (2009, p. 417), the descriptions rigidified with "dthat" cannot be used as reference fixing for descriptive names, since it is congenital for descriptive names that they derive their descriptive content from their mother descriptions—and if "dthat" somehow cancels such content of these descriptions, descriptive names have nothing to derive from.

The other way of making descriptions rigid was established by Martin Davies and Floyd Humberstone (1980) who introduced two modal operators: $\mathcal{A}$—actually, and $\mathcal{F}$—fixedly. The first one is a standard rigidifier, while $\mathcal{F}$ when it interacts with $\mathcal{A}$, plays the role of a derigidifier. For instance, the description "$\mathcal{FA}$(planet responsible for the irregularities of Uranus)" is interpreted as: the planet that is responsible for the irregularities of Uranus in a world that is considered as actual. When our real-world $W$ is considered as actual, the description refers to the planet responsible for the irregularities of Uranus in $W$, i.e., Neptune, and the reference is rigid: the description refers to that planet in every non-actual possible world. At the same time, if some world $W^*$ ($\neq W$) was considered as actual the description would refer to the planet that is responsible for the irregularities of Uranus in $W^*$ (and that could be another planet than the one in $W$). And the reference also would be rigid but with regard to $W^*$, i.e., in every possible non-actual world (one of which from this perspective is our $W$) the

description would refer to that planet. Basically, operators $\mathcal{A}$ and $\mathcal{F}$ are supposed to capture two aspects of modality acknowledged in two-dimensional semantics.

Kanterian (2009, p. 418) claims that Davis's and Humbersone's solution does not help in defending the rigidity of descriptive names, because the solution allows that in some possible world the descriptive name "Neptune" refers to a different object than in the real world *W*. That would be equal for the name to lose its proper-names-like referential rigid character.

I believe Kanterian is wrong on this point. Contrary to him I think that the two-dimensional approach involving $\mathcal{A}$ and $\mathcal{F}$ allows us to consider descriptive names as rigid and equal to rigidified mother descriptions. In my opinion, Kanterian demands too much from descriptive names as he requires them to be rigid in the same way as ordinary proper names are. As said before, obviously this is the heart of the whole problem with descriptive names—the way they differ from ordinary proper names with respect to rigidity. Let us take a short look at the rigidity of ordinary proper names. As it is exposed in two-dimensional semantics, proper names are rigid to the highest degree of rigidity, to say so. "Nixon" refers to Nixon in absolutely every possible world (in which he exists), no matter which world is considered as actual. It is impossible to construct a possible world in which "Nixon" does not refer to Nixon. Why is it so? Because ordinary proper names have no descriptive content and no semantic content other than their reference. Anytime we would like to consider a world in which "Nixon" does not refer to Nixon, we are inevitably transferred into talking about a different proper name than the one we initially considered. Referring to Nixon is an indispensable feature of the name "Nixon" and if we deny that feature, we do not talk about that name anymore. When an ordinary proper name is disconnected from its reference, it loses its identity.

Things look significantly different when it comes to the descriptive names because the definitional property of these names is that they bear descriptive content.[9] It is true that along with ordinary proper names, descriptive names belong to the class of expressions whose contribution to propositions is exclusively their reference; however, descriptive names, unlike ordinary proper names, have also that descriptive charge which is their congenital feature. Descriptive content is sensitive to context and since descriptive content determines reference, reference of descriptive expressions, in general, is (to a various extent) sensitive to context. Thus, it is a fundamental mistake to require descriptive expressions (e.g., descriptive names) to be semantically equivalent to non-descriptive expressions. Especially, when it comes to semantic properties—like rigidity—which concern changing of reference in contexts/possible worlds. As it is captured by two-dimensional semantics there are several "degrees" of rigidity. On the one side of the spectrum we have ordinary proper names which are "rigidly rigid"—both their semantic functions, i.e., character and content are con-

[9] If descriptive content was taken away from a given proper names that name would become an ordinary proper name. The history of "Neptune" shows how it may happen.

stant. On the other side, we have definite descriptions used attributively which are not rigid at all—their character and content are not constant. In between there are expressions with hybrid modal semantic properties, e.g., indexicals are considered to be "indexically rigid"—their character is constant but the content is not. It means that reference of such expression is relativised to the circumstances of utterance or in other words—to the world which is considered as actual. If we consider as actual the world in which I utter "I am hungry", indexical "I" refers to me. If the world in which such a sentence is uttered by Barrack Obama is considered as actual, then the indexical refers to Obama. However, once a reference is fixed in the currently-actual world, it is thus fixed for all possible worlds. So if the world in which I utter the above sentence is considered as actual, it does not matter with regard to which possible world the proposition expressed by the sentence will be evaluated, the proposition is always about me because the reference of "I" has been fixed to me. Definite descriptions rigidified by the use of $\mathcal{A}$ and $\mathcal{F}$ behave similarly to indexicals. Their reference depends on which world is considered as actual, but once the reference is fixed it is constant across various possible worlds. Description "$\mathcal{FA}$[the president of the USA in 2010]" refers to Obama if our real world is considered as actual. And if its reference is fixed this way, it refers to Obama in every possible world. If the world in which the results of the 2008 election are different and John McCain wins was considered as actual, then the description in question would refer to McCain in that world as well as in every possible world. This kind of indexical rigidity is the most we can expect from any descriptive expression. A higher degree of rigidity would be the "rigid rigidity" which is characteristic of ordinary proper names and as I argued, they are so strongly rigid precisely because of a lack of any descriptive content. There is no way to ascribe descriptive names with such a strong rigidity since they have descriptive content. The indexical rigidity, however, appears to work perfectly for descriptive names and I believe it is the strongest rigidity we can attribute to them. For that reason, I think it is adequate to claim that the mother descriptions descriptive names are $\mathcal{FA}$-rigidified descriptions. Such an account explains the rigidity of descriptive names which thus turns out to be the indexical rigidity. We should remember that the indexical rigidity is not "weak". It is not as strong as the rigidity possessed by ordinary proper names, but still a strong one: indexical rigidity guarantees that a descriptive name refers to the same object in every possible world, once its reference is fixed. Moreover, as far as I am concerned, the indexical aspect of rigidity corresponds very well with the nature of descriptive names. When we introduce a descriptive name we do not know or are not sure which particular object is the one that satisfies the given mother description and thus—which particular object is the bearer of the descriptive name. In other words, we do not know or are not sure which world should be considered as actual—and that is manifested in the indexical aspect of the rigidity of descriptive names. When Le Verrier introduced the descriptive name "Neptune" he did not know which planet did cause the irregularities of Uranus. He did not know if it was the new planet Neptune or Saturn or Earth, i.e., he did not know

whether the actual world is the one in which the new planet causes irregularities or the one in which Saturn causes irregularities, and so on. Hence, I think that we should not consider this indexical aspect of rigidity of descriptive names as something unwanted. It is my firm belief, that this indexical aspect is absolutely crucial to the nature of descriptive names as well as their rigidity across possible worlds.[10, 11]

## 6. Conclusion

My main concern in the previous section was the mystery of the rigidity of descriptive names. The conclusion I have arrived at is as follows: descriptive names are indexically rigid, in a manner similar to indexicals or definite descriptions rigidified by the operators $\mathcal{F}$ and $\mathcal{A}$. Once the reference is fixed to an object, the descriptive name refers to that object in every possible world. However, depending on the context (resp. the world considered as actual) the reference of a descriptive name can be fixed to various objects. The indexical rigidity of descriptive names takes its origin in the rigidity of mother descriptions which are

[10] At this point, someone may ask why we need descriptive names if semantically they are just equivalents of rigidified descriptions. This issue goes beyond the topic of this paper, so I will address it shortly: even if semantically they are equivalent, they are definitely not equivalent psychologically or epistemologically. I believe that Jeshion (see Section 1) is right when she says that psychological neutrality is what we need descriptive names for. We should not underrate the importance of such neutrality. In other words, we do not need descriptive names to obtain rigidity—rigidity is something that (rigidified) descriptions can provide us with. The descriptions, however, are not able to stay psychologically neutral, as they inevitably present the reference in some particular aspect.

[11] Worth mentioning and at the same surprising is what Kanterian proposes as his answer to the question of what are the mother descriptions for descriptive names. As said before, he rejects $\mathcal{FA}$-rigidified descriptions as candidates for that and he (2009, p. 419) suggests that instead, we should focus on the fact that a description that plays a role of a mother description is not only *mentioned* but actually *used*. That, in his opinion, preserves the rigidity of descriptive names, because if the description is used, and not merely mentioned, it is always used in some particular context and thus it refers to some particular object. A descriptive name that takes its reference from its mother description will thus always (in all possible worlds) refer to the object that was the reference of the description in that particular context. In my opinion, this solution is substantially the same as the account involving $\mathcal{A}$ and $\mathcal{F}$. If a description—either an $\mathcal{FA}$-rigidified one or a bare description—is merely mentioned, and not used, by definition it does not refer to anything, so it does not deliver reference to a given descriptive name. If, on the other hand, a description is used in a given context as referring to a particular object, it … refers to a particular object; and constitutes it as a reference of a descriptive name. And once the reference is fixed, it stays constant across possible worlds, although we can always think of a different context (i.e., consider another world as actual) in which the description would pick another object. I cannot see any substantial difference between Kanterian's account and Davies's and Humberstone's position. I think that even though Kanterian does not directly use modal operators, he in fact states exactly the same as what can be shown by the use of these operators.

***FA***-rigidified descriptions. What are the consequences of such an account for the argument against the direct reference theory? Initially, it may seem that delivering the explanation of rigidity of descriptive names enforces the arguments against the direct reference. The assumption that descriptive names are rigid was essential for both Dummett's and Stanley's arguments. More precisely, the clue of these arguments is the observation that although two sentences—one with a descriptive name and the other with a mother description of that name—behave differently in modal contexts, the sentences express the same proposition because a descriptive name is equal to its mother description with respect to the semantic properties. At first glance, my attempt to reinforce the rigidity of descriptive names could be taken as supporting the positions of Dummett and Stanley. That is obviously a misimpression. Their arguments are valid only if we agree that descriptive names and their mother descriptions have different modal properties. As I argued above, that is not the case. Both descriptive names and their mother descriptions are indexically rigid—they function identically in possible worlds. If the mother description of the name "Julius" is not "whoever who invented the zip" but "***FA***[whoever who invented the zip]" sentences examined by Stanley:

(1) Julius like figs,

(2') ***FA***[The inventor of the zip] likes figs

not only express the same proposition but share the same modal profile. If the possible world in which Kripke invented the zip is considered as actual "Julius" as well as the mother description in question refer to Kripke in that world and all possible worlds. Thus, (1) and (2') are true in all the worlds in which Kripke likes figs, and false in ale the worlds in which it is not the case that Kripke likes figs. And if the world in which I am the inventor of the zip is considered as actual the situation is analogous and (1) are (2') are true in all the worlds in which I like figs and are not true in all the worlds in which it is not the case.

Stanley as well as Dummett proclaimed the break up between propositions and modal properties of sentences. As I believe and as I attempted to argue they were wrong. And they were wrong because descriptive names turn out to be non-rigid, but because their assumptions about modal properties of propositions expressed by sentences with mother descriptions were incorrect.

For the sake of fairness, it has to be said that although the account proposed in this paper stands against Dummett's and Stanley's arguments, it does not consolidate Kaplan's argument for direct reference. Descriptive names understood as equivalents of rigidified descriptions are not the expressions for which Kaplan would derive their direct reference from their rigidity. As I mentioned earlier Kaplan excludes "artificially" rigid expressions from the scope of his argument. I argued that descriptive names are not "naturally" rigid like proper names or indexicals. Instead, they are designed to be rigid by founding them on their rigidified mother descriptions. All in all, descriptive names turn out to be neutral

about direct reference—they do not support it, but as was argued above, they also do not undermine the idea. What else could we expect from exotic birds.

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Article

KATARZYNA KIJANIA-PLACEK *

# NAMES OF INSTITUTIONS[1]

SUMMARY: This paper advances the thesis that the proper names of some institutions, such as the names of universities, heads of state and certain positions or agencies, inherit the linguistic types of the nouns which denote the basic category of the objects that the names refer to, e.g., "university", "school" or "company". A reference by those names may select particular aspects of institutions, in the same way that "city" or "book" selects the physical, legal or informational aspects of objects in the extension of the nouns. This view is based on Asher's and Pustejovsky's conception of dot-type semantics.

KEYWORDS: names of institutions, dot-type semantics, many aspect-words, direct reference.

## 1. Introduction

The literature on proper names largely focuses on the proper names of people, such as "Aristotle" or "Barack Obama". Another often discussed class of names, or at least frequently given as examples, would be the names of cities, e.g., "Dartmouth". In this paper, I will instead concentrate on the proper names of institutions, i.e., organized social groups, such as political parties, firms, universities, etc. Like cities, institutions are artifacts and thus names of both refer to structured unitary entities whose ontological status is difficult to classi-

* Jagiellonian University, Institute of Philosophy. E-mail: katarzyna.kijania-placek@uj.edu.pl. ORCID: 0000-0002-2764-7758.

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fy (Arapinis, 2013; Baker, 2004; Burazin, 2016; Hilpinen, 1992; 2011; Miller, 2019; Searle, 1995; 2010; Thomasson, 2003; 2007; 2009a; 2009b; 2014 Weinberger, 1991). In this paper, however, I will abstract from such ontological disputes and concentrate on semantic questions, trying to account for systematic uses of names of institutions.

The proper names of both people and places are systematically deployed to refer to objects or events other than their default referents. In (1) "Vietnam" does not refer to the country but to the relevant war:

(1) He championed civil rights during Vietnam.

Yet an interesting feature of the names of cities and countries is that, in contrast to the proper names of people, whose default referents are the contextually assigned human bearers of the names, the names of cities and countries systematically refer to:[2]

- geographical territories

(2) Britain lies under one metre of snow.

- political entities

(3) Britain has declared war on San Marino.

- groups of people

(4) Britain mourns the death of the Queen Mother's corgi.

and even appear to change the referent in one sentence:

(5) Britain, despite the fact that it is lying under one metre of snow and is mourning the death of the Queen Mother's corgi, has declared war on San Marino.

(6) Brazil is a large two-century-old Portuguese-speaking country.

In such examples it is unclear if there is a primary referent or even if there are several distinct referents involved. In this paper I will argue that the proper names of at least some institutions behave similarly, that they are used to refer to different aspects of the institutions they name. In this respect, their semantics is akin to many-aspect words such as "book" or "city". Most institutions have legal and human/agentive aspects, some also have physical/location aspects. The names of institutions exhibit and combine those aspects:

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[2] Examples (2)–(5) are due to Cruse (2000), (6) is from Arapinis and Vieu's (2015). Compare also Kijania-Placek's (2021).

(7) Charles University was founded in 1348.

(8) Charles University is situated in the city center.

(9) Charles University, which was founded in 1348, is situated in the city center.

(10) The President of the United States signed an executive order to stop unnecessary international travel.

(11) The President of the United States went skiing abroad.

(12) The President of the United States went skiing abroad, violating his own executive order.

One may oppose that the President signed the order in his capacity as the President, while he went skiing as a private person. But the anaphoric use of the pronoun "his" in (12) suggests that it was the same entity who signed and went skiing. To argue that it is indeed one referent, I will rely on linguistic evidence taken from attested and constructed examples but will also consult the legal documents which establish the relevant institutions. Thus, by claiming that the institution of The President of the United States has a human aspect, I do not mean merely that the phrase is sometimes used to refer to the actual person who occupies the office when they are performing some activities in their private life, e.g., when he/she marries or goes skiing. I also refer to those human aspects of the institution which are part of the person's duties and activities as President, yet intrinsically require human features. See the discussion of example (10) in Section 3. I will argue for treating the proper names of institutions as referring to a single referent, in analogy to the treatment of "book", "city" or "school" in Asher and Pustejovsky's dot type semantics.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In Section 2 I briefly explain the concept of an institution that I will be concerned with, and dismiss concerns about treating some phrases as the proper names of institutions. I discuss the issues of the rigidity of the names of institutions and their purported descriptive character. Section 3 deals with grammatical and ontological arguments for treating the proper names of places and institutions as referring to one entity. Section 4 and 5 introduce relevant elements of dot-type semantics and in Section 6 I propose its application for the names of institutions.

## 2. What Are Institutions, and Do They Have Proper Names?

### 2.1. What are Institutions?

According to conceptions of institutions encountered in the literature, institutions are usually considered in one of two ways, which I characterize following Arapinis (2013, p. 45):

(a) institutions are organized social groups, i.e., organizations such as political parties, firms, universities, etc.
(b) institutions are normative rules that contain prescriptions that forbid, permit, or require some actions or outcomes.

In this paper I am only concerned with proper names of institutions understood as in (a), which arguably involve normative rules within their legal aspect.

## 2.2. Do Institutions Have Proper Names?

Many of the examples of the proper names of institutions have the form of a definite description, like in

(13) The Supreme Court of the United States ruled that segregation is unconstitutional.

The form itself should not deceive us, however, as many proper names of countries, including "the United States of America" or "the Netherlands" include the definite article as well. But there is also an important difference between the proper names of institutions and definite descriptions referring to those same institutions, even if the name has the form of a description. "The University of Padua" is the proper name of that renowned institution and the definite description "the university of Padua" refers to it as well. But if the only university in Padua was founded by Mussolini in the 20th century, the name "the University of Padua" would arguably be empty (unless the counterfactual university was named by the same name type), while the description would refer to the newer university. To give one more example, "the university of Prague" refers to Charles University but is not its name. A definite description refers to an institution if that institution uniquely fulfills the descriptive condition, but for a descriptive phrase to become a name of an institution it must be assigned to that institution in an appropriate (legal) way. The name of the most important office in the United States is declared by the US Constitution to be "the President of the United States". It could have been named differently, e.g., "the President of the United States of America".[3] Although the description "the president of the United States" may refer to the institution in a special context (e.g., if proceeded by the words "the institution of"), its default reference is to the current holder of

[3] In the case of the institution of the Polish president, the descriptions "the president of Poland" and "the president of the Republic of Poland" are co-referential, but only for the latter there is a name which sounds identical, "the President of the Republic of Poland", because this is the phrase used to refer to the institution in the Polish Constitution (along with "the President of the Republic" and "the President"). In some cases the naming relation is made explicit, e.g.: "A Court, to be known as the Family Court of Australia, is created by this Act"—(Australian) Family Law Act, 1975. I have borrowed the last example from Gawthorne's (2013).

that office. Additionally, the default reading of a description in an atomic sentence is made explicit by "the current president of the United States". In contrast, the name of the institution does not admit of the insertion of "current" and refers to the same institution regardless of who occupies it. This brings us to the question of the rigidity of institutional names.

### 2.3. The Question of Rigidity

An expression is a rigid designator if it designates the same object in all circumstances of evaluation.[4] Importantly, Ludwig (2017) argued that the phrase "the Supreme Court" should not be considered a name, because, as it is with other definite descriptions, it could and does refer to different judges at different times. This line of argument is misguided, however, because what it shows, rather uncontroversially, is that the phrase cannot be considered a proper name of the relevant judges. As I have pointed out above, the question I consider in this paper is the semantics of the names of institutions, not of the names of the actual people occupying roles central to those institutions.[5] For institutional names to be rigid, it is enough that the name refers to the same institution and for the identity of the institution it is not required that the same people occupy an office. In the same way, "the President of the United States" refers rigidly to the institution defined and named by the Constitution of the United States even though the corresponding description is non-rigid and refers to different people in different times and circumstances. Similarly, even if we assume that a university must have a physical location (a building or a group of buildings), for an identity of a university it is not required that it occupy the same building during its existence.[6]

### 2.4. Are Institutional Names Partially Descriptive?

Although from the fact that different judges may occupy the offices of Supreme Court judges at different times and circumstances it does not follow that "the Supreme Court" considered as a name of an institution is non-rigid, there seem to be important semantic differences between typical proper names and the names of institutions. Simple proper names, such as "Aristotle", are directly referential, from which it follows that their propositional contributions do not include (truth-conditionally relevant) properties. In contrast, names of institu-

[4] For simplicity's sake I do not address the issue of reference in circumstances in which a relevant object does not exist.

[5] In fact, Ludwig seems to be arguing that the institution of the Supreme Court should be considered identical to the actual people occupying the offices of Supreme Court judges. I will omit these ontological issues from the considerations of this paper.

[6] In this paper I do not attempt to formulate sufficient and necessary conditions for the identity of institutions, leaving this question to metaphysicians. An interesting account, based on the notions of material, temporal and agentive constitution and the underlying notions of coincidence, has been proposed by Arapinis (2013), and Arapinis and Vieu (2015).

tions seem to contribute properties to the propositions expressed by sentences in which they occur.

An interesting account of what he calls partially descriptive names is given by Soames (2002). Soames proposes that for some complex names, such as "Princeton University", the common noun contributes directly to the propositional content: "the semantic content of *Princeton University* is a propositional constituent that includes both the property of being a university and the well-known institution of higher learning itself" (Soames, 2002, p. 52, emphasis in the original). I believe the requirement is too strong. As is typical for universities, Princeton University was founded as a college and—as we can learn from Wikipedia—its former name was the "College of New Jersey". These facts make the sentence:

(14) Princeton University was a college in the 18th century.

literary true, which is difficult to square with a strict reading of Soames's account. That does not mean, however, that there are no necessary conditions for something to be the referent of "Princeton University".[7] Princeton University could be degraded to a college in the future, it could have been a school before becoming a college but arguably could not be just a building which is out of use. If the institution lost all legal status, Princeton University would presumably no longer exist. This suggests that at least the property of being an institution is an essential property of Princeton University. Yet, this is a metaphysical thesis, not a semantic one. For the name to be a rigid designator, the semantic requirement is only that it refers to the same entity and what counts as the same entity in the case of an institution is a question for metaphysics. An analogical argument would work for typical, directly referential names, such as "Aristotle". Provided the name is used as a name of the philosopher, it could refer to a person who is not interested in pedagogy or philosophy (i.e., it is possible that Aristotle might not have been interested in those topics), but it arguably could not refer to a non-human. However, from this metaphysical fact, if it is one, we do not conclude that the property of being human is a propositional constituent of the name (as used with reference to the philosopher).[8] Rather, it is a metaphysical requirement for Aristotle to be the entity he is that he is human. By parity of reasoning, I conclude that the requirement of being an institution comes from the identity conditions for Princeton University but it is no part of the propositional constituent of its name.[9, 10]

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[7] In this section I assume for the sake of simplicity that Princeton University only refers to the relevant university. In principle, nothing prohibits somebody from calling their dog Princeton University. Such a use of the name would obviously not be a name of an institution.

[8] I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for encouraging me to clarify this point.

[9] It might be argued additionally that the phrase "Princeton University" has a different modal profile from simple proper names such as "Aristotle" or "Einstein", because the sentence "if the college founded in 1746 by New Light Presbyterians never became an

## 3. Against Deferred Reference Interpretation: Grammatical and Ontological Arguments for Treating the Proper Names of Institutions as Referring to One Entity

The referent of “Vietnam” in (1):

(1) He championed civil rights during Vietnam.

is not the country, but the relevant war associated with the country. This is a case of deferred reference, which involves two distinct objects. Could we consider one aspect of an institution a deferred referent of the name? In what follows, I will argue against such an interpretation.

Deferred reference takes place when we refer to one object by way of using another, where the two objects are connected by a contextually salient relation. Nunberg (1993), who originally characterized deferred reference for indexicals, reserved the term *referent* for the object intended as referent by the speaker, calling the auxiliary object, given by context, an *index*. On Nunberg’s account, deferred reference is constrained by the meaning of an expression, specifying the grammatical features which must be in agreement with either the index or the referent. A paradigmatic example of deferred reference is referring to an author while pointing at a book (Nunberg, 1993):

(15) She is my chemistry teacher.

The referent—the author—must agree in number, gender and animacy features with those encoded in the meaning of the pronoun used, while the index is given by demonstration (for demonstratives) or by the Kaplanian character (for other

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university, Princeton University would not have existed” has a true reading, which shows that the name “Princeton University” has descriptive readings, such as, e.g., “Princeton University as we know it”, “Princeton University as so called”, or “Princeton University as the hub of Nobel Prize winners”. However, simple proper names have predicative and descriptive readings as well, as exemplified by true readings of “if Aristotle never met Plato, Aristotle (the great philosopher we know by this name) would not have existed”, “if Aristotle’s parents had called him Socrates, Aristotle (as the person known by this name) would not have existed”, or of “I love teaching, every time after the summer holidays I hope I will have an Einstein in my class” (cf. Kijania-Placek, 2018). Thus, whatever the modal profile of simple names amounts to, the names of institutions exhibit a similar one.

[10] In the case of the names of legal institutions, such as “the Supreme Court” or “the President of the United States”, it may be argued that the properties stated in the Constitution are the necessary properties of their referents. A consequence of this would be that a change in the Constitution necessarily results in a different (and not just altered) institution, which may be considered counterintuitive. Again, I remain neutral with respect to these metaphysical questions (for an account treating legal discourse in analogy to fictional descriptive names, see Gawthorne, 2013; for arguments against the descriptivist treatment of institutional names, see Banaś, in press).

indexicals). For proper names, the name's grammatical features and the prepositions used must agree with that of the object being referred to. Thus, in (1) the index is the country, and the deferred referent is the Vietnam War. This interpretation is justified by the grammatical requirements of the preposition "during", which requires an eventive complement. Since Vietnam—the country—is not an event, the referent is plausibly the most salient event that corresponds to it. In general, the index for proper names is given by the naming convention which is relied upon in the context and the deferred referent corresponds to the index in a contextually salient manner. The referent must agree with the name in whatever grammatical features the name possesses (cf. Kijania-Placek, Banaś, 2021).

Examples such as (8),

(8) Charles University is situated in the city center.

when considered in English, may seem to be susceptible to the analysis via deferred reference. It seems that we could consider the legal entity to be the default referent of "Charles University" and thus constitute the index, the building being its deferred referent in (8). But testing in languages with more grammatical features that are morphologically marked, such as Czech or Polish, falsifies this hypothesis.[11] Since we are aiming at a general theory of proper names of institutions, the proposal should work in any language.

In Polish it is not just personal pronouns and adjectives which are sensitive to the grammatical features of proper names but also demonstratives and verbs (in the past tense). (8) when translated into Polish is (8'):

(8') *Uniwersytet Karola* *jest położony* *w środku miasta*.
Charles University.SG.MSC is situated.ADJ.MSC in center city

and it complies with the constraints of deferred reference. To show this, it is enough to consider the grammatical gender of the adjective. In (8') it is in agreement with that of *building*, which in Polish is masculine. But if the building were a deferred referent in (8), the same interpretation should be applicable to (16):

(16) Polytechnic University of Prague is situated in the city center.

Yet, (16) in Polish is:

(16') *Politechnika Praska* *jest położona* *w centrum miasta*.
P. U. of Prague.SG.FEM is situated.ADJ.FEM in center city

[11] The arguments proposed here mirror Nunberg's arguments against treating some examples involving indexicals ("I am parked out back") as a case of deferred reference. Nunberg relies on translation to Italian (Nunberg, 1995, p. 110).

If the legal entity were the index and the building the deferred referent, the gender of the adjective should again be masculine, in agreement with the grammatical gender of the deferred referent, but it is feminine, in agreement with the subject. This pattern of agreements shows that the gender of the predicate follows that of the subject and not that of the potential referent, in violation of the rules of deferred reference. The superficial compliance in the case of (8) was just a result of a coincidence: the gender of the name was identical to the gender of the purported deferred referent.[12] If (16) were a case of deferred reference, (16') should be infelicitous, because the gender of the verb does not match the gender of the purported deferred referent (the building).

Grammatical considerations alone seem to support a deferred interpretation of (10):

(10) The President of the United States signed an executive order to stop unnecessary international travel.

If we considered the legal office to be the index and the person occupying it the deferred referent, the gender of verbs would change with the gender of the appointee (in language with appropriate morphological differences), and it does. But there are ontological arguments against interpreting (10) as a case of deferred reference. It is crucial for deferred reference that the index is not identical with the referent. But for the activity of signing documents the requirement is the contrary one: whoever does the signing must be both the legal and the embodied person, collapsing the distinction between index and referent.[13, 14]

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[12] According to Nunberg, the gender in question "is determined by the grammatical gender of the name of the basic-level category to which the referent of the expression belongs, or in the case of animates, usually by the sex of the referent" (1993, pp. 25–26). I follow Nunberg in this paper in understanding the gender agreement requirements.

[13] In fact, Nunberg (1993) treated direct reference as a special case of deferred reference, where the relation between index and referent is that of identity. However, this is just a terminological issue. In the end I will opt for treating examples such as (10) as a case of direct reference, and my thesis in this section may alternatively be understood as opposing the treatment of some uses of names of institutions as a non-trivial application of deferred reference.

[14] Since in the case of names such as "the President of the United States" only two aspects are postulated (legal vs. physical), a natural question is if we can account for them by extending accounts proposed for such readings of the corresponding descriptions. An interesting account is proposed by Duží, Materna, Jespersen (2010). According to the theory, which is based on Tichý's Transparent Intensional Logic (1988), a definite description such as "the president" refers either to the presidential office or to its occupier, depending on whether the description is used in the *de dicto* or *de re* mode. Such an analysis might work for (11) and "the President of the United States is elected every four years" but because the *de dicto*/*de re* distinction is disjunctive, it does not extend to examples like (10) or (12), which crucially depend on non-disjunctive readings of the name (cf. Duží, Materna, Jespersen, 2010, p. 362, where the *de dicto*/*de re* distinction for

The felicity of (10) and (12), as well as that of (9) relies on the permeability of aspects connected with the proper names of institutions; a feature the name “Charles University” shares with the noun “university”, which denotes the basic category of the object the name refers to, whatever it turns out to be from the metaphysical point of view. In all of the presented examples, predicates select different aspects of the object in the same way as predication selects for particular aspects in the case of the noun “university”, as well as in the case of “book” or “city”. Some predicates require two aspects for comprehension—again analogically to the predicates “read” and “write” for “book”—the way it is required in (12). In the following sections I base my analysis of proper names of institutions on the treatment of “book”, “city”, and “school” by Asher and Pustejovsky.

## 4. The Semantic Properties of the Nouns “Book”, “City”, and “School”

Interpretation processes such as deferred reference depend on there being a default sense of a word, which is subject to meaning or reference transfers. Yet for many words there are no principled grounds for distinguishing one sense as default. (Nunberg, 1979; cf. Carston, 2012). An oft-mentioned example is the noun “book”, which has at least two potential primary senses (Bosch, 2007; Carston, 2012; Chomsky, 2000; Pustejovsky, 1995; 2005):

- a physical object

(17) Mary burned my book on Mahler.

- content, information

(18) Mary believes all of Chomsky’s books.

These senses (content vs physical object) can be combined in one sentence, as in Chomsky’s (2000) famous example (19) or Asher’s (2011)—(20):

(19) The book that he is planning will weigh at least five pounds if he ever writes it.
(20) The book has a purple cover and is the most intelligible introduction to category theory.

(19) requires both aspects for comprehension, as both aspects are selected by the verb “write” (Asher, 2011; Chomsky, 2000; Pustejovsky, 1995). This shows that the two aspects are not disjunctive, which would be typical for homonymous

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“the King of France” is rendered as a scope distinction). I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for reminding me of this theory.

senses, and that possibly the default denotation of "book" is the *whole* book, with both of its aspects (Asher, 2011).[15]

Similar ideas are put forward by Cruse (he uses the term "facet" for what Asher and Pustejovsky call "aspect"; cf. Asher, 2011; Asher, Pustejovsky, 2005; Cruse, 1986; Dölling, 2021):

> (i) Ordinary speakers are not normally aware of the dual nature of "book": it has to be pointed out to them (however, once pointed out, it becomes obvious). The default reading of "book" is the combined one. (ii) predicates selecting different facets can co-ordinate without zeugma, and there is no normal requirement for speakers to intend, or hearers to identify, only one of the facets, as is the case with true ambiguity. (iii) The combined reading functions as a basic level item. (iv) Some predicates require both facets to be present: "publish a book", "John is reading a book" […]. (vi) The combination may bear a proper name. (e.g., "Britain"). (Cruse, 2000, p. 116)

The properties of "book" are shared by many words; "dictionary", "newspaper", "map", "letter", "film" or "CD" all have physical and informational aspects; "speech", "lecture", "movie" or "play" have eventive and informational aspects; "lunch" and "dinner" concern food as well as the event of eating; "human" and "city" are reported to refer to entities of "dual nature" (Dölling, 2021; see also Asher, Pustejovsky, 2000; Kijania-Placek, 2021; Ortega-Andrés, Vicente, 2019; Pustejovsky, 2005). But duality—e.g., physical object vs content or physical vs eventive—does not suffice to account for the semantic complexity of many words. At least three aspects are required for "newspaper": copy/physical object (21), information/content (22), and organization/institution/publisher (23):[16]

(21) John spilled coffee on the newspaper.

(22) That newspaper is full of metaphorical language.

(23) The newspaper fired its editor.

They can combine in copredication and anaphoric reference:[17]

(24) The newspaper decided to change its format. [physical object vs organization]

(25) Murdoch's network has just bought the newspaper you are reading. [organization vs physical object vs content]

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[15] In this paper I follow the practice common in the literature on many-aspect words which is to use the term "denotation" as an umbrella term standing for objects in the extension of a word (for common nouns) or objects the words refer to (for proper names).

[16] Examples (21) and (23) are due to Pustejovsky (1995), (22) is due to Copestake and Briscoe (1995).

[17] Example (24) is due to Nunberg (1979), (25)—to Abbott (2013).

The nouns important from the point of view of the topic of this paper are "school", "bank", "university", "parliament", "church", "opera", which designate legal institutions, people involved in those institutions and the buildings those institutions reside in. They seem to designate abstract (most often legal) organizations that group a number of people together and (in many cases) are hosted in a building (cf. Arapinis, 2013). The nouns thus exhibit at least the organization/legal entity aspect (26), the collection of people/agentive aspect (28), as well as the physical/building aspect (27):[18, 19]

(26) The school hired a new teacher. [legal body]
(27) The school caught fire. [building]
(28) The school took a trip to the lakes. [people]

And the aspects can be combined in one sentence:

(29) This private school, founded in the 18th century, is located in the historical center. [organization vs building]
(30) The school that caught fire was celebrating 4th of July when the fire started. [organization vs building]

In (1995), James Pustejovsky suggested a then novel semantics for the analysis of many aspect words such as "book", "city", or "school". The theory was later developed in a series of works co-authored with Nicolas Asher. In Section 5, I will sketch the main ideas of Pustejovsky's proposal which are relevant for the aims of this paper and in Section 6 I will deploy the theory to the analysis of the proper names of institutions.

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[18] Sources of examples: Dölling (2021) for (26); Ortega-Andrés and Vicente (2019) for (27); Frisson (2009) for (28), and Arapinis (2013) for (29).

[19] Even more aspects could in principle be considered for school, as exemplified by Frisson (2009, p. 112): "(1) Jocelyn walked to the school. (2) The concerned mother talked to the school. (3) Eve's little brother is at the school. (4) The school won the match in the last minute. (5) The school took a trip to the lakes. (6) School's out! (7) "The school was that rare achievement; a family within an institution". In all these examples, school is being used with a different interpretation; in (1), a reference is made to the building itself; in (2), the mother talked to the school board or maybe phoned the admissions office(r) or someone else, but more than likely did not talk to the brick and mortar school itself; in (3), it is unclear whether school is being used to refer to the place/building or the institution; (4) refers to the school team; (5) to school students and maybe some staff members; (6) to a time period; and (7, taken from the British National Corpus), I will not even attempt to categorize". Some of these examples may arguably be analyzed by deferred reference or meaning transfer (Nunberg, 1995). In this paper I will only be concerned with the aspects of the words which are related to those aspects of the respective institutions which are constitutive for those institutions being of a certain kind.

## 5. ●-type Words

Pustejovsky intended to account for the phenomenon of copredication, where two predicates apply to the same argument. In typical cases, predication is only successful if the predicate and its arguments are of compatible types, as in (31), where the predicate "burn" requires an argument to be a physical object, and in (32), where the predicate "end" requires an eventive complement:

(31) The match burned my fingers.

(32) The match ended without a winner.

Copredication is unproblematic when the argument fulfills the requirement of both the predicates (33), but typically renders an expression infelicitous if it is not. In particular, copredication does not work with homonymy (34):

(33) He vandalized and then burned down the shop.

(34) *The match burned my fingers but ended without a winner.

But characteristically, in cases involving many-aspect words such as "book", "city", or "school", copredication is successful even though the requirements of the predicates are conflicting (Asher, 2011):

(35) Mary picked up and mastered three books on mathematics.

Thus (35) is perfectly felicitous, even though "pick up" requires a physical object while for "master" an informational one is needed. (36) exemplifies another phenomenon characteristic for those words, which occurs in anaphoric reference:

(36) John's mother burned the book on magic before he mastered it.

the first predicate requires the argument be a physical object, while the pronoun "it" refers anaphorically to an informational one—the content of the book.

Pustejovsky (1995) assigns types to all nouns, but argues that copredication phenomena support complex typing for words such as "book" or "school". Thus, simple types are sufficient for the two meanings of "match":

$match_1$ [physical object]
$match_2$ [event]

or for the meaning of "proposition":

*proposition* [content, informational object]

but many aspect words require complex types, which are called *dot-type* or ●-*type* by Pustejovsky. A ●-*type* is formed by two or more simple types (simple types are *physical object*, *informational object*, *legal object*, etc.) but are not their ordinary sums.

*book* [physical object●content]

While many predicates select one of the simple types which constitute the complex type (e.g., 26, 27, and 28), other predicates require an argument of the complex type. The predicates Pustejovsky suggests selects the complex type for “book” are “read” and “write”, which require an object which is physical and informational at the same time.

According to Pustejovsky and Asher (Asher, Pustejovsky, 2005; Pustejovsky, 1995) for ●-type words the constituent types correspond to aspects of objects denoted by those words and in most cases those aspects are available simultaneously during composition of the meaning of the whole sentence. This, according to the authors, allows for explaining the copredication phenomena.

Asher and Pustejovsky propose to treat all words mentioned in Section 4 as ●-types but those relevant for our analysis of proper names of institutions are the words “school”, “university”, “bank”, etc. ● is a binary type construction operator but it can be iterated, as is required by “newspaper”, whose type consist of three simple types and is structured as organization●(content●physical object) (Pustejovsky, 2005). Similarly iterated complex types are required for “city”, “school”, and “university” (Arapinis, 2013; Asher, Pustejovsky; 2000; Pustejovsky, 1998; 2005):

*city* [people●(territory●political (legal) entity)]
*school* [physical object●(legal entity●people)]
*university* [physical object●(legal entity●people)]

The constituent aspects are available for predication, as exemplified by (26)–(30) above, as well as by (37–40):[20]

(37) The manifesto was signed by the university. [legal entity vs people]
(38) I have a meeting with Laura at the university. [building]
(39) The university in the city center specializes in humanities. [building vs people (staff)]
(40) The best university of the country has caught fire. [building vs people (staff)]

[20] Examples (37), (38), and (40) are those of Ortega-Andrés and Vicente (2019); (39) is from Arapinis and Vieu’s (2015).

In Section 6 I will argue that proper names of institutions such as universities or agencies inherit the semantics of the respective common nouns and should be analyzed as ●-types.

## 6. Names of Universities Behave Like the Noun "University"

The thesis I propose here is that the proper names of some institutions, such as the names of universities, agencies, and heads of state are multi-aspect words and that they should be analyzed as Pustejovsky's ●-type words, in particular as a people●(building/physical aspect●legal entity) types (for names of universities or schools). As we have seen in the case of "book" and "city", predication can select specific constituent aspects. This is shown by examples repeated from previous sections as well as in the examples presented below:

*Charles University* [physical object●(legal entity●people)]

(7) Charles University was founded in 1348. [legal entity]
(8) Charles University is situated in the city center. [building]

In the examples presented, predication concerns divergent aspects of the respective institutions but none of the aspects seems to be the primary one. They combine in copredication and anaphora:

(9) Charles University, which was founded in 1348, is situated in the city center. [legal entity vs building]
(41) "Charles University was founded in 1348 [legal], making it one of the oldest universities in the world […]. It is the largest and most renowned Czech university [location]. For many years Charles University has been keen to incorporate the results of its research and development work into its teaching [people]" (Charles University, n.d.).

*the University of Padua* [physical object (building)●(legal entity●people)]

(42) "The University of Padua is one of Europe's oldest and most prestigious seats of learning" (University of Padua, n.d.). [legal entity vs physical object]

*the Supreme Court of the United States* [legal entity●people]

(13) The Supreme Court of the United States ruled that segregation is unconstitutional. [legal entity●people]

*the International Court of Justice* [physical object●(legal entity●people)]

(43) "The International Court of Justice, which has its seat in The Hague, is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations" (The International Court of Justice, n.d.). [legal entity vs. physical object]

(44) "The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN). It was established in June 1945 by the Charter of the United Nations and began work in April 1946 [legal]. The Court is composed of 15 judges, who are elected for terms of office of nine years by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council [people]" (The Court, n.d.).

*the President of the United States* [legal entity●human]

(10) The President of the United States signed an executive order to stop unnecessary international travel. [legal entity●human]

(11) The President of the United States went skiing abroad. [human]

(12) The President of the United States went skiing abroad violating his own executive order. [legal entity●human]

(45) "When you are President of the United States and widely regarded as among the most thoughtful and eloquent speakers on the planet, it must be hard to watch someone go on TV and speak for you" (Press Briefing by Press Secretary Josh Earnest, 1/17/17). [human]

(46) "The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America [legal]. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years [human]. In Case of the Removal of the President from Office [legal vs human], or of his Death [human], Resignation, or Inability to discharge the Powers and Duties of the said Office [human], the Same shall devolve on the Vice President, and the Congress may by Law provide for the Case of Removal, Death, Resignation or Inability, both of the President and Vice President, declaring what Officer shall then act as President, and such Officer shall act accordingly, until the Disability be removed, or a President shall be elected [legal vs human]" (U.S. Const. art. II, sec. 1, amend. XXV).

(47) "Every Bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it become a Law, be presented to the President of the United States: If he approve he shall sign it [legal vs human], but if not he shall return it" (U.S. Const. art. II, sec. 7).

I have suggested a dot-type semantics for the analysis of some kinds of uses of institutional names, such as "the International Court of Justice", "Charles University" or "the President of the United States". I have argued that certain kinds of uses of institutional names inherit the linguistic types of the nouns which denote the basic category of the objects the names refer to, e.g., "universi-

ty", "school" or "company". The thesis should not be understood, however, as identifying the semantics of a name of a university (e.g., "Princeton University") with the definite description "the university", even in contexts in which the two expressions denote the same object. Although the true values of sentences differing only in those expressions coincide in non-intensional contexts, the propositional contributions of coreferring names and definite descriptions are not identical. While the propositional contribution of the description includes the property of being a university, the property is not included in the case of the name (Section 2.4 above). I thus propose that in the kind of uses exemplified by (7)–(12) and (41)–(47), the proper names of institutions directly refer to their objects of reference, regardless of whether the focus is on the physical, legal, or agentive aspects of the referents.[21] Dot-type analysis allows the complex nature of reference relations to be explained without postulating multiple referents. The exact nature of the objects which institutional names refer to is a question I will leave to the metaphysicians.

## 7. Conclusion

In this paper I have proposed a dot-type based interpretation of the proper names of (some) institutions. Among the aspects of an institution that enter the semantics of its name I only include those which are constitutive for its being an institution of a certain type. The aspects distinguished are thus those labelled *physical/building*, *agentive/people* and *legal*. Different aspects may be required for proper names of kinds of institutions other than those considered and the physical aspect in particular is arguably not required for many institutions. Further work is thus needed to ascertain if the proposal is adequate as a general theory of names of institutions.

I opened the paper with an analogy between proper names of cities and that of institutions, but arguably cities themselves are just a special kind of institution. The complex, multifaceted nature of the referents of the names of institutions, including cities, can be traced back to them being social artifacts. A natural extension of the proposal would thus be a semantics of other institutional names, and of other artifacts, such as artworks. This, however, is a project for another paper.

[21] By postulating that the referent of institutional names allows for the predication of both material and legal properties—for proper names such as "the President of the United States"—I go against theorists who assume that the referent of a legal name is an abstract object (e.g., Marmor, 2014; Gawthorne, 2013; Burazin, 2016; Banaś, in press).

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Article

BEN CAPLAN *

# E. E. CONSTANCE JONES ON EXISTENCE IN FICTION AND IMAGINATION[1]

SUMMARY: E. E. Constance Jones (1848–1922) was one of the first women to study philosophy at the University of Cambridge. On her view, "Dorothea" (from George Eliot's novel *Middlemarch*) applies to a fictional character, which has existence in fiction, and "fairy" applies to fairies, which have existence in imagination. She proposes a novel account of negative existentials, on which "fairies are non-existent" is both meaningful and true, given that there are at least two kinds of existence: one that fairies have (so that we can talk about them) and another that they lack (so that we can truly say that they "are non-existent"). Contrary to Russell's objection in *The Principles of Mathematics*, accounting for negative existentials does not require distinguishing existence and being, nor does it require rejecting the existential theory of judgment (according to which every sentence is about something that exists).

KEYWORDS: E. E. Constance Jones, existence, fiction, imagination.

* University of Kansas, Department of Philosophy. E-mail: caplan@ku.edu. ORCID: 0000-0003-0277-6948.

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> No one objects to admitting regions of, *e.g.*, Fiction and Imagination.
> (Jones, 1893, p. 455)

## 1. Introduction

Emily Elizabeth Constance Jones (1848–1922) was one of the first women to study philosophy at the University of Cambridge.[2] In this paper, I present some of her work in metaphysics and philosophy of language, particularly pertaining to existence in fiction and imagination. On her view, fictional characters and imaginary creatures are things that have specific kinds of existence: for example, Dorothea (from George Eliot's novel *Middlemarch*) has existence in fiction, and fairies have existence in imagination.[3]

The plan for the paper is as follows. In Section 2, I situate Jones's views about existence in fiction and imagination both with respect to her views about other kinds of existence and with respect to other views about the reference of names from fiction and the existence of fictional characters. In Section 3, I discuss some of her views about what she calls the *application* of names and about the existence of the things that names apply to. On her view, names from fiction apply to fictional characters, which have some kind of existence. In Section 4, I discuss some of her views about what she calls *categorical* sentences, including sentences that contain terms that apply to mythological characters. On her view, a wide range of sentences carry a commitment to the existence of mythological characters. And, in Section 5, I discuss a passage in which she talks about the existence of fairies and offers a novel account of negative existentials. Her view, I argue, has the resources to respond to two of Bertrand Russell's objections from different stages in his career: his argument in *The Principles of Mathematics* against "the existential theory of judgment" and his charge in *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (from 1903) that views that posit existence in fiction and imagination are "confused" beyond belief (Russell, 1903, p. 449; 1919, p. 169; Jones, 1892; 1893 accepts the existential theory of judgment).

Jones's work is little discussed today (see n. 2 for some exceptions). But this neglect is not justified. Her work is careful and systematic. In addition, her views about existence in fiction and imagination fit with some of our ordinary thought and talk

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[2] For biographical overviews of Jones's life, see Janssen-Lauret, in press; Ostertag, 2020, Section 1; Ostertag, Favia, 2021, pp. 328–329; Waithe, Cicero, 1995, pp. 25–27; Warnock, 2004; see also Jones, 1922. For philosophical overviews of Jones's work, see Ostertag, 2020; Waithe, Cicero, 1995.

[3] I use the slightly cumbersome expression "has existence in fiction"—to be read as [has][existence in fiction] rather than [has existence][in fiction]—instead of "exists in fiction" to emphasize that, on Jones's view, existence in fiction is a specific kind of existence. Likewise for "has existence in imagination".

about fictional characters and imaginary creatures, and her views are substantially different from the views of several of her better-known male contemporaries.

In our ordinary thought and talk, we might say that Dorothea "exists in fiction" or that fairies "exist in imagination".[4] Sometimes, we might mean merely that it is true in the fiction that Dorothea exists, or we might mean merely that we imagine that fairies exist. But we might also sometimes mean that, as on Jones's view, Dorothea is a thing that has a specific kind of existence—namely, existence in fiction—and fairies are things that also have a specific kind of existence: namely, existence in imagination. Jones would take such agreement with ordinary thought and talk to count in favor of her view.[5]

Jones's views about existence in fiction and imagination were probably influenced by the views of John Neville Keynes and William James.[6] And she probably took her views to be widely held. As Jones (1893, p. 455) says in *On the Nature of Logical Judgment* (and in the epigraph for this paper), "[n]o one objects to admitting regions of, *e.g*., Fiction and Imagination". But, still, her views were not entirely commonplace. For example, as discussed below in Section 2.2, her views are distinct from the views of several of her contemporaries—including, not just Russell, but also Gottlob Frege and Alexius Meinong. On their views, it is not true that fictional characters have existence in fiction, nor is it true that imaginary creatures have existence in imagination.[7]

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[4] Parsons (1980, pp. 10–11) reports that he has "often heard expressed in conversation" a view on which "Pegasus *exists in mythology*" and "Sherlock Holmes *exists in fiction*" (emphasis in the original).

[5] In *Elements of Logic as a Science of Propositions*, Jones (1890) says that Logic "must start from the standpoint of ordinary thought, ascertained by reflexion on ordinary language" (§1, p. 3). (Unless indicated otherwise, citations are to *Elements of Logic*). Thanks to an anonymous referee for discussion here.

[6] On Keynes's (1887, p. 155, n. 2) view, "the Homeric gods" and fairies "exist in the particular universes to which reference is obviously made" in sentences like "the wrath of the Homeric gods is very terrible" and "Fairies are able to assume different forms". Keynes was one of Jones's teachers (Jones, 1922, pp. 53–54). But Keynes does not talk about different kinds of existence.

On James's (1889, p. 331) view, a "mythical object" exists "in the strict and ultimate sense of the word". Jones quotes James approvingly (§2, p. 6, n. 1). But she takes existence "in the strict and ultimate sense" to be existence itself, which everything has, rather than a specific kind of existence (§11, p. 88, n. 2). On Jones's views about different kinds of existence, see Section 2.1.

Jones might also have been influenced by the work of John Venn (see n. 24). But she seems to be more willing than he was to engage in "metaphysical enquiry" about existence (Venn, 1881, p. 127).

[7] Thanks to an anonymous referee for discussion here.

## 2. Other Kinds of Existence and Other Views

### 2.1. Some Other Kinds of Existence

On Jones's (1890) view in *Elements of Logic as a Science of Propositions*, there are many "different kinds of existence" (§11, p. 101). At one end of the spectrum, each thing has a unique existence, which it does not share with anything else (§2, p. 10; cf. Caplan, 2022). At the other end of the spectrum, there is *existence itself* or *existence pure and simple*, which everything has (§11, pp. 88, 90).[8]

In between existence itself and the unique existence of each thing, there are various intermediate kinds of existence, which a thing might share with some but not all other things. One is "physical existence", which is had by people and buildings (§11, p. 89). Another is "fictitious" existence (§2, p. 9)—existence in fiction, or "$E_f$" for short—which is had by fictional characters such as Dorothea. (Dorothea is what Jones [1911, p. 14] might describe as a "fictitious character"). Jones also talks about *existence in imagination* (§11, p. 90), or "$E_i$" for short, which is had by fairies. And yet another intermediate kind of existence is existence in what she calls "a Region of Supposition", which is had by round-squares (Jones, 1893, p. 455; see also Jones, 1911, pp. 60–62).

On Jones's view, $E_f$ and $E_i$ are distinct from physical existence, since fictional characters have $E_f$ but lack physical existence, and imaginary creatures have $E_i$ but also lack physical existence. In the rest of this paper, I leave open the question of whether $E_f$ and $E_i$ are distinct from each other. And, if they are, I leave open the questions of whether fictional characters have $E_i$ (in addition to $E_f$) and whether imaginary creatures have $E_f$ (in addition to $E_i$). Jones describes $E_i$ as "a certain kind of existence in fairy tales and in imagination" (§11, p. 90), and she says that the golden mountain, for example, "'exists' in imagination or a fairy tale" (Jones, 1910–1911, p. 178). Since fairy tales are a kind of fiction, these remarks suggest that the distinction between $E_f$ and $E_i$ might not be so stark. But she talks about "regions of, *e.g.*, Fiction and Imagination" (Jones, 1893, p. 455). And existence in a region is a kind of existence (§11, p. 101). If she takes Fiction and Imagination to be distinct regions, then $E_f$ and $E_i$ would be distinct kinds of existence. Still, even if $E_f$ and $E_i$ are distinct, some fictional characters that have $E_f$ might also have $E_i$; and, conversely, some imaginary creatures that have $E_i$ might also have $E_f$.

[8] Emphasis in quotations from Jones occurs in the original. I have made some minor changes in quotations, eliminating spaces (after left quotation marks and before right quotation marks) and altering punctuation to conform to a text that Jones quotes.

### 2.2. Some Other Views

As we will see in Section 3, Jones accepts both of the following claims.

Reference: “Dorothea” refers to Dorothea.

Existence: Dorothea has some kind of existence.

But not everyone does.

Some reject Reference. For example, on Frege’s (1892/1948, p. 215) view and on Russell’s (1905, p. 491) view in *On Denoting*, “Dorothea” does not refer to anything.[9] One problem with this view is that accounting for the truth of sentences like (1) is not straightforward (e.g., Caplan, 2021, pp. 387–390):

(1) Dorothea is a fictional character.

Others accept Reference but reject Existence. On Terence Parsons’s (1980, Chapters 3 and 7) view, for example, Dorothea is an object that does not have any kind of existence or being. (Parsons’s view is inspired by Meinong’s [1904/1960] view, on which some things that we can think and talk about are objects that do not have any kind of existence or being; see also Twardowski, 1894/1977). On Russell’s (1903, p. 449) view in *The Principles of Mathematics*, mythological characters (e.g., “Homeric gods”) are objects that have being but lack existence (see also Russell, 1903, p. 43; on Russell’s [1903, p. 449] view, existence and being are distinct, and neither is a kind of the other). A parallel view about fictional characters would be that Dorothea is an object that has being but lacks existence; on this parallel view, Existence is false, too.

Some accept both Reference and Existence but are committed to further claims about fictional characters. For example, Peter van Inwagen (1977) and Saul Kripke (2013) accept Reference and Existence. But, on their views, Dorothea is *abstract* rather than *concrete* (Kripke, 2013, pp. 73, 78; van Inwagen, 1977, p. 304). That is, they accept the following claim:

Abstract: Dorothea is abstract.

Those who accept a plurality of concrete possible worlds might also accept both Reference and Existence.[10] But, on their view, Dorothea is *merely possible* rather than *actual* (Bricker, 2020, p. 34, n. 60). That is, they accept the following claim:

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[9] On Frege’s view, if “Dorothea” does not refer to anything, then Existence either lacks a truth-value or (if existence sentences are a special kind of linguistic context) is false (Caplan, 2021, p. 394, n. 24; Salmon, 1998, pp. 282–285). In either case, Frege does not accept Existence. And, on Russell’s 1905 view, Existence is false.

[10] Lewis (1986) accepts a plurality of concrete possible worlds but does not discuss fictional characters. On Bricker’s (2020, p. 34, n. 60) view, the reference of a name from fiction

Merely Possible: Dorothea is merely possible.

By contrast, Jones is not committed to Abstract or Merely Possible (for Jones's discussion of the abstract-concrete distinction, see §5, pp. 37–39).

To avoid problems posed by names that do not refer to anything, one might want to accept Reference. And, as mentioned in Section 1, one might find a certain intuitive appeal to the view that Dorothea "exists in fiction". So one might want to accept Existence. But one might not want to be committed to the view that Dorothea is abstract or merely possible. So one might want a view that accepts Reference and Existence without being committed to either Abstract or Merely Possible.

This is Jones's view. In what follows, I spell out some of the details of her view and present some of its virtues. Among other things, it allows her to offer a novel account of negative existentials and to respond to a pair of objections due to Russell (one from 1903, the other from 1919).

## 3. Application and Existence

On Jones's view, a name *applies to* or *refers to* one or more things (§2, p. 5; §27, p. 200). In what follows, I use "applies to" rather than "refers to", since that is the terminology Jones uses more often herself. Using "applies to" instead of "refers to", Reference becomes the following claim:

Application: "Dorothea" applies to Dorothea.

I take Reference and Application to be equivalent. In this section, I discuss Jones's acceptance of Application and Existence.

On Jones's view, everything has at least some kind of existence. She divides things into *attributes* and *subjects of attributes* (§2, p. 12). For example, George Eliot is a subject of attributes, and *being a novelist* is an attribute. On Jones's view, the world consists of attributes and subjects of attributes, each of which has "at least a minimum of 'existence'" (§11, p. 88).

And, on Jones's view, every name applies to at least one thing, since every name applies to at least one attribute or subjects of attributes.[11] Speaking of the attributes

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is indeterminate. So, on his view, Reference and Existence might not be true as stated. Still, he might accept Reference and Existence as super-true (i.e., true on all precisifications).

[11] There might be hard cases. Suppose that I introduce a new name (e.g., "Floop") when using Universal Instantiation: "everything has some kind of existence", I say, "so Floop must have some kind of existence". Is "Floop" guaranteed to apply to something? Jones's view might be that it is. For example, she seems to endorse the claim that "all names are names of *Things*" (§6, p. 87). There might be a difficulty in singling out a particular thing for "Floop" to apply to. If I can have a particular thing in mind, then "Floop" can apply to that thing, which Jones would say I have "the intention of distinguishing" (§2, p. 15). In cases where no particular thing is singled out, she might say that

and subjects of attributes in the world, she says that "to some of these Subjects [of Attributes] or Attributes any term [or name] must apply" (§11, p. 89).[12]

We can now see that Jones accepts both Application and Existence. If every name applies to at least one thing and "Dorothea" is a name, then "Dorothea" applies to at least one thing. And, if so, then presumably it applies to Dorothea. In that case, Application is true. And, if everything has some kind of existence, then Dorothea has some kind of existence, too. In that case, Existence is true.

It might be helpful to work through some examples in which Jones says that a name applies to at least one thing, which has some kind of existence.[13] She uses "name" broadly. Among the expressions that she uses "name" to apply to are proper names (e.g., "George Eliot", "Athena"), possessive descriptions (e.g., "James Thomson's second brother", "George Eliot's Dorothea"), and bare nouns (e.g., "bird", "fairy").[14]

On Jones's view, "bird" applies to one or more birds, each of which has several kinds of existence. Each bird has a unique existence, which it does not share with anything else; existence itself, which it shares with everything else; and physical existence, which it shares with every other bird but not with any fairies. Similarly, "fairy" applies to one or more fairies. Each fairy has a unique existence, which it does not share with anything else; existence itself, which it shares with everything else; and existence in imagination, $E_i$, which it shares with every other fairy but perhaps not with every bird. Jones lists "bird" and "fairy" as names that explicitly signify a sufficient number of attributes "to enable us to define and apply the name" (§2, p. 14). And, later, in *A Primer of Logic*, Jones (1905, p. 12) lists "Ghosts" and "Fairies" along with "Men" and "Thoughts" as "concrete names" that "apply to subjects of attributes". The subjects of attributes that "Ghosts" and "Fairies" apply to are presumably ghosts and fairies.

On Jones's view, anything we can think about must have some kind of existence (§11, p. 89). Since we can think about fairies, they must have some kind of existence. But it is not just that we can think about fairies; we can also imagine them. Fairies are thus among what she would call *objects of imagination* (Jones, 1908, p. 533; 1911, p. 75). (I say more about Jones's views about the existence of fairies in Section 5).

Jones has an extensive typology of names and terms (§2, pp. 16–18 [Tables 1–3]; §3, pp. 25–34 [Tables 4–16]). In this typology, she lists "Athena" and

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I have failed to introduce a new expression or perhaps that the new expression I have introduced is not a name, since every name applies to at least one thing (§2, p. 5). But that would open the possibility that something that looks like a name does not actually apply to anything. Thanks to an anonymous referee for discussion here.

[12] A term, for Jones, is a name that occurs as the subject-name *S* or the predicate-name *P* in a sentence of the form *S copula P* (§2, p. 5). Any name can be used as a term.

[13] As Jones says about categorical sentences (discussed below in Section 4), "it will perhaps not be superfluous to illustrate the application of my definition by a few simple examples" (§6, p. 46).

[14] The examples are from §2, p. 14; §3, p. 31 (Table 11).

"Melpomene" in the same category as "George Eliot" and "Sir Walter Scott", and she lists "George Eliot's Dorothea" in the same category as "James Thomson's second brother" (§3, p. 31 [Table 11]). Each of these names applies to at least one thing. "George Eliot", "Sir Walter Scott", and "James Thomson's second brother" apply to people; "George Eliot's Dorothea" applies to a fictional character; and "Athena" ("the goddess of wisdom") and "Melpomene" ("the Muse of tragic poetry") apply to mythological characters. Each of these things has its own unique existence as well as existence itself. In addition, George Eliot, Sir Walter Scott, and James Thomson's second brother have (or had) physical existence; and Dorothea has existence in fiction, $E_f$.[15]

Jones does not describe a kind of existence that Athena and Melpomene share with each other but not with George Eliot and Sir Walter Scott. Perhaps Athena and Melpomene have $E_f$, $E_i$, or a similar kind of existence that one might call *existence in myth* or *existence in mythology*.[16] (Jones might describe Athena and Melpomene as "personages in mythology"; §3, p. 32 [Table 13]; §6, p. 75 [Table 30]). On her view, that we can talk about some things tells us *that* they have some kind of existence, but it does not tell us *what* kind of existence they have, since we might be talking about "the 'real' world" or about "mere fancy or fiction" instead (Jones, 1911, p. 63). Rather, we can tell what kind of existence some things have from their attributes (p. 63).

## 4. Categorical Sentences and Mythological Characters

### 4.1. Categorical Sentences

In this subsection, I present part of Jones's account of what she calls *categorical* sentences: that is, sentences of the form *S copula P*, where *S* is a subject-name and *P* is a predicate-name (§6, p. 46). In the next subsection, I discuss part of what her account has to say about categorical sentences that contain terms that apply to mythological characters.

Consider, for example,

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[15] It might be that, on Jones's view, George Eliot and Sir Walter Scott (and perhaps James Thomson's second brother) are now among the "visible and tangible objects which *once had* physical existence, but which, in the form in which they are thought about, have altogether ceased to be, except in thought" (§11, p. 89; on time and different kinds of existence, see n. 24).

[16] In her typology, Jones routinely mentions names from Greek mythology—particularly names for the three Graces (i.e., Aglaia, Thalia, and Euphrosyne) and for some of the Muses (e.g., Mneme and Melete)—along with names for people and planets (e.g., §3, p. 33 [Tables 14–15]).

(2) Jack is a fidgety child,

(3) Monmouthshire is not a Welsh county.[17]

(2) and (3) are both of the form *S copula P*. In (2), "Jack" is the subject-name *S*, "is" is the copula, and "a fidgety child" is the predicate-name *P*. In (3), "Monmouthshire" is the subject-name *S*, "is not" is the copula, and "a Welsh county" is the predicate-name *P*. (2) is what Jones calls an *affirmative* categorical sentence (§6, p. 54); (3) is what she calls a *negative* categorical sentence (§27, p. 199).

On Jones's view, an affirmative categorical sentence *S copula P* is true if and only if, in that sentence, *S* and *P* apply to exactly the same things (§6, pp. 46–48). For example, (2) is true if and only if, in (2), "Jack" and "a fidgety child" apply to the same person (and neither applies to anything else; for different interpretations, see Janssen-Lauret, in press; Ostertag, 2020, Section 2.4; in press).[18]

Two perhaps surprising features of Jones's view are worth flagging here (Jones, 1893, pp. 441–442). First, what a predicate-name applies to varies across sentences. For example, in (2) "a fidgety child" applies to Jack and does not apply to any other fidgety child; but, in

(4) Mary is a fidgety child,

"a fidgety child" applies to Mary and does not apply to Jack. Second, what a predicate-name applies to in a sentence depends on what the subject-name in that sentence applies to. For example, the reason "a fidgety child" in (2) applies to Jack but not to Mary is that "Jack" in (2) applies to Jack but not to Mary.

On Jones's view, a negative categorical sentence *S copula P* is true if and only if, in that sentence, *S* and *P* do not apply to any of the same things (§6, pp. 46, 48). For example, (3) is true if and only if, in (3), "Monmouthshire" and "a Welsh county" do not apply to the same thing.

As mentioned in Section 3, Jones uses "name" broadly. Among the expressions that she uses "name" to apply to are, not only proper names (e.g., "Jack", "Monmouthshire"), but also complex demonstratives (e.g., "this satellite of Jupiter") and quantifier expressions (e.g., "some of the planets", "some of the rivers in America"). As a result, categorical sentences include sentences in which the subject-name is a complex demonstrative or a quantifier expression. For example,

[17] Examples (2) and (3) are from §6, p. 64 (Table 19).

[18] I am ignoring two parts of Jones's account of categorical sentences in the text. First, I have not said what categorical sentences *assert*. On Jones's 1890 view, (2) asserts that "Jack" and "a fidgety child" in (2) have the same *denomination* (§6, p. 46)—where the denomination of "Jack" is, not Jack himself, but rather his unique existence (Caplan, 2022). Second, I have not said what explains why (2) is significant in a way in which "Jack is Jack" is not. On Jones's view, the significance of (2) is explained in part by the difference in *determination* between "Jack" and "a fidgety child" in (2)—where the determination of "Jack" is one or more attributes that Jack has that are "*explicitly* signified" by the name (§2, p. 8).

(5) This satellite of Jupiter is not so large as the moon,

(6) Some of the rivers in America are larger than any in Europe,

and

(7) Some of the planets are larger than the earth

are all categorical sentences.[19]

(5) is a negative categorical sentence. On Jones's view, "this satellite of Jupiter" in (5) applies to a particular satellite of Jupiter; and (5) is true if and only if "so large as the moon" in (5) does not apply to that satellite.

(6) and (7) are affirmative categorical sentences. On Jones's view, "some of the rivers in America" in (6) applies to some rivers (specifically, some rivers in America that are larger than any river in Europe); and (6) is true if and only if "larger than any in Europe" in (6) applies to those rivers and does not apply to anything else. Similarly, "some of the planets" in (7) applies to some planets (specifically, some planets that are larger than the earth); and (7) is true if and only if "larger than the earth" in (7) applies to those planets and does not apply to anything else.[20]

### 4.2. Mythological Characters

In this subsection, I discuss part of what Jones's account has to say about categorical sentences that contain terms that apply to mythological characters.

Jones has an extensive typology of categorical sentences (§6, pp. 62–76 [Tables 17–31]). In this typology, she lists sentences that contain terms that apply to people, heavenly bodies, and rivers in the same categories as sentences that contain terms that apply to mythological characters. For example, for each of the following pairs, she lists both sentences in that pair in the same category (§6, pp. 64 [Table 19], 71 [Table 26], 75 [Table 30]):

(2) a. Jack is a fidgety child.
    b. Aglaia was a Greek goddess.

(5) a. This satellite of Jupiter is not so large as the moon.
    b. This Muse of Hesiod is Terpsichore.

[19] Examples (5)–(7) come from §6, pp. 71 (Table 26), 75 (Table 30).

[20] It might be that, on Jones's view, the predicate-name in (6) must first be expanded, so that (6) is treated as "some of the rivers in America are [some rivers that are] larger than any in America" (on adding explicit quantifier expressions to predicate-names, see §6, p. 47). In that case, (6) would be true if and only if "[some rivers that are] larger than any in Europe" in (6) applies to the rivers in question and does not apply to anything else. (One might need to make corresponding adjustments to other sentences, including [5] and [7]). Thanks to an anonymous referee for discussion here.

(6) a. Some of the rivers in America are larger than any in Europe.
b. Some of the Muses of Hesiod are better known than the others.

(7) a. Some of the planets are larger than the earth.
b. Some of the Muses are not very important personages in mythology.

Since (2b) and (5b)–(7b) are categorical sentences, her account of categorical sentences applies to them.

(2b), (5b), and (6b) are affirmative categorical sentences. On Jones's view, "Aglaia" in (2b) applies to Aglaia; and (2b) is true if and only if "a Greek goddess" in (2b) applies only to Aglaia. "This Muse of Hesiod" in (5b) applies to Terpsichore; and (5b) is true if and only if "Terpsichore" in (5b) applies only to Terpsichore. And "some of the Muses of Hesiod" in (6b) applies to some Muses (specifically, some Muses of Hesiod that are better known than the others); and (6b) is true if and only if "better known than the others" in (6b) applies only to those Muses.

(7b) is a negative categorical sentence. On Jones's view, "some of the Muses" in (7b) applies to some Muses (specifically, some Muses that are not very important personages in mythology); and (7b) is true if and only if "very important personages in mythology" in (7b) does not apply to any of those Muses.

Together, (2b) and (5b)–(7b) are true on Jones's view only if mythological characters (specifically, Aglaia, Terpsichore, some Muses that are better known than the others, and some Muses that are not very important personages in mythology) are among the things that names apply to. And everything that some name applies to has some kind of existence. So, if (2b) and (5b)–(7b) are true, then mythological characters have some kind of existence.

Some of the sentences Jones mentions are reminiscent of the kind of sentences van Inwagen (1977, p. 302) and Kripke (2013, p. 62) use to argue for the existence of fictional characters. For example, (6b) and (7b) are analogous to

(8) Some fictional characters are better known than others,

and

(9) Some fictional characters are not very important in literature.

For van Inwagen's and Kripke's argument, what is important about sentences like (8) and (9) is that they existentially quantify over fictional characters and describe them from a perspective external to the fiction. On Jones's view, by contrast, it is not just quantificational sentences like (6b) and (7b) that carry a commitment to mythological characters; sentences like (2b) and (5b) do, too.[21]

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[21] On Jones's view, sentences that describe mythological characters from a perspective internal to the myth (e.g., "each of the nine Muses was a daughter of Apollo", "some of

## 5. Existence in Imagination

### 5.1. A "Certain Kind of Existence in Fairy Tales and in Imagination"

In *Elements of Logic*, Jones says,

> (*) if I say—
>
> Fairies are non-existent,
>
> the existence that I deny is not existence of *every kind*, since fairies have a certain kind of existence in fairy tales and in imagination. This *existence in imagination* is, of course, distinct from the so-called *mental image* which accompanies not only our comprehension of the terms of propositions[22] [names in sentences] which we understand, but also our apprehension of objects which we recognise. What is denied to them in the above proposition [sentence] is (perhaps) "ordinary phenomenal existence, and at the time present". (§11, p. 90)

In this subsection, I discuss what Jones says in the starred passage about a kind of existence that fairies have; and, in the next subsection, I discuss what she says there about negative existentials and a kind of existence that fairies lack.

On Jones's view, one kind of existence that fairies have is existence in imagination, $E_i$. In the middle of the starred passage, she says,

> fairies have a certain kind of existence in fairy tales and in imagination. This *existence in imagination* is, of course, distinct from the so-called *mental image* which accompanies not only our comprehension of the terms of propositions [names in sentences] which we understand, but also our apprehension of objects which we recognise. (§11, p. 90)

Here, she distinguishes $E_i$ from the mental image that we have when we think about things that have $E_i$.

In *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, Russell (1919) criticizes a view on which some things have $E_i$ or perhaps existence in fiction, $E_f$. He says,

> To say that unicorns have an existence in heraldry, or in literature, or in imagination, is a most pitiful and paltry evasion. What exists in heraldry is not an animal, made of flesh and blood, moving and breathing of its own initiative. What exists is a picture, or a description in words. Similarly, to maintain that Hamlet, for example, exists in his own world, namely, in the world of Shakespeare's imagination, just as truly as (say) Napoleon existed in the ordinary world, is to say something deliberately confusing, or else confused to a degree which is scarcely credible. (Russell, 1919, p. 169)

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the Sirens were heard singing together") also carry a commitment to mythological characters (§6, pp. 68 [Table 23], 75 [Table 30]).

[22] Jones uses "proposition" to apply to sentences (§6, p. 44). And terms are names (see n. 12 above).

Although Russell might not have had Jones's view specifically in mind, his objection applies to her view. But her view has the resources to respond to his objection.

On Jones's view, to say that unicorns or fairies have $E_i$ is not an evasion; rather, it is to attribute to them a specific kind of existence, one that they have and other things lack. And, in attributing $E_i$ to some things, she is not confusing $E_i$ with any representations ("pictures, or a description in words"). In the starred passage, for example, she is careful to distinguish $E_i$, which fairies have, from the mental image we have when we think about them. Nor is she confusing $E_f$ or $E_i$, which Hamlet has, with Napoleon's existence "in the ordinary world". On her view, there is a kind of existence—namely, existence itself—that Hamlet and Napoleon share. But, in addition, there is a kind of existence that Hamlet has and Napoleon lacks (namely, $E_f$ or $E_i$), just as there is a kind of existence that Napoleon has (or had) and Hamlet lacks (namely, physical existence).[23]

### 5.2. Negative Existentials

On Jones's view, even if fairies have $E_i$ we can truly say

(10) Fairies are non-existent.

In saying (10), we are not saying that fairies lack $E_i$ or existence itself. Rather, we are saying that there is another kind of existence—for example, physical existence—that they lack. At the beginning and end of the starred passage, Jones says,

> if I say—
>
> Fairies are non-existent,
>
> the existence that I deny is not existence of *every kind*, since fairies have a certain kind of existence in fairy tales and in imagination […]. What is denied to them in the above proposition [sentence] is (perhaps) "ordinary phenomenal existence, and at the time present". (§11, p. 90)

I take it that "ordinary phenomenal existence, and at the time present" is something like physical existence.[24]

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[23] As a character in Tolstoy's novel *War and Peace*, Napoleon might have $E_f$ or $E_i$. I ignore this complication in the text. And perhaps Napoleon no longer has physical existence (see n. 15). Still, on Jones's view there is a kind of existence (namely, physical existence) that Napoleon once had but Hamlet never did.

[24] The phrase "ordinary phenomenal existence, and at the time present" comes from Venn's (1881, p. 127) *Symbolic Logic*. In that work, he mentions a contrast between "phenomenal or sensible existence", on the one hand, and "the region of the imaginary", on the other (Venn, 1881, p. 133, n. 1). Jones suggests that existence at a specific time is a kind (or "determination") of existence (§11, p. 92). So perhaps "ordinary phenomenal existence, and at the time present" is more specific than physical existence. I ignore this com-

In her discussion of fairies in the starred passage, Jones thus accepts the following three claims. First, fairies have some kind of existence; in particular, they have $E_i$. Second, although fairies have $E_i$, they lack another kind of existence; in particular, they lack physical existence. And, third, the truth of a negative existential like (10) requires that fairies have one kind of existence (so that we can talk about them) but lack another kind of existence (so that we can truly say that they "are non-existent"). As Jones (1893, p. 454) later puts it, "in order to predicate non-existence in one sphere it is necessary to postulate existence in another".

In *The Principles of Mathematics*, Russell (1903, pp. 449–450) criticizes "the existential theory of judgment—the theory, that is, that every proposition is concerned with something that exists". He argues that it has trouble with negative existentials, or what he calls "non-existential propositions": that is, sentences or propositions that deny the existence of some things (p. 450). Speaking of the existential theory of judgment, he says,

> The theory seems, in fact, to have arisen from neglect of the distinction between existence and being. Yet this distinction is essential, if we are ever to deny the existence of anything. For what does not exist must be something, or it would be meaningless to deny its existence; and hence we need the concept of being, as that which belongs even to the non-existent. (Russell, 1903, p. 450)

Distinguishing existence and being is one way to account for the truth of negative existentials like (10). Perhaps fairies have being, so it is not meaningless to deny their existence; and perhaps fairies lack existence, so it is not false to deny their existence.

But, even if Russell is right that *some* distinction is essential, Jones's discussion of (10) shows that the specific distinction that Russell draws—namely, between existence and being—is not. Instead, we can distinguish two kinds of existence: for example, $E_i$ and physical existence. This distinction allows Jones to propose a different account of negative existentials, one that, as far as I know, is novel. On her view, fairies have $E_i$, so it is not meaningless to deny their existence; and they lack physical existence, so it is not false to deny their existence (at least if physical existence or something like it is the kind of existence that we are denying that they have). Jones's view thus shows that, contrary to Russell's objection, there is a way for the existential theory of judgment to account for the truth of negative existentials after all.

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plication in the text (on existence at different times—particularly past, present, and future existence—as different kinds of existence, see Frischhut, Skiles, 2013; McDaniel, 2017, pp. 78–108; Turner, 2013, pp. 275–276).

## 6. Conclusion

On Jones's view, every name applies to something, which has some kind of existence. In particular, "Dorothea" (from *Middlemarch*) applies to a fictional character, which has existence in fiction, $E_f$; and "fairy" applies to fairies, which have existence in imagination, $E_i$. Similarly, a wide range of names from mythology apply to mythological characters, which have some kind of existence other than physical existence: perhaps $E_f$, or $E_i$, or existence in myth. These names (broadly construed) include, not only proper names (e.g., "Athena", "Melpomene", "Aglaia"), but also complex demonstratives (e.g., "this Muse of Hesiod") and quantifier expressions (e.g., "some of the Muses of Hesiod"); and, where *S* is a name that applies to one or more mythological characters, sentences of the form *S copula P* carry a commitment to the existence of mythological characters.

Jones's view has the resources to reply to two of Russell's objections. First, contrary to Russell's (1919, p. 169) objection in *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, to say that Dorothea has $E_f$, or that fairies have $E_i$, is not a "pitiful and paltry evasion", nor is it "confused to a degree which is scarcely credible". And, second, contrary to Russell's (1903) objection in *The Principles of Mathematics*, saying that sentences like "Fairies are non-existent" are both meaningful and true does not require distinguishing existence and being, nor does it require rejecting the existential theory of judgment (according to which every sentence or proposition is about something that exists), provided that there are at least two kinds of existence: one that fairies have (so that we can talk about them) and another that they lack (so that we can truly say that they "are non-existent").

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