

Fiction Preface

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Preface

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1. *Paradoxes of fiction*

The logic of fiction has been a stand-alone research programme only since the early 1970s.¹ It is a fair question as to why in the first place fictional discourse would have drawn the interest of professional logicians. It is a question admitting of different answers. One is that, since fictional names are “empty”, fiction is a primary datum for any logician seeking a suitably comprehensive logic of denotation. Another answer arises from the so-called incompleteness problem, exemplified by the fact (or apparent fact) that some fictional sentences – think of “Sherlock Holmes’ mother was nick-named ‘Polly’” – are neither true nor false. These are sentences to command the attention of logicians who work on non-bivalent logics. A further spur to logical engagement is the supposed fictionality of certain kinds of ideal models in science and certain classes of mathematical objects. No doubt, there are other features of fictional discourse that provide the logician with a natural *entré*, but perhaps it would also be correct to say that the fiction’s biggest draw for logicians is that our quite common beliefs about the fictional constitute what Nicholas Rescher calls “aporetic clusters”, so named after the Latinized Greek *aporos* for “impassable”.² An aporetic cluster is a set of claims such that

1. as far as the known facts go, there is good reason for accepting them all;
2. but, taken together, they are mutually incompatible.

Because they are impassable, aporetic clusters are blockages. They are too much for us to swallow. Beings like us dislike aporetic clusters. They evince a kind of cognitive dissonance. When we recognize that our beliefs constitute such a cluster, there is a strong impulse to remove the irritation occasioned by its embedded inconsistency. It is easy to

¹ Historical precedents include Bentham (1932) and Vaihinger (1924). More recently, there was a burst of activity in the late 1960 and 1970s. This work includes in chronological order Woods (1969), Gale (1971), Routley and Routley (1973), Coleman (1973), Crittenden (1973), Woods (1974), Devine (1974), Martin and Schotch (1974), Blocker (1974), Howell (1974), Pavel (1975), Gabriel (1975), Parsons (1975), Woltersdorff (1976), Howell (1976), Urmson (1976), Lewis (1978), Walton (1978a, 1978b), Parsons (1978), Woods and Pavel (1979). In addition to works expressly designed to accommodate the analysis of fictional discourse, various other contributions of the period bear on the issue somewhat tangentially, but with interesting and influential things to say about fiction (Kripke (1972), Kaplan (1973), Plantinga (1974).)

¹ See a small but representative, for example, Braun (2005), Brock (2002), Byrne (1993), Currie (1990), Everett and Hofweber (2000), Gendler and Kovakovich (2006), Goldman (2006), Griffin (2005), Jacqueline (1996), Howell, 1998, Jacqueline (2005), Kalderon (2005a, 2005b), Kroon (1992), Lamarque and Olsen (1994), Matravers (2006), Morton (2006), Sainsbury (2005), Schroeder and Matheson (2006), Skolnick and Bloom (2006), Slater (2005), Stock (2006), van Inwagen (1977), Woods (2006).

² Rescher (1985).

see that aporetic clusters are a kind of paradox, and no one doubts that paradoxes are mother's milk for logicians.

What is the paradox embedded in our common beliefs about the fictional? Actually, there are at least four of them. They arise from the following widely held assumptions or intuitions:

1. We *refer* to fictional objects.
2. There are *true statements* about fictional objects.
3. There are *correct inferences* from true premisses about fictional objects.
4. We *know things* about fictional objects.

Let us consider these in order.

- Aporia 1* 1. We refer to fictional objects
- 1a. Reference is possible only to what exists.
 - 1b. Fictional objects don't exist.
[So we don't refer to fictional objects].

- Aporia 2* 2. There are true statements about fictional objects.
- 2a. Statements about the non-existent can't be true.
 - 2b. Fictional beings are non-existent.
[So there aren't any true statements about fictional objects].

- Aporia 3* 3. There are correct inferences from true premisses about fictional objects.
- 3a. Such inferences require true premisses.
 - 3b. There are no true premisses about fictional objects.
[So there are no correct inferences from true premisses about fictional objects].

- Aporia 4* 4. We know things about fictional objects.
- 4a. One knows that Φ only if Φ is true.
 - 4b. No sentence about a fictional object is true.
[So we have no knowledge of fictional objects].

To be sure, our four paradoxes go through only if certain qualifications are understood. One is that "true statement" here means "true nuclear statement".³ For example "Sherlock Holmes lived in Baker Street" is a nuclear statement. "Sherlock Holmes doesn't exist" is an extra-nuclear statement. Similarly "know things" means "know nuclear things". So our knowing where Holmes lives is nuclear knowledge about him, whereas knowing that he doesn't exist is extra-nuclear knowledge about him. Similarly for inference. In some approaches it is correct to infer from "Sherlock Holmes doesn't exist" that there is someone who doesn't exist. But the inferences intended by claim (3) are of nuclear truths

³ The nuclear/extra-nuclear distinction terminology is that of Parsons (1980). Difficulties with it are discussed in Howell, 1983, pp. 167-171. A formal elucidation is proposed in Jacquette (2009), section 5.2.

drawn from other nuclear truths; for example, the inference of “Someone was interviewed by someone” from “Holmes interviewed Lestrade”.

We might note in passing the possibility of collapsing the present four clusters into a single omnibus one which pivots on the premiss that the existence of a thing is a condition for reference to it truth about it, inferences therefrom, and knowledge about it. But, whether one or four, the same problems arise.

Paradoxes resemble *reductio ad absurdum* proofs. *Reductio* proofs establish the joint inconsistency of their own premisses. Knowing that a set of premisses is inconsistent, we realize that at least one of them is false. At their best, *reductio* proofs are transparent; that is to say, they reveal the culprit premiss. Another way of saying this is that a transparent *reductio* identifies the weakest link in this conflicted set. By and large, paradoxes are not transparent in this sense. On the score of apparent truth, all members of the inconsistent premiss-set do equally well. This is what makes them impassable. Paradoxical arguments tell you where the problem resides globally, but they don't give you the means of a more specific diagnosis. By these lights, for most people the logical and semantic paradoxes are *reductios* but not paradoxes. For example, nearly everyone thinks that in Russell's paradox of the set that is a member of itself if and only if it isn't is the culprit the comprehension axiom. If the Russell example is a good example of a transparent reduction, the standard argument for determinism might strike us as a good example of the non-transparent variety. The argument proceeds as follows.

1. Every (non-quantum) natural event is caused.
2. No causal event is free.
3. Every human action is a (non-quantum) natural event.
4. So no human action is free.

As is well known, libertarians take this as a *reductio* of one of its premisses, which they take to be premiss (1). The price they pay for this diagnosis is that hardly anyone believes – nor did they themselves prior to the proof – that (1) is false. A measure of this resistance is to be found in the determinists' reaction to the proof. They take it to be a sound demonstration of something shocking. The price that they, in turn, pay for this diagnosis is that the truth of the conclusion, (4), is indeed shocking. Hardly anyone believes it – nor did they themselves prior to the proof. There are many people for whom the present argument presents just these two options – either there are no free actions or the causal nature of the (non-quantum) world is an illusion. So seen, the proof is paradoxical in a measure that exceeds the opaque *reductio*. For here it is not even clear that it *is* a *reductio*.

The present case illustrates what has been called Philosophy's Most Difficult Problem.⁴ With respect to valid arguments with what appear to be manifestly false conclusions, determining a suitably principled and general way whether they've sound proofs of something surprising or *reductios* of something in their premiss-sets. Arguments such as these trade briskly in cognitive dissonance. They excite high levels of cognitive irritation. It is interesting to reflect on whether the paradoxes of fiction also instantiate Philosophy's Most Difficult Problem. Certainly, our four clusters may strike

⁴ Woods (2003).

one as selling up differential diagnoses that parallel those to which determinists and libertarians are attracted. Running through these clusters is what I will call

PARMENIDES' RULE: *One cannot stand in relations of any kind to the nonexistent.*

Here is a principle that marks a major division in theories of fiction. There are those, such as Meinongean theories, in which the principle is denied. There are those, such as Fregean and Russellian theories, in which it is upheld. What is more, there are heavy costs to be paid for going in either of these directions. For Meinongean and the like it is the cost of producing a credible ontology of non-existent objects. For Fregeans and the like it is the cost occasioned by the massive repudiation of common (and not unintelligent) practice. For our purposes here, I shall until further notice simply assume that Parmenides' Rule is true. Further notice will be given in section 2 to follow.

However we decide to classify the paradoxes of fiction, there is a particular feature of them by virtue of which they stand apart from institutions of Philosophy's Most Difficult Problem. Consider again the determinism/libertarianism problem. The argument drawing these rivalrous assessments is a theoretical argument. It is an argument for metaphysicians. It is not an argument – or an issue – that seeps into actual practice. No one – not even the metaphysician in his everyday moments – *experiences* the world as effected by this paradox. People see the natural order as causal and many of the actions that occur in them as free. If the seeings are inconsistent – indeed even if they are in intellectual moments judged to be inconsistent – it is not an *existential* inconsistency.

It would appear to be quite different with the paradoxes of fiction – differently so, depending on whether Parmenides' Rule is accepted or rejected. For those who accept it, it is wholly open that notwithstanding the relations one experiences oneself as bearing to the fictional, there is *nothing there*: no Holmes, no Watson, no case of the speckled band, no residency at 221B Baker Street, nothing. What is more, unlike Rescherian clusters, there is no cognitive dissonance that attends one's experience of the fictional. Parmenideans are perfectly happy to *say* that Holmes patronized Watson, *knowing* that no such thing is true, and being not in the least fussed by it, *existentially*.

2. Ambiguation

Readers familiar with the determinism/libertarianism controversy will have grown impatient with the lateness of our recognition that its underlying argument – as indeed with all instantiations of Philosophy's Most Difficult Problem – attracts a third diagnosis. The third diagnosis is that the argument itself is untenable, that the requisite consequence relation between premisses and conclusion is absent. In compatibilist hands, the correct diagnosis of the argument for determinism is that it is invalidated by an equivocation on “free”. Literary theory has also attracted its fair share of computabilists. By far their most common strategy is to postulate an ambiguity in statements about the fictional. Taking the sentence “Holmes lived in Baker Street” as an example, it is ambiguous as between the statement that Holmes lived in Baker Street (which is false) and the statement that *in-fiction* or *in-the-Doyle-stories* Holmes lived in Baker Street (which is true). Let us call this the *ambiguation strategy*. In its most general sense it is the strategy of dissolving

(apparent) inconsistency by finding (genuine) ambiguity. As applied to fiction, if you accept an ambiguation policy, you will find that our so-called aporetic clusters are not genuine paradoxes after all. This bears on the cognitive dissonance attaching to genuine paradoxes. Not only is the embedded inconsistency cognitively irritating, it can also be psychologically frustrating. For the demand to eliminate the inconsistency admits of no intuitive grounds for its satisfaction. The impassability of paradoxes are a challenge to resolution. The requirement that some particular premiss be eliminated in the absence of intuitive grounds for doing so is problematic. It provides that a paradox-resolving theory will end up saying things that we are disposed to think are false. There is a sense, then, in which the paradox-resolver is flying without a compass. As Kant would tell us, resolutions without intuitions are indeed blind.

It is a condition on aporetic clusters that terms be unambiguous in all occurrences. Otherwise the proof of the paradox fails and concomitantly, intuitive remedies become available. The task now is not to eliminate a proposition that appears to be true, but rather to show that the cluster isn't paradoxical after all. Ambiguation is a way of showing this. In adopting it, we purport to find ambiguities in the clusters' key terms; and this offers us a mode of paradox-elimination achieved by correlative disambiguation. As mentioned, perhaps the most common example of this procedure is the discovery (or purported discovery) that in some but not all of their occurrences these terms are implicitly qualified by the suffix (or in some variations, prefix) "in-fiction". Thus we don't refer to fictional objects, but we refer to them-in-fiction; fictional objects don't exist, but they do exist-in-fiction; no (nuclear) statement about a fictional object is true, but some are true-in-fiction; and so on. It is important to see that ambiguation-disambiguation strategy does not find the weakest link in the paradox's premiss-set. It denies that the premisses are actually inconsistent; so there *is* no weakest link.

Anyone availing himself of the ambiguation-disambiguation method strategy must provide a mature semantics for formulas in the form "in-fiction". To date, most such attempts are those in which "in-fiction" is taken as a modal operator⁵ – typically a sentence-operator, although occasionally a term-operator. According, the logic of fiction is quite often taken to be a modal logic. In some ways this is an encouraging development. After all, haven't we had a formal semantics for modalities since the late 1950s?⁶ On the other hand, not everything construable as a modality responds well to a possible worlds treatment. So a Kripke-style semantics is not free-on-board for the logic of fiction.⁷

⁵ See here Woods (1974), chapter 5.

⁶ Kripke (1959).

⁷ Kripke's is a formal semantics of necessity and possibility in which the main idea is that of truth in a quantification over a domain of non-empty abstract set theoretic structures. Let \mathcal{W} be an abstract set whose elements are w_1, \dots, w_n , and \mathcal{A} a binary relation on \mathcal{W} . ϕ is necessarily true at w_i iff ϕ is true at every element w_j of \mathcal{W} to which w_i bears the \mathcal{A} -relation. The intuition that a sentence ϕ is true in a story but false in the real world may suggest a similar treatment, putting ϕ as "In-fiction Holmes lived in London" and w_k as the element of \mathcal{W} at which this sentence is true. (Intuitively, it is this, the real world.) What we now require is w_j to which the real world bear \mathcal{A} at which "Holmes lived in London" is true. Perhaps we could think of w_j as the *text* of the Holmes stories. So seen, it is true of this world that in-fiction Holmes lived in London only if there is a fiction in which Holmes lived in London. Of course, since the Holmes stories themselves are part of this world, it appears that if it is true in this world that in-fiction Holmes lived in London, it is also true in this world that Holmes lived in London. But it is not true in this world that

3. Rival approaches

Underlying the paradoxes are some powerful and widespread assumptions about semantics and ontology. Let us say that a language or language fragment \mathcal{L} has a “robust semantico-epistemic profile” when its names refer, its derivable sentences are true, its inferences are correct, and its true sentences are knowledge-conveying. One especially strong assumption is that if \mathcal{L} has a robust semantico-epistemic structure then, correspondingly, it connects to a richly robust ontological structure. Here an ontological structure is robust when it is a structure of *objects*, and *existence* is a condition on objecthood. Seen this way, if \mathcal{L} really is referential, then what it refers to really are objects. They are not pretend objects or imagined objects or postulated objects. They are *objects*. Likewise, if \mathcal{L} really is truth-stating, then the truths it states are real truths. They are not pretend truths or imaginary truths or postulated truths. They are *truths*. And if \mathcal{L} really is knowledge-conveying, then the knowledge it transmits is genuine knowledge, not pretend knowledge or assumed knowledge or apparent knowledge. It is *knowledge*. The ambiguity-disambiguation strategy is an attempt to escape this semantico-epistemic/ontological (SE-O) assumption. It accepts the SE-O connection but denies that fictional discourse has a robust semantic-epistemic structure. For again, so this story goes, fictional sentences *don't* refer, *aren't* true and *don't* convey knowledge.

There are other ways of reacting to the SE-O thesis. It turns on our recognizing a further feature of paradoxes. It encourages us to see paradoxes as *dilemma-producers*. A paradox presents us with a set of sentences to which we were (or appear to have been) antecedently pledged, not all of which can be consistently persisted with. If a dilemma has a solution, one of two things must be true. At least one sentence in the cluster must be given up, in which case the dilemma is escaped by “grasping a horn”. Or the incompatibility attributed to the cluster must be denied, in which case one has escaped “through the horns” of the dilemma. Ambiguity-disambiguation is a dominant form of through-the-horns dilemma-resolution. Another form of it accepts the SE-O thesis, but denies the existence-condition on objecthood. The most prominent example of this kind is *Meinongianism*. It is also its most radical variation.⁸

Meinongianism is a general theory of objects, whose historical motivation is not a logician’s interest in fiction but rather a philosopher’s interest in intentionality – in the objects of thought. Meinongianism attacks the SE-O assumption by denying that only existing objects are objects. In an extreme form, Meinongianism allows that corresponding to any grammatically well-formed singular term is the object it refers to, never mind that the object might not be real (or even self-inconsistent). On this view, to say that “Sherlock” refers-in-fiction underdescribes the relevant facts. It proposes that the

Holmes lived in London. A similar problem arises from the reference to London. If it is true in the part of this world that is the text of the Holmes stories that London is where Holmes lives, then since London is part of this world, we would seem to have it that “Holmes lived in London” is true of this world. But it isn’t. A third difficulty is whether a text can be considered as a bona fide element in relations $w_i \mathcal{A} w_j$ such that w_i and w_j are elements of \mathcal{W} .

⁸ See, here, Russell (1903), Routley and Routley (1973), Parsons (1980), Jacquette (1996, 2009), Griffin (2005).

better thing to say is that, without any qualification on “refers”, “Sherlock” refers to Sherlock. If supporters of the ambiguity-disambiguation strategy are required to produce a semantics for the “in-fiction” modality, those who exercise the through-the-horns option must produce an ontologized semantics that makes sense of our actual contact with the non-actual.

A less emphatic form of the SE-O thesis is existence-neutral quantification theory. Existence-neutral quantifiers were introduced to preserve the truth of natural language sentences such as, in French, “Il y a des choses qui n’existent pas” or, in English “There are things that don’t exist”, and similar constructions in German via the “es gibt”-quantifier. In English, “There are things that don’t exist” gives the appearance of inconsistency, carrying the information that there *exist* things that *don’t exist*. But according to boosters of existence-neutral quantification, the French and German examples clearly disclose that the “existential” quantifier is not in fact a cognate of the verb “exists”. What makes existence-neutral quantification less radical than its Meinongian cousin is its stricter constraints on what counts as an object. In particular, it is not allowed in existence-neutral logics that any and all referring expressions actually refer. In a Meinongian logic, “the present king of France” refers to the present king of France, never mind that no actual person is he (or it). But there are existence-neutral approaches in which, “the present king of France” doesn’t refer at all.

One might think that existence-neutral systems are pure gold for logicians of fiction. But it is interesting to note that the theory of fiction espoused by one of the founders of existence-neutral logic is a *pragmatic* theory, not a semantic one. (For pragmatics, see below).

A difficult question for the “in-fiction” operator approach crops up as follows. Consider the sentence

1. Sherlock Holmes waved our strange visitor into a chair.

which occurs in the text of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Let \mathcal{T} be a theory in which (1) is ambiguous between

- (1a) w (Sherlock Holmes waved our strange visitor into a chair)

and

- (1b) f (Sherlock Holmes waved our strange visitor into a chair)

where w is an “in-the-world” operator and f is a “in-fiction” operator. It is a peculiarity of a semantics for sentences like (1a) that there is no semantic difference between (1a) itself and (1a)’s *scope*; no difference, that is, between (1a) and (1). It is precisely the opposite with respect to (1b). Sentence (1b) calls for a markedly different semantic interpretation than does (1). Suppose, as is widely supposed, that sentence-meaning is a matter of truth conditions. Then, according to the point at hand, (1b) and (1) will have markedly different *meanings*. This raises two questions of importance.

- i. Do (1) and (1b) have different meanings?

ii. If so, what *is* the difference?

There is a clear way of answering (i). If (1) and (1b) have different truth conditions, they have different meanings, and they do have different truth conditions. Question (ii) is trickier. Given that the meaning of (1b) will bear some essential connection to *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, the meaning of (1) will bear some essential connection to the world – a world, moreover, which will never make it true that Sherlock Holmes waved any strange visitor into any chair.

Free logics (FLs) are a prominent part of the existence-neutral approach to quantification. Free logics are frequently invoked as giving the truth conditions for fictional sentences.⁹ But this is ambiguous. Does it mean that an FL is wanted for (1b) or for (1)? My own view is that the natural fit is with sentences like (1) but not with sentences like (1b). I find myself drawn to a *negative* free logic (NFL) for sentences like (1), in the manner of Burge (1974). It is typical of a NFL that the scope of an \mathcal{F} -sentence – a sentence like (1b) – is always false, and that a false sentence always has a true sentential negation. (This necessitates some departures from classical logic, notably the loss of existential generalization as a universally valid rule). On the other hand, since we don't want sentences like (1b) always to come out false, NFL is not the logic to sort out their truth conditions.

There is a further version of the through-the-horns strategy. It too owes nothing to a motivating interest in fiction, but rather to an interest in mathematical existence. This is *Hilbert's famous principle* according to which a sufficient condition of the existence of a mathematical object is a logically consistent description of it. Here the SE-O principle is retained, but once again an underlying assumption is not. This is the assumption that except for transformations of already-existing materials, real objects, or objects having real existence, cannot be created solely by human intervention. Objects are not, so to speak, free for the thinking up. There are logicians who reject this assumption in fictional contexts. They hold that fictional objects actually exist and are fully real objects. In so saying, they attach prime importance to the originating power of authors, exercised by means of object-creating stipulations. Accordingly, the inconsistencies alleged by our aporetic clusters would hold of non-author-created objects, but they don't hold of author-created objects. Here too, anyone availing himself of the object-stipulationist option must produce a semantics for it. It must be a semantics that absorbs the impact of a class of actual objects created *ex nihilo*, and it must produce a motivated theory for their stipulated truths.

Yet another point of impatience elicited by the aporetic characterization of the problems of fiction comes from the *actualist-realist camp*.¹⁰ In one not untypical formulation of this view, and contrary to the Parmenidean position that no object is a fictional object, fictional “objects” are indeed objects, albeit objects of a special kind. If this is right, our four aporetic clusters fall like king-pins. In aporia 1, (1b) is the culprit (“Fictional objects don't exist”). In aporia 2, (2a) is the culprit (“Statements about the non-existent can't be true”). Likewise aporia 3 is defanged by rejection of (3b) – “There

⁹ See, for example, Sainsbury (2005).

¹⁰ Another small but representative sample is van Inwagen (1977), (1983), Howell (1983), (1998), Salmon (1998), Thomassen (1998), Soames (2002), Schiffer (2003), Voltolini (2006).

are no premisses about fictional objects”, and aporia 4 by rejecting (4b) – which again is “No statement about a fictional object is true”.

It is rather typical of fictional actualism that what makes for the specialness of the objects of fiction is their *abstractness*. Thus, while Sherlock Holmes is a man, no man is Sherlock Holmes. And, if that isn’t an aporetic cluster, what would be? The same holds for whole classes of ascriptions: Although Holmes is a resident of London, no resident of London is Holmes: although Holmes is a brilliant detective, no detective is Holmes; although we all refer to the doctor who was Holmes’ (fictional) biographer, no doctor and no biographer was that referent; although there are true sentences about the man Holmes and the man Watson, no fact about any man or men makes that sentence true, and so on.¹¹ All this creates for the logic of fiction problems not unlike those that crop up under Parmenidean assumptions. Take the problem of Holmes’ manhood. How can it be the case that something exists whom Holmes is and that, for the manhood-ascribing predicate “is a man”, Holmes satisfies that predicate, yet also be true that no man is Holmes – that is, that nothing satisfying the predicate “is a man” is Holmes? Here, too, it would appear that the answer lies in the ambiguity of these clashing ascriptions. There is a *sense* in which Holmes is a man and a *sense* in which no man is Holmes. If this were so, “Holmes is a man” and “Doyle is a man” would have different kinds of truth conditions. Whatever may be their difference in fine, the first set of truth conditions involve features of the world, whereas the second set involve features of a text. But the trouble is, when in our untutored moments we refer to Holmes and say that true things about him, we experience ourselves as fulfilling the former constraints, knowing full well that it is the latter constraints that apply. More double-aspectness still.¹²

In what follows, I shall be thinking primarily of non-actualist Parmenidean approaches to fiction. Non-Parmenidean theories will, in various respects, call for diverse treatment. But, in general, it won’t prove over-difficult to adjust what I say about the Parmenidean case to the non-Parmenidean case, and I shall leave the task of doing so as an exercise for the interested reader.

3. *Salty tears and racing hearts*

Nearly all the significant attempts at producing a logic of fiction share an important procedural orientation. They see their task as elucidating our *semantic* relations to the fictional. Accordingly, a semantically oriented theory of fiction is one that must develop an account of reference, truth and inference in fictional contexts. On this approach the logic’s motivating data are those facts or apparent facts about the fictional recorded in the quadruple of semantic intuitions introduced above in section 1. While there is no denying the appeal and the appropriateness of this orientation, it might well be the case that a logic of fiction would benefit from some attention to what broadly could be called our *psychological* relations with the fictional. A case in point is the role of the emotions in our interactions with fictional goings-on. A further example is the whole

¹¹ Note also the failure-of-symmetry problem. Suppose in one of Doyle’s stories that Holmes had tea with Prime Minister Gladstone. Then it would be true of Holmes that he had tea with Gladstone but *not* true of Gladstone that *he* had tea with Holmes. For discussion, see Woods (1969) and Griffin (2005), pp. 24-30, p. 32, n. 15.

¹² For problems with realist approaches, see Everett (2005).

question of fictional belief-formation. These are matters that non-logician fiction-theorists take frequent note of, especially the first. Perhaps there is also something there for logicians.

If we did decide to proceed in this way, there is reason to think that the following facts, or apparent facts, would constitute the basic *psychological* data for a logic of fiction:

1. Readers of fiction exhibit linguistic behaviour that indicate (nuclear) *belief* in the contained sentences and of those that are inferable from them.
2. Readers of fiction *react emotionally* to the persons and events described by such sentences.
3. People who have (nuclear) beliefs about and emotional reactions to the persons and events of fiction aren't concurrently unaware that the beliefs are false and the emotions are reactions to non-events.
4. Intuitively and initially, the set composed of statements (1), (2) and (3) may strike us as an aporetic cluster. But in fact, people who satisfy (1), (2) and (3) are not in any degree in a state of cognitive dissonance about the states of affairs they jointly report.

This lack of cognitive dissonance is a matter of fundamental importance. There are at least three explanations of it. One is that the reason we feel no cognitive distress at crying over the death of Little Nell is that we are under the spell of an illusion that temporarily blocks our awareness that nothing is actually happening. A second possibility is that the absence of cognitive distress is best explained by the hypothesis that we don't in fact stand in emotional relations to Little Nell, but rather in something like "pretend" or "make-believe" emotional relations. Both these suggestions have attracted the favourable consideration of legions of non-logician theorists of fiction (and of a smattering of logicians too).

Whatever might be said of them in detail, the present proposals share a difficulty. The difficulty is that they appear not to be true to the empirical facts of our literary experiences. The illusion thesis overlooks the fact that even while sobbing at Nell's death we do not lose sight of the fact that no such thing is happening. The pretense, or make-believe, thesis has it that our reaction to Nell's death isn't real; it is only pretend. But, then, how did the front of my shirt get so wet when I cried my heart out for Nell?

Support for (1) arises from the widely agreed to fact that if someone claims that Sherlock Holmes lived at 57 Berczy Street, then he is wrong. It is not true that he lived there. 221B Baker Street is where he lived. And let us say again that support for (2) arises from the fact that not only are people engaged by the events of fiction, but they can also be deeply affected by them, as with the tears triggered by Nell's demise or the elevated heart rate occasioned by Smiley's fears of Karla's late arrival at Checkpoint Charlie.

Proposition (3) speaks for itself. What explains (4)? Why, in particular, are we able to cry over Nell without believing for a nanosecond that there is anything to cry over? There is an answer to the *semantic* version of this question which we should pause

to consider. Why do we say that it is true that Holmes lived in Baker Street, knowing that there is no such person living there? If we examined the answers reviewed above, we see a dominant theme: While it's true that Holmes lived there, it's not true that he really did live there. No one doubts that this is a vexed saying, which it is the responsibility of the theorist of fiction to elucidate and justify. But it is not unreasonable to think that, vexed or not, it is *true*. Certainly it is something that people in general have little hesitation in saying. It is a matter of some importance that no such answer is available in the case of the psychological counterpart of this situation. If we ask, "Why did you cry over Little Nell's death, knowing that there is no such person to cry over?", it is not all convincing to say that although we cried, there was no crying really going on. Equally, it beggars belief that the crying wasn't real, that the crying was only pretend crying and the splashing tears were only *ersatz* splashings of *ersatz* tears.

Perhaps this is a trifle too quick an objection. No one doubts that my tears are real. But isn't it possible that those tears were occasioned by a mental state that is not in fact the relational state of being sad about Nell's death? True, this is not a possibility to be dismissed out of hand. However, if we embrace it, there are some tricky questions that press for attention. One is to characterize the state that appears to be sadness at Nell's death. The other is to explain what it is about this state that triggers those tears, given that the appearance of our standing in an emotional relation to Nell is not one that takes us in.

A suggestion similar to the pretend-emotion thesis is that while we do not stand in emotional relations to fictional persons or events, we are nevertheless capable of "quasi-emotions". When we read the relevant passages of Dickens' text, we fall into the quasi-emotions of shock and sadness. These states are not as they appear. When I am seized by the quasi-emotion of sadness over as, it appears to me, Little Nell's death, there is indeed a relation in which I stand to something. But the something is neither Nell nor Nell's death; there are no such things. Rather the relation in which I stand when I have that quasi-emotion of sadness is to Dickens' *text*. Suppose that the quasi-emotion view had legs. Then one of its virtues would be that it makes intelligible the pretense or make-believe theory. For we could now conjecture that what pretense-theorists were trying to get at was a theory of a type in which our relations to the fictional are *quasi*-relations in much the way that our sadness about Nell is quasi-sadness. But, of course, we are now left with the task of explaining what it is about my connection to Dickens' text that could possibly trigger my tears. In any event, pretense, make-believe and quasi-emotion theories embed a common assumption. It is that "Nell-sadness" and real sadness have some of the same causal effects without having the same kinds of causal antecedents. They are, so to say, "causally askew" from the real thing.

It is possible, then, that a suitably vigorous account of our semantical relations to fiction will have to await convincing answers to the problems generated by our affective and other psychological relations to it. Once again, it may occur to the would-be theorist that his efforts will not be crowned with success unless he takes proper measure of a lack of cognitive dissonance attaching to the aporetic cluster (1) to (3). In this regard, a further possibility must be taken note of. It is that in the passage in which Dickens chronicles the death of Nell, there is the appearance of its being *reported*, and that in the passage in which Le Carré describes Karla's defection, there is the appearance of its being *reported*. (Just as in the quasi-emotion account, our quasi-emotion of sadness appears to be, or is experienced as, sadness *at* Nell's death.) Of course, no one seriously supposes that these

sentences do in fact report the goings-on they appear to describe. Rather they *create* those events. Even so, they do have the appearance of reports. Reports are rendered in the assertive mode. They narrate the states of affairs they report. They are fact-stating modes of speech. The syntactic heart and soul of reports is the declarative sentence. What our present speculations help us to see is that when a declarative sense is used (rather than mentioned) in non-reportative ways, it can – and typically does – retain the appearance of reportedness. It retains the appearance of fact-staters.

We would do well to avoid a certain confusion about the apparentness we are here ascribing to literary texts. The sentences of *Smiley's People* have the appearance of reports and the appearance of fact-staters. These appearances are neither illusions nor pretendings. The illusion-interpretation is ruled out by the fact that the appearance of fact-stating does not at all disguise the non-fact-stating character that Le Carré's sentences actually possess. Likewise, the pretend-interpretation of their apparently reportative character is ruled out by the fact that our merely pretending that these sentences are reportative renders unintelligible the empirical reality of our reactions to them. Against this it might be objected that we also cry at the death of Juliet in Prokofiev's ballet. We do so knowing that the performance is *play-acting*. Yes, so it is. But it hardly follows that in our sadness over Juliet's wretchedness, we ourselves are playing at being sad.

More positively, the sense in which the sentences of Dickens's, Doyle's and Le Carré's stories carry the appearance of reports is the same sense as that carried by a fallacy that has been successfully diagnosed. A person who is fully seized of the inductive frailty of "Since this one is four-legged, ocelots are four-legged" is not all precluded from seeing that it appears to be a safe and reasonable generalization. For this sense of "appearance", neither the illusion nor the pretense-interpretation stands up very well. The quasi-relation approach does better precisely because it is a variation of the *apparent*-assertion approach. . It is in this same sense that authors' sentences have the appearance of reports.

4. *Causal powers*

Assertions have causal powers. The same is true of apparent assertions. One of their standing powers – albeit a defeasible one – is to push the psychological buttons of those to whom they are directed. If someone reports to us the death of the little girl next door, it may make us cry. If someone tells us of the final gripping minutes in the match between Italy and Spain, our heart-rate may be pushed up. What the fictional cases suggest is that it is not a condition on the button-pushing causal efficacy of these narratives that they be considered accurate. On the contrary, what these cases suggest is (1) that psychological or psychophysical reactions to reports turn on the appearances they carry, and (2) that knowing that an appearance is false does not preclude a report's carrying it. (So, again, appearances aren't illusions and aren't pretendings). Accordingly what, in the end, may be needed is a semantics of literary appearances. Some logicians will not like this suggestion. It smacks, they will say, of idealism. (But see below.)

A final word about reports. Assertions are kinds of *telling*. Being told things is a central feature of our cognitive lives. Virtually everything that we know or think we know we have been *told*. The economies of such an arrangement speak for themselves,

and do so in a way that suggests an adaptive advantage for them. This further suggests that the knowledge-by-being-told modality is a deeply primitive arrangement. If this is right, then we would have it that

1. it is *typical* of a report that Φ that Φ be believed on receipt of it.
2. and the connection between being told that Φ and believing that Φ is *causal*.

Here, too, confusions should be avoided. It is not at all essential to the point at hand that the beliefs induced by this modality be epistemically respectable. On that point, all that I will say here is that if the receptive possibility were realized, then most of what we think we know we don't. It suffices for present purposes that it is an empirically supported defeasible fact about reportative utterance is that it causally induces psychological acceptance of its message. Except when there is particular reason not to, beings like us believe what we are told and do so in consequence of the belief-inducing powers of reportative utterance.

The causal powers thesis is not an undisputed one in the rapidly expanding literature on testimony. In as much as it is the central part of the present suggestion about how attestation is related to belief and to the emotions, this is an issue which theorists have a stake in closing, one way or the other. But as long as the causal powers thesis remains an open possibility, there is a further possibility to consider. Let us say that believing that Holmes lived in Baker Street while knowing full well that he didn't, and that crying over the death of Nell while knowing full well that there was no such death and no such person is a "double-aspect" response to these tellings. What the present hypothesis suggests is that double-aspected responses are produced by mixed causal signals. It suggests in particular that for the kinds of case under review, these competing causal signals aren't (respectively) strong and weak enough for the one to neutralize the causal efficacy of the other. This contrasts markedly with standard situations of belief-revision. If up to now you believe that Φ and now come to believe that ψ , and also that ψ is inconsistent with Φ , then for a great range of cases your belief-forming mechanisms will *erase* your belief that Φ . This is precisely what doesn't happen in double-aspected situations. Not only does my belief that no one is Holmes not erase my belief that Holmes lived in Baker Street, but it is not something that I am unaware of and troubled by.

What are we to say of these double-aspected situations? However we are minded to answer this question, there is a fact of some importance that should be taken into account. It is that my belief that Holmes lived in Baker Street, unlike my belief that Barbara lives in Berczy Street, is attended by significantly different possibilities of action. I can in principle visit Barbara in Berczy Street, but I can't visit Holmes in Baker Street. I can visit Baker Street, but I can't visit Holmes. This raises a critical question about the identity conditions for beliefs. If apparently different tokens of some same belief type turn out to produce markedly different types of action possibilities, can it be that they really are beliefs of that same type? A logic of fiction will have to say something about this. Here, too, there is no room to consider in detail how such a logic would go. But before closing this section, we might briefly consider in a quite general way one possible line of development. Suppose we took seriously the suggestion that

- a. the belief that Barbara lives in Berczy Street

and

b. the belief that Holmes lives in Baker Street

are not tokens of the type

c. the belief that $x R y$.¹³

Suppose that, upon reflection, we decided that (a) and (b) carry different ontological commitments, what with (a) requiring that the believer stand in some relation to Barbara (and perhaps to Berczy Street), and (b) requiring only that the believer stand in some relation to (let us say it briefly) the appearance of Holmes (and perhaps to the real Baker Street). If this – or something like it – were so, then the relation of residence imputed in these two cases could not plausibly be instances of the same relation. Apparent people can't live in real streets. Apparent people can apparently live in real streets (and apparent ones too).

For all its sketchiness, the present line of thought possesses the advantage of suggesting a rationale for other theories, correct or not. If the belief that Holmes lived in Baker Street cannot be the sort of thing that the belief that Barbara lived in Berczy Street is, then one can see the attraction of the ambiguation-disambiguation strategy. Similarly, one can begin to appreciate how people might be drawn to the pretense-interpretation, and even to the illusion-interpretation, mistaken as I believe that latter two may be.

5. *Pragmatics*

I have been assuming all along that a logic of fiction will pivot on a semantic theory for fictional texts and fictional discourse. As commonly understood, a semantic theory for a language \mathcal{L} is an account of the meanings of the sentences of \mathcal{L} . Meanings are fixed by truth conditions. Accordingly, a semantics for \mathcal{L} will produce for every sentence Φ of \mathcal{L} a biconditional in the form

Φ is true if and only if ...

where the dots are place-holders for Φ 's truth conditions. When we wish to concentrate on those items of \mathcal{L} that are fictional sentences relative to some text or texts – call this a subset \mathcal{F} of \mathcal{L} – the standard approach takes on a certain complexity. For one thing, a decision will have to be taken on the syntactic form of the sentences in \mathcal{F} . If we thought that they incorporate an “in-fiction” qualification (“ f ” e.g., our friend f), then we would say that the items in \mathcal{F} are sentences in the form “ $f(\Phi)$ ”. The job of the semantics of \mathcal{F} would be to specify truth conditions for sentences in this form. A further complication also concerns the membership of \mathcal{F} . We may take it as given that \mathcal{F} will contain all the

¹³ Similarly, on the Holmes-as-a-real-but-abstract-object approach, there is no entity type *man* of which Holmes and Doyle are tokens.

sentences that occur in the literary text in question. But it is commonly agreed that the story at hand is constituted not only by the sentences of the text by also by those that arise from them by inference. Correspondingly, one of the jobs of a theory of fiction would be to elucidate the conditions under which such inferences are correct.

No doubt there is more still to a semantics of fiction, but our present remarks will do for the purposes of this Preface. What I should like to call attention to now is the possibility that a theory that honours the speculations of section 3, especially those relating to assertion and apparent assertion, is better conceived of as a *pragmatic* theory rather than a semantic one. A central suggestion was that the sentences of \mathcal{F} are apparent assertions, and as such are susceptible to at least some causal consequences of a kind that attend the reception of real assertions. In an obvious extension of this idea, the sentences of \mathcal{F} appear to refer, have the appearance of truth, and appear to convey knowledge of their apparent referents. All this suggests that a logic of fiction should *not* pivot on a semantics for these sentences, short of one that would verify that they don't refer, aren't true and don't convey knowledge. Instead, a logic of fiction should pivot on an account of apparent assertion (within which supplementary treatments of apparent reference, apparent truth and so could be worked up). But a logic of assertion is pragmatics, not semantics. The conditions that are its stock-in-trade are felicity conditions rather than truth conditions.

Accordingly, a pragmatic theory of apparent assertion will specify the conditions under which our utterance constitutes an apparent assertion. It is a theory that fills in the dots of a biconditional in the form

In uttering u one makes the apparent assertion that Φ if and only if

It will also determine closure-conditions under which an utterance that constitutes an apparent assertion Φ also constitute the apparent assertion ψ .

Perhaps a theory of utterance-conditions for apparent assertion is something that should be developed and placed in the family of theoretical approaches already to hand or in process of development. If this were indeed a fruitful thing to explore, it would be natural occasion for a supplementary account of the causal powers of apparent assertion, an account that would tell us why and in what sense the sentences of \mathcal{F} trigger beliefs and emotions.

While it has attracted and is presently attracting some worthy contenders, the logic of fiction is a decidedly open research programme in which comparatively few issues have been settled definitively and finally. This makes the appearance of the present volume something to applaud. Not only are its essays full of challenging ideas wrought with technical skill, but they mark an advance in the internationalization of the logic of fiction project, bringing to it larger numbers of participants, and a greater diversity of analytical perspective.

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