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DEBATE/DISCUSSION

How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love ‘Sherlock Holmes’: A Reply to García-Carpintero

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RESUMEN

Defiendo un punto de vista kripkeano sensible al contexto de los nombres de ficción que, afirmo, hace verdaderas a oraciones como “Sherlock Holmes fuma”, y que, a la vez, es anti-realista [Tiedke (2011)]. García-Carpintero (2019) argumenta que mi concepción es simplemente una variedad notacional de realismo. Defiendo que este argumento descansa sobre dos supuestos: (a) que la predicación puede entenderse solamente en términos de atribución de propiedades; y (b) que los nombres, si tienen significado, tienen que tener referentes. Rechazo tanto (a) como (b). En este texto presento las razones que motivan el interés por el puzle de los nombres de ficción, exploro el punto de vista del propio García-Carpintero y defiendo que mi posición no podría considerarse como realista.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *nombres propios, ficción, referencia, verdad.*

ABSTRACT

I defend a particular context-sensitive Kripkean view of fictional names that I claim makes sentences like ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ true, but that I also claim is anti-realist [Tiedke (2011)]. García-Carpintero (2019) argues that my view is simply a notational variant of realism. I argue that this argument rests on two assumptions: (a) that predication can be understood only in terms of property attribution; and (b) that names, if they have meaning, then they must have referents. I reject both (a) and (b). Here I motivate the interest of the puzzle of fictional names, explore García-Carpintero’s own view, and argue that my own view could not be realist.

KEYWORDS: *Proper Names; Fiction; Truth; Reference.*

I. HOW I CAME TO WORRY ABOUT ‘SHERLOCK HOLMES’

In my “Proper Names and Their Fictional Uses” I argue for an anti-realist, yet Kripkean analysis of certain sentences that have fictional names as their subjects that explains their truth [Tiedke (2011)]. In his “Semantics of Fictional Names,” García-Carpintero [(2019)] critically surveys the most recent literature on the topic of fictional names. One of his targets is realism about fictional discourse. Realists about fictional discourse believe: (1) it contains true sentences with fictional names as their subjects; that sentences containing names can be true only if those names have referents; and that fictional names have fictional characters – abstract objects – as their referents. The fundamental problem with this view is that not all true sentences having fictional names as their subject are plausibly about abstract objects. This leads to the need to introduce disjunctive conceptions of property attribution, which García-Carpintero claims are implausible, and for that reason, realism should be rejected. He also maintains, however, that fictional discourse contains truth evaluable content. I agree. But García-Carpintero claims that, unlike his own view, my view is not truly an anti-realist view. As I understand the criticism, the worry is that the difference between my view and the realist view amounts only to a disagreement about how to use the expression ‘referent’.

I will explain and motivate the puzzle of fictional names, as I see it, by giving a description of my own line of reasoning about proper names, and how that led me to focus specifically on fictional names. First, however, note that any philosopher of language who spends a significant amount of time thinking about the puzzle of fictional names, you can safely bet endorses a connection between the semantics of sentences and their truth — a truth-conditional framework. Otherwise, why bother worrying about whether sentences containing fictional names as subjects are truth evaluable at all?

I’m going to assume in my response, then, that García-Carpintero and I have this much in common, even though we have different ways of resolving the nightmares fictional names can cause a would-be Kripkean or anti-realist. We do, however, diverge in the language we use to discuss the puzzle. For instance, I talk about sentences as the bearers of truth – in the old-fashioned Fregean way – as if the recognition of serious context-sensitivity, and the ubiquitous use of non-declaratives just never happened. In contrast, García-Carpintero’s discussion has fully absorbed these “contemporary” lessons — assigning only utterances truth values, as well as relying heavily on the vocabulary of speech act theory. Since I

found myself spending some 20 or so years worrying about the meanings of sentences containing just two or three words, for instance, the sentence 'Spiderman spins webs', and these sentences did not really raise these issues in any terribly serious way, I found the old-fashioned vocabulary more economical — somewhat ironic since the account of names I endorse holds that they are a context-sensitive expressions [Pelczar & Rainsbury (1998); Tiedke (2011)]. Nevertheless, I will stick to that way of speaking unless it makes a serious theoretical difference.

García-Carpintero and I also motivate the puzzle of fictional names in different ways. I approach it from the semantic side, whereas García-Carpintero seems to approach it from the metaphysical side. Either way, both of us found ourselves working within a literature in which Meinongianism [Meinong (1904)] — the idea that there are objects that do not exist — is still a live option.

I took an interest in fictional names because of the initial threat that the existence of empty names posed to what was the only piece of philosophical literature — Kripke's *Naming and Necessity* (1980) — that contained claims I saw as unquestionably true. For instance, one of Kripke's three arguments against the standard classical descriptivist view appeared conclusive — what's known as the "epistemic" argument. And his ideas concerning how names truly function, as devices for tracking the same individual throughout different contexts, just seemed intuitively correct, despite this idea being very unlike the view of names accepted at that time — that they are shorthand for descriptions that uniquely identify their referents — a view I understood only after taking a course in philosophy of language.

However, if names are just devices for tracking referents, then what do we say about the meaning of names that have no referents — empty names? Empty names would seem to be defective in some way. In fact, if we accept that the only meaning a name could have is that of having a referent — a Millan theory [Mill (1874)] aka direct reference theory — then empty names would, in fact, be completely meaningless. But empty names do not appear to be meaningless, at least not in the way that a string like 'husheiuwwrbe' appears to be. Kripke's theory on its own, however, does not exclude the possibility that names could have a "sense" — a non-truth-conditional aspect of meaning — in addition to having a tracking function [Frege (1892)]. I decided, then, that the existence of empty names on its own was not a decisive worry for the would-be Kripkean, so long as Millianism was rejected.

What did worry me, however, was that discourse containing empty names as subjects did not just simply fail to be gibberish, it sometimes appeared to be truth-evaluable, and sometimes even true. And this, this was not at all consistent with Kripke's ideas. On any Kripkean theory of names, their contribution to the truth conditional content of sentences that contain them are their referents, and empty names lack these. Even rejecting Millianism, in favor of a softer Kripkean model that allows for empty names to have some kind of "sense" does not address this issue.

Sentences known as "negative existentials" are often used to illustrate the previous point. The sentence 'Vulcan does not exist', for instance, appears to be true, and yet the name 'Vulcan' is empty. But if the name 'Vulcan' is empty, then on a Kripkean model, it should not be able to occur in any true sentences at all — not even those that are true precisely because the name is empty. And this is fairly ironic, if not outright paradoxical. However, I did not believe that even this issue was decisive for the would-be Kripkean, since the predicate 'exist' is itself suspect, and therefore the problem might be due to its nature rather than due to a commitment to any specific theory of names.

Then, however, I began to consider sentences that did not contain the predicate 'exist' but that still seemed true, sentences from fictional discourse like the earlier sentence I mentioned 'Spiderman spins webs'. Sentences like this did not seem to be easily dismissed. My impression was that they posed a quite different, and much stronger challenge to Kripkean theories than those concerning the meaning of empty names, or how to explain the truth values of negative existentials.

It seemed to me, for instance, that I could rationally accept that I was reading a particular bit of fiction that contained the sentence 'Spiderman spins webs', and then truthfully utter it, and suffer no guilt, no cognitive dissonance of any kind, no sense of being disingenuous, and so on. And then my students, in class after class, seemed to agree. If I wrote the previous sentence on the board and asked my students: What do you think? Is this true or false? None of them struggled with deciding what to say. The answer was always, almost instantly, "true." It was only amongst philosophers that I ever got the answer "false." And, for that reason, it struck me that this answer was one coming from individuals already in the grip of a theory.

In contrast, Kripke's work seemed to be the work of someone who was able to intuitively "see" from a natural language speaker's pre-theoretical point of view. So, while I was convinced that a Kripkean theory of names had to be true, I was equally convinced that the sentence 'Spiderman spins

webs' also had to be true. And clearly, this was not because I thought there was someone running around some city with the powers of web-spinning, just as my students did not believe it on those grounds either. There is no Spiderman. He is a mere fictional character.

Additionally, there were also other sentences containing the name 'Spiderman' that seemed potentially true. For instance, the sentence 'Spiderman is a fictional character' seems like it might be true. Kripkeans, including Millians, often explain the truth of these sentences by denying that fictional names are empty. Instead, as mentioned, they refer to abstract objects – fictional characters. However, I found the existence of such objects puzzling and rather suspect, and so I asked my mother, who had attended school up until the eighth grade, why she would agree that Spiderman was said to be a fictional character. Her response was because Spiderman "just isn't."

So, there I was, faced with giving an analysis of the truth of a sentence like 'Spiderman spins webs' that was anti-realist, and yet supported a Kripkean theory of proper names – a seemingly impossible task – but one I hoped to have made some progress towards in my published work. It would be disappointing, then, if García-Carpintero's recent criticism turned out to be correct — that I'm truly a realist and just did not know it. I fully understand, however, why it might seem that way. The worry was one myself had, but having thought it through carefully, it turns out that it is not possible for my view to be a variant of realism, at least not a variant of any kind of realist view I have ever encountered.

I have organized the rest of the discussion as follows: the next section lists different examples of sentences from different kinds of fictional discourse and explains their potential metaphysical implications. Section three examines the motivations and problems for standard realist views, and then in section four, I begin a somewhat lengthy examination of García-Carpintero's anti-realist view, to which I offer several criticisms, mainly because it is a view that seemed to me to be fresh, and to which I am sympathetic, and for that reason, I felt, demanded significant attention. In section five, I explain my own anti-realist view and apply it to different kinds of fictional discourse. Section six describes García-Carpintero's criticism of my view, and in section seven, I explain why that criticism is flawed. The last section considers what needs to be explored next.

In addressing the views of standard realism, García-Carpintero's view, and my own, I begin with the treatments of the discourse that García-Carpintero uses to motivate the puzzle of fictional names, despite the fact

that, on my own view, such discourse is false. Nevertheless, this ordering maintains uniformity in the organization of the discussion, as well as respecting the standard motivation for worrying about fictional discourse.

II. KINDS OF FICTIONAL DISCOURSE AND THEIR METAPHYSICAL IMPLICATIONS

García-Carpintero considers different sentences occurring within fictional discourse, and identifies them as belonging to different categories, each raising their own specific issues about their proper treatment. Consider the following three sentences:

- (1) Sherlock Holmes smokes
- (2) According to the story, Sherlock Holmes smokes
- (3) Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character

García-Carpintero claims that, in certain contexts, each of these sentences appear to be truth evaluable, and as we both agree, can even appear to be true.¹

Concerning sentence (1), García-Carpintero correctly points out that if it is true, this could occur only after a story has been composed. By penning sentence (1), for instance, Doyle is not asserting anything, since he is not reporting on facts, but is instead “creating something spun out of whole cloth” [Kripke (1980). p. 160]. This use of a sentence like (1) García-Carpintero calls a “textual” use.

However, as he also notes, sentences like (1) are uttered outside of fiction-making contexts. Readers of Doyle’s work might utter it, as well as others familiar with the work’s content, and in those contexts, a sentence like (1) can appear to convey information that can be true or false. García-Carpintero claims if a sentence like (1) is true, it is true only in virtue of the truth of a sentence like (2), which reports on the content of a story’s plot. These sentences García-Carpintero calls “paratextual.”

Sentence (3) also seems to be true. Its truth, however, cannot be explained by relying on a sentence like (2), since it does not report on the content of a story at all, but rather on the nature of fiction-making itself. Fictional discourse that contains sentences like (3), García-Carpintero calls “metatextual” discourse.

Because sentences (1) and (3) both appear to be true, this immediately raises alarms about their potential metaphysical implications. The worry stems from a widespread commitment to a semantic rule – call it rule “R” — for evaluating the truth of a simple predicative sentence with a proper name as its subject. According to rule R such a sentence is true iff the referent picked out by its subject has the property delineated by its predicate – the set of members that predicate maps to the value true – and is otherwise false or not true.² For example, sentence (1) is true iff the name ‘Sherlock Holmes’ refers to, or designates, an individual referent Sherlock Holmes, and he has the property of smoking – is a member of the set of smokers.

But almost no one wants to endorse the idea that sentence (1) satisfies rule R, at least not in any obvious way.³ For that reason, the intuition that sentence (1) is true is often treated in the way suggested by García-Carpintero: it is true if it is understood as short or elliptical for what is true according to a story as expressed by a sentence like (2). This approach is supposed to explain the intuition that sentence (1) is true without entailing the existence of Sherlock Holmes, since sentence (2) – prefixed with a story operator – can be true even if sentence (1) is false.⁴ Unlike sentence (1), however, there is no developed strategy for mitigating the potential metaphysical implications of sentence (3). Accepting that it is true seems to require realism, which I will now discuss.

III. FICTIONAL DISCOURSE AND TRUTH: THE STANDARD REALIST ACCOUNT

The claim that sentence (3) is true is compelling, as is rule R. If so, then realism is an obvious way to accommodate them both by claiming that names like ‘Sherlock Holmes’ have referents and that these referents are fictional characters. This strategy appears to work well for metatextual discourse but falls short for addressing paratextual discourse.

III.1 *Metatextual Discourse: Fictional Entities as Abstract Objects*

The intuition that sentence (3) is true, in part, stems from the fact that it occurs in discourse that is clearly meaningful and intended to be serious. There is, for instance, an entire academic discipline called “English,” referring to the study of English literature, not the language, that traffics in sentences like (3), as well as sentences that refer to plots, themes, literary

styles, genres, and so on. And, most people believe that there are such things as plots, themes, literary styles, and genres. The realist therefore concludes that it is only charitable to treat fictional discourse involving sentences like (3) as being about something. In fact, as vanIwagen (1977) argues, it is extremely difficult to eliminate all realist talk of fictional characters.⁵ For the realist, fictional names are about fictional characters, and these are simply entities that are of the kind that, say, a plot might be. Most reasonably, a fictional character is an abstract object of some kind that can have properties like being a protagonist, or symbolizing humanity's fear of the unknown.

III.2 *Paratextual Discourse: Realism and Rule R*

What motivates the realist to interpret sentence (3) as true, however, should also motivate them to accept sentence (1) as true. For instance, as a matter of empirical fact, natural language speakers assign the value true to utterances of sentences like 'Sherlock Holmes smokes' 80 percent of the time [Piccinini and Scott (2010)]. That is most natural language speakers take sentences like (1) to be true. If so, then the realist's motivation for treating sentence (3) as true, because it occurs in a well-established discourse that is meaningful and intended to be serious, applies equally to sentence (1).

As I mentioned, however, given rule R, the metaphysical consequences of committing to the truth of sentence (1) are much more severe than in the case of sentence (3). By rule R, if sentence (1) is true, there must be some individual referent Sherlock Holmes and that individual referent must smoke. But since only spatial temporal objects smoke, if sentence (1) is true, then Sherlock Holmes must be a spatial temporal object. Realists, however, never intended to be committed to this idea. To avoid this consequence, the realist might appeal to the story operator account, on the grounds that theoretical discourse – like that used in the discipline English – is serious discourse, but casual everyday discourse is not. Sentences like (3) that occur in serious discourse are true, but sentences like (1) that occur in casual everyday discourse are not. They are only qualifiedly true, as expressed by a sentence like (2).⁶ This would allow the realist to avoid a commitment to the truth of sentence (1).

However, not even the story operator account eliminates the problem that paratextual discourse poses for the realist. On a realist interpretation, the truth of sentence (2) would require that, according to the story, Sherlock Holmes – an abstract fictional character – smokes, and this seems just as false as sentence (1).

Because an appeal to story operators does not allow for a plausible realist treatment of paratextual discourse, the realist must pursue another option. For instance, the realist might revise rule R in a way that allows for a sentence like (1) to be true, but not in virtue of facts about spatial temporal objects, but instead abstract fictional characters. That is, the evaluation rule for certain predicative sentences that have fictional names as their subjects, would have to allow for abstract objects to have properties like smoking. This would entail that there must be more than one way to have a property [Zalta (1983)]. Rule R, then, to accommodate paratextual discourse, would need to be replaced by a disjunctive rule that encodes two ways an abstract object might have properties — some sense in which they can have concrete properties like smoking, and some other sense in which they can have abstract properties like being a protagonist. The rule for evaluating the truth of predicative sentences within fictional discourse, then, would be disjunctive.

However, explaining what it is to have properties at all, even in some ordinary way, has been a historically difficult philosophical issue. For instance, if an object has a property like being red, does it “instantiate,” “exemplify,” or “manifest” redness? Is being red to have some single metaphysical object – the property red – in common? Or is it that red things simply resemble one another in a way that they overlap to form a natural group? There is still no agreement about answers to these questions. To add resolving what it could be for an abstract object to have a concrete property simply makes things worse. It is for this reason that theorists like García-Carpintero and I shy away from realism about fictional characters.

IV. FICTIONAL DISCOURSE AND TRUTH: GARCÍA-CARPINTERO'S ANTI-REALIST ACCOUNT

Initially, my intention was to show only that my view is not, in fact, realist. However, García-Carpintero outlines his own approach to fictional discourse that resolves long-standing problems with some standard theories in novel ways. And, a novel solution, if it withstands proper scrutiny, might tempt me to reconsider some of the standard views I long ago abandoned. For this reason, I spend a significant amount of time exploring and critiquing García-Carpintero's view. Ultimately, I find it has other unacceptable consequences for me, but they are new unacceptable consequences. This is progress.

IV.1 *Metatextual Discourse: García-Carpintero's Dead Metaphor Analysis*

García-Carpintero, like the realist, endorses the truth of sentence (3), and rule R. To maintain an anti-realist stance, he invokes Yablo's figuralist approach [Yablo (2001)] — a view developed to explain how metaphorical speech is truth-evaluable in any context, but it can also be used to explain the truth of metatextual discourse. As Yablo points out, metaphorical speech can occur in contexts in which the metaphor itself concerns discourse that is false or merely representational. This kind of metaphorical speech can also be true in virtue of expressing something true about that kind of discourse, as we might think is the case with metatextual discourse, which is about a practice that should carry no ontological debts — the practice of fiction-making.

According to García-Carpintero, the truth of a sentence like (3) depends upon the “hypostatization” or reification of certain expressions like ‘fictional character’ generating a discourse that is initially metaphorical, but later loses this status, as occurs in cases of dead metaphors. According to García-Carpintero, the expression ‘fictional character’ is used figuratively in place of the sets of sentences associated with the different names contained within a work of fiction.⁷ Introducing the expression ‘fictional character’, then, appears to have been motivated by the desire for a vocabulary that enables more efficient communication about works of fiction, since it allows a speaker to avoid the need to list a very large set of sentences in order to convey something about a work of fiction to a hearer. For instance, a speaker might wish to say something general about works of fiction, such as what this sentence expresses:

- (4) In most works of fiction, some fictional characters are central to the plot, and others play a more secondary role.

On García-Carpintero's view, initially, sentences like (4) invoke mere figures of speech. After some time, however, speakers forget the complex facts that make our use ‘fictional character’ metaphorical, and its meaning becomes what it once simply represented metaphorically. A sentence like (4) can be literally true or false, then, depending upon what is true about sets of sentences in relation to other sets of sentences relative to an even larger set of sentences — the set occurring within all works of fiction.

How this ensures the truth of sentence (3), exactly, is not obvious. One conjecture is that a fully developed figuralist account of the truth of sentence (3) would require not only an account of the metaphorical use of the expression ‘fictional character’ but also of the name ‘Sherlock Holmes’.

This could be done by associating the name 'Sherlock Holmes' figuratively with the set of specific sentences involving that name, and by claiming that such a figurative use eventually dies just as the figurative use of the expression 'fictional character' does. This would make sentence (3) true, since sentences associated with the name 'Sherlock Holmes' would be members of the set of sentences that compose the set of fictional characters. The truth of sentence (3), then, would depend only on the existence of sets of sentences that themselves are supposed to have no ontological import.

As I see it, two separate issues arise for this analysis. The first is a general issue about how to understand the nature of dead metaphors. The second arises with respect to reconciling this analysis with other plausible commitments.

IV.1.1 *The Nature of Dead Metaphors: From Figurative to Literal Uses*

García-Carpintero's dead metaphor analysis of metatextual discourse succeeds only if a dead metaphor is an expression whose meaning comes to be that for which it initially figuratively stood. That this is what constitutes the death of a metaphor, however, is questionable.

Consider, for instance, the expression 'kick the bucket' — deemed a dead metaphor for the expression 'die'. Now suppose this phrase counts as a dead metaphor in virtue of the fact that it has come to have the same meaning as the expression 'die'. Even so, the phrase 'kick the bucket' can still be used to convey the fact that a person intentionally moves their leg in such a way that their foot hits a bucket with enough force to count as kicking it. So, if 'kick the bucket' has to come to have the meaning of the expression 'di', then it must be ambiguous between its compositionally determined original meaning, and that meaning resulting from its metaphorical use, which applies to the expression as a unit.

Currently, there are only two well understood kinds of ambiguity: lexical ambiguity and structural ambiguity. The former applies to atomic lexical units that have more than one meaning, as occurs in the case of the lexical item 'bank'. The latter applies to complex linguistic items that can be composed in different ways, thereby generating multiple interpretations, as occurs in the case of the complex expression 'drives with eye-glasses'. Neither one of these kinds of ambiguity can capture the sense in which the expression 'kick the bucket' is supposed to be ambiguous, however. It cannot be a common case of lexical ambiguity, since the different interpretations do not both occur at the lexical level, and it also cannot be a case of structural ambiguity since the different interpretations are not due to differing ways

of composing the expression's parts. So, this is either an uncommon kind of ambiguity, or it is not a case of ambiguity at all.

Since positing only two kinds of ambiguity that are somewhat well understood is the simpler option, if there is an explanation that can be applied to dead metaphors that does not require a third kind of ambiguity, and has significant explanatory power, then it should be preferred to the other option. For instance, dead metaphors might be the result of pragmatic effects. And, there are examples of complex expressions that trigger such strong pragmatic interpretations that, if anything should count as a case of meaning change, these examples should, but they do not.

Consider, for instance, the sentence 'I am not going to die' as uttered by a patient intending to convey that they got a good prognosis — that they are not going to die tomorrow. In fact, consider every utterance of this sentence ever made. I would bet that most of them, perhaps 100 percent of them, were interpreted as indicating that the utterer was not going to die within some, perhaps vaguely specified, time frame. Even so, the sentence 'I am not going to die' is not taken to mean that the utterer is not going to die within a certain time frame, it means that the utterer of the sentence is just not going to die period. And, even if we never use it that way, the sentence still retains that meaning, we just simply ignore it because, as a matter of accidental fact, those who have used it and do use it — human beings — happen to be mortal. Likewise, apparent ambiguity of dead metaphors might also be the product of pragmatic interpretation. (Insert the endnote that: this appeals to a certain methodological principle — that our theories of the meanings of expressions ought to support maximal expressiveness. This might contrast with views like Ludlow's (2014) that hold that the lexicon shifts its meaning over time, though they may be materially equivalent).

The best explanation for the death of a metaphor, then, might not be in terms of meaning shifts. If that is correct, then García-Carpintero's explanation of the truth of sentence (3) needs further explanation and defense.

IV.1.2 *Direct Reference Theory and The Dead Metaphor Analysis*

While the dead metaphor analysis may seem attractive, adopting it is not easy to do for just any anti-realist. For instance, a direct reference theorist wishing to adopt it, since it entails that fictional names have a meaning, and on this theory of names, they have meaning iff they have referents. If this is correct, then adopting both direct reference theory and the dead metaphor analysis would entail that fictional names have referents. But we standardly understand referents as individuals that exist, and therefore, if direct reference theory is true, the dead metaphor analysis could not preserve

anti-realism about fictional entities. In fact, García-Carpintero himself is committed to direct reference theory. However, he holds a complicated view, and for that reason, it is not clear whether this worry applies to his own view. It is, however, a worry for anyone committed to a simple version of direct reference theory.

One way a direct reference theorist might avoid realism is by rejecting a realist understanding of certain types of referents. Taking this position, however, has implications for how to interpret rule R, as well as entailing other significant consequences.

A direct reference theorist might argue, for instance, that even though direct reference theory, in combination with the dead metaphor analysis, entails a commitment to referents for fictional names, those referents consist only of sets of linguistic entities. And these, they could claim, are not real entities on the grounds that they are mere social constructs — an idea not without precedent [Dummett (1982)]. Adopting this stance would allow for accepting that fictional names have referents, count sentence (3) as true by rule R, and yet still claim to be an anti-realist. Note, however, that if rule R is univocal, the stance just described raises real questions about rule R's robustness as a condition for being true, at least as a condition acceptable to, say, a metaphysical realist.

The combination of the dead metaphor analysis with anti-realism about referents might also have a significant consequence for the rule of existential generalization. This is the rule within classical predicate logic that allows for the derivation of sentences bound by an existential quantifier from predicative sentences that contain constants — frequently thought of as representing proper names. Specifically, existential generalization would need to be given a substitutional interpretation, or the rule itself would have to be rejected as invalid, and a positive free logic endorsed that allows for predicative sentences that have fictional names as subjects to be true [Leblanc and Thomason (1968)]. It might be easier to admit to some form of realism — reductive linguistic realism, perhaps. Or to simply give up the truth of sentence (3) altogether.

The previous criticism affects the general appeal of García-Carpintero's view, which is a significant disadvantage. I will now, however, explore his account of paratextual discourse.

IV.2 *Paratextual Discourse: García Carpintero's Hybrid Pretense-Story Operator Analysis*⁹

Several of García-Carpintero's commitments come together in his explanation of the truth of paratextual discourse: his account of textual discourse; his theory of proper names; and finally, his hybrid pretense-story operator account of paratextual discourse. I will begin with an overview of García-Carpintero's take on direct reference theory that allows for an explanation paratextual discourse as truth evaluable.

IV.2.1 *Grounding the Truth of Paratextual Discourse: Descriptivism and Direct Reference Theory*

García-Carpintero endorses the idea that fictional names are devices of direct reference, and that they are empty.¹⁰ However, if this is correct, then fictional names are meaningless, and therefore, any discourse in which they are embedded would be equally meaningless, a point that some ignore [Evans (1982)]. This entails that textual discourse would be meaningless, and so too would paratextual discourse, since it consists in merely adding a story operator to textual discourse.

However, García-Carpintero also endorses the claim that fictional names are associated with descriptive content, which plays only a pragmatic reference-fixing role, rather than constituting any part of a name's semantic content — based on Kripke's idea that we might use a definite description to fix on a referent in order to name it, but that description is not therefore part of that name's meaning or truth conditional content. While this does not make textual discourse meaningful, it does allow it to at least have cognitive significance for readers — by associating fictional names with their descriptive contents — even if this falls short of meaning-constituting significance. This commitment, in turn, allows for an account of paratextual discourse as significant. And, given García-Carpintero's approach to textual discourse, which I will describe next, it can also explain its truth.

Concerning textual discourse, García-Carpintero agrees with Walton (2006) that it is a *sui generis* speech-act — that of fiction-making — constituted by invitations to imagine or to pretend that certain facts hold. Works of fiction containing these invitations are themselves props in these games of make believe. For Walton, readers use these props to imagine that the names occurring in textual discourse really do have referents, and that what the author writes about these referents is true.

The referents about which readers pretend are only hypothetical referents, however, that speakers can pick out, if at all, only by descriptive

means. García-Carpintero's account can allow this since he accepts that there is descriptive content associated with fictional names. Even so, this will not settle the issue of how readers could choose a particular hypothetical referent to assign to some fictional name about which to pretend, since the descriptions associated with any fictional name will pick out many different hypothetical referents, each of which could equally serve as a referent.¹¹ Pretending that a fictional name has a referent would seem, then, to be impossible, or at least highly difficult.

García-Carpintero seems to recognize this, and suggests instead that, in reading fiction, speakers are not imagining that fictional names have referents, but instead only that the reference-fixing descriptions associated with those names pick out some individuals, and those individuals have the properties they are said to have in the story. For instance, concerning sentence (1), readers are not imagining that some hypothetical referent for 'Sherlock Holmes'. Instead, they are imagining that something like this sentence is true

(1)* The detective living at 221B Baker Street smokes.

On García-Carpintero's view, there is no need for readers to identify any hypothetical individual to assign as the referent of a fictional name. This approach, then, has a significant advantage over other pretense accounts, at least as adopted by direct reference theorists, since it resolves what it could be to pretend that meaningless names are, in fact, meaningful.¹²

The descriptivist about proper names might argue that this is evidence for a descriptive account of the meaning of fictional names. García-Carpintero, in defense of his pragmatic stance, points out that if descriptivism about fictional names were correct, a certain kind of fictional discourse, which constitutes an entire industry known as fan fiction, would make no sense.¹³ Fan fiction arises when readers wonder, hypothesize, and imagine what might be "true" about the characters in works of fiction that goes well beyond what is contained in the fiction itself — closed under classical deduction, or even entailed by other logics.

However, if fictional names were synonymous with descriptions, any predicative sentence having a fictional name as its subject, which also has one of one of its associated descriptions as its predicate, would express a tautology. Since wondering if a tautology is true does not make sense, this would entail that fan fiction does not make sense either. But fan fiction

does make sense. Therefore, descriptivism about the meaning of fictional names must be false.

IV.2.2 *Story Operators and Reference-fixers*

Because García-Carpintero makes textual discourse at least pragmatically descriptive, this informs his account of paratextual discourse. On his account, paratextual discourse does not consist of predicative sentences that containing empty names penned by an author, which are then qualified with a story operator. Instead, these sentences have as their subject a reference-fixing description that is associated with a fictional name. On this view, a qualified sentence like (2) is truth evaluable only once we replace the name ‘Sherlock Holmes’ with an appropriate reference-fixing description(s), say the previous description ‘the detective who lived at 221B Baker Street’. The explanation for the intuitive truth of sentence (1), then, that a sentence like

(2)* According to Doyle’s story, the detective living at 221B Baker Street smokes

is in fact true.

This account does not require the occurrence of an expression that is referential in nature – a proper name, which for an anti-realist like García-Carpintero, can have no meaning. What is not clear, however, is the relation between the sentences (1) and (1)* and the relation between sentences (2) and (2)*. It would depend upon García-Carpintero’s understanding of paraphrasing, which he cannot take as instances of substituting synonymous expressions for one another, since the reference-fixing descriptions associated with fictional names do not, on his view, constitute their meanings.

IV.2.2.1 *A Kripkean Epistemic Objection*

García-Carpintero’s account of textual and paratextual discourse is most certainly an advance for any direct reference theorist hoping to understand fiction via Walton’s pretense theory. I worry however that because the view allows for the free substitution of reference-fixing descriptions for fictional names, it might be vulnerable to at least one Kripke-like objection that usually applies only to classical descriptivist accounts.

Consider Kripke’s epistemic objection to descriptivism — that on a classical descriptivist view, to be competent with a name, a speaker must know some description that uniquely identifies its referent. Kripke points out that this will be false for many ordinary speakers with respect to many

names, and for that reason, classical descriptivism is implausible as an account of a name's meaning.

García-Carpintero's view of paratextual discourse, I'll call it "pragmatic descriptivism", might face a similar objection, not with respect to understanding fictional names, but with respect to making true assertions using them. Suppose a speaker knows the genre of novels that Doyle wrote – mystery novels. And suppose the speaker knows that most mystery novels do not involve fantastical elements such as acts of magic that allow for the defiance or suspension of natural laws, or the existence of omnipotent detectives, for instance. If a speaker knows this, and then encounters the title of one of Doyle's novels "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes," then based on conventions for the titling works of fiction, they can infer that 'Sherlock Holmes' is a name for the novel's protagonist. It seems that this speaker could then truthfully, knowingly, and intentionally assert the following sentence

(5) Sherlock Holmes is not omnipotent,

consistent with that speaker lacking any knowledge of any reference-fixing descriptions associated with the name 'Sherlock Holmes'. Yet sentence (5) seems to be a true assertion, properly interpreted and qualified, but it is not one that fits García-Carpintero's account of such discourse.¹⁴

V. FICTIONAL DISCOURSE AND TRUTH: A REVIEW OF MY EASY ANTI-REALIST ANALYSIS

There are several distinctions between my commitments, the realist's, and García-Carpintero's. First, while I do endorse a multifaceted concept of predication, I reject that this requires changing the idea of the metaphysical relation between individuals and properties. Second, as far as rule R is concerned, it applies univocally in those contexts in which speakers do use predicates attributively. Third, unlike both, I see the main puzzle of fictional names as deriving from issues concerning sentence (1), not sentence (3), and I offer an anti-realist account of the truth of this sentence, while jettisoning the truth of sentence (3). I also believe that sentence (1), as used in non-fiction-making contexts, is unabashedly true, and therefore, it is not explained by its being shorthand for sentence (2)

or even (2)*. It is literally true. Last, I reject a strict Millian interpretation of Kripke's ideas.

Because I do not take Kripke's view to entail that the meaning of a name consists only in its having a referent, and because I do allow for predication to be multifaceted, I can offer an easy, yet robust anti-realist stance on fictional discourse. And it is also fully compositional.¹⁵

On my view, name types are a doubly context-sensitive expression: the content of any token of a name type depends upon which chain of historical tokenings of that type, if any, that any particular token invokes determined by its context of utterance also known as a "context of deployment." These historical chains of name tokenings end in a first tokening of a name type, and the content of these tokenings are assigned in what I call a "context of introduction" or a "context of assignment." This account respects what I take to be the two key ideas from Kripke concerning the nature of proper names — that they are *de jure* expressions and that they are also rigid expressions.

Name tokens, in a context of introduction, are *de jure* expressions, since their contents are determined by an explicit act of stipulation, which must meet certain felicity conditions. Whatever these conditions are, acts of stipulation that assign names individual referents respect them. I also support the idea, however, that they can be met in other ways, as they are in the case of fictional names. On my view, the meaning of a fictional name is constituted by the set of properties an author stipulatively associates with that name. Authors do not assign them referents, directly or indirectly, in any way at all.

Once a name token is assigned content in a context of introduction, any further tokenings of that name type, historically connected to that context, will retain the same content across all contexts. This is the sense in which names meet Kripke's criterion that they are rigid expressions.

Concerning rule R, it will be relevant for evaluating only those predicative sentences that contain names with referents to which properties are attributed. Evaluating the truth of sentences like (1) requires a different rule. In my original presentation, I endorse a disjunctive evaluation rule. As mentioned, this rule is distinct from the disjunctive rule offered by the realist. The disjuncts of my rule, for instance, each apply univocally to all forms of referential discourse, or to all forms of fictional discourse.

I adopt a rule for determining the truth of predicative sentences with fictional names as their subjects that does not require that they have referents that have certain properties. Instead, it requires that the property delineated by the predicative element of these sentences is among the

properties that constitute the meaning of a fictional name. I will expand upon this in more detail when I address paratextual discourse.

V.1 Metatextual Discourse: Accepting that Sentence (3) is False

In initially offering my treatment of names, and how it applies in the case of fictional names, I did not address metatextual discourse in any way, which I agree is at odds with the standard literature.¹⁶ The reason, however, is that I take it as a fact that understanding paratextual discourse is prior to understanding discourse about fiction-making itself — metatextual discourse. Children, for instance, in learning a natural language, are presumably first introduced to paratextual, not metatextual discourse. Giving a treatment of metatextual discourse, then, could not be done, in my eyes, without first offering an account of paratextual discourse.

As it turns out, given my stance on the meaning of fictional names, sentences like (3) turn out to be false, assuming reasonably that the property of fictionality is not part of the content an author assigns to a fictional name. However, I am willing to accept this consequence, since I see no elegant way of making those sentences true without accepting realism about fictional characters, and I am thoroughly anti-realist about such things.

There is support for anti-realism about fictional characters based on facts about the use of natural language. As my mother seemed to take it, the expression 'fictional' is a modifier that negates ontological commitment, as perhaps the expression 'fake' might also do. Furthermore, studies of children distinguishing between fantasy and reality show that they too take the expression 'fictional' as a synonym for 'unreal' [Woolley and Ghossainy (2014)]. I suspect that the expression 'fictional character' in sentence (3), then, is used to inform an interlocutor about the reason for Sherlock Holmes's lack of existence — due to the name 'Sherlock Holmes' originating in a work of fiction. This would make sense of utterances of sentences like these

(6) Sherlock Holmes is just a fictional character; he does not exist.

Rejecting the truth of a sentence like (3), then, has some significant advantages. Furthermore, the fact that I do take this position is evidence that García-Carpintero is simply wrong that my view is a notational variant of realism.

V.1.2 *The Problem of Transregional Discourse*

One wrinkle for the line of argument I am endorsing is that there is, in addition to the three kinds of fictional discourse we have seen, another kind that I will call “transregional” fictional discourse. It is composed of sentences like

- (7) I love Mr. Bennet’s sharp wit, despite its coming at the expense of Mrs. Bennet’s dignity of which she is not even aware.¹⁷

Sentences like (7) seem to require that Mr. Bennet be able to serve as some kind of relata that can have the property of being loved for having a sharp wit, and that implies that Mr. Bennet is a real thing – something that can be an object of love. Since I reject that fictional names have referents, and it is evident that a certain reader’s love of Mr. Bennet’s wit would not be a property associated with that name either, I must also reject that sentences like these can be true. My best explanation, even after 12 years, is that sentences like (7) get uttered because, even though a person cannot literally love Mr. Bennet, since there is no Mr. Bennet, they can love the property of wittiness that, on my view, would be associated with that name, and properties are real entities.

V.2 *Paratextual Discourse: A Literalist Anti-Realist Analysis*

Before exploring my analysis of paratextual discourse, first note that I, in fact, completely reject story operator explanations of our intuition that sentence (1) is true. There are good reasons for this, however. In fact, there are many. I will here explain three.¹⁸

First, note that the story operator account can be interpreted either as a semantic or as a pragmatic account, which often goes unmentioned. Its most plausible interpretation, however, is a pragmatic one [Bertolet (1984)]. As a semantic account, in order to count as compositional, there would have to be hidden syntax in sentences like (1). And, positing hidden syntax, without some motivation independent of the semantic theory under evaluation, is ad hoc — done only to make the data fit the theory. Without this motivation, positing hidden syntax undermines compositionality as a substantive constraint on semantic theories altogether, since nearly any semantic hypothesis can be compositional if willing to posit enough hidden syntax.¹⁹ So the semantic version of the story operator theory is implausible on these grounds.

Second, the view may not even be coherent. If the relation between sentence (1) and (2) is semantic, then they must be synonymous. But

synonymous sentences cannot vary in truth value. But the whole point of the story operator account is to explain how a sentence that is untrue can be shifted to a sentence that is true. That shift then would seem to be conceptually required to be a pragmatic shift.

On the pragmatic interpretation, when speakers utter a sentence like (1), they are understood as simply having used an untrue sentence to convey true information as expressed by sentence (2) or (2)*. However, even the pragmatic interpretation has implausible consequences.

In its pragmatic form, the story operator account requires that we should reject a rather robust intuition of natural language speakers – that sentences like (1) are true at face value. But taking natural language speakers’ assignments of truth values to sentences at face value should, for methodological reasons, be treated as a constraint on truth conditional theories of meaning, if those theories are to remain scientifically respectable [Stojanovic (2012)]. If this is correct, a truth conditional theorist would need fairly strong reasons for rejecting a rational and fluent speaker’s truth value assignments to the sentences of a language under study, since such assignments are one of the primary means for testing truth conditional hypotheses, without which the theory would lose much, if not all, substance.

Before explaining my account of paratextual discourse, I will first give a brief overview of the standard Fregean conception of semantic composition — function application. I will also explain the standard interpretation of the semantic components of this view. This will ensure that my account is entirely clear.

In its most abstract form, Frege’s idea is that a complete sentence is composed of one expression with the semantic value of a function and another that has the semantic value of an argument. Function application is what binds the elements of sentence together semantically. The functional expression (traditionally what we call a “predicate”) maps the value of that sentence’s argument (traditionally known as its “subject”) to the semantic value true or not true. The semantic value of a complete sentence, on a purely Fregean view, then, is a set of truth values. This conception of the meaning of a sentence appears to have several flaws. For instance, on this view, it would seem that necessary truths will all be associated with the very same sets of truth values, and therefore, would be synonyms, but that cannot be correct.²⁰

Even so, while many have rejected Frege’s conception of the meaning of a sentence as being equivalent to a set of truth values, Frege’s conception of the semantic value of predicates still has a significant influence.

The standard interpretation of the semantic value of predicates as functional expressions is thoroughly Fregean, and widely accepted. On a Fregean picture, a predicate maps the content of an argument to the value true or false. Its semantic value is therefore a set of ordered pairs. And typically, this idea is then used to define a predicate's semantic content as that of a property — composed of the first members of the set of ordered pairs that constitute its semantic value.

If a predicate's semantic value is a function, it follows on the Fregean notion of semantic composition, that the semantic value of a sentence's subject must be an argument. Therefore, if a proper name is the subject of a sentence, its semantic value must be that of an argument. And since Kripke, the arguments provided by proper names — their semantic content — are assumed to be individual referents — individuals that serve as the atomic members of sets, and as the first members of the ordered pairs that constitute the semantic value of a predicate.²¹

The content of a predicative sentence having a proper name as its subject, then, is understood as relating individual referents to properties, making predicates fundamentally expressions of property attributions. The widely adopted rule R encodes Frege's idea of semantic composition as function application, his commitments concerning the semantic values of predicates and proper names, as well as commonly held ideas about the semantic contents of these expressions.

Imagine, however, rejecting the idea that subjects must have arguments as their semantic values, and that proper names must have referents as their semantic content. It is now at least conceptually possible for names to have functions as their semantic values. And, on my view, fictional names, at least, do in fact have functions as their semantic values. They map arguments associated with properties to the value true or false. The semantic content of a fictional name, then, is not an individual referent, but rather a set of properties derived from the application of a function.

In the case of fictional names, we need a different evaluation rule to determine the truth of predicative sentences having them as subjects. Call it the "M" rule — short for Montague. According to the M rule, these sentences are true just in case the predicate of the sentence, associated with a property, gets mapped to the value true by the subject of the sentence — a fictional name. That is, predicative sentences that have fictional names as subjects are true iff a name has, as one of its members, the property expressed by the predicate of a sentence. In other words, the name plays the role of function, and the predicate plays the role of argument.

The moral of the story is that accepting function application as the rule of semantic composition does not entail anything more than meeting the abstract characterization of it that I offered earlier. Let us call this the “P” rule standing for predication.’ I claim that sentence (1) is true on the P rule, but that it is not true according rule R — the referential rule. Rule R, then, on my thinking, is simply a special case of rule P.²² However, as I claim, sentences like (1) are true, and according to rule M — another special case of rule P — they do so count.” applying the M rule to sentence (1), it is true, since the set of properties associated with the name ‘Sherlock Holmes, does in fact, include the property of smoking as a member.

My treatment of the problem of fictional names then explains the truth of sentence (1) without story operators or referents that have odd properties, or that jettisons a Kripkean semantics for proper names. I’ll now explore García-Carpintero’s claim that my view really is a realist view.

VI. GARCÍA-CARPINTERO’S CRITIQUE OF MY EASY ANTI-REALIST VIEW

García-Carpintero has two main reasons for claiming that my view is a notational variant of realism. Both rest on misinterpretations.

First, García-Carpintero claims that my view is a version of a realism because I subscribe to a disjunctive evaluation rule. And, this is true. His inference, however, from this similarity between myself and the realist to the claim that I must also be a realist is flawed. I believe he makes this inference because it is a standard to assume that any true predicative sentence containing a name as its subject entails understanding the semantic function of its predicative expression as that of property attribution. The realist also seems to accept this idea, and then offers a disjunctive evaluation rule that allows for different understandings of property attribution. Second, it is nearly the received view that the objects of property attribution provided by names are individual referents.

If these previous claims are accepted, then my view would appear to be a version of realism. The fact that I assign fictional meanings would entail that they have referents. My claim that the meaning of a fictional name is a set of properties, then, would amount to saying they refer to abstract objects — sets of properties. And if this was the view I was offering, my motivation for endorsing a disjunctive evaluation rule would seemingly have to be the same as the realist’s — to allow for a sentence

like (1) to be true even though this would require modifying our ideas about appropriate property attributions, such as attributing a property like smoking to an abstract object, as the realist sees sentence (1). It would then indeed appear that there is little difference between my view and the realist's view. García-Carpintero would be correct.

VII. A RESPONSE TO GARCÍA-CARPINTERO'S CRITIQUE

While the previous line of argument is compelling, it is, nevertheless, mistaken. It is false that I am committed to existence of fictional characters as referents for fictional names, and this does not turn on redefining the term 'referent'. I accept, just as García-Carpintero and the realist do, that rule R is the correct evaluative rule to use for evaluating the truth of predicative sentences involving referents as subjects.

I believe I have made my denial that all names must be referential clear, as well as my reasons for believing that this does not require giving up a Kripkean view. What I have not made entirely clear are the consequences and motivations for the disjunctive evaluation rule I have introduced. And this is necessary to fully appreciate that my view is anti-realist.

Unlike the realist, I do not introduce my disjunctive rule in order to revise our common understanding of property attribution. As I mentioned, García-Carpintero's line of reasoning is based on this assumption. We see it at work in García-Carpintero's assessment of Ludlow's view as realist as well [(2006)]. But I reject this assumption.

On my view, sentences like (1) do not involve property attributions at all. And therefore, the predicates, in these cases, are not attributive, as the truth condition I endorse for a sentence like (1) seems to entail. My disjunctive predication rule, then, cannot be interpreted as an attempt to introduce new understandings of property attributions, but instead of the nature of predication itself. On my structural analysis of sentence (1), the traditional roles that names and predicates play in cases involving fictional names are reversed, at least with respect to paratextual assertions.²³

In sum: on my account, fictional names do not have referents — they are functional expressions. Furthermore, the disjunctive predication rule I endorse is not to the same as the realist's disjunctive rule. In making these ideas explicit, I have illustrated that the two main reasons for believing that my view is realist are based on misinterpretations of my account.²⁴

VIII. FINAL THOUGHTS

Because I reject the idea that predication is fundamentally attributive, I will eventually need to develop a treatment of the concept of predication. In fact, this issue puzzled even Mill who believed that both subjects and predicates were proper names, and the word 'is' somehow connected them. In fact, there is a long tradition of distinguishing between different kinds of facts that syntactically predicative sentences might express. Facts about an individual's properties are but one kind. Others include relational facts about identity, as expressed by the sentence

(8) Hesperus is Venus.

And, some predications are not about either of these, but are instead about an individual's composition, as expressed by a sentence like

(9) This statue is clay.

Other predicative sentences, such as metaphors like

(10) Boating is heaven

express comparative facts. Last, there are also predicative sentences that express facts about definitional relations, as in the sentence

(11) A vixen is a female fox.²⁵

That is, before my view is committed to the flames of realism, there is more to be said about the nature of predication. However, I fully agree with García-Carpintero that the way to do this is not to offer different metaphysical interpretations of what it is to have a property. Instead, I believe that a closer examination of the ways we use predicative sentences and the attendant semantic consequences is required.²⁶

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NOTES

¹ He, of course, likely more correctly, puts all of this in terms of utterances and assertions.

² The fact that the discourse could be false is problematic as well, since empty names should not be contributing any truth conditional content of any kind. My own favored idea is one due to Donnellan (1974) — that the state of being false might occur for more than one reason.

³ See Deutsch's (2000) work for a thorough-going Meinongian treatment of sentence (1) that fully embraces its consequences

⁴ The story operator view has a significant history, beginning with Lewis's (1983) account of truth in fiction.

⁵ This fact, based on Quine's exactingness about what entails ontological commitment, is the driving force for vanInwagen's commitment to realism about fictional characters. As Yablo and Gallois (1998) later point out, however, this argument can be "Moored" in the same way that skeptical arguments can. To wit, vanInwagen's argument runs like this: if so-called metaphorical talk is ineliminable, then that so-called metaphorical talk must literally be about the way the world really is — is not truly metaphorical. So-called metaphorical talk of fictional characters is ineliminable. Therefore, fictional characters exist. Yablo, in contrast, ironically, equally inspired by Quine, assumes that fictional characters do not exist, but that the use of the expression 'fictional character' is ineliminable. Therefore, ineliminable metaphorical talk does not entail ontological commitments about how the world is.

⁶ I often wonder, when theorists treat academic disciplines differently from everyday discourse, just what language they suppose is being used that is more readily truth evaluable than ordinary language. Personally, I learned Chemistry, English, and Physics in the natural spoken language of English. And it did seem like I needed a new stricter concept of truth, or that I was relying on a more precise language to understand what I was being taught. My good ole sloppy "casual" concepts and natural language served me quite well.

⁷ I am here referring to sentences, whereas García-Carpintero would refer instead to utterances or to categories of utterances that constitute certain types of speech acts, such as assertions.

⁸ My own interpretation of Yablo's figuralism differs significantly I believe from García-Carpintero's, and it might not generate the same objections. As I understand the view, metaphors can be true if their metaphorical content is an explicit part of the analysis of what makes them true. To illustrate, consider the sentence 'Only a snake would lie like that.' It expresses a figure of speech conveying the thought that only an evil individual is capable of a certain type of lying. However, this sentence is not literally true in any strict sense for at least two reasons (we'll ignore the ambiguity of the expression 'lie'): a snake cannot lie, and a snake is not evil. It is a fact, however, that the snake has been mythologized into a creature of evilness and destruction, and its moniker has therefore likewise

become a metaphor for these types of individuals. Assume that the species of lying being referenced can, in fact, be performed only by evil individuals. If that is correct, then the sentence 'Only a snake would lie like that' appears to be true in some sense. What it expresses is that only a "snake" would lie like that. That is, the sentence is true iff an individual to which the expression 'snake' figuratively applies — an evil individual — is capable of a certain type of lying, and this is true. Perhaps a similar analysis could be applied to sentences like (3) without recourse to dead metaphors.

⁹ Devitt (1981) too offers such an account, but the mechanic of it are very different from this one.

¹⁰ As I argued in section 4.1.2, it is not clear how to square these commitments with the dead metaphor analysis of sentences like (3). Perhaps this is explained elsewhere in some of his other work.

¹¹ Kripke, in his (1980) addenda, addresses this issue in detail.

¹² Another issue that is not addressed about pretense accounts, and even story operator accounts is the worry that expressions like 'pretend', 'imagine', and 'story' can only be understood if we already understand the nature of fiction, or vice versa — that these approaches presuppose an understanding of what is being explained.

¹³ I also address the implications of this discourse, but as it applies to problems with the story operator accounts, in my 2020 work.

¹⁴ There may also be a semantic argument in the works as well if it turns out that unreliable narrators can associate the wrong reference-fixing descriptions with various names. But this would be a complex assessment and I think I would need more details about the nature of the reference-fixers, how they come to be associated with the name, what they can and cannot do, and so on.

¹⁵ For an explanation of how my account is compositional, see my previous 2011 work.

¹⁶ Thanks to Harry Deutsch for pressing me on this.

¹⁷ Thanks to David Kaplan for bringing sentences like these to my attention.

¹⁸ For more reasons, see my (2020) forthcoming article.

¹⁹ This reminds me of a worry I have about Chomskyan approaches. Many insist that intuitions about truth value assignments are unreliable guides to semantic content, relying instead on intuitions about grammaticality. However, having been raised by someone whose second language was English, I have often found myself puzzled as to why certain sentences get the grammatical interpretation they do, and also why certain sentences get marked ungrammatical and not others. For instance, apparently, if a speaker says, "she said I am hungry." this is to be interpreted as having said that the speaker was hungry, and not as the speaker reporting on her speech act. To my ear, however, this sentence is ambiguous, which has led to some very frustrating philosophical conversations. And, there are plenty of examples of grammaticality being relative to culture. For instance, in New Brunswick Canadian English, the word 'some' can be an adjectival modifier, as in when

my four year old next door neighbor pronounced “That lobster was some fuckin good”. Also, in New Brunswick Canadian English (as well as in some parts of Upstate New York) if a hearer responds to a speaker’s assertion that ski, they do so by saying “So don’t I”, which means that the hearer also skies. Some speakers would mark these as ungrammatical, but others would not. Intuitions about grammaticality, then, are also unreliable.

²⁰ There is a potential response here. The objection that on a Fregean view all sentences that express necessary truths will have the same meaning relies on conflating the difference between an expression’s semantic and its semantic content. Logical truths may all have the same semantic value, but could differ in semantic content.

²¹ In Zermelo (1908) set theory, these atomic units known as “ur-elements” are dispensable, though consistent with the view. It is not surprising, then, given Kripke’s views on proper names that in Kripke-Platek set theory, ur-elements are indispensable.

²² I put this differently now than I did in previous work. In the work García-Carpintero critiques, it is expressed disjunctively.

²³ Exactly what this might entail concerning the logical form or deep structure of these sentences, I have yet to consider in any detail.

²⁴ It’s possible, I suppose, once we move to a second-order logic, to argue that what I have offered is a view that makes the referent of fictional names a second order property of which we can attribute to first order properties. So, the sentence ‘Sherlock Holmes smokes’ would be true because the first order property of smoking is true of the second order property Sherlock Holmes. I am not sure what this claim means exactly, but it would be a very different kind of argument that my view is realist that the one I am addressing here. And, at any rate, I would likely say instead that fictional names express second order predicates, and leave the question of what it is to predicate a second order predicate of a first order predicate open.

²⁵ Another way of interpreting my view, suggested to me by John Horty, is to make proper names all have the same semantic value. They are all functions that map sets of properties to truth values. Predication then would truly be univocal. The disjunctive element would then reside in proper names themselves. Both fictional and referential names would have sets of properties as their semantic contents. The difference between them would lie in the origin of that content. In the case of a fictional names, their semantic content is the result of an act of stipulation, but referential names derive their content from the properties of individual referents. A view still potentially respectful of Kripke’s insights. There are two problems I see with this suggested modification. First, it becomes unclear what semantic role the origin of the semantic content of a name would be playing in such a view, and second, I predict it would be less fruitful, since I see sentences (8) through (11) as demanding complicating our notion of predication anyhow.

²⁶ Thanks to the Editor of **teorema** for allowing me the opportunity to respond, and to García-Carpintero for correspondence. Discussions with Harry Deutsch and John Horty were also extremely helpful.

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