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Fictional Discourse. Replies to *Organon F* Papers (Part II)

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In what follows I continue in replying to papers which have been collected by Juraj Hvorecký and appeared in the first Supplementary Issue of *Organon F* 2015.[1] I need not repeat (but cannot resist doing so) how exciting it was to read that exceptional bunch of papers, written by brilliant philosophers and my good friends. As usual, in my replies I am voicing agreement and disagreement with the same pleasure (the latter perhaps with greater passion), and take both as a sign of deep respect.

Anders Pettersson[2]

The provocative title of Anders' paper and his radical exposition of the paradox he finds in the widely shared theoretical notion of a text as an abstract object present a good motivation for clarifying certain concepts – and Anders does a considerable work in this field. He works with a strong concept of abstract objects as atemporal entities, with the counterintuitive consequence that texts, fictional stories, characters engaged in them, symphonies,

[1] The first part can be found in Koťátko (2015). In both parts I preserve the order in which the papers originally appeared. I owe my thanks to Juraj Hvorecký for a thorough review of the text and correction of my English.

[2] Reply to Pettersson (2015). All the page references which appear without the author's name refer to this paper.

laws etc., if conceived as abstract entities, cannot be created. This generates an interesting tension with Zsofia Zvolenszky's paper based on the concept of abstract artifacts – abstract entities brought into existence by human creative activities. Nevertheless, even if we accept such a concept (as I think we should), and classify texts as abstract artifacts, the question how or in what sense something abstract can be involved in relations and bear properties we are used to ascribe to physical objects poses an interesting challenge.

Anders is not satisfied with explanations of the kind given by Stephen Davies: symphony is an abstract object but "it can be noisy and triumphant at its close" – which means that "its 'well formed instances' must be noisy and triumphant at its close" (p. 120). To be sure, this involves certain ambiguity in ascribing properties to their bearers. Noisy in straightforward sense (or: noisy "in the last instance" – not parasitic upon any more fundamental case of something having some property) can be only spatiotemporal events: but abstract entities like symphonies can have properties which have normative implications concerning noisiness of certain acoustic events, namely those which are presented as their instances. There is no harm, I would say, if we, for the sake of brevity, describe those properties by using the term "noisy". We normally do so and that's why it would sound counterintuitive to deny that symphonies can be noisy. With the explanation just given we can avoid category mistake (of straightforwardly, literarily ascribing physical properties to abstract entities) without falling into conflict with ordinary usage. To do justice to the way we use language, we simply have to admit that when making an utterance of the form *S is P* we do not have to predicate *P* to the referent of *S*. We can assign it to its instances, if the referent is an abstract entity, saying thereby something rather complex *about that abstract entity*: namely that it is such that all its instances (or "proper", "standard", "well formed" instances) have the property specified by *P*.

Perhaps we can borrow the terminology Pavel Tichý in (1978) has introduced in the context of theory of descriptions. Since he insisted that expressions like "the US president" refer in all their uses to a concept (also: "character" or "office"), rather than to an individual (uniquely satisfying the concept or occupying the office in the time of the utterance), he had to make a special move to account for sentences like "The US president is usually a white rich male". In such a case Tichý speaks about *predication de re*: the property specified in the predicate is not ascribed to the concept referred to by the expression in the grammatical subject but to the individual uniquely

satisfying the concept. On the contrary, in cases like "The US president is electable" the property is ascribed to the concept itself: that is *predication de dicto*.[3] The relation of satisfying (or occupying) which holds between Tichý's concepts (or offices) and individuals satisfying (or occupying) them can be approached as a special case of the relation between abstract entities and their instances and I think we can keep Tichý's terminology even on this more general level. In our case, it makes certainly sense (though not the same sense) to say that noisiness belongs to the symphony as an abstract object and that it belongs to its instances (particular performances): in the latter case the sense is straightforwardly simple, in the former it includes a mediating construction specified above.

With the same right one can say that it makes good (though not the same) sense to say that we read a text as an abstract entity and to say that we read a particular instance of that text. The specific feature of this case is that in doing so we draw attention to two aspects of a rather complex phenomenon in which relations to the text as an abstract entity and to its physical instance are inseparably interconnected. Since reading, in the literal sense of the word „reading", includes:

(1) focusing on some particular physical object (typically string of shapes on the paper, on the wall etc.);
(2) identifying it as an instance of a text as abstract entity;
(3) interpreting the sentence types belonging to the text as bearing certain literal meanings;

[3] In other words, Tichý had to allow for plurality on the level of predication if he wanted to avoid it on the level of referents of descriptions (i.e. if he did not want to admit that "the US president" sometimes refers to a concept and sometimes to an individual uniquely satisfying it in the time of the utterance). Our situation is analogical: we have to join Tichý in postulating two kinds of predication, if we want to insist that the terms like "symphony" or "text" in all their uses refer to an abstract entity. The question is whether we should insist on this. If we do so, it is hard to see how to account for sentences like "Can you pass me that text?" Here we certainly do not ask the addressee to pass us an instance of some text (as a contextually identified abstract entity) but to pass us particular (deictically identified) physical object which is, as we presuppose, an instance of some (unspecified) text as an abstract entity. This should be distinguished from an utterance of "Could you give me the text?" made by an actor during the rehearsal: here he asks to be given some (whatever) instance of particular text as abstract entity (text of particular play).

(4) interpreting the particular occurrences of instances of these sentences with their literal meanings, produced in given context, as used to perform speech acts with particular force and propositional contents;
(5) occasionally, interpreting the fact, that such and such speech acts have been directly (literarily) performed in given context, as a performance of some indirect speech acts (or: as generating some implicatures in Gricean sense).[4]

So, it makes equally good sense to relate reading to the text as an abstract entity and to its physical instance: in fact, both relations are present and interwoven in the act of reading. None of them can in itself constitute reading: neither mere contact with a string of shapes or sounds nor mere intellectual (interpretative) operations with a text as an abstract entity instantiated in our mind, not based on a simultaneous intercourse with its external physical instance, would be called "reading".

Here is another example of ambiguity on the level of predication. If we, as I have suggested in Koťátko (2004), define literary work as a structured complex of the text's literary aspirations, we presuppose that it makes sense to ascribe aspirations to a text (similarly like we ascribe intentions to literary works when using the term "intentio operis"). But the definition also provides space for ascribing them to the literary work. In these two ascriptions we just appeal to two ways in which something can belong to something: particular literary aspirations belong to the text as to their bearer (the text bears and indicates certain aspirations) and they belong to the literary work as to the whole which includes them as its parts.[5] Similarly, when speaking about reading the text of *Madame Bovary*, we can mean both the text as an abstract entity and its particular instances, activating thereby two correlative aspects of the sense of "reading something" (cf. the preceding paragraph).

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[4] This is not to say that reading is a series of steps proceeding in the order presented here: for instance, the hypothesis about what the author of a text intended to convey in given context (step 5) can help us in identifying the words written (step 2): think e.g. of the case of an illegible manuscript.

[5] This may recall long philosophico-logical tradition beginning with Aristotelian interpretation of the system of categories as representing various ways in which something can belong to something – and, on the level of predication, something can be ascribed to something (cf. Anal. prot. I, c. 37, p. 49a).

In the light of all this, we have no reasons to complain that the common use of the word "text" balances between the physical and non-physical reading,[6] as Anders shows in Sections 1 and 2: this is certainly not a case for philosophical "therapy" (also here I join Anders: cf. p. 124). He also points out (p. 122), that the ordinary use of the word "text" in some contexts refers not only to symbols (as types), but also to their meanings. I believe that even the theoretical usage should allow us to keep these things together as distinct *levels of the text*. Taking into account also the distinction between meanings of expression types and meanings expressed by their use in given context, we should distinguish:

(1) $text_1$ as a syntactically identified series of symbols (types);
(2) $text_2$ as a syntactically identified series of symbols (types) interpreted according to the conventions of particular language;
(3) $text_3$ as a syntactically identified series of symbols (types) interpreted as used to express certain propositional contents with certain illocutionary force.[7]

In Koťátko (2013) I have tried to analyze various ways in which identification of these text-levels within the literary interpretation contributes to (or depends on) identification of the literary work.

To sum up, I agree that the attempts "to press the ordinary concept of a text to perform heavy theoretical duty for which it was never conceived" (p. 131) lead to aporias and appreciate the precision with which Anders shows their nature. On the other side, I still believe that it makes good sense to try to

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[6] This is what I would prefer to say instead of Anders' classification of the "ordinary conception of a text" as "illogical" or "logically incoherent" (p. 124, 127 ff.). I find the concept manifested in the ordinary use of the word "text" rather dynamic or flexible than incoherent: it enables us to do justice to the text's complex mode of existence, including both a concatenation of expression-types endowed with meanings and physical instances of the former.

[7] "As used" (applying to sentence-types) is to be read "as used within the given text as a type" – so even on his level we do not shift from a text as an abstract entity to its instances. The $text_3$ clearly does not coincide with David Davies' notion of work defined as "a text-type as used as an artistic vehicle in a particular generative context" (cf. Pettersson 2015, 126). The identification of the $text_3$ and the identification of the literary work (in my sense – cf. above) are mutually dependent moves, requiring respect to "particular generative context" (circumstances of the text's origin).

work with the theoretical concept of the text in a way which will be compatible with our ordinary use of the term "text" and do justice to the intuitions manifested in this use. I do not find this aspiration unrealistic since, unlike Anders, I do not find the ordinary concept of text incoherent.

Göran Rossholm[8]

Göran discusses, in the most illuminating way, the problem of completeness/incompleteness of fictional worlds and their components and the way in which we should approach various kinds of gaps we find in texts of narrative fiction. In one moment (cf. p. 136) he quotes from Ingarden: "In a real object such Leerstellen are not possible. At most the material is unknown" and adds: "Why not just say the same about fictional and factual accounts that mention a table without mentioning the material it is made of: we do not know the material and that is all. Koťátko does not discuss this question" (p. 136).

In fact, I have made some comments on this issue and they are, I suppose, in full agreement with Göran's position. Let me try to imitate a possible dispute (opened by Göran's question) with the adherents of the incompleteness thesis (IT). Their most straightforward reply could go as follows:

> (IT) In the case of our talk about real entities in everyday communication – in contrast to the fictional discourse – there is a sphere which determines what our descriptions leave underdetermined, namely the actual world. This world contains, independently of our descriptions, complete individuals, definite even in those respects which are epistemically (currently or in principle) inaccessible to us.

I believe that the adherent of the completeness thesis (CT) should reply as follows:

> (CT) An analogical presumption belongs to our role of interpreters of literary works. The world in which the story of Flaubert's novel takes place is the world we must presuppose if Flaubert's text is to fulfill its lit-

[8] Reply to Rossholm (2015). All the page references which appear without the author's name refer to this paper.

> erary functions. And this is a complete world in which complete human beings live in complete settings, find themselves in complete situations and take part in complete events, while the narrator naturally provides us with only an incomplete description of all this.

The dispute could then continue e.g. this way:

> (IT) If you insist that the world of the novel is complete, the question arises in which mysterious way the author managed to create it, granted that he can provide us only with incomplete sets of descriptions of characters, objects, settings, events and so forth.
> (CT) It is entirely sufficient that the author has written a text whose literary functions require the reader to presume a complete world as the world where the story of the novel takes place, where its protagonists live etc. In this way the author has established this world as the world of his novel.[9] Descriptions contained in the text of the novel have thus acquired the status of incomplete descriptions of complete individuals, settings, events and the like.

So far, the dispute concerned the ontology of fiction. But the adherents of (IT) can convert it to epistemological one, by arguing that the reader can hardly presume that the literary text provides her with incomplete descriptions of complete entities, when she knows that she has no chance of completing these descriptions in any respect that would go beyond the text. I believe that there is no substantial asymmetry between the "ordinary" and fictional talk even in this field – but this part of the defence of (CT) can be found in Koťatko (2010, 98) and Göran refers to it in his paper.

The arguments I have ascribed to the proponents of (IT) fit well together with Göran's "preliminary" answer to the question "Why do many scholars treat the factual and fictional discourses so differently with respect to incompleteness?" (p. 136). I find his explanation sharp and convincing.

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[9] In fact, I believe that the world we are supposed to relate the text of narrative fiction to is the actual world: the narrative functions of the text require that the reader approaches its sentences (in the *as if* mode) as records of utterances of an inhabitant of the actual world (the narrator) who tells us what happened in this world. Cf. e.g. my reply to Zsofia Zvolenszky bellow.

This dispute with the proponents of (IT) requires certain important qualification – which brings us to the second part of Göran's paper. What I oppose is the claim that it *belongs to the very nature* of fictional entities and the world they inhabit that they are ontologically incomplete. But I do not want to deny that a piece of narrative fiction may present the world the narration is about and its inhabitants as essentially incomplete. If one believes, as I do, that the text of narrative fiction requires from us to assume (in the *as if* mode) that its story takes place in the actual world, the completeness of the world to which the narration refers is guaranteed in advance – but only on the presumption that the actual world is complete. Obviously, the same concerns the issue of contradictions: the coherence of the fictional world (despite the contradictory statements made occasionally by the narrator) can be guaranteed by its identification with the actual world – granted that the actual world does not include contradictions. I have repeatedly referred to Samuel Beckett as an example of an author who does not seem to share these presumptions and, as a writer, does not intend to create the illusion that they are right. The starting point is his account of the world as universal chaos ("I can't see any trace of a system anywhere") and the consequence is his rejection of narrative techniques which, according to his opinion, serve to conceal the chaotic nature of reality and construe an illusionary picture of an ordered, and hence coherent and complete world.[10] The main target of his criticism is (not surprisingly) Balzac, but he distances himself even from Kafka as not consequent enough: the way his characters behave is not compatible with the fact that the chaotic nature of the world does not leave space for personal integrity and continuous purposeful action.[11] Correspondingly, I agree with Göran that Kafka's world is not of the kind I have ascribed to Beckett. It certainly does not lack order:

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[10] Just one illustration of the incompletness of Beckett's world: in the *Unnamable* it comes out that one cannot decide whether the names "Molloy", "Moran", "Malone" (and several others) refer to the same individual or to different individuals and whether any (or all) of them are identical with the narrator. This does not serve to illustrate the narrator's momentary indisposition but the nature of the world he lives in and the inscrutability of personal identity in such a world. The reader is not expected to presuppose that this world includes some facts, unknown to the narrator, which could decide such issues.

[11] "The Kafka's hero has a coherence of purpose… He's lost but he's not spiritually precarious, he's not falling to bits. My people seem to be falling to bits" (Shenker 1997, 162).

Kafka's characters are permanently confronted with signs of a hostile and impenetrable order and are endowed with a desperate desire to gain insight into it and find an efficient way of behaving within it. Moreover, as Göran's examples show, although their position might be tricky, for instance it may be unclear whether K. in *Trial* is or is not arrested (as a consequence of the introductory episode), this need not mean that the world they live in is incomplete (i.e. that its order is disrupted by gaps). Göran leaves this interpretation available as one of the alternatives (cf. p. 138) but I would opt for another one. According to it, this case shows that our dichotomy "arrested – not arrested" is not quite apt for describing the position in which K. finds himself (perhaps the same can be said about the position of some of our actual contemporaries): but precisely the way in which this dichotomy fails shows a lot about K.'s situation. In general, this part of Göran's paper demonstrates that our inability to answer certain questions concerning the characters or the story may play very different roles in the interpretation of a work of fiction and that our analysis should be sensitive to these distinctions.

I find equally illuminating the last part of the discussion Göran went into. If there is any point of disagreement, it would concern the degree of our reliance on what we are told in a text of narrative fiction and in everyday communication: I do not find the difference as radical as Göran (cf. p. 142). The trust in truthfulness of the assertions we are addressed in the ordinary discourse, is, according to some authors, anchored in the very nature of linguistic communication.[12] One need not share this view and still hold that trust is the default attitude which we abandon only under the pressure of evidence (or at least suspicion) that the speaker is not reliable. But even if this happens we have often a good chance to find out how things really are. For instance we may conclude that the speaker exaggerates her role in the events she is de-

[12] For instance, Lewis (1983) famously approaches linguistic convention as a "convention of truthfulness and trust". It follows that if in some moment the inhabitants of the United Kingdom cease to believe that the vast majority of assertive utterances of English sentences addressed to them in everyday communication are true, in that very moment English will cease to be conventionally fixed as the language spoken by the inhabitants of UK. Similarly, McDowell (1980) has argued that in such a case assertion (as a type of speech act) could not fulfill its basic function adopted from the prelinguistic forms of communication, namely the function of providing the addressee with an "epistemic surrogate" of direct experiencing the relevant state of affairs (specified in the propositional content of assertion).

scribing or that she misidentifies the cause of what has happened. Quite often we are able to recognize this without having any independent source of information about the subject matter in question – we simply register something suspicious in *what* the speaker says or in the *way* she expresses herself and draw on our general knowledge about how things usually go. And from the same resources we are often able to put together quite a reliable picture of how things really are in the case in question, contrary to what the speaker says. Obviously, the construction of a literary work may include reliance on our ability to exploit precisely these skills, acquired in everyday communication. One of the intended effects of a literary text may be a discrepancy between the assertions we are ascribing (in the *as if* mode) to the narrator on one side and our reconstruction (in the *as if* mode) of the actual course of events. In such cases, to use Göran's way of putting it, "the reader sees through what is said" (p. 140): and I fully agree that this (what the reader is supposed to see behind the words) is what we the reader is in the last instance told to be true – not by the narrator but by "the book", as Göran has aptly put it. In the most radical case I can think of, the message we receive "in the last instance" is that the nature of the world is such that it leaves no space for meaningful utterances. With respect to the fictional world of Beckett's texts it certainly holds – for cooperative readers – that this "is true because the book says so" (p. 140). But if we admit that Beckett's aspiration is to let us see the actual nature of the world we live in (to make the universal chaos visible to us), we have a good reason to raise the question of truthfulness again.

Manuel García-Carpintero[13]

Let me start with Manuel's account of the nature of the fiction-maker's creative acts: "…Joyce's utterance is not an assertion but a different speech act of pretending or make-believe which should be understood in terms of norms stating contents that proper appreciators of Joyce's tale ought to *imagine*" (p. 153). According to my view, the specification of the author's creative act is something which should follow from our reply to a more fundamental question: what do the literary functions of the text require from the *inter-*

[13] Reply to García-Carpintero (2015). All the page references which appear without the author's name refer to this paper.

preter? In other words, what are the interpretative moves the reader has to make in order to allow the text to fulfill its literary functions? Then we can characterize the writer's achievement so that she creates a text whose literary functions impose such and such requirements on the readers. As far as I can see, this does not mean, on the author's part, to *pretend* to make assertions, promises etc.,[14] neither to *actually perform* them, but simply to write sentences whose literary functions require that they are interpreted in certain way (namely, in case of narrative fiction, that they are read, in the *as if* mode, as records of the *narrator*'s assertions, promises etc.). And it is part of the author's being aware of what she is doing that she *intends* her sentences to function in this way.

Speaking about "requirements" or "the moves the reader has to make" may invite normative interpretation – but I do not think (apparently unlike Manuel) that the writer's creative acts or their results establish real *obligations* any more than the instructions for operating a washing machine do. According to my view, what these requirements or instructions in effect say is this: "If you want the literary text/the machine to fulfill its intended functions for you, you should do so and so (and avoid doing so and so)". Read in this way the instruction is purely instrumental. The introductory conditional clause in this hypothetical imperative certainly does not specify any wish we are obliged to have: the reply "No, I don't think this is precisely what I want" makes quite a good sense. Of course, it will be found inappropriate or even invite sanctions *in special contexts*, in which our discourse and connected non-linguistic actions fall within the domain of some *extra* norm, like "All students in this class (or: all inhabitants of this hostel) are obliged to interpret classical Czech literature (or: to use the owner's washing machine) in the way specified above!" Obviously, any type of discourse and any kind of activity in general can occasionally appear within the domain of various sorts of norms – but that in itself does not show that it is *intrinsically normative*.[15]

But no matter how much we may differ concerning the nature of the author's creative acts and their results, the main challenge to be found in Manuel's rich and subtle paper concerns the functions of proper names in the

[14] For an opposite view, see e.g. Searle (1979); Kripke (2013).

[15] This corresponds to one of the arguments to be found in Kathrin Glüer's and Åsa Wikforss' polemics with normativists in the theory of meaning – cf. my comments on their paper in the first part of this series of replies.

texts of narrative fiction and should be taken very seriously by all non-descriptivists in this field: "Even if Joyce's act is not an assertion but rather an invitation to his reader's imagination, the purported imaginings should nonetheless have contents; and non-descriptivists must tell us what, on their view, the contribution of names such as "Mr. Leopold Bloom" to such contents is" (p. 153). And on another place: "While the mode of thinking through which we think of Venus when we assert 'Hesperus is smaller than Mars' is intuitively and theoretically irrelevant to what we assert, in that many other modes of thinking about it may do as well, the corresponding modes of thinking 'about' Marlow and Holmes provided by the relevant fictions are essential to their contents: no proper appreciation can ignore them; no proper appreciation can do without building the corresponding files, starting with 'the object picked out by the relevant 'Marlow' naming practice', and stacking into it all the information about the character derived from the fiction" (p. 157).

Let me start with the suggestion (following from the preceding quotation) that the utterance of "Marlow is a clever detective" in Chandler's text has a descriptive propositional content which can be specified as "The object picked out by the relevant 'Marlow' naming practice is a clever detective". Or, as it is put elsewhere (p. 154): "The object called 'Marlow' is a clever detective". I take these two versions as equivalent and fully compatible with the view I will present bellow, even if my own presentation of the descriptive contribution of proper names to propositions (expressed by sentences containing the names) will be a bit different. But I do not share Manuel's conclusion concerning rigidity: "On this view, the semantics of textual uses is descriptive and hence singular terms *both empty and non empty* in them are not rigid" (p. 154; cf. also p. 157).

Everything depends on the function we assign to descriptions like "the object called 'Marlow'" – and the same concerns all the Marlow-descriptions we collect when reading Chandler's text. Let me recall (again – cf. my reply to Marián Zouhar) Kripke's famous example of a case in which the referent of a proper name is fixed by description: the story of Jack the Ripper (cf. Kripke 1980). As everybody knows, this name has been given to the person who committed certain brutal murders in Soho and has never been unveiled, so that "the person who committed those and those murders" is the only available way of identifying the bearer of the name. But as Kripke insists, this does not mean that the name just abbreviates this description: it is not so that with respect to any possible world *w*, the name refers to the person satis-

fying that description in *w*. Instead, the name refers, with respect to any possible world, to the person who satisfies that description in the actual world: hence even if the referent is fixed descriptively, the name is a rigid designator.

Now, to get closer to our original (Marlow) example, let us imagine that the identifying knowledge we can connect with the name is even poorer (and less spectacular) than in Jack's case. I witness a conversation in which the name "Jan Novák" is repeatedly uttered. It is quite natural to interpret the situation so that both speakers use the name "Jan Novák" for one of the hundreds of persons that have been baptized with that name and are continuously referred to by means of utterances of that name. This can be put so that I think about Jan Novák as the person uniquely satisfying the description: "the man who has been assigned the name 'Jan Novák' at the beginning of the chain to which these utterances belong (or: the chain activated in this conversation)". In this way I have descriptively fixed the referent of that name (as used in given conversation) with respect to all possible worlds, including those in which that person is not called 'Jan Novák'.[16] To that person I then assign various descriptions which I collect while following the conversation.

I believe it is the same with the name "Marlow" as used in Chandler's text and with the description "the person called 'Marlow'", or its equivalents. You may object that the mechanism described above cannot work in case of fiction, since here (unlike in Jan Novák's case) there is no way of identifying the world to which we should primarily apply the relevant description in order to pick out the referent of the name (as the person uniquely satisfying the description *there*) and to fix it with respect to all other possible worlds. Since there is no criterion which could select precisely one among all those possible worlds in which everything what is said in Chandler's text is true: all of them

[16] I fully agree with Manuel's insistence (on p. 159) that descriptive identification provides a good basis for thinking or speaking *about* an individual – not only in cases in which descriptions are used "refentially" in Donnellan's sense. The fact that it makes sense to say "the richest man in the world, *whoever he is*", is irrelevant in this respect, since you can equally well say "Jan Novák, whoever he is" or "this gentleman, whoever he is". The "whoever he is" clause just indicates that the mode of identification you have used is the only one available to you, not that it is insufficient for picking out the individual you want to speak about.

have the same right to be called "story-worlds" of Chandler's novel.[17] But it should be clear that we are in the same situation even in case of any "serious" (i.e. non-fictional) text like police report, newspaper reportage, theoretical article etc.: no such text *in itself* provides us with a criterion for selecting one among all those worlds in which all of its sentences are true. But obviously, no such problem arises in reality since the communicative function of these texts require that we automatically relate the assertions made in them and the referential function of the singular terms used in them to the *actual* world. I believe that we do (and are supposed to do) the same with the texts of narrative fiction.

Let me turn from Marlow to Emma Bovary, to refresh our imagination a bit, and consider what I am supposed to do when reading Flaubert's text. If it is to fulfill its narrative functions for me I have to approach its sentences (in the *as if* mode) as records of utterances of a real person (the narrator) who tells us what happened in the actual world. And it belongs to the role of the reader that I evaluate these utterances (in the *as if* mode) as true in the actual world – until the narrator proves to be (in some respect) unreliable.[18] Within this approach to Flaubert's sentences, I interpret (in the *as if* mode) the occurrences of the name "Emma Bovary" in them so that the narrator, in his uttering that name, links himself to the chain of uses of that name in the actual world. Hence I can identify (in the *as if* mode) the person the narrator speaks about as the individual uniquely satisfying (in the actual world) the following description: "the person who has been given the name 'Emma Bovary' in the act of baptism at the beginning of the chain to which the narrator's utterances belong". This description, including reference to the name "Emma Bovary" and to the narrator's utterances in which it occurs, can be labelled as "parasitic" or "derivative" or "nominal" or "metalinguistic" or "formal" in the sense that it is based on the general mechanism of the referential functioning

[17] If we stop at this point we will have to admit with Currie (2003) that "Marlow", as it appears in Chandler's text, is not a name of an individual but rather a name of an "individual role", interpreted as a function from possible worlds to individuals.

[18] If the narrator is construed as unreliable in that radical sense that she (consciously or unconsciously) misrepresents what happens, this requires from the readers to evaluate her utterances (in the *as if* mode) as false and to reconstruct what "actually" happened in contrast to what the narrator presents as having happened. As this and the preceding point show, I do not share Manuel's view that the utterances of sentences within literary texts are "not intuitively truth-evaluable" (p. 147).

of names rather than on factual information regarding the bearer of the name.[19] As the reader I presume (in the *as if* mode) that this formal description is satisfied by precisely one person in the actual world;[20] and it is the person identified in this way to whom I assign all the "non-parasitic" descriptions which I collect while reading Flaubert's text. They, indeed, enter into my picture of Emma and thereby into the way I think about her: hence I fully agree with Manuel's insisting on their relevance (e.g. on pp. 157, 164).

Surely, it would be bizzare to interpret this so that my Emma-thoughts are in fact thoughts about all those individuals which satisfy those descriptions in various possible worlds.[21] Instead, I am thinking (in the *as if* mode) about Emma as that individual which satisfies them in the actual world. And nothing should prevent me from thinking about *this very individual* (picked out in the way just mentioned) also with respect to other possible worlds, for instance to speculate about what would have happened with Emma if she did not meet Rudolph.[22] This shows that despite the crucial importance we have assigned to descriptions (both of the parasitic and non-parasitic kind), "Emma" behaves like a rigid designator. And it should be so, if we are supposed to approach (in the *as if* mode) the sentences contained in the literary text as records of utterances of the narrator inhabiting the actual world.[23] Since then we should assume that he (as well as all the characters) breathes like us, digests like us and also uses proper names in the way we do.

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[19] This description can be quite naturally reduced to the form "the person called 'Emma Bovary'", if we do not find it necessary to account for the fact that "Emma Bovary" may have more than one bearer.

[20] To borrow Manuel's term (p. 161), this presumption can be called "reference fixing presupposition", with the addition that its acceptance by the reader is a matter of pretence (ibid.) or, as I prefer to put it, that it is made in the *as if* mode.

[21] Or, equivalently, about the Emma-role interpreted as a function from worlds to individuals (cf. Currie 2003).

[22] The alternative would be to think about Emma, when reading Flaubert's text, as about an entity which has its properties like being in love with Rudolph, being called "Emma", etc. necessarily – that means not to think of her as a human being like us. But then it is difficult to imagine how Emma's story could make a good sense to us, invoke empathy in us etc.

[23] Of course, this counts only for those who (like myself) believe that proper names, as they are used in everyday communication, are rigid designators.

Within the account I am advocating here, all this is not to be interpreted as a matter of an *import* from the actual world to the fictional world created by the writer; or, in Marie-Laure Ryan's terms (cf. e.g. Ryan 1991; 2010), from the "actual actual world" to the fictional world to which we move in our imagination, pretending to accept it as actual (within the operation called "re-centering"). According to this account, no such moves are needed: the text directs us to the actual world, and in this world everything remains as it is, except the changes required by the text. This, among other things, enables us to interpret the narrator quite straightforwardly as using English, Spanish etc. (rather than some fictional correlates of them), without having to transport (in our imagination) our linguistic practices or their results to some other world. Similarly, this enables us (and requires from us) to approach the names borrowed from the ordinary discourse as keeping their referents even when used in fiction.[24]

If sentences of a literary text contain a name like "Robespierre", as it is e.g. in Hugo's novel *Ninety Three*, we are supposed to deal with it in the same way as with the name "Emma Bovary". We presume that the narrator is speaking about a person who satisfies the formal (parasitical) description: "the person who has been given the name 'Maximilien de Robespierre' at the beginning of the chain to which the narrator's utterances belong". In addition to this, we assume (in the *as if* mode) that the chain to which the narrator has linked himself when uttering the name "Robespierre" is the same chain which the editors of Hugo's novel joined in their historical notes and the same chain which my history teacher joined when uttering the name "Robespierre" in his exposition of the French revolution, and the same chain that I joined when being examined at school. This assumption enables me to attach, when reading Hugo's text, to the name "Robespierre" not only the descriptions that I find in the text itself, but also the descriptions that I find in the editorial historical notes, as well as those which I manage to put together from my schooldays – in all cases on the condition that they are compatible with the descriptions provided by the literary text.

I believe that all this belongs to the way in which the text of narrative fiction is anchored in the actual world and relates our thought, imagination and sensitivity to this world. But I do not claim that the approach I am advocating

[24] So, my present claim about the fictional use of names like "Napoleon" or "Paris" is not based on the idea of "importation", as it is presented by Manuel (cf. p. 162).

here represents the only possible way of accounting for the fact that our historical knowledge about Robespierre, including those parts of it which are not mentioned in the text of the novel, can be exploited in our interpretation in a productive way. When discussing this point, Manuel points to the difference between things which belong to the content of fiction and things we have just to assume or imagine in order to make sense of the fiction:[25] let me put it (for short) so that the things of the latter kind belong to the interpretative "scaffolding" surrounding the fiction. I find this distinction productive: needless to add, the question always arises where to draw the dividing line in particular respects. For instance, I would say that the construct of the *implied author*, if it has any relevant application at all, belongs to the scaffolding. On the contrary, I would say that the referential function of the name "Napoleon", as I have described it, belongs directly to the way in which the narrator of *War and Peace* is supposed to tell us the story. This, if I am right, introduces the actual emperor into the content of the story (for Manuel's opposite suggestion see p. 161). But I am rather uncertain about the rest: as to our knowledge about the historical Napoleon, I would hesitate where to draw the line. Shall we say that everything that is not explicitly said or implicated by the narrator but is needed to make sense of what he says or what the characters say and do, or what is needed to work out the implicatures, etc., belongs to the content of the literary work – or does it belong to the scaffolding? And a considerable part of our historical knowledge certainly need not but may be exploited in our reading the text and appreciating the story we are told: that would perhaps require introduction of some third category.

Zsofia Zvolenszky[26]

Zsofia is right that what I have said about the role of fictional names remained on the level of their use within the texts of narrative fiction. Let me briefly resume my view on this and then to proceed to its implications con-

[25] "There are imaginative acts required to understand the text that are merely ancillary to the determination of the contents that the text invites proper appreciators to imagine" (p. 161).

[26] Reply to Zvolenszky (2015). All the page references which appear without the author's name refer to this paper.

cerning other kinds of use, discussed by Zsofia. The question is whether on some of these levels it comes out that I can, or even should, combine my approach with (some sort of) artifactualism, as Zsofia suggests (p. 176).

Textual use

(1) Andrei Bolkonski entered the room.

The question is what the reader is supposed to do with this sentence in order to allow Tolstoy's text to fulfill its literary functions for her. The reply I have suggested in my reaction to Manuel García-Carpintero's paper (and in some earlier texts) goes as follows: The reader is supposed to interpret, in the *as if* mode, the occurrence of this sentence in the text as a record of an utterance made by a real person (the narrator) who tells us what happened in the actual world. This requires from us to assume (in the *as if* mode) that the narrator uses the word "Andrei Bolkonski" in the same way in which we use proper names in ordinary communication, which means that he joins certain chain of uses of the name "Andrei Bolkonski", at the beginning of which that name has been assigned to particular person.[27] About that man the narrator claims (as we assume in the *as if* mode) that he entered the room – and on other places he makes other statements, including counterfactual ones, about that very man.

Notice that once we accept this approach, there is no space left for the problem of the identification of the person the narrator is speaking about (Zsofia is addressing this problem on p. 175). We are supposed to simply assume (in the *as if* mode) that it is the person satisfying (in the actual world) the description "the person who has been assigned the name 'Andrei Bolkonski' at the beginning of the chain to which the narrator's utterances belong". If somebody wonders how could Tolstoy succeed to identify precisely one person as Andrei Bolkonski, if there are, in various possible worlds, countless persons satisfying all the Bolkonski-descriptions to be found in Tolstoy's text, the reply should be very simple. The author succeeded to do so simply by producing a text the literary functions of which require us to make

[27] Obviously, this assumption does not exclude the possibility that there may be other chains at the beginning of which another person has been baptised with a phonologically identical name.

the move (to adopt the assumption related to the *actual world*) described above.

Paratextual use

(2) Bolkonski is a prince.

This can be quite naturally paraphrased in one of the familiar ways using some fiction-operator, e.g.

(2i) In Tolstoy's novel, Bolkonski is a prince.

But the real point at issue is how to interpret this paraphrase. I suggest to unpack it in the following way:

(2ii) The literary functions of Tolstoy's novel require us to assume (in the *as if* mode) that there exists a person referred to by the narrator as "Bolkonski" and that that person is a prince.

That certainly does not commit us to the existence of an entity called "Bolkonski", whatever its ontological status is supposed to be. Of course, one can say: Bolkonski is one of the persons we have to assume (in the *as if* mode) as existing, in order to make sense of Tolstoy's novel, but this does not commit us to any hypostasis – it amounts to saying that the literary functions of Tolstoy's text impose such and such demands on us.

Intertextual use

(3) Bolkonski is a less passionate man than Fabrizio.

Utterances of this kind can be, quite naturally, classified as a special case of paratextual uses of fictional names. I suggest to unpack our present case in the following way:

(3i) The man we are required (as readers of *War and Peace*), to assume as the bearer of the name "Andrei Bolkonski" exhibits less passion than the man we are required (as readers of *La chartreuse de Parm*) to assume as the bearer of the name "Fabrizio del Dongo". ("Exhibits" is here a shortcut for "exhibits in his behaviour described in the relevant novel".)

Nonexistence claims

(4) Bolkonski does not exist.

Here I opt for the following metalinguistic paraphrase:

(4i) The word "Bolkonski", *as it appears in Tolstoy's novel*, does not have any referent in the actual world (i.e. it is not a proper name of any real person).

This paraphrase is, due to the clause in italics, perfectly compatible with the possibility (a) that there is (in the actual world) a person called "Bolkonski", (b) that there is a person satisfying all the Bolkonski-descriptions we find in Tolstoy's text and (c) that there exists another text of narrative fiction in which the name "Bolkonski" is (equally like "Napoleon" in Tolstoy's novel) used to refer to a real person. I believe that no sound interpretation of (4) should exclude such possibilities.[28]

Metatextual use

(5) Bolkonski is a fictional entity.

The interpretation I am suggesting combines elements of the paraphrases of (1) and (4):

(5i) The word "Bolkonski", as it appears in Tolstoy's novel, does not have any referent in the actual world but the literary functions of the novel require that we assume (in the *as if* mode) the opposite.[29]

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[28] One may object that (4) does not include any explicit reference to Tolstoy's novel. Generally speaking, we have two options. Either we approach (4) as used to straightforwardly claim that there exists no person called "Bolkonski" (and claims of such a kind have no relation to our present considerations). Or we understand (4) as implicitly related to the use of the word "Bolkonski" in certain context (in particular conversation, newspaper article, police report, novel etc.). Obviously, in our discussion the latter case is relevant and the context of the use is fixed in advance by our interest in the status of Tolstoy's characters.

[29] This is, of course, an interpretation in theoretical terms and is not supposed to show how the typical users of sentences like (3) would explain what they meant. Per-

As the suggested interpretation of (5) shows, I do not share Zsofia's view that "metatextual uses" (of words like "Bolkonski") "require us to include fictional characters as abstract artifacts in our ontology" (p. 173) and the same concerns all other kinds of use we have considered. So, I believe that we can make sense of all kinds of discourse considered so far without committing ourselves to any ontology including literary characters as abstract artifacts. What we assume is just the existence of texts the literary functions of which require from the interpreters certain moves – assuming or accepting or imagining certain things, including the existence of certain human beings (obviously, not abstract artifacts, but creatures of flesh and bone).

As far as the writer's achievement is concerned, it consists simply in creating a text with these functions. If they require that the readers imagine or assume (in the *as if* mode) a human being *X* with certain name, outlook, temperament, personal history etc., we can indeed say that the author has *created* this being – but this should be understood as a paraphrase of: the author created a text with such and such literary functions (raising such and such demands on the readers).

Let me stress that there is no animosity to abstract entities behind these suggestions. I do not have any problem with classifying the literary text (in opposition to its instances) as an abstract entity and the same concerns the literary work, understood as a structured complex of the text's literary functions. I just fail to see how the presumption of literary characters as abstract entities can help us to understand the way in which texts of narrative fiction work or to properly interpret the kinds of uses of fictional names we have been discussing above or to avoid problems we would otherwise inevitably fall into.

It should be clear that if understood in the way suggested above, neither of the statements (1) – (5) are made in the *as if* (or *pretense*) mode. Correlatively, if we make them sincerely, we *believe* (rather than *make-believe*) that they are true. Another thing is that these statements (except (1)) include some kind of reference to the literary functions of the text and *these functions*, as I understand them, require from the readers certain moves in the *as if* mode. So, I agree with Zsofia (p. 173) that there is no pretense inevitably involved

haps they would say something like: "'Bolkonski' is not a name of a real person but we are supposed to pretend that it is."

in uttering (5),[30] and unlike her I also believe that the same concerns (2). As construed above (in 2ii), an utterance of (2) is a full blooded claim about the literary functions of Tolstoy's novel, which does not involve any pretense of a commitment to the existence of Andrei Bolkonski. So, although I ascribe to pretense (or to the *as if* attitudes) an essential role in interpreting fiction and I do so within an approach which does not assume literary characters as abstract entities, I do not seem to be a "pure pretense theorist" of the kind criticised by Zsofia (with reference to Thomasson's arguments, p. 173; cf. Thomasson 2003).

I can only admire the delicate discussions Zsofia went into concerning the phenomenon of inadvertent creation of abstract artifacts, I agree that the abstract artifactualists concerning fiction should admit that this phenomenon is quite widespread and I believe that they should not be worried about this. So, I do not feel temptation to misuse the fact that Zsofia's subtle observations and arguments concerning this issue can be, as she notices, "easily turned upside down and construed as a new set of reasons for resisting artifactualism about fictional characters" (p. 183). Neither do I feel motivated to look for any other arguments against interpreting fictional characters as abstract artifacts. I am just unable to offer to them an appropriately decent and comfortable place within the approach I am proposing.

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[30] I say "inevitably involved" to account for the platitude that each sentence can serve to make pretended claims, for instance on the theatre stage or as part of some conversational play.

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